

CHARLES DICKENS'S DIDACTIC USE OF HUMOROUS CHARACTERS  
FOR ATTACKING HYPOCRISY IN HIS NOVELS

---

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH  
IN THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF  
TEXAS STATE COLLEGE FOR  
WOMEN

DEPARTMENT OF  
E N G L I S H

BY  
FRANCES STUBBLEFIELD BISHOP, B. A.

---

Denton, Texas

August, 1949

# Texas State College for Women

DENTON, TEXAS

----- AUGUST ----- 1949 -----

We hereby recommend that the thesis prepared  
under our supervision by FRANCES STUBBLEFIELD BISHOP  
entitled CHARLES DICKENS'S DIDACTIC USE OF HUMOROUS  
CHARACTERS FOR ATTACKING HYPOCRISY IN HIS NOVELS

be accepted as fulfilling this part of the requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Committee in Charge of Thesis

Constance L. Osceach  
Chairman, and Director of Thesis

Mary Huggard

Antony Nell Wiley

Accepted:

W. H. Clark  
Director, Graduate Division



## PREFACE

The writer wishes to express her gratitude to Dr. Constance L. Beach, who has served as guide and critic throughout the preparation of this thesis. She wishes also to express her appreciation to the other members of the thesis committee, Dr. Autrey Nell Wiley, and Dr. Mary Hufford, for their counsel and constructive criticisms.

*Frances Stubblefield Bishop*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .	iii
CHAPTER . . . . .	PAGE
I. THE NOVELIST IN THE MAKING. . . . .	1
Statement of Thesis Problem. . . . .	1
Charles Dickens's Birth and Parentage . . . . .	2
Early Education. . . . .	3
Influence of the Blacking Factory. . . . .	5
Young Dickens in London . . . . .	7
Dickens as a Reporter. . . . .	7
The First Sketch: "A Dinner at Poplar Walk" . . . . .	10
Industrial England in the Thirties . . . . .	11
Appearance of <u>Sketches By Boz</u> . . . . .	13
Dickens's Marriage to Catherine Hogarth. . . . .	14
Serial Publication of <u>Pickwick Papers</u> . . . . .	14
Mary Hogarth's Death . . . . .	16
Dickens's Sudden Literary Fame. . . . .	17
II. THE NOVEL, THE MEANS TO AN END . . . . .	18
Literary England in the Early Nineteenth	
Century . . . . .	18
Influence of Fielding and Smollett . . . . .	19
Popularity of the Novel . . . . .	20
The Novel of Purpose . . . . .	21

## CHAPTER

## PAGE

The Victorian Age . . . . .	21
The Novel, Dickens's Medium for Expression. . . . .	23
Recognition of Genius by Critics . . . . .	24
A Representative of the Bourgeoise . . . . .	24
Desire to Continue Writing . . . . .	27
Social Sympathy Illustrated in Oliver Twist . . . . .	28
Hypocrisy in Victorian England. . . . .	29
III. DELINEATION OF THE HYPOCRITE . . . . .	31
Dickens a Creator of Character. . . . .	31
Portraits of Hypocrites in the Novels . . . . .	31
The Jennings Rodolphs in "The Mistaken Milliner". . . . .	33
Signor Billsmethi in "The Dancing Academy". . . . .	34
Jingle, Trotter, and Stiggins in <u>Pickwick</u> <u>Papers.</u> . . . .	37
Attack on Schools in Nicholas Nickleby. . . . .	43
Mr. Snawley in <u>Nicholas Nickleby</u> . . . . .	45
Dick Swiveller in <u>The Old Curiosity Shop</u> . . . . .	47
<u>Barnaby Rudge</u> , an Historical Romance. . . . .	51
Sir John Chester in <u>Barnaby Rudge</u> . . . . .	52
Ridicule through Humorous Character-Types . . . . .	54
IV. DICKENS'S ARCH-HYPOCRITE . . . . .	55
Voyage to America . . . . .	55
Publication of American Notes . . . . .	56

Reflections on the United States in Martin	
Chuzzlewit . . . . .	56
Seth Pecksniff, the Arch-Hypocrite . . . . .	57
Young Martin Chuzzlewit in America . . . . .	70
Sarah Gamp, a "Female Functionary" . . . . .	71
Pecksniff's Betrayal of old Martin Chuzzlewit . . . . .	75
Disillusionment of Tom Pinch . . . . .	80
Downfall of the Arch-Hypocrite . . . . .	87
V. THE PROLIFIC YEARS . . . . .	88
The Christmas Stories . . . . .	88
Serious Purpose of <u>Dombey and Son</u> . . . . .	89
Major Bagstock in <u>Dombey and Son</u> . . . . .	89
Autobiographical Element in <u>David Copperfield</u> . . . . .	92
Uriah Heep in <u>David Copperfield</u> . . . . .	93
Satire on the Chancery Courts in <u>Bleak House</u> . . . . .	94
The Reverend Mr. Chadband in <u>Bleak House</u> . . . . .	94
Josiah Bounderby in <u>Hard Times</u> . . . . .	97
Publication of <u>Little Dorrit</u> and <u>A Tale of</u>	
<u>Two Cities</u> . . . . .	100
Domestic Troubles. . . . .	101
Uncle Pumblechook in <u>Great Expectations</u> . . . . .	101
Illness in 1865 . . . . .	103
Luke Honeythunder in <u>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</u> . . . . .	103

CHAPTER	PAGE
VI. CONCLUSION: DICKENS'S HYPOCRITES UNVEILED. . . . .	106
Recurrence of the Hypocrite . . . . .	106
Hypocrisy in all Professions. . . . .	107
Vivid Descriptions . . . . .	107
Dramatic Presentations. . . . .	108
Didactic Use of Humor . . . . .	109
The Composite Hypocrite . . . . .	109
BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .	110

## CHAPTER I

### THE NOVELIST IN THE MAKING

Charles Dickens, the greatest humorist of Victorian England, chose to teach definite ideals through his humorous portrayal of certain types of characters; outstanding among these is the hypocrite. So far as the writer has been able to determine no specific study has been made of hypocrites in Dickens's works, such as has been made of Chaucer's characters. It is the writer's purpose, therefore, to make such a study by examining in chronological order Dickens's major novels, to discover the frequency and the importance of the theme of hypocrisy as it is revealed through the major characters. In the analysis of this study the writer will try to evaluate the changes in the author's point of view and technique, the sources of influence, both literary and personal, and to estimate the success which Dickens attains in his didactic use of humorous characters for attacking hypocrisy.

In order to obtain the necessary data for the preceding problem the writer has consulted background materials of the nineteenth century, not only in the literary field but in the historical and social realms as well; the background of nineteenth century fiction; biographical materials including both biography and letters; the major novels; contemporary reviews and criticisms of the novels; and scholarly books and articles on Dickens's novels.

Since biographers agree that the events and experiences in Charles Dickens's life were the primary influence on his work as a novelist this investigation begins with a study of the period which James Ley calls the "impressionable years."<sup>1</sup> In view of this fact the writer seeks to find the motivations of Dickens's use of humorous characters for a didactic purpose.

In 1812, the memorable year in which the United States declared war on England, Charles Dickens was born at Landport, Portsea, on February 7. His parents, John and Elizabeth, christened their young son Charles John Huffman. Charles Dickens's mother, Elizabeth, had been a Barrow before her marriage. Charles Barrow, young Charles's maternal grandfather, was related to Sir John Barrow, second secretary of the Admiralty from 1804 to 1845.<sup>2</sup> John Dickens's mother was the former Elizabeth Ball, housemaid to the Crewe family at Crewe Hall.<sup>3</sup> His father, John Dickens, was the son of a steward, William Dickens. Upon the death of John Dickens's father the Crewe family assisted Mrs. William Dickens in educating her sons, John and William. John was given a substantial position as a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. Shortly afterwards he married Elizabeth Barrow, and the couple lived at Landport, where Fanny was born

---

<sup>1</sup>The Dickens Circle (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1919), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Una Pope-Hennessy, Charles Dickens (New York: Howell, Soskin, Inc., 1946), pp. 2-3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-2.



in 1810, and Charles, two years later.<sup>1</sup> As a clerk and salaried man, John Dickens usually spent all the money which he made and more. Since clerks had no fixed residence the Dickens family shifted from place to place: in 1816 they moved to Chatham, and in 1823 they settled in Camden Town.<sup>2</sup>

During this period of constant shifting about young Charles was sorely neglected. His father was uninterested, apparently, in educating his family; as a result, Charles's activities consisted of blacking his father's boots, running small errands for both parents, and caring for the younger children in the family. When he was eight he attended a preparatory day school with his sister Fanny.<sup>3</sup> He was a precocious child and a brilliant reader. He loved Smollett and Fielding, especially for their characters of Roderick Random and Tom Jones.<sup>4</sup> The Dickens library, though meager, contained copies of The Arabian Nights, Robinson Crusoe, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, The Tales of the Genii, and Don Quixote.<sup>5</sup> All these novels Charles read with boyish curiosity and excitement. When the Dickenses moved from Ordnance Terrace to Saint Mary's place in 1821,

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Charles attended Mr. William Giles's school for children.<sup>1</sup> He liked to study; May Becker believes he thought that "learning lessons was like jumping waves on a beach, the bigger the better!"<sup>2</sup> In 1823, when John Dickens moved the family to Camden Town on the outskirts of London, nearer his new appointment, Charles remained in Giles's school until the spring term ended. On his arrival in London he felt terribly alone; the big rain-soaked city was depressing.<sup>3</sup> Just as young Charles settled once more with his parents, expecting to continue his schooling, John Dickens was arrested for debt and imprisoned in the Marshalsea.<sup>4</sup> The prison itself was soon to be a famous landmark, but not until after it had been torn down; for although John Dickens went into the Marshalsea, Mr. Micawber and Mr. William Dorrit came out.<sup>5</sup> Dickens had not been imprisoned long when the family in order to cut expenses joined him, that is with the exception of Charles and Fanny. The latter had won in 1823 a nomination, as a pupilage-boarder, to the Royal College of Music, where she spent four happy years.<sup>6</sup> Charles, on the other hand, had been

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Introducing Charles Dickens (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1940), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>G. K. Chesterton, Charles Dickens (London: Methuen and Co., 1906), p. 31.

<sup>5</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>6</sup>Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., p. 7.

employed, soon after his arrival in London, at Warren's Blacking Factory, despite protests to his parents. They seemed satisfied that their young son had employment; there were larger problems than his at the moment, for even then debts were accumulating.

Just as in the plot of an old-fashioned novel luck came to John Dickens. His mother, who died in the spring of 1824, left her son part of her invested savings.<sup>1</sup> Having thus gained his freedom in May of that year, he sought an occupation by which he might support his family. No word was said to Charles about quitting his job and returning to school. Those were days of torture. At the age of twelve the little fellow had wasted his energies blacking pots and pasting labels on them. He was a bright boy and had learned the dull, degrading labor quickly.<sup>2</sup> He was humiliated, nevertheless; but he kept his grief to himself. When John Dickens remained silent after seeing his boy at such horrible work, young Charles was crushed. He knew his father was not cruel; it simply had not occurred to him that his son was ashamed. His hopes of schooling were thwarted; there was no hope for any kind of change. But a change came, though "purely accidental."<sup>3</sup>

Dickens's employer, James Lamert, and John Dickens quarrelled violently; as a result Charles's father refused to let him continue

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

working at the blacking factory. Charles's mother, however, defended Lamert and insisted on the boy's being employed there. At times John Dickens could be firm; fortunately this was one of those times, and he stood his ground with both his wife and Mr. Lamert. Charles recorded long afterwards:

I do not write resentfully or angrily, for I know all these things have worked together to make me what I am, but I never afterwards forgot, I never shall forget, I never can forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back.<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious now, as it was to young Dickens when two or three years later he reflected upon this humiliating experience, that the unspeakable miseries and poverty besetting his path when a boy had made him ever alert and conscious of his surroundings.<sup>2</sup> Toward the close of the year 1824 he attended Wellington House Academy near his home. He studied no more than was absolutely necessary, but he wrote brief character sketches of his classmates and teachers, and accounts of incidents which occurred during school hours. He had learned already that people could be stored away in one's mind. As one biographer says, "One good look, and he had them!"<sup>3</sup> At this school also Dickens developed an interest in theatricals, and he entertained nightly with impromptu performances in his own home and those of his friends.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>W. Walter Crotch, The Pageant of Dickens (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1915), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 49.

From 1824 to 1827 the years seemed to fly by, now that he was making some progress in educating himself. In London, where the family moved in 1827, although he was unable to continue his formal education, the London streets provided him another kind of education. His spirit could not be broken; it seemed rather to stir him into a precocious interest in the "pageant of London life and the humors of London character."<sup>1</sup> He was still determined to educate himself and to secure material independence. The sad part of the story is that at the early age of fifteen and seventeen respectively, Charles and Fanny fully realized that they could not look to their father for a living. When a prospective employer inquired of John Dickens where his son had been educated, the elder Dickens replied: "Why, indeed, sir, (ha! ha!) he may be said to have educated himself!"<sup>2</sup>

Charles's father, who had been a parliamentary reporter for the British Press since 1825,<sup>3</sup> stimulated his son's interest to some extent in government proceedings--at least, in a reporter's career. Beginning in May, 1827, Charles worked as a clerk for Attorney Edward Blackmore;<sup>4</sup> even this minor office gave Dickens a knowledge of official position and social importance. He held his head high, to make up for all the months

---

<sup>1</sup>Crotch, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

when it had been bent.<sup>1</sup> Aside from his duties as clerk, young Charles read widely, spending hours at the British Museum.<sup>2</sup> In addition to his reading he learned a very difficult type of shorthand which he practiced with fervor. By 1828 he was reporting in the Doctors' Commons and other courts. This experience gave him a real chance for survival, for it brought him into the larger world of men and affairs.<sup>3</sup> As his experiences mounted, he complimented himself by saying that he was "the best and most rapid reporter ever known."<sup>4</sup>

At the age of eighteen Charles felt rather proud of his achievements; and a girl, whom he had fallen in love with, had inspired him to write; he wanted to be someone for her sake, for she demanded merits of an admirer. The young woman whom Dickens loved to distraction was Maria Beadnell, who was introduced to him by a friend, Henry Kolle.<sup>5</sup> Although Miss Beadnell accepted her suitor's verses, letters, and gifts, she did not accept his offer of marriage. Dickens later looked upon the romantic affair as a study in disillusionment, but for the moment his heart was

<sup>1</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), I, 53.

<sup>3</sup>Edward Wagenknecht, The Man Charles Dickens (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929), p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Sir Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), The Dictionary of National Biography (London: Oxford University Press, 1937-1938), V, 438.

<sup>5</sup>Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., p. 18.

broken! He felt, however, that his life would go faster, further than ever, now that there was no love to drag him back.<sup>1</sup> Maria Beadnell had done one thing for Charles Dickens: when he lost her, writing became a refuge from his failure and an end in itself. From that time forward Dickens did not cease writing.

In 1832 Charles Dickens was a reporter on the original staff of the True Sun;<sup>2</sup> while on this newspaper he met the dramatic critic for the paper, the man who later was his personal friend and biographer, John Forster. Charles's accuracy, dexterity, and demonic capacity for getting things done made him number one among ninety pressmen in the gallery of the House of Commons.<sup>3</sup> During the historical year of 1833 Dickens reported speeches on reform measures from the House.<sup>4</sup> After reporting for the Mirror of Parliament for two sessions, he climaxed his career as a reporter for the Morning Chronicle.<sup>5</sup>

Although reporting consumed a major portion of his time, Dickens took moments to sketch, not artistically, but descriptively. His reporter's observational eye sought people in out-of-the-way corners,

---

<sup>1</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>4</sup>Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 29.



among the derelicts, ne'er-do-wells, and estrays of life.<sup>1</sup> He was a first-class journalist because he modified his reporting. As a clerk and a reporter he learned the byways and slums of London, the social pretensions of obscure men, the sins of poverty, and the value of ugliness.<sup>2</sup> He mailed one of his sketches to the Monthly Magazine; and in the December issue, 1833, his sketch "A Dinner at Poplar Walk" appeared.<sup>3</sup> That was the birthday of Charles Dickens's genius. He was at last in command of himself and his destiny!<sup>4</sup> When Dickens saw his article in print it was as if the apparition of a muse had appeared. He continued to write creatively, at first under the assumed name of "Boz," and later as Charles Dickens himself. Continuing his journalistic endeavors as he contributed sketches to various periodicals of the time, he gained a knowledge of the Victorian world which he otherwise might not have obtained. Reporting did not always keep him in London; at times he was dispatched to various parts of the country to record political speeches and perhaps elections. In the London courts he observed the men who sat in judgment as well as those men who were being judged; he was acquainted with the police-court and the prisons. Dickens's interest in the poor and oppressed

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard Burton, Charles Dickens (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1919), p. 258.

<sup>2</sup>Humphry House, The Dickens World (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Grant C. Knight, The Novel in English (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), p. 165.

<sup>4</sup>Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Charles Dickens and Other Victorians (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), p. 6.

was instinctive; his love for humanity excelled all other virtues which he possessed. It was apparent later that Boz was recording in newspapers and periodicals, episode by episode, the changes in his world.

England looked dark to the man who had fought his way into the changing scene. Industrialization had turned English people out of the country; their streams and rivers were polluted, their lands smoked and blackened, their lives made miserable by cotton lords and mine-owners.<sup>1</sup> While industrialized England prospered, the social structure had begun to decay. Conditions were abominable in London and other manufacturing towns, large or small. Water supplies were inadequate, and there was almost a total lack of drainage; slum districts multiplied as families often occupied one room, or lived in cellars not fit for any human being.<sup>2</sup> An epidemic of cholera broke out over London in 1832, causing countless thousands of deaths.<sup>3</sup> Lunatic asylums housed hundreds of patients, often unattended; they were herded into "crib room" cases, often chained, with little food and water and less straw upon which to lie.<sup>4</sup> Children were forced to endure torturing slavery; they worked as chimney sweeps and were often injured seriously; spinning mill girls, mere children, worked

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur L. Hayward, The Days of Dickens (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., n. d.), p. 96.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

worked sixteen hours per day; boys who worked in the mines were compelled to pull wagon-loads of coal by crawling along on their hands and feet.<sup>1</sup> Not all of England was a distorted picture, however; science had made great strides by the mid-thirties; hundreds of thousands were employed to operate the wheels of machinery. The first railroads were in operation soon after 1830, as were the electric telegraph and the steamship.<sup>2</sup> London teemed with coaches, carriages, omnibuses, carts, and wagons. Street vendors sold their wares: pies, muffins, potatoes, lavender, and brooms.<sup>3</sup>

The changing scene brought about a tremendous growth in democracy. William Moody and Robert Lovett, in their History of English Literature, emphasize the fact that "with this growth came also the spread of popular education, and a great increase in the number of readers of books."<sup>4</sup> It was the Reform Bill of 1832 which placed the political power of England in the hands of the middle class.<sup>5</sup> This class felt that their task was to straighten out the social and economic tangle imposed by the Industrial Revolution.<sup>6</sup> The man on the street was convinced that great changes,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), p. 341.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Esme Wingfield-Stratford, Those Earnest Victorians (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1930), p. 102.

occurring year by year, would make the world, and all those in it, much better.<sup>1</sup> This was the world Dickens knew and loved. Why should it not have been a challenge to write of the rapid and sweeping changes which were then taking place?

Sketches by "Boz" had appeared frequently in various publications since that historic day in 1833. At the suggestion of the novelist, Harrison Ainsworth, a personal friend, Dickens decided to publish the sketches as a collection of stories in 1836. Through Ainsworth a publisher was found; and the great artist, Cruikshank, who was at his own height of popularity in the middle thirties, promised Dickens an illustrative plate for each article.<sup>2</sup> The sketches were reprinted from the Monthly Magazine, the Evening Chronicle, Bell's Life in London, and the Morning Chronicle.<sup>3</sup> Sketches by Boz, Illustrative of Every Day Life and Every Day People, appeared on Charles's twenty-fourth birthday, February 7, 1836.<sup>4</sup> The reviews which followed made the young writer's heart flutter because his stories were well received, and his work was praised. The Morning Post even commended the Sketches under "Literature."<sup>5</sup> Dickens had successfully pictured everyday London at its best and its

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>2</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>3</sup>Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., pp. 43-45.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

worst. His truthful observation of a sort of life between the middle and lower class showed its humours and joys, as well as its sufferings and sins.<sup>1</sup>

During the time Dickens was employed by the Morning Chronicle he became well acquainted with the managing editor, George Hogarth. At his invitation Dickens visited the Hogarth home frequently and was graciously entertained by the three daughters--Catherine, Georgina, and Mary. Catherine, the only daughter of marriageable age, soon won the affections of young Charles, and they became engaged.<sup>2</sup> When the Sketches brought momentary fame, at least, to the illustrious Boz, he proposed to Kate, and they were married in a parish church on the second of April, 1836.<sup>3</sup>

Just a month before Dickens's marriage the first issue of a series of stories, later known as the famous Pickwick Papers, was published. The sale from the first number reached four hundred; by the time the third number appeared Dickens was a popular writer; and when sales reached a peak of forty thousand for the fifteenth number, Charles Dickens's success was secure.<sup>4</sup> The publication of The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club lifted young Dickens, then only twenty-five years

---

<sup>1</sup>Forster, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>4</sup>Knight, op. cit., p. 166.

of age, from poverty to affluence, and from isolation to world-wide popularity.<sup>1</sup>

Dickens's biographer and personal friend, John Forster, prophesied the future of Boz when he said that beyond the animal spirits of Pickwick there were indications of ability of the first rank in the delineation of character. Perhaps the real critics, the intelligent readers of the masses, recognized the young author's ability first; for they felt that a new and original genius in the walk of Smollett and Fielding had arisen in England.<sup>2</sup> The poet, Thomas Hood, complimented Dickens and his Pickwick Papers when in a letter to a friend he said: "Didn't you enjoy Pickwick? It is so very English! I felt sure you would."<sup>3</sup> Ley records the fact that after Thomas Hood met the young author he went home and told his wife to cut off his hand and bottle it, because he had shaken hands with Boz!<sup>4</sup>

The admiration and recognition Dickens received wherever he went challenged him to continue writing. From a financial point of view his stories were a success; this too was encouraging, for a son, Charles Dickens Junior, had been born on January 6, 1837.<sup>5</sup> Not all was peaceful

---

<sup>1</sup>Stephen Leacock, The Greatest Pages of Charles Dickens (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1934), p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>Forster, op. cit., I, 84-85.

<sup>3</sup>Op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., p. 67.

in the Dickens household, however; Kate's youngest sister, Mary, whom Charles idolized, became violently ill in the Dickens home and died there in the spring of 1837.<sup>1</sup> The shock of Mary's death was so severe that Dickens failed to publish an issue of *Pickwick* in June of that year.<sup>2</sup> The young girl's character was later immortalized in *Little Nell*, *Rose Maylie*, *Florence Dombey*, and *Little Dorrit*. Years later in 1869 Dickens testified to her lasting influence:

She is so much in my thoughts at all times, especially when I am successful, and have greatly prospered in anything, that the recollection of her is an essential part of my being, and is as inseparable from my existence as the beating of my heart is.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever the influence, whether it was Mary, his journalistic career, or his childhood memories, the inimitable Boz had become, almost overnight, a literary figure of great importance in the nineteenth century. His keen sense of humor and of pathos, his vivid imagination, and his all-pervading power of observation helped to make him the genius that he was. The critic, Sir Edwin Charles, summed up those very characteristics by saying "when he was made, the mould was broken."<sup>4</sup> Dickens's achievements are many in the literary world, but at this early stage in

<sup>1</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

<sup>3</sup>Forster, op. cit., II, 497.

<sup>4</sup>Some Dickens Women (New York: Stokes, 1926), p. 30.



his literary career he had discovered a romantic element long lost to view among the bourgeoisie. He had converted commonplaceness into something imaginative, fanciful, and entrancing.<sup>1</sup>

Dickens's literary strength was fortified by the early experiences influencing his life, although those same experiences were the source too for most of his weaknesses. Nature had gifted him at a very early age with sensibility and imagination, which were supplemented by his keen observation. His mental and moral vigor was also supported by a splendid physical make-up. He was inspired with a didactic purpose to discern good from evil, and he was provided with a technique to depict character and situation heretofore unseen by the reading public--that public which declared his success. It is no wonder then that Dickens was destined to be a great writer of world-wide renown and, perhaps, to achieve immortal fame.

---

<sup>1</sup>Stefan Zweig, Three Masters: Balzac, Dickens, and Dostoeffsky (New York: The Viking Press, 1930), p. 67.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NOVEL, THE MEANS TO AN END

Having found in Dickens's life and personality influences which determined not only his materials as a novelist but also his feelings and attitudes, and which motivated him to use his profession as a novelist to attack anything he despised or hated by means of humorous characterization, we must next examine the age in which he lived and the most popular literary form of that age--the novel--for additional influences relating to our special problem of his attack on the hypocrite. What motives, if any, were supplied by his Victorian background and by other novelists? How much was Dickens indebted to or motivated by his age and fellow novelists? Was hypocrisy a recognized vice of human nature? Was humor a popular weapon for attack? How much of his work was original?

The nineteenth century literary world, acclaimed by many critics as the most productive and influential period since Shakespeare's time, was a world of diverse ideas and methods. At the opening of the century, England was reading the works of the poets Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats, as well as novels by Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott. As literary masterpieces were circulated throughout the nation, however, less brilliant works by minor writers came into prominence; these included annals of crime and "freaks of biographies,"<sup>1</sup> which no doubt were read by the young,

---

<sup>1</sup>Crotch, op. cit., pp. 129-30.

future literary artists then growing up. Following these minor works by now unfamiliar names came a literary period of high spirits, which lasted from the early twenties to the mid-forties.<sup>1</sup> The literature of this period made a world of its own out of galloping horses, practical jokes, idiotic foreigners, funny stories, and bobbing chambermaids.<sup>2</sup> In such a literary age as this Charles Dickens's genius developed.

Other critics agree with Saintsbury and Walters that Dickens was somewhat indebted to the writings of Tobias Smollett and Henry Fielding. These two eighteenth-century novelists were responsible in a large measure for the creation of a prose literary type: the realistic novel.<sup>3</sup> Fielding's Joseph Andrews (1742) depicted a true picture of life, while Tom Jones (1749) remains a classic today for its vivid characterization, its intricate plot, and its genuine humor.<sup>4</sup> Smollett's Roderick Random (1748) and Humphrey Clinker (1771), though picaresque in style, were based on the elaboration of a single trait or humour in the characters.<sup>5</sup> Other eighteenth-century novelists--Richardson, Sterne, and Goldsmith--wrote a sentimentalized type of fiction which critics referred to as the sentimental

---

<sup>1</sup>J. B. Priestley, The English Comic Characters (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1931), p. 198.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>3</sup>George F. Reynolds, English Literature in Fact and Story (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1946), p. 217.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 219.

novel. Though both types of the novel were extremely popular, the novelists seemed far more concerned with the picaresque story, morals, and manners, than they were with the social structure of the time. Therefore, Dickens's indebtedness to his predecessor seems to be chiefly to Smollett.

Two great story-tellers widely read at the opening of the nineteenth century were, of course, Jane Austen and Scott. Jane Austen was primarily a writer of satire on the manners of her day; Scott, on the other hand, was a romancer and the first successful writer of historical novels.<sup>1</sup> Charles Dickens was writing sketches for publication a year after Scott's death in 1832; and although his fiction contained certain features popular in the works of both Austen and Scott (satirical characterization and the historical romance), no direct indebtedness to these earlier novelists is evident.

Scott had been, to the reading world, an ideal, a creator of character and situation unsurpassed by any previous writer. During his lifetime the novel had grown in structure and complexity until it was a favorite type of entertainment in most English homes; short novels lasted throughout a long evening, while longer novels were entertainment for three or four evenings.<sup>2</sup> The novel became the most popular form of reading because the reading audience had an increased knowledge not only

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>2</sup>Cornelius Weygandt, A Century of the English Novel (New York: The Century Co., 1925), p. 4.

of the past, but of distant places. In the Victorian period its popularity increased steadily, too, because the author used a wide range of subject matter--crime, sport, commerce, the army, the sea, and the church; and because the deeper thought of the period, evidenced in rapid social changes, gave to the novel a real purpose.

The distinction then between the prose fiction of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries lies in the novel of purpose. When one reads the history of nineteenth-century England one becomes aware, immediately, of the tremendous effects imposed by the Industrial Revolution, which reached its height in the early 1830's. Succeeding this vitalizing movement, which stirred the entire nation, there were measures of reform which spread throughout the country; of these the abolition of slavery, the enactment of the Factory Act, and the Poor Law dominated the changing scene.

In this epoch of industrial upheaval the third woman ever to rule the British Empire came to the throne. Victoria, Queen of England from 1837 to 1901, embodied all the noble, virtuous traits and ideals of nineteenth-century women. The Victorian age itself was visualized through the ideals of manhood and the policies of government sought by Her Majesty. Two distinctive characteristics of the period were the prevailing spirit of optimism and the moral earnestness of the upper and middle classes.<sup>1</sup> In no other period of English history does the home play such an influential

---

<sup>1</sup>Reynolds, op. cit., pp. 325-26.

part as it does in Victorian England:

The home was the school of loyalty and comradeship;  
the academy of tact; the breeding ground of most every virtue;  
the abode of love; and, the stronghold of liberty.<sup>1</sup>

Amidst the calm and complacent Victorian world, however, lay the restless middle and working classes of people, who were still struggling despite measures of reform. The working class had no education and no means of self-expression;<sup>2</sup> the middle class endured an ugly, monotonous life under the stress of merciless competition.<sup>3</sup> The existence of these conditions, moreover, caused a tremendous protest, and the protest came from the writers of the age. Naturally enough, the poets, essayists, and novelists were the critics, rather than the admirers; for they felt that the emphasis had been placed on material, rather than spiritual, values.<sup>4</sup> Reynolds suggests that though the general attitude of the times was complacent, the bulk of the important literature was quite the contrary.<sup>5</sup>

Because of the flexibility of its form the English novel, eminently a social document, provides the best means for recording the life of the time. Prose-fiction, in its entirety, absorbs all other literary types:

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Barker (ed.), The Character of England (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 476.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph P. Boas and Barbara M. Hahn, Social Backgrounds of English Literature (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1929), p. 209.

<sup>3</sup>Wingfield-Stratford, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>4</sup>Reynolds, op. cit., p. 326.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

poetry, the essay, the short story, and the drama.<sup>1</sup> The novel can be, however, the broadest of the types in scope and the most varied in effect. Regardless of form, it offers the literary artist opportunity for achieving a certain sense of beauty, the insight, understanding and knowledge of humanity, and perhaps moments of action equal in tenseness to that of the drama.<sup>2</sup> These elements appealed to young Dickens, for since childhood he had believed himself to be a writer.<sup>3</sup> One cannot forget that he was delighted and thrilled as a boy when reading pages of adventure from Tom Jones and Roderick Random.<sup>4</sup> The fact remains that Dickens had, in his own mind, character sketches of rogues, seamen, criminals, lawyers, clerks, politicians, clergymen, and sportsmen—all from experiences dating as far back as his own depressing childhood, a time when his wanderings imprinted them indelibly on his mind.<sup>5</sup> One critic, Lord David Cecil, remarked that Victorian novels were aggregations of brilliant passages rather than coherent wholes;<sup>6</sup> If this description applies to Dickens's novels it does not make him a lesser novelist.

---

<sup>1</sup>Weygandt, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-17.

<sup>4</sup>Supra, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Crotch, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>6</sup>Early Victorian Novelists (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1935), p. 32.

When a man like Charles Dickens writes novels incorporating both realism and idealism and fuses laughter and tears, coarseness and delicacy, heaven and earth, and poetry and prose, that writer is a genius. So it was said of Chaucer and Shakespeare.<sup>1</sup> Forster admitted that Dickens wrote for money and fame, but Edward Wagenknecht goes a step further to say that Charles Dickens wrote because there was something inside him that had to get out!<sup>2</sup> That something, intangible in itself, exists in every man who is a genius; without it there can be no art. In addition to this quality of sheer genius, Dickens was simply a natural writer, a writer by instinct; he could scrutinize men in a flash and reveal truths about them with words right at his finger-tips! George Gissing believed that Dickens was destined to depict the London of his day.<sup>3</sup>

No one who is thoroughly familiar with the biographical background of Dickens will question his being undeniably bourgeois. He wrote for the people and was supported by them. In fact, he was truly proud to be an ordinary man.<sup>4</sup> Dickens's sincerity is overwhelming to the modern reader; he wanted what the nineteenth-century reader wanted, and for that reason he never wrote down to his public because he himself was part of

<sup>1</sup>Barker, op. cit., p. 317.

<sup>2</sup>The Man Charles Dickens, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Critical Studies of the Works of Charles Dickens (New York: Greenberg Publisher, Inc., 1924), p. 28.

<sup>4</sup>G. K. Chesterton, The Victorian Age in Literature (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1913), p. 88.



that public. The one thing animating the will of the novelist as an artist was his desire to succor the weak; he wanted, more than anything else perhaps, to see improvements in England's social order. Like Carlyle, he saw its selfishness and cruelty, its hypocrisy and shallowness. Dickens believed not so much in legislation as in individual heart-searching.<sup>1</sup> He possessed a glowing faith in human freedom, a fiery indignation against wrong, and an impassioned conviction that in the end, good must conquer evil.<sup>2</sup> Because of his own social consciousness Dickens became the exponent of direct action; he was not afraid to state a truth. In fact, Osbert Sitwell believed he reveled in telling the truth, which he accomplished with gusto.<sup>3</sup> Dickens had no desire to overthrow the world; he did feel, however, that his bitter childhood experiences allowed him to present to a complacent society poor, forsaken, and forgotten children and adults. Thus Dickens's novels demand attention, because the stories he tells are about obscure lives; he does not sermonize, but rather teaches, for he is the exposé of abuse, the advocate of reform, and the censor of folly.<sup>4</sup> Forster says, "It is the fact that teaches, and not any sermonizing drawn from it."<sup>5</sup> Dickens dreamed of another England: a brighter and cheerier

---

<sup>1</sup>Boas and Hahn, op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>2</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 250.

<sup>3</sup>Dickens (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932), p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>J. Cuming Walters, Phases of Dickens (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1911), Preface, p. x.

<sup>5</sup>Op. cit., I, 103.

country, a closer union between rich and poor, fewer workhouses and slum areas, more schools and recreation, less crime, the manifestation of brotherly feeling, and a religion cleansed of hypocrisy.<sup>1</sup> Dickens had no theory of reform, but he did believe in the qualities of honesty, goodness, and sincerity, and insisted on charity to all men.

The peculiar triumph which Dickens achieved as a young writer was due, in part, to his nearness to his public. Beginning his career as a reporter, and later becoming a professional journalist, Dickens experienced the anxieties, the joys, and the sorrows, which the people themselves felt. It is no wonder then that G. K. Chesterton said that Charles was a man who tasted, who really felt!<sup>2</sup> Dickens's early sketches, as well as his first novel, Pickwick Papers, were representative of the "humours" of life in their appropriate settings. As a result, these episodes are illustrative of broadly exaggerated figures and of absurd, but humorous situations.<sup>3</sup> The unprecedented popularity of Pickwick Papers convinced Charles Dickens that the people wanted him to continue writing. He proceeded at such a rapid rate that his materials overlapped one another: Pickwick Papers was issued monthly from April, 1836, to November, 1837; meanwhile, he began work on his second novel, Oliver Twist, which was issued monthly from January, 1837, to March, 1839.<sup>4</sup> From that time

---

<sup>1</sup>Walters, op. cit., Preface, p. xix.

<sup>2</sup>The Victorian Age, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup>Moody and Lovett, op. cit., p. 405.

<sup>4</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 116.

on, Dickens's works continued to overlap; by the time he finished one novel he was in the middle of another.

Dickens had been writing since the days of his deep affection for Maria Beadnell because he desired fame. Now he wrote, however, because publishers and editors asked him to write; his literary powers had at last given him the security which he had sought so long. Not until a year before his death did Dickens confess his choice of the profession of literature. It is imperative that the reader know about that choice now, in order that he may comprehend the earnestness with which Charles Dickens asserted himself in his chosen field. In a reply in 1869 to Lord Houghton concerning his objections to entering public life, the author said:

. . . . that when he took literature for his profession he intended it to be his sole profession; that at that time it did not appear to him to be so well understood in England, as in some other countries, that literature was a dignified calling by which any man might stand or fall; and he resolved that in his person at least it should stand by itself, of itself, and for itself; a bargain which no consideration on earth would now induce him to break.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt Dickens would agree with those who believe a writer of fiction should begin with characters, not plot, for he began writing in just that manner. In his first novel, Pickwick Papers, the story existed solely for the characters; Dickens delighted in producing eccentric and exaggerated portraiture of English people whom he knew or had seen on his journeys. More often than not his novels lacked real plot, but they

---

<sup>1</sup>Forster, op. cit., II, 479-80.

did not lack interest and entertainment. Percy Fitzgerald believed that behind the name of Dickens there was a whole diversified world. In the novelist's books were recorded Dickens's own feelings, thoughts, and doings. The localities he used were so vivid that his stories soon became geographical reference books; and the accounts of the daily life of his generation, recorded in the manners, habits, and customs of the time, have become invaluable to twentieth-century scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Dickens's biographers agree that he used the novel as a means to protest against the abuses of the social and political life of his time. But sheer genius led him to the resolve to make the foolish laugh at their own follies.<sup>2</sup> The reader of Dickens's work cannot help being impressed by the choice which he gave his audience: though he presented virtue and vice, he allowed the reader to choose between the two. The earliest illustration of Dickens's social sympathy lies in the story of Oliver Twist, a story strongest in its humorous treatment of rascaldom.<sup>3</sup> Gissing believed that Dickens intended to use Oliver Twist to exhibit the evil working of the Poor Law Act and to give a faithful picture of the life of thieves in London.<sup>4</sup> Whatever Dickens's purpose, the story is as compact and exciting as any he ever wrote. It is also as good an

<sup>1</sup>The Life of Charles Dickens as Revealed in His Writings (London: Chatto and Windus, 1905), II, 210.

<sup>2</sup>Walters, op. cit., Preface, p. xxi.

<sup>3</sup>Burton, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>4</sup>Op. cit., p. 45.

an example as one could find of his passionate love for, and interest in, the children of England. Was he reflecting over childhood experiences perchance? The writer of this thesis knows only that Dickens constantly looked back to his childhood and drew from that source a store of the freshest feelings and impressions one could conceive. Some critics have called that storehouse the Dickens world. Whether Dickens created a mythological world or not, he did create an urban world, crowded with middle and lower class people, in streets where Dickens himself was bred and from which he drew the miseries of his boyhood.<sup>1</sup> The novelist's imaginary world was a hurrying, breathless place, teeming with folk who possessed innumerable qualities: happiness, sorrow, virtue, cruelty, sham, and hypocrisy.

The age, itself, which Dickens lived in, was an age of transition where hypocrisy flourished in religion, politics, public and social life. One could, perhaps exclude the temples and the high priests from condemnation; otherwise, hypocrisy appeared in every phase of English life.<sup>2</sup> Dickens's genius, supreme in its intimacy with the fundamental qualities of English character, was never more arresting than in the studies which embraced portraiture in hypocrisy. There were reasons for the young writer's desire to ridicule the hypocrite: the hypocrite gave unsure footing to measures of social reform, and he denied man the opportunity

---

<sup>1</sup>Quiller-Couch, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Crotch, op. cit., p. 206.

of becoming a better man and a more useful citizen; in other words, Dickens's ridicule was for humanity's sake, for the nation's sake, and for the sake of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> These characters of imposture were a specialized and monstrous class of people which Dickens treated with unmitigated rigour.<sup>2</sup> He allowed no redeeming feature in the hypocrite. The point of approach in this problem, however, is not Dickens's analysis of the hypocrite as a general type, but rather it is a study of his didactic use of humorous characters for attacking hypocrisy.

---

<sup>1</sup>Walters, op. cit., pp. 263-64.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

### CHAPTER III

#### DELINEATION OF THE HYPOCRITE

Dickens was not a philosopher, nor was he a psychologist; but he was a creator, and he created character and situation to fit the needs of the times. The Victorian age was characterized by moral earnestness and optimism, that is true; on the other hand, it was characterized by snobbery and hypocrisy. Dickens had no difficulty in embodying moral earnestness and the spirit of optimism in his characters; for he, himself, inherited these traits. There was no room in his own personality, however, for snobbishness and hypocrisy. These evils thus became objects for attack.

In tracing his attack on hypocrisy, which is the subject of this thesis, we notice first the types of hypocrites Dickens creates. Walters gives a very good classification by opposites:

Those who grovel; while others stand erect  
Those who shout; while **others** whisper  
Those who smirk; while others frown  
Those who laugh and sing with affected good humor;  
and those who weep and moan<sup>1</sup>

He points out that Dickens's hypocrites usually possess telltale characteristics underneath the surface of their personalities: fuming passions, burning animosities, or loathsome revenges. The hypocrites quite often

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 224.

have writhing limbs, shifting eyes, and bodies which have become distorted.<sup>1</sup> Since the imposter, or the hypocrite, can be dealt with most satisfactorily by means of ridicule, Dickens used this method for denouncing hypocritical characters who moved about in the Dickensian world.

Let us now turn to this world, first created by him when he was writing under the assumed name of Boz. We find it filled with thoroughly human men, women, and children possessed with the elementary virtues but also with such faults as ignorance, obstinacy, pretentiousness, snobbishness, and hypocrisy. The Sketches, a collection of stories, was Dickens's first attempt at illustrating the ordeals of everyday life and everyday people. The subject matter ranged from elaborate pictures of London, and its alluring suburbs, to vivid descriptions of people, examples being "The Parlour Orator," "The Hospital Patient," "Mr. Minns and His Cousin," "The Tuggses at Ramsgate," "The Drunkard's Death," "The Mistaken Milliner," and "The Dancing Academy." Of the one hundred and fifty-six sketches published in volume form in 1836, only two relate themselves in any particular way to this study; those sketches are "The Mistaken Milliner" and "The Dancing Academy." They are significant, first, because they indicate Dickens's early observation of, and interest in, pretentiousness; and second, because they illustrate a character-type which he later developed into one of the most powerful creations of his entire

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 217.



literary career. The hypocrite, then, appears for the first time in Sketches by Boz. The delineation is slight, but, nevertheless, it is there.<sup>1</sup>

In "The Mistaken Milliner" Miss Amelia Martin, a dressmaker and milliner of good repute, succumbed to the flattering remarks of some musical friends, the Jennings Rodolphs, who enticed her one evening, amidst a company of friends, to sing for the group. Dickens continued the story:

. . . . whereupon Miss Martin, after sundry hesitations and coughings, with a preparatory choke or two, and an introductory declaration that she was frightened to death to attempt it before such great judges of the art, commenced a species of treble chirruping, containing frequent allusions to some young gentleman of the name of Hen-e-ry, with an occasional reference to madness and broken hearts.<sup>2</sup>

When Miss Martin had finished her song, the Jennings Rodolphs exclaimed at length over her talent. Having decided between them that they had never heard a voice so sweet, the Rodolphs suggested that Amelia cultivate her voice. An agreement was made between the two women: Amelia sewed for Mrs. Rodolph, who, in turn, taught Miss Martin the rudimentary techniques of voice. When the time arrived for Amelia to appear publicly, Mr. Rodolph arranged for an engagement in eloquent company: Miss Martin was to sing a duet, "The Time of Day," with some unknown comic

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>2</sup>Dickens, Sketches by Boz (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., n. d.), p. 248.

gentleman.<sup>1</sup> Dickens related the humorous scene in the following manner:

The symphony began, and was soon afterwards followed by a faint kind of ventriloquial chirping, proceeding apparently from the deepest recesses of the interior of Miss Amelia Martin.

"Sing out," whispered Mr. Jennings Rodolph.

"So I do," replied Miss Amelia Martin.

"Sing louder," said Mrs. Jennings Rodolph.

"I can't," replied Miss Amelia Martin.<sup>2</sup>

The audience by this time was disgusted, and they shouted their remarks to the frightened woman on the stage. She left the orchestra with much less ceremony than she had entered it; and she returned to her millinery and dressmaking shop never to leave it again. The dresses promised Mrs. Jennings Rodolph were never presented to her, and Mr. Rodolph was painfully aware that his flattering remarks about Miss Martin's vocal abilities were falsehoods.

The delineation of Signor Billsmethi in "The Dancing Academy" is less pronounced than that of the previous characters, the Jennings Rodolphs. Signor Billsmethi, proprietor of a dancing academy in Gray's Inn Lane, had a very select group of pupils who never numbered more than seventy-five, and from whom he exacted a quarter's payment in advance. One Mr. Augustus Cooper, who, having just come of age, had a little business, and a little money, wanted very much to be introduced into genteel society. Upon being accepted as a new pupil in Signor Billsmethi's dancing academy, young Cooper felt assured that his debut would not be far off. The signor was very attentive, even introducing his lovely

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 250.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

daughter to Augustus. He slapped the young chap on the back, "as if he had known him a dozen years--so friendly."<sup>1</sup> Asked to join the family circle in the evening, poor Cooper consented, and during the night's hilarious proceedings Mr. Cooper expressed his deepest affections to Miss Billsmethi. Weeks passed by; during the interim Cooper purchased himself new shoes and a new coat--"a two-pound-tenner from Turnstile."<sup>2</sup> On the night of Mr. Cooper's public appearance, the Grand Ball, he was so much complimented that he celebrated the occasion by consuming "considerable quantities of spirits and water, negus, and compounds."<sup>3</sup> Before he knew just what had happened really, he had encouraged the attentions of a rather lovely young lady, not Miss Billsmethi. The latter arrived on the scene in a moment, however, to call the young Miss Brown offensive names. The party was not quieted until Mr. Billsmethi explained to the audience that Mr. Cooper had made various promises of marriage to his daughter on various occasions, and now he had basely deserted her. Chagrined and speechless, Mr. Cooper left his host in the dancing academy and returned home. A day later he received notice from Billsmethi's lawyers, demanding payment of twenty pounds in behalf of poor Miss Billsmethi, whose life had been humiliated. Like the Jennings Rodolphs, Signor Billsmethi deceived his friends through false words and actions. This characterization,

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 256.

then, is the mere beginning of a delineation of traits which make the arch-hypocrite of Dickens's world.

While Dickens was still writing his Sketches, he was hard at work on The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, asserted by some to be his best book. Boas called the series of Pickwickian episodes "a masterpiece of farcical humour and shrewd satire on social life before the Reform Bill."<sup>1</sup> Forster believed that beyond the high and noble animal spirits of Pickwick Papers there were indications of superb ability in the delineation of character.<sup>2</sup> In later years Dickens modestly named Pickwick as his favorite:

If I were to live a hundred years, and write three novels in each, I should never be so proud of any of them as I am of Pickwick, feeling as I do, that it has made its own way, and hoping, as I must own I do hope, that long after my hand is withered as the pens it held, Pickwick will be found on many a dusty shelf with many a better work.<sup>3</sup>

Chesterton expressed the opinion that the power of Pickwick lay in the "humours" of the Pickwickians.<sup>4</sup> The story had no elaborate plot: the characters were members of a club, a sort of correspondence society, in which each member contributed his own observations on character and manners, descriptions of his journeys, and tales of his adventures. In

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>2</sup>Op. cit., p. 342.

<sup>3</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Dickens, p. 76.

Pickwick there are sixty male characters and twenty-two female characters; of this group only three deserve mention in the portrait gallery of hypocrites made famous by the novelist. Two, Alfred Jingle and Job Trotter, were transparent impostors; they tried to deceive Samuel Weller and succeeded in deluding the amiable Mr. Pickwick. The third, the Reverend Mr. Stiggins, embodied those qualities of the pious fraud which Dickens attacked with such fervor that he ridiculed this type of hypocrite for all time. Stephen Leacock said of Jingle that he was one of the world's immortals and a character which Charles Dickens loved to draw. Jingle was "crookedness turned by a soft haze of perspective to comicality, a rogue more precious than an honest man."<sup>1</sup> Jingle's rascality was revealed when he paused in the Wardle family garden to overhear a conversation certainly not meant for his ears. Dickens related three reasons for the trespasser's attentiveness:

In the first place, he was idle and curious; secondly, he was by no means scrupulous; thirdly, and lastly, he was concealed from view by some flowering shrubs. So there he stood, and there he listened.<sup>2</sup>

Jingle had decided, not long after his arrival at Manor Farm, that he would "lay siege" to the heart of Rachael, a spinster aunt; his power of observation detected that the aunt was agreeable to his attentions, and he felt strongly that she possessed a small independence. In overhearing

<sup>1</sup>The Greatest Pages of Charles Dickens, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Dickens, The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (Modern Library; New York: Random House, n. d.), p. 105.

the conversation in the garden, then, Jingle felt obliged to tell old Mrs. Wardle that her daughter was being sought out by a young man. He knew full well that young men, to spinster aunts, were as lighted gas to gunpowder, and were, therefore, excellent objects for affection. In order to betray Miss Rachael's confidence in her young lover he approached the spinster aunt, mumbling incoherently but audibly, these warning words:

"Yes, ma'am--damn that Joel--treacherous dog, Joe--told the old lady--old lady furious--wild--raving--arbour--Tupman--kissing and hugging--all that sort of thing--eh, ma'am--eh?"

"Mr. Jingle," said the spinster aunt, "if you come here, sir, to insult me--"

"Not at all--by no means," replied the unabashed Mr. Jingle;--"overheard the tale--came to warn you of your danger--tender my services--prevent the hubbub. Never mind--think it an insult--leave the room"--and he turned, as if to carry the threat into execution.

"What shall I do!" said the poor spinster, bursting into tears. "My brother will be furious."

"Of course he will," said Mr. Jingle, pausing--"outrageous."

"Oh, Mr. Jingle, what can I say!" exclaimed the spinster aunt, in another flood of despair.

"Say he dreamt it," replied Mr. Jingle, coolly.

A ray of comfort darted across the mind of the spinster aunt at this suggestion. Mr. Jingle perceived it, and followed up his advantage.

"Pooh, pooh!--nothing more easy--blackguard boy--lovely woman--fat boy horsewhipped--you believed--end of the matter--all comfortable."

Whether the probability of escaping from the consequences of this ill-timed discovery was delightful to the spinster's feelings, or whether the hearing herself described as a "lovely woman" softened the asperity of her grief, we know not. She blushed slightly, and cast a grateful look on Mr. Jingle.

That insinuating gentleman sighed deeply, fixed his eyes on the spinster aunt's face for a couple of minutes, started melodramatically, and suddenly withdrew them.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

A moment later Jingle unfolded a fabricated story: the young man in question, Mr. Tupman, wanted only the spinster aunt's money. She gasped. Not only that, but the truth was, he really loved another. This was too much for Rachael; she resolved to convince herself of this matter and from then on to leave Mr. Tupman alone. Assured of her resolve, Jingle fell on his knees, remaining there for about five minutes; he rose the accepted lover of the spinster aunt. Four evenings later, as supper was laid, the domestics rushed into the parlor exclaiming as they came that Miss Rachael was gone! Mr. Wardle inquired of them, who had gone. Mr. Tupman, Mr. Pickwick, and the Wardles soon knew the entire story: Jingle and Rachael had eloped! Mr. Tupman was indignant: Jingle had borrowed ten pounds that very week. Pickwick was terrified: he thought Jingle a madman to do such a thing. Mr. Wardle instigated the plan to follow Jingle at once, and the three were soon on their way in search of the notorious swindler and impostor. Wardle's chaise overtook Jingle; but, unfortunately, the former's vehicle lost a wheel, and this accident allowed Jingle to continue his way alone. His chaise rattled away from the scene, and Pickwick and the others could see a white handkerchief fluttering from the coach-window. Jingle got the marriage license in London; but just as he was about to show it to Rachael, in walked Wardle, Tupman, Pickwick, and Wardle's lawyer. Jingle was at their mercy, although he defended himself admirably. He argued, at first, that Miss Wardle was twenty-one, and thus free to know her own mind. Wardle coughed and in the same breath said that Rachael was at least forty! The lawyer succeeded,

however, in bribing Jingle. An agreement was made, the settlement being one hundred-twenty pounds and Rachael's release. Wardle had decided that Jingle would go to the devil faster perhaps if he had a little money in his pocket. On leaving the room, Jingle bade Pickwick good-bye. The latter's reaction, described by Dickens, is ample justification of Jingle's being classified as a hypocritical character:

If any dispassionate spectator could have beheld the countenance of the illustrious man, whose name forms the leading feature of the title of this work, during the latter part of this conversation, he would have been almost induced to wonder that the indignant fire which flashed from his eyes, did not melt the glasses of his spectacles -- so majestic was his wrath. His nostrils dilated, and his fists clenched involuntarily, as he heard himself addressed by the villain. But he restrained himself . . . he did not pulverize him.<sup>1</sup>

Job Trotter, Jingle's manservant and confederate in his rascalities, was as conniving as his master. Trotter's methods, however, were dissimilar: his open shyness and crocodile tears triumphed over the insight and scheming of others.<sup>2</sup> Sam Weller, who had become Pickwick's manservant and perpetual shadow, had taken sides; for he disliked Trotter as much as Pickwick detested Jingle. Job, having approached Sam one day, greeted him in an affable fashion, suddenly threw his arms about Sam's neck, and began weeping. Weller, insulted, said:

"Get off . . . get off I tell you. What are you crying over me for, you portable engine?" . . .

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>Crotch, op. cit., p. 38.



Mr. Trotter made no reply; for the little pink pocket handkerchief was in full force.<sup>1</sup>

Finally Sam complied with Job's request to listen to him a few minutes, and the two engaged in a peculiar conversation concerning Jingle's extraordinary behavior. In short, Trotter was excusing his own conduct at the expense of Jingle's crude antics.

Pickwick, meanwhile, had resolved to reform Jingle. When Sam reported that Trotter and his master were in the vicinity, Pickwick sought the opportune moment to deliver his sermon on reform. This attempt was, however, futile; for Jingle, under the alias of Captain Fitz-Marshall, continued his old tricks: this time the victim was Henrietta Nupkins. Mr. Nupkins, in his anger, declared that he would have Jingle arrested as a rogue and an impostor. Jingle reminded him that pride would not permit his doing that:

"Pride, old fellow, pride," replied Jingle, quite at his ease. "Wouldn't do--no go--caught a captain, eh?--ha! ha! very good--husband for daughter--biter bit--make it public--not for worlds--look stupid--very!"<sup>2</sup>

Naturally Job agreed with his master; he rubbed his hands together with delight and laughed a "low noiseless chuckle."<sup>3</sup> Outraged at their complacent attitude, Pickwick, who had heard the entire conversation, reminded them that he could have taken greater means of revenge than he did; he felt that it was his duty to expose them. At this point Trotter

<sup>1</sup>Dickens, Pickwick Papers, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 361.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

bowed with great politeness and laid his hand upon his heart.<sup>1</sup> With facetious gravity he then applied his hand to his ear, as if desirous not to lose a single word Pickwick uttered.<sup>2</sup> Pickwick, now thoroughly angry, dismissed the impostors at once. Dickens's ingenious description of their departure is worth noting:

" . . . . good fellow, Pickwick--fine heart--stout old boy--but must not be passionate--bad thing, very--bye, bye--see you again some day--keep up your spirits--now, Job--trot!"

With these words, Mr. Jingle stuck on his hat in the old fashion, and strode out of the room. Job Trotter paused, looked around, smiled, and then with a bow of mock solemnity to Mr. Pickwick, and a wink to Mr. Weller, the audacious slyness of which baffles all description, followed the footsteps of his hopeful master.<sup>3</sup>

In the interim of Jingle's escapades, Dickens introduced the deceitful character of the Reverend Mr. Stiggins, who was, one evening, a guest of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association.<sup>4</sup> Upon being introduced, Stiggins was welcomed enthusiastically, especially by the female members, who worshipped him. Stiggins appeared midst the "clapping of hands, and stamping of feet, and flourishing of handkerchiefs."<sup>5</sup> His reaction to this introduction was lifeless:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 467.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 472.

Brother Stiggins returned no other acknowledgment than staring with a wild eye, and a fixed smile, at the extreme top of the wick of the candle on the table: swaying his body to and fro, meanwhile, in a very unsteady and uncertain manner.<sup>1</sup>

When asked by Brother Tadger if he was unwell, Stiggins replied, ferociously, that he was all right, and that no man had the right to assume that anything was wrong with him. When asked to address the meeting, Stiggins rejoined by saying, "No, sir. I will not, sir."<sup>2</sup> Dickens's introduction of the drunken ranter proceeded at a rapid and humorous pace:

"It's my opinion, sir," said Mr. Stiggins, unbuttoning his coat, and speaking very loudly; "it's my opinion, sir, that this meeting is drunk, sir. Brother Tadger, sir!" said Mr. Stiggins, . . . turning sharp round on the little man in the drab shorts, "you are drunk, sir!" With this, Mr. Stiggins, entertaining a praiseworthy desire to promote the sobriety of the meeting, and to exclude therefrom all improper characters, hit Brother Tadger on the summit of the nose with such unerring aim, that the drab shorts disappeared like a flash of lightning. Brother Tadger had been knocked, head first, down the ladder.<sup>3</sup>

The members of the Temperance meeting regained their composure only after the lights had been put out for a few moments, and the Reverend Mr. Stiggins had been removed to safe lodgings for the night.

In his third novel, Nicholas Nickleby, Dickens continues to fill a large canvas with a great variety of portraits. Francis Charles points out the kaleidoscopic area of all sorts and conditions of men and women

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 472-73.

in this novel.<sup>1</sup> Dickens was finishing Oliver Twist and contributing sketches to Bentley's Miscellany when he began writing Nicholas Nickleby. The man was writing under great stress, for he felt the obligation to his reading public very keenly. Forster tells us that Nicholas Nickleby reveals the true novelist in technique as well as creative imagination. He believed that Dickens had ceased to be regarded as a "mere phenomenon or marvel of fortune."<sup>2</sup> In Nicholas Nickleby the novelist established himself as a master of dialogue; and because he let his characters disclose themselves, Forster classified his friend with storytellers of the first rank.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the technique, Dickens once more attacked society; this time he showed up the evils in boarding schools for English children through the experiences of a young boy, Nicholas Nickleby. The popularity of this book is revealed best, perhaps, through a comment made by William Makepeace Thackeray:

. . . . I know one who, when she is happy, reads Nicholas Nickleby; when she is unhappy, reads Nicholas Nickleby; when she is in bed, reads Nicholas Nickleby; when she has nothing to do, reads Nicholas Nickleby; and when she has finished the book, reads Nicholas Nickleby again. This critic, at ten years of age, said: 'I like Mr. Dickens's books better than yours, papa,' and frequently expressed her desire that the latter author should write a book like one of Mr. Dickens's books.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Op. cit., II, 343.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ley, op. cit., p. 85.

As in the preceding volumes, Dickens introduced a character of hypocritical nature in Nicholas Nickleby. Mr. Snawley, a sanctimonious rascal, desired to send his step-sons to Mr. Squeers' school, Dotheboys Hall in Yorkshire. Squeers told Snawley that the boys would need only a few items: two suits of clothes, six shirts, six pairs of stockings, two night caps, two pocket-handkerchiefs, two pair of shoes, two hats, and a razor. When Mr. Snawley questioned the need of a razor, Squeers replied, rather slowly, that it was "to shave with."<sup>1</sup> Dickens has very subtly introduced into his narrative the character of Mr. Snawley in the scene which follows:

There was not much in these three words, but there must have been something in the manner in which they were said, to attract attention; for the schoolmaster and his companion looked steadily at each other for a few seconds, and they exchanged a very meaning smile. Snawley was a sleek, flat-nosed man, clad in sombre garments, and long black gaiters, and bearing in his countenance an expression of much mortification and sanctity; so, his smiling without any obvious reason was the more remarkable.<sup>2</sup>

Before the final chapters of Nicholas Nickleby were completed, Dickens was hard at work on Master Humphrey's Clock, a weekly periodical which he conceived in 1839. The Old Curiosity Shop was included in 1841 as a serial in Master Humphrey's Clock when the public demanded a story in that weekly publication. Dickens had already used Master Humphrey as

---

<sup>1</sup>Dickens, Nicholas Nickleby (Everyman's Library; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1946), p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

his narrator for the beginning chapters of The Old Curiosity Shop; nevertheless, within a few issues he abandoned this angle of narration and narrated in the third person the familiar story of Little Nell and her grandfather, who lived in the gloomy atmosphere of an old curiosity shop. For Little Nell, Dickens created a superb supporting cast--families reduced to poverty, criminals, actors, lovers,--and a hypocrite, the immortal Dick Swiveller. Little Nell, inspired by the lovely Mary Hogarth, Dickens's sister-in-law, is an immortal figure in the realm of English prose fiction. Bret Harte's poem, "Dickens in Camp," written in July, 1870, expresses the universal sentiment felt for one of Dickens's favorite child characters:

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

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

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

And then, while round them shadows gathered faster,  
 And as the fire-light fell,  
 He read aloud the book wherein the Master  
 Had writ of "Little Nell."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Forster, op. cit., I, 142-43.

Swiveller, believed by Chesterton to be Dickens's "noblest creation,"<sup>1</sup> was indeed a combination of character types. Facetious and disreputable at times, Swiveller embodied an overwhelming spirit of bombastic optimism. Priestley said that Swiveller was a character who moved "happily in a mist, not of alcohol, but of romance and art."<sup>2</sup> Dick is introduced into the story in a conversational manner, for he delighted in making extemporaneous speeches. Upon going to the old curiosity shop with Fred Trent in order to see the latter's grandfather, Swiveller made himself as comfortable as possible and "observed that last week was a fine week for the ducks, and this week was a fine week for the dust."<sup>3</sup> After various exclamations on unrelated subjects, he burst forth with his own philosophy of life:

". . . what is the odds so long as the fire of soul is kindled at the taper of conviviality, and the wing of friendship never moults a feather! What is the odds so long as the spirit is expanded by means of rosy wine, and the present moment is the least happiest of our existence!"<sup>4</sup>

When Fred proposed the idea that his friend marry Little Nell within four or five years, Dick was astounded. On thinking the matter over, however, young Dick visualized the possibility of his inheriting a small

<sup>1</sup>Charles Dickens, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Priestley, op. cit., p. 230.

<sup>3</sup>Dickens, The Old Curiosity Shop (Everyman's Library; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1946), p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

fortune when Nell's grandfather would die. Dickens interceded at this point to make a brief comment on Swiveller's moral character:

It is sufficient to know that vanity, interest, poverty, and every spendthrift consideration urged him to look upon the proposal with favour, and that where all other inducements were wanting, the habitual carelessness of his disposition stepped in and still weighed down the scale on the same side. To these impulses must be added the complete ascendancy which his friend had long been accustomed to exercise over him--an ascendancy exerted in the beginning sorely at the expense of the unfortunate Dick's purse and prospects, but still maintained without the slightest relaxation, notwithstanding that Dick suffered for all his friend's vices, and was in nine cases out of ten looked upon as his designing tempter when he was indeed nothing but his thoughtless light-headed tool.<sup>1</sup>

Swiveller's aunt, who sent him a small monthly allowance, had not responded favorably to the young nephew's recent inquiries about money. Dick believed that six letters would "soften her,"<sup>2</sup> and an additional one might assure immediate response. This particular letter was, however, number nine. Dick was desperate. He proposed to write on the following morning and to "blot it a good deal and shake some water over it out of the pepper-castor, to make it look penitent."<sup>3</sup> This is what he wrote, together with his actions and comments:

'I'm in such a state of mind that I hardly know what I write'--blot--'if you could see me at this minute shedding tears for my past misconduct'--pepper-castor--'my hand trembles when I think'--blot again--if that don't produce the effect, its all over.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 59-60.



As the story progressed, Swiveller submitted to the evil ways of the grotesque dwarf, Daniel Quilp. When Fred found out that Dick and Quilp had joined forces to aid him in securing his grandfather's fortune, Trent was dismayed and bewildered. His friend's confession of the matter was simple and modest:

"I don't defend myself, Fred," said the penitent Richard; "but the fellow has such a queer way with him and is such an artful dog, that first of all he set me upon thinking whether there was any harm in telling him, and while I was thinking, screwed it out of me. If you had seen him drink and smoke, as I did, you couldn't have kept anything from him. He's a salamander you know, that's what he is."<sup>1</sup>

When Swiveller became a clerk for the solicitor, Sampson Brass, he again philosophized over his status in life:

"Quilp offers me this place, which he says he can insure me . . . ; Fred, who, I could have taken my affidavit, would not have heard of such a thing, backs Quilp to my astonishment, and urges me to take it also--staggerer, number one. My aunt in the country stops the supplies, and writes an affectionate note to say that she has made a new will, and left me out of it--staggerer, number two. No money; no credit; no support from Fred, who seems to turn steady all at once; notice to quit the old lodgings--staggerers three, four, five, and six. Under an accumulation of staggerers, no man can be considered a free agent. No man knocks himself down; if his destiny knocks him down, his destiny must pick him up again."<sup>2</sup>

Dick Swiveller was a man who could not make up his mind; he swore allegiance to his friends, and in the next breath he betrayed them. His belief might well have been that good conquers evil. He did not worry

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 247-48.

over matters--trivial or great. Beneath the surface, however, one believes that Dickens made his reader well aware of at least one vice, drink, which was related to the instability of Dick Swiveller. When Quilp and Swiveller finally met in the office of Sam Brass, Dickens speculated on the scene and more especially on Dick:

. . . . who chanced at the moment to be sprinkling a glass of warm gin and water on the dust of the law, and to be moistening his clay, as the phrase goes, rather copiously. But as clay in the abstract, when too much moistened, becomes of a weak and uncertain consistency, breaking down in unexpected places, retaining impressions but faintly, and preserving no strength or steadiness of character, so Mr. Swiveller's clay, having imbibed a considerable quantity of moisture, was in a very loose and slippery state, insomuch that the various ideas impressed upon it were fast losing their distinctive character, and running into each other. It is not uncommon for human clay in this condition to value itself above all things upon its great prudence and sagacity; and Mr. Swiveller, especially prizing himself upon these qualities, took occasion to remark that he had made strange discoveries in connection with the single gentleman who lodged above, which he had determined to keep within his own bosom, and which neither tortures nor cajolery should ever induce him to reveal. Of this determination Mr. Quilp expressed his high approval, and setting himself in the same breath to goad Mr. Swiveller on to further hints, soon made out that the single gentleman had been seen in communication with Kit, and that this was the secret which was never to be disclosed.<sup>1</sup>

Poor Dick had been false to himself and to his friends again. But unlike other hypocrites created by Dickens, Swiveller was an innocent fellow in most ways. His friends confided in him; and, in turn, he shared their troubles and their joys as any gentleman should. He did not always have the faculty of distinguishing right from wrong. His standards of loyalty

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 349-50.

and conduct changed perennially, and although he was an affectionate friend, he continually misled his companions, thus involving himself and them in situations which never could be wholly justified.

During the year 1841 Dickens published Barnaby Rudge serially in the periodical, Master Humphrey's Clock. When in August of that same year Dickens gave up the idea of the periodical, he published the novel, his fifth, in volume form. Barnaby Rudge is an historical romance which deals with the period of the Gordon anti-popery riots of 1780.<sup>1</sup> Wagenknecht believes that Dickens's first attempt at historical writing was influenced particularly by Scott's The Heart of Midlothian.<sup>2</sup> As in most of Dickens's other books, the characters in Barnaby Rudge represent the virtues of honest faith, the evils of honest intolerance, and the vices of hypocrisy. The story, which contains no less than twenty principal characters, is concerned chiefly with the anti-popery riots; the action itself is intensified by Dickens's vivid descriptions of the riots. One of the characters, Sir John Chester, was partially responsible for instigating the Gordon riots. Chester was an aristocrat who believed in the beauty of being a gentleman.<sup>3</sup> Underneath this superficial appearance, however, Sir John was more appropriately called a villain of the first rank. The hatred existing between the Chester and Haredale families was interrupted only because the riots intervened.

---

<sup>1</sup>Dickens, Barnaby Rudge (Everyman's Library; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1946), Preface, p. i.

<sup>2</sup>The Man Charles Dickens, p. 215.

<sup>3</sup>Dickens, Barnaby Rudge, Introduction, p. xii.

Dickens presented Sir John Chester to the reader while reading a few pages from Lord Chesterfield. Sir John was meditating:

"I thought I was tolerably accomplished as a man of the world, . . . . I flattered myself that I was pretty well versed in all those little arts and graces which distinguish men of the world from boors and peasants, and separate their character from those intensely vulgar sentiments which are called the national character. Apart from any natural prepossession in my own favour, I believed I was. Still, in every page of this enlightened writer, I find some captivating hypocrisy which has never occurred to me before, or some superlative piece of selfishness to which I was utterly a stranger. I should quite blush for myself before this stupendous creature, if, remembering his precepts, one might blush at anything. An amazing man! a nobleman indeed! any King or Queen may make a Lord, but only the Devil himself--and the Graces--can make a Chesterfield."<sup>1</sup>

Dickens's personal thoughts concerning the moral character of Sir John follow:

Men who are thoroughly false and hollow seldom try to hide those vices from themselves; and yet in the very act of avowing them, they lay claim to the virtues they feign most to despise.<sup>2</sup>

Determined to intercede between the marriage of Emma Haredale and Edward Chester, Sir John told the young lady that his son was not wealthy, but very poor. Having thus explained the situation to the bride-to-be, Sir John was ready to face his son with these bitter words:

". . . . If you intend to mar my plans for your establishment in life, and the preservation of that gentility and becoming pride . . . . if, in short, you are resolved

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

to take your own course, you must take it, and my curse with it. I am very sorry, but there's really no alternative."<sup>1</sup>

Edward, who then realized his father's injustice, left the room and turned his back upon his home forever. The tragedy of the situation lies in the fact that word soon got out that Chester's son had been disloyal to his father and had been asked to leave. Dickens's own statement expresses best, perhaps, the universal comments made on most misunderstood situations:

. . . . the good people who heard this and told it again marvelled the more at his [Sir John's] equanimity and even temper, and said what an amiable nature that man must have, who, having undergone so much, could be so placid and calm. And when Edward's name was spoken, Society shook its head, and laid its finger on its lip, and sighed, and looked very grave; and those who had sons about his age waxed wrathful and indignant, and hoped for Virtue's sake, that he was dead.<sup>2</sup>

After the riots were dispensed with and Sir John's treachery was still undetected except by Mr. Haredale, whose desire for revenge had reached its peak, a conversation between the two led to a heated argument and then to a bitter duel, in which Sir John was mortally wounded. Even as he died, Sir John maintained his false front:

Raising himself upon his hands, he gazed at him [Haredale] for an instant, with scorn and hatred in his look: but seeming to remember, even then, that this expression would distort his features after death, he tried to smile; and, faintly moving his right hand, as if to hide his bloody linen in his vest, fell back dead--the phantom of last night.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 625-26.

As one peruses the early novels of Dickens, from Pickwick in 1836 to Barnaby Rudge in 1841, one cannot help being interested in the character types represented in each situation. Because these years are the period of germination of Dickens's genius, one is justified in analyzing the portraitures. The inimitable Boz created many human beings who stood in the rank and file; but he also created personalities who stood outside these characters--those who, by their own peculiar traits and passions, served Dickens's purpose in attacking hypocrites, or false pretenders, of the Victorian world. Dickens was not lenient in dealing with this type: he exaggerated physical appearance, personal mannerisms, and mode of speech. He used the method of repetition to emphasize those personalities who sought the appearance of virtue through the evil practices of imitation, insincerity, and pretentiousness. Dickens possessed a sympathetic understanding of the masses; in his literary interpretation of them he succeeded in making England aware of its own misbehavior. One must remember too that Dickens did not lack real humor in his writing; despite his rigid efforts to induce reform in the social institutions as well as in man, he gained much of his wide popularity through his humorous attacks on society. This method of approach paralleled his attack by means of ridicule: some of the most ridiculous situations were quite often jovially entertaining. Dickens was a man who could make a nation weep, but he could also make a nation laugh--yes, even at its own follies.

## CHAPTER IV

### DICKENS'S ARCH-HYPOCRITE

In January, 1842, Dickens and his wife, Kate, sailed for America on the steamship Britannia, forever immortalized as the Screw in Martin Chuzzlewit.<sup>1</sup> The American journey was not entirely satisfactory, however; the Dickenses were awed by the vastness of the country and its obvious sources of immense wealth, but they were inexpressibly shocked at not seeing freedom rule on every hand. During the visit to the States Dickens's scorn increased. America's sins ranged from the great to the petty: from the maintenance of negro slavery and swindling land companies to the common and apparently delightful use of chewing tobacco.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Dickens found the American people themselves friendly, hospitable, and earnest; he admired their frankness, their warm-heartedness, and their enthusiasm. He wrote to his friend Forster, in England, that the American people were "often accomplished, and less prejudiced than one would suppose."<sup>3</sup> In the United States, as in England, Dickens was observing people--their idiosyncrasies and their habits. Would these observations result in a new book with an American setting and characters? And among these characters would he create a new type of hypocrite?

---

<sup>1</sup>Hayward, op. cit., p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Weygandt, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>3</sup>Forster, op. cit., I, 248.

Back in England, Dickens compiled the notes of his trip to the States, publishing them in 1842 under the title American Notes. Dickens himself wrote of the collection:

This book is simply what it claims to be--a record of the impressions I received from day to day, during my hasty travels in America, and sometimes (but not always) of the conclusions to which they, and after-reflection on them, have led me; a description of the country I passed through; of the institutions I visited; of the kind of people among whom I journeyed; and of the manners and customs that came within my observation.<sup>1</sup>

The American Notes was Dickens's first literary contribution to the people after his return from America. A second publication was soon to follow. In January, 1843, the first monthly issue of Martin Chuzzlewit appeared. By the time the author had written a few chapters of the novel he had begun to realize that sales were falling off. This financial problem worried Charles for several reasons: first, because his family was steadily increasing; second, because his publishers pressed his obligations to them for more serial material; and third, because he now had assumed the full responsibility for his father and mother, who lived in a cottage in Devonshire, purchased for them by their illustrious son in 1840.<sup>2</sup>

As a result, in order to retain his American reading public, Dickens proposed to send his hero, young Martin Chuzzlewit, to the States. This new situation created a sparkle of interest, but critics deny that the American scene itself captivated the reader. The critics do agree,

---

<sup>1</sup>Forster, op. cit., I, 264-65.

<sup>2</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 144.



however, that certain characters in the novel made it a final success, and that these same characters probably account for its wide popularity today. Let us turn then to the adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit to discover the relationships between those particularly significant characters and the hypocritical characters pertinent to our own problem.

Of the fifty-one speaking characters in Martin Chuzzlewit, two stand out above all the rest--both hypocrites. Critics have acclaimed them to be immortal figures--Seth Pecksniff and Mrs. Sarah Gamp. Pecksniff is an architect and land surveyor, while Mrs. Gamp is a disreputable old nurse. Neither one of the characters embodies likable traits, but despite all their obvious faults the reader laughs at them and pities them.

Dickens chose to introduce the hypocrite, Pecksniff, in the first chapter of action in the story. In fact, within the first twenty pages of the narrative we are well acquainted with the entire Pecksniff family, but we do not have the remotest idea of what part young Martin will play in the narrative. Pecksniff's daughters, Mercy and Charity, are minor characters, but strong enough indeed to exemplify the teachings of their proud parent. Dickens's introduction of Seth Pecksniff is revelatory:

. . . . Perhaps there never was a more moral man than Mr. Pecksniff: especially in his conversation and correspondence. It was once said of him by a homely admirer, that he had a Fortunatus's purse of good sentiments in his inside. In this particular he was like the girl in the fairy tale, except that if they were not actual diamonds which fell from his lips, they were the very brightest paste, and shone prodigiously. He was a most exemplary man: fuller of virtuous precept than a copy-book. Some people likened him to a direction-post, which is always telling the way to a place, and never goes there: but these were his enemies; the shadows cast by his brightness; that was all. His very throat was moral. You saw a good deal

of it. You looked over a very low fence of white cravat (whereof no man had even beheld the tie, for he fastened it behind), and there it lay, a valley between two jutting heights of collar, serene and whiskerless before you. It seemed to say, on the part of Mr. Pecksniff, "There is no deception, ladies and gentlemen, all is peace, a holy calm pervades me." So did his hair, just grizzled with an iron-grey, which was all brushed off his forehead, and stood bolt upright, or slightly drooped in kindred action with his heavy eyelids. So did his person, which was sleek though free from corpulency. So did his manner, which was soft and oily. In a word, even his plain black suit, and state of widower, and dangling double eye-glass, all tended to the same purpose, and cried aloud, "Behold the moral Pecksniff!"<sup>1</sup>

Even if the character of the moral Pecksniff seems exaggerated he is none the less real. The novelist has pictured not only the architect's physical appearance, but his inner-self as well. And as for his profession, Pecksniff was far more interested in obtaining pupils to help him carry out his schemes than in blue-prints and plans which he himself designed. It was an easy matter for him to acquire pupils: Dickens comments that "his genius lay in ensnaring parents and guardians, and pocketing premiums."<sup>2</sup> Once inside Pecksniff's home, the student was subject to various kinds of activities not at all relevant to his architectural studies: entertaining the Pecksniff daughters and acting as porter or even as servant to the household.

Pecksniff not only knew how to deal with young people, but he managed older men and women as well. At least, he thought he handled them. When his cousin, old Martin Chuzzlewit, lay ill at the Blue Dragon Inn,

---

<sup>1</sup>Dickens, Martin Chuzzlewit (Everyman's Library; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1947), pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

Pecksniff visited the elderly gentleman on the pretext of inquiring about his illness. Beneath that excuse, however, lay an ulterior motive: old Chuzzlewit had a small fortune over which Pecksniff expressed great concern, as did numerous other relations--from an only grandson to distant cousins. Mr. Pecksniff, described by Dickens as one who was "keeping his hand in his waistcoat as though he were ready, on the shortest notice, to produce his heart for Martin Chuzzlewit's inspection,"<sup>1</sup> offered a modest proposal to the old fellow--implying that he might be in a position to handle Chuzzlewit's finances for him. The latter, who was well aware of that fact, raved at length about his wealth and concluded by saying that he had no pleasure in hoarding money. Pecksniff's reaction to this statement revealed his habitual hypocrisy:

It would be no description of Mr. Pecksniff's gentleness of manner to adopt the common parlance, and say that he looked at this moment as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. He rather looked as if any quantity of butter might have been made out of him, by churning the milk of human kindness, as it spouted upwards from his heart.<sup>2</sup>

Chuzzlewit was as susceptible, though, as some of Pecksniff's pupils, because he confessed to his cousin many of his domestic troubles and admitted that he was living "the life of one who is hunted."<sup>3</sup> At this point Pecksniff laid his hand upon his breast and dropped his eyelids--characteristics which Dickens used repeatedly to show Pecksniff's moral

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

earnestness. Although the old man tired of his visitor quickly, his guest, before leaving, insisted on saying a word about Martin's only grandson, young Martin Chuzzlewit. Pecksniff, standing on tiptoe in order to see the old man beyond the curtains, exclaimed:

"I tell you without fear or favour, that it will not do for you to be unmindful of your grandson, young Martin, who has the strongest natural claim upon you. It will not do, sir," repeated Mr. Pecksniff, shaking his head. "You may think it will do, but it won't. You must provide for that young man; you shall provide for him; you will provide for him."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of Dickens's excessive exaggeration, the reader discovers new facets of Pecksniff's character in each new situation in which he plays the hypocrite. An example is his visit to old Martin at the Blue Dragon. On not finding anyone to greet him downstairs, Pecksniff went directly to Chuzzlewit's door, put his ear to the keyhole, and listened furtively. Unfortunately on this occasion, however, Pecksniff collided with another person at the keyhole and was forced to introduce himself. He had only to say that he was a relative, a protector, yes--practically a guardian; and the other gentleman, Montague Tigg, was at ease. Tigg obtained information concerning Chuzzlewit's state of health and affairs from Pecksniff, and the latter acquired accurate reports that old Martin's relatives were about to descend on him in order to secure a firm footing when property settlements were made. After meditating on the possibilities of the situation, Pecksniff finally succeeded in getting most of the family to come to his house for a "general council and conference."<sup>2</sup> Dickens's

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

ironic description of Pecksniff's countenance at the beginning of that day revealed his hypocrisy:

If ever Mr. Pecksniff wore an apostolic look, he wore it on this memorable day. If ever his unruffled smile proclaimed the words, "I am a messenger of peace!" That was its mission now. If ever man combined within himself all the mild qualities of the lamb with a considerable touch of the dove, and not a dash of the crocodile, or the least possible suggestion of the very mildest seasoning of the serpent, that man was he.<sup>1</sup>

The family arrived: Anthony Chuzzlewit and his son, Jonas; the widow and three daughters of a deceased brother; a niece; a grandnephew; a "solitary female cousin"<sup>2</sup>; a bachelor cousin; Tigg and one of his business acquaintances; and the Pecksniff family. The master of the house and the host for this great occasion was the first to speak:

"This," said Mr. Pecksniff, rising and looking round upon them with folded hands, "does me good. It does my daughters good. We thank you for assembling here. We are grateful to you with our whole hearts. It is a blessed distinction that you have conferred on us, and believe me:" it is impossible to conceive how he smiled here: "we shall not easily forget it."<sup>3</sup>

The family pounced on his words, however; for they were determined not to consent to his counsel. Anthony, who had been quiet during the proceedings, spoke up and told Pecksniff not to be a hypocrite. Mr. Pecksniff was stunned. He turned to his daughter and said:

"Charity, my dear, . . . when I take my chamber candlestick tonight, remind me to be more than usually

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 51-52.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 53-54.

particular in praying for Mr. Anthony Chuzzlewit; who has done me an injustice."<sup>1</sup>

The so-called conference met without success--everyone appeared to be angry at everyone else. After the group dispersed, Pecksniff contemplated the results of his efforts:

[He] had, in short, only one comfort, and that was the knowledge that all these his relations and friends had hated him to the very utmost extent before; and that he, for his part, had not distributed among them any more love than, with his ample capital in that respect, he could comfortably afford to part with. This view of his affairs yielded him great consolation; and the fact deserves to be noted, as showing with what ease a good man may be consoled under circumstances of failure and disappointment.<sup>2</sup>

Pecksniff could, however, turn to his profession for a time and thus forget the trials of endeavoring to be a helpful relation. His manservant, Tom Pinch, a worthy bachelor, but one very much degraded by Pecksniff's sneering remarks and selfish actions, had brought his master a new pupil--young Martin Chuzzlewit. Of course the architect was delighted at the prospect of teaching Martin's grandson. He was made as comfortable as possible and was offered the services of Tom, who had been an assistant in the household for several years. In fact, his host said apologetically, "If Thomas has a fault, it is that he is sometimes a little apt to forget his position. But that is soon checked. Worthy soul! You will find him easy to manage."<sup>3</sup> If poor Tom had only known

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-61.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

how deeply his master was slighting his character. When Tom had finished unpacking for young Martin and was certain that he was comfortably situated, Pecksniff assumed complete charge of his pupil. Having considered his ability and ambitiousness, Pecksniff decided that Martin might best employ himself in illustrating his idea of a monument of the Lord Mayor of London, or a tomb for a sheriff, or perhaps even his "notion of a cow-house to be erected in a nobleman's park."<sup>1</sup> The architect folded his hands as if he were satisfied that the last suggestion was indeed excellent. But then he thought aloud:

"A pump," said Mr. Pecksniff, "is a very chaste practice. I have found that a lamp-post is calculated to refine the mind and give it a classical tendency. An ornamental turnpike has a remarkable effect upon the imagination. What do you say to beginning with an ornamental turnpike?"<sup>2</sup>

While Martin expressed his doubts, Pecksniff changed his mind again; this time he believed that Martin should begin work on the plans of a grammar school. He added, speaking merrily:

. . . . "I shall be very curious to see what you make of the grammar-school. Who knows but a young man of your taste might hit upon something, impracticable and unlikely in itself, but which I could put into shape? For it really is, my dear Martin, it really is in the finishing touches alone, that great experience and long study in these matters tell. Ha, ha, ha! Now it really will be," continued Mr. Pecksniff, clapping his young friend on the back in his droll humour, "an amusement to me, to see what you make of the grammar school."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



Had Martin suspected then that his efforts were later to be claimed by the moral Pecksniff, he might never have drawn the plans for so fine a grammar school as he worked on during his teacher's absence. Before the revelation of that incident appeared, however, other events intervened.

When Pecksniff went to London, he took his two daughters with him; and as they went by coach, the paternal parent had much time to philosophize over the sights which his lovely young ladies were seeing for the first time. Because the weather was disagreeable they pitied the passengers who had to sit on the outside of the coach. Pecksniff, having situated his girls comfortably, observed that:

. . . . --it is always satisfactory to feel, in keen weather, that many other people are not as warm as you are. And this, he said, was quite natural, and a very beautiful arrangement; not confined to coaches, but extending itself into many social ramifications. "For" (he observed), "if every one were warm and well-fed, we should lose the satisfaction of admiring the fortitude with which certain conditions of men bear cold and hunger. And if we were no better off than anybody else, what would become of our sense of gratitude; which," said Mr. Pecksniff with tears in his eyes, as he shook his fist at a beggar who wanted to get up behind, "is one of the holiest feelings of our common nature."<sup>1</sup>

A moment later Pecksniff asked his eldest daughter for the brandy-bottle, and from the narrow neck of that stone vessel he imbibed a copious refreshment."<sup>2</sup> The moral Pecksniff! How his whole philosophy of life pervaded the world in which he lived.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



The comparatively peaceful journey was disrupted when the occupants of the coach had to make room for two more passengers, Anthony Chuzzlewit and his son Jonas. A slight reference to the family conference held a few days previously in the Pecksniff home brought a twinkle to Pecksniff's eyes and disparaging words to old Anthony's lips. He told Pecksniff why he thought he (Pecksniff) was a hypocrite:

" . . . the annoying quality in you, is . . . that you never have a confederate or partner in your juggling: you would deceive everybody, even those who practice the same art; and have a way with you, as if you--he, he, he!--as if you really believed yourself. I'd lay a handsome wager now, . . . that you keep up appearances by a tacit understanding, even before your own daughters here."<sup>1</sup>

Pecksniff was not offended by Anthony's words; in fact, he received the remarks as a compliment and chatted freely with Anthony's son throughout the remainder of the trip. The five had dinner together when the coach stopped; and "when they could eat no more, Mr. Pecksniff and Mr. Jonas subscribed for two sixpenny-worths of hot brandy-and-water."<sup>2</sup> Not content to let Pecksniff appear only a social drinker, Dickens carried the point further:

Having swallowed his share of the enlivening fluid, Mr. Pecksniff, under pretence of going to see if the coach were ready, went secretly to the bar, and had his own little bottle filled, in order that he might refresh himself at leisure in the dark coach without being observed.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Unlike Dick Swiveller, Pecksniff concealed his desire for liquor; he was not always able, however, to compose himself afterwards, and the results were quite often ridiculous.

Upon arriving in London, the Pecksniffs secured lodgings at M. Todgers's Commercial Boarding-House.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Todgers was as pleased to meet the Pecksniff daughters as she was to see Mr. Pecksniff in the city once more. Before the latter commenced his official business, he called on Ruth Pinch, Tom's sister, who was governess on an estate in the outskirts of London. Charity, Cherry, and Mrs. Todgers accompanied him on the trip. After the visit was concluded, Pecksniff professed a great admiration for Ruth's lovely quarters and for the entire house. His professed interest in architecture becomes visible to the reader on rare occasions, this being one of them. Dickens tells us:

Indeed, he delivered, between the study and the hall, a familiar exposition of the whole science of architecture as applied to dwelling-houses, and was yet in the freshness of his eloquence when they reached the garden.<sup>2</sup>

Back at the boarding-house that same evening, Pecksniff, who had been drinking rather heavily, became very attentive to Mrs. Todgers; he claimed that she was very much like his deceased wife. As the night wore on, Pecksniff rambled about his experiences: his patrons, pupils, and boarders. Having decided that the poor man was ill, Mrs. Todgers endeavored to get him to his room. Pecksniff tried to make a grand exit, but as he stood

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

making a "futile attempt to pull off his shoes, he fell into the fire-place."<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, one of the young boarders, who had witnessed the scene, dragged the drunken form on to a rug before his head was singed. Two other boarders assisted in his rescue. Dickens continued to enliven the story:

They carried him up-stairs . . . . .  
His bedroom was at the top of the house, and it was a long way; but they got him there in course of time. He asked them frequently on the road for a little drop of something to drink. It seemed an idiosyncrasy. The youngest gentleman in company proposed a draught of water. Mr. Pecksniff called him opprobrious names for the suggestion.<sup>2</sup>

By the time his rescuers had returned to the first floor, Pecksniff was at the banisters shouting down to them about "the nature of human life."<sup>3</sup> Disregarding the threats from the men below, Pecksniff continued to rave; he was returned to his room several times, but each time he reappeared on the top landing to declaim violently. Dickens added:

In a word, as often as he was shut up in his own room, he darted out afresh, charged with some new and moral sentiment, which he continually repeated over the banisters, with extraordinary relish, and an irrepressible desire for the improvement of his fellow creatures that nothing could subdue.<sup>4</sup>

The days which followed Pecksniff's escapade at the boarding-house were busy ones, for he conducted his business affairs with old

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

Martin Chuzzlewit, who had returned to London. When Chuzzlewit met his daughters, Pecksniff dried his hands on his handkerchief and exclaimed that his daughters were constructed on the best models. They talked at length about the girls; then the conversation turned to Martin's grandson. Old Martin, claiming that his grandson had deceived him, offered Pecksniff a handsome fee to expel the youth. Pecksniff quickly agreed to do so. During the interim Jonas Chuzzlewit had located the Pecksniff sisters and had called on them. He referred to their father as a sleek, sly chap--"just like a tom-cat."<sup>1</sup> These remarks did not make the girls very happy; in fact, they found it difficult to be courteous to their cousin. This feeling did not last long, however, for Anthony and his son invited the Pecksniff family to dinner one evening. After the meal was finished, Anthony proposed a toast to Pecksniff:

. . . . Your father, my dears. A clever man, Pecksniff. A wary man! A hypocrite, though, eh? A hypocrite, girls, eh? Ha, ha, ha! Well, so he is. Now, among friends, he is. I don't think the worse of him for that, unless it is that he overdoes it. You may overdo anything, my darlings. You may overdo even hypocrisy.<sup>2</sup>

From this point forward Pecksniff carries with him the public title of hypocrite. As he involves himself deeper and deeper in the affairs of the Chuzzlewit families (the brothers Martin and Anthony), his hypocrisy becomes both more obvious and devious in the role he plays. Adolphus Ward believes that Pecksniff's friendliness is the very quintessence of

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 175-76.

falsehood.<sup>1</sup> The remainder of the book is devoted primarily to Pecksniff's schemes and the relationship of those schemes to the other characters sketched by the author.

While the Pecksniffs were travelling back to their home, young Martin and Tom Pinch spent an evening at the Blue Dragon Inn in the company of an old friend, John Westlock. The conversation was aimed finally at Pecksniff, and Martin expressed his dislike for the architect in no uncertain terms. Westlock agreed with him despite Tom's protests. Tom Pinch was indeed a loyal and devoted man-servant. Westlock said that Pecksniff was "the most consummate scoundrel on the face of the earth."<sup>2</sup> The latter went ahead to defend his remarks:

"His treatment of Pinch is in itself enough to justify them; but when I look back upon the five years I passed in that house, and remember the hypocrisy, the knavery, the meannesses, the false pretences, the lip service of that fellow, and his trading in saintly semblances for the very worst realities . . . . I swear to you that I almost despise myself."<sup>3</sup>

Young Martin was soon to know that John Westlock spoke the truth. Upon his arrival home Pecksniff, in order to carry out his promise to old Martin, without any warning denounced young Martin for coming to him under false pretences and asked him to leave his house at once. Trembling, Pecksniff said:

<sup>1</sup>Dickens (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1901), p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>Dickens, Martin Chuzzlewit, p. 194.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 194-95.

. . . . "This lowly roof, sir, must not be contaminated by the presence of one who has deceived, and cruelly deceived, an honourable, beloved, venerated, and venerable gentleman; and who wisely suppressed that deceit from me when he sought my protection and favour, knowing that, humble as I am, I am an honest man, seeking to do my duty in this carnal universe, and setting my face against all vice and treachery. I weep for your depravity, sir, . . . . I mourn over your corruption, I pity your voluntary withdrawal of yourself from the flowery paths of purity and peace"; here he struck himself upon his breast, or moral garden; "but I cannot have a leper and a serpent for an inmate."<sup>1</sup>

The moral Pecksniff! Completely astonished at this outburst, Martin could not contain himself. His reply was vigorous and unrestrained.

Thrusting Mr. Pecksniff down on the carpet, he exclaimed:

"I tell you . . . . that as he lies there, disgraced, bought, used; a cloth for dirty hands, a mat for dirty feet, a lying, fawning, servile hound, he is the very last and worst among the vermin of the world."<sup>2</sup>

Young Martin might have been too severe with his former master; nevertheless, at this point the reader realizes Pecksniff's smooth countenance is merely superficial. But Tom, who was bewildered by the young man's actions, remained faithful to the one person who had given him a place in the world.

Dickens moved the story swiftly after young Martin left Pecksniff's premises. Arriving in London a few days later, he was penniless but his conscience was clear. In the city Martin met an old companion, Mark Tapley; and the two decided to go to America together. Before sailing,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

Martin said goodbye to his sweetheart, Mary--an adopted daughter of old Martin Chuzzlewit--who loved him despite the old man's objections. The scenes changed rapidly as Dickens took his readers aboard the Screw and across the ocean to the coast of North America. Martin's experiences in the United States were various--he did everything from surveying land to drawing blueprints for buildings and houses; and he met the people whom Dickens himself had met on his trip to America in 1842. Although the American people resented Dickens's interpretation of them in Martin Chuzzlewit, critics are agreed that the analysis is not unduly exaggerated. Dickens's method of transferring the action back to England is reminiscent of Shakespeare, of whom he was an ardent admirer. As all foreigners talk of home at one time or another, so did Martin and Mark as they retired one night:

Leaving them to blend and mingle in their sleep the shadows of objects afar off, as they take fantastic shapes upon the wall in the dim light of thought without control, be it the part of this slight chronicle--a dream within a dream--as rapidly to change the scene, and cross the ocean to the English shore.<sup>1</sup>

At the opening of the nineteenth chapter Pecksniff appeared hale and hearty at the London establishment of Anthony Chuzzlewit. During his visit there old Anthony died very suddenly. Jonas, his son, outwardly, at any rate, deeply grieved, persuaded Pecksniff to take charge of household matters and arrangements for the funeral. Nothing could have pleased Pecksniff more. At this point the reader is introduced to Sarah

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 287.

Gamp, the literary world's most renowned nurse and "female functionary."<sup>1</sup> Except for Shakespeare's immortal characterization of Falstaff, Dickens's description of the old woman is unsurpassed. Mrs. Gamp can well be classified as one of Dickens's hypocrites, for as he himself said, she had a face for all occasions.<sup>2</sup> One would have to be courageous to look at Sarah:

She was a fat old woman, this Mrs. Gamp, with a husky voice and a moist eye, which she had a remarkable power of turning up, and only showing the white of it. Having very little neck, it cost her some trouble to look over herself, if one may say so, at those to whom she talked. She wore a very rusty black gown, rather the worse for snuff, and a shawl and bonnet to correspond. . . . The face of Mrs. Gamp--the nose in particular--was somewhat red and swollen, and it was difficult to enjoy her society without becoming conscious of a smell of spirits. Like most persons who have attained to great eminence in their profession, she took to hers very kindly; insomuch that, setting aside her natural predilections as a woman, she went to a lying-in or a laying-out with equal zest and relish.<sup>3</sup>

It is sufficient to say at present that Mrs. Gamp performed her duty--that of watching the dead--until Anthony Chuzzlewit's body was removed to the churchyard. Jonas recovered from his grief quickly; as a matter of fact, too quickly. Already having shown an interest in the Pecksniff girls, he lost no time in seeking one of them for himself while visiting Pecksniff in the country. Either one of the ladies would do. It was not long until Jonas proposed to the youngest daughter, Mercy, much to

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 301.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 302.



Charity's dismay. Pecksniff had heard the proposal, although he appeared quite innocent as Charity told him the details. When the girls met afterwards in their room, whom should they face but their father. He was calm, "so self-possessed, so cool and full of peace, that not a hair upon his head was stirred."<sup>1</sup>

Pecksniff entertained unexpected guests while his daughters were being pursued by their amiable cousin. These guests--old Martin Chuzzlewit and his adopted daughter, Mary--became frequent visitors in Pecksniff's household. Old Martin was anxious for news of his brother's death, as well as for news, if any, of his nephew, who had gone to America. Naturally, Mary was as deeply concerned about the latter as was Martin.

Some chapters later Dickens referred again to the domestic troubles in the Pecksniff family. The situation had been altered, however, for the author tells us:

As the surgeon's first care after amputating a limb is to take up the arteries the cruel knife has severed, so it is the duty of this history, which in its remorseless course has cut from the Pecksniffian trunk its right arm, Mercy, to look to the parent stem, and see how in all its various ramifications it got on without her.<sup>2</sup>

A first glimpse of the parent indicates that he did not suffer his loss very long. In fact, because he thought that he belonged to a practical class, he felt that his "immediate business was to live."<sup>3</sup> Upon a second

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 325.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 452.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

glimpse, however, Pecksniff was confronted with a serious problem. Charity, whose affectionate name was more appropriately Cherry, was rebellious; she was angry with her sister, with Jonas, and most of all with her father, whom she blamed unceasingly for Mercy's actions. In his anger, Pecksniff shook her violently, but later apologized for his behavior. Cherry could not be pacified; as a result she proposed going to London--to Mrs. Todgers's. Calm Mr. Pecksniff could not bear this brutal blow, nor could he control his emotions:

. . . . he squeezed his pocket-handkerchief against his eyes with both hands--as such men always do: especially when they are observed. "One of my birds," Mr. Pecksniff said, "has left me for the stranger's breast; the other would take wing to Todgers's! Well, well, what am I? I don't know what I am, exactly."<sup>1</sup>

Cherry did not flinch; rather she was "grim, rigid, and inflexible."<sup>2</sup> And Pecksniff, proud soul that he was, began to feel sorry for himself. He granted his daughter the permission she asked and with deep emotion said: "Do not think of me, my girl! I shall get on pretty well, no doubt."<sup>3</sup> When the final plans were made, Pecksniff gave Cherry his blessing, "with all the dignity of a self-denying man who had made a hard sacrifice, but comforted himself with the reflection that virtue is its own reward."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 455-56.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 456.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

We have already indicated that Pecksniff concentrated on crooked schemes, and that his motives were ulterior. A further complication arose in the plot when Pecksniff considered a second wife. Who would be the victim? Mary, of course. The architect's plans were unfolding beautifully. With Cherry out of the way, Pecksniff was at liberty to act as he chose--and he chose to invite old Martin and Mary to reside with him rather than at the Inn. Dickens infers that Pecksniff's manner toward women was "remarkable for its insinuating character."<sup>1</sup> Mary was, however, very indignant toward Mr. Pecksniff's approaches; she shunned him whenever she could. But her actions did not prevent Pecksniff's speaking kindly of her in the presence of old Martin. While walking one morning for pleasure along the roadside and meadows, Pecksniff chanced to see Mary. Dickens depicted the scene in a ridiculous manner, but in keeping with Pecksniff's whole behavior:

Chancing to trip, in his abstraction, over the spreading root of an old tree, he raised his pious eyes to take a survey of the ground before him. It startled him to see the embodied image of his thoughts not far ahead. Mary herself. And alone.

At first Mr. Pecksniff stopped as if with the intention of avoiding her; but his next impulse was to advance, which he did at a brisk pace; carolling as he went so sweetly and with so much innocence that he only wanted feathers and wings to be a bird.<sup>2</sup>

When Pecksniff offered his arm, Mary refused him; she said that his touch was disagreeable to her. Greatly offended, he mused:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 458.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 462.

His touch! What? That chaste patriarchal touch which Mrs. Todgers--surely a discreet lady--had endured, not only without complaint, but with apparent satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

Determined to win her for himself, Pecksniff began at once to tell her of his affection--his love for her. Mary tried to turn away, but Pecksniff held her hand. What could be more vivid than Dickens's description of the scene which followed between the pair:

She tried to disengage her hand, but might as well have tried to free herself from the embrace of an affectionate boa-constrictor: if anything so wily may be brought into comparison with Pecksniff.

"Although I am a widower," said Mr. Pecksniff, examining the rings upon her fingers, and tracing the course of one delicate blue vein with his fat thumb, "a widower with two daughters, still I am not encumbered, my love."<sup>2</sup>

Mary tried to show her gratitude for his kind remarks, but she made it apparent that she would not, under any circumstances, accept his proposals. Pecksniff smiled a "greasy smile"<sup>3</sup> and drew the girl closer to him. Mary twisted and turned, trying to loosen herself from his grasp; she reminded him that Mr. Chuzzlewit would hear about this. Pecksniff raised his heavy eyelids languidly and let them fall again.<sup>4</sup> Mary could not endure Seth Pecksniff any longer. Losing her temper, she charged him with warping her guardian's nature, as well as being coarse and cruel to her. Pecksniff

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 463.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 464.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

remained perfectly calm. When asked if anything ever moved him, he replied with a placid leer that it was difficult to ruffle him because of "a habit of self-examination, and the practice of--shall I say of virtue?"<sup>1</sup> Mary's answer was more nearly correct, for she said, "of hypocrisy."<sup>2</sup> Pecksniff thought to himself how little his dear girl knew his heart. No one could ruffle the moral Pecksniff! Dickens increased the readers' loathing of Mr. Pecksniff's actions by saying that Mary would have preferred the "caresses of a toad, an adder, or a serpent: nay, the hug of a bear: to the endearments of Mr. Pecksniff."<sup>3</sup> The climax of this romantic scene occurred when Pecksniff told Mary that he knew of her love for young Martin; he then threatened her by telling her that her anger toward him might endanger Martin. Mary began weeping, for she knew she had no alternative: her love for old Martin's grandson was sincere. Pecksniff responded quickly:

"As to our own share in the precious little mystery,  
 . . . we will keep it to ourselves, and you shall think  
 it over. You will consent, my love; you will consent, I know.  
 Whatever you may think; you will."<sup>4</sup>

As Mary turned to walk away, Pecksniff kissed her hand and blessed her. Dickens analyzed the hero of the preceding episode in the following manner:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 464-65.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 465.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 466.

Gallantry in its true sense is supposed to ennoble and dignify a man; and love has shed refinements on innumerable Cymons. But Mr. Pecksniff: perhaps because to one of his exalted nature these were mere grossnesses: certainly did not appear to any unusual advantage, now that he was left alone. On the contrary, he seemed to be shrunk and reduced; to be trying to hide himself within himself; and to be wretched at not having the power to do it. His shoes looked too large; his sleeve looked too long; his hair looked too limp; his features looked too mean; his exposed throat looked as if a halter would have done it good. For a minute or two, in fact, he was hot, and pale, and mean, and shy, and slinking, and consequently not at all Pecksniffian. But after that, he recovered himself, and went home with as beneficent an air as if he had been the High Priest of the summer weather.<sup>1</sup>

Preoccupied with his own egotistical thoughts, Pecksniff chanced to stray into the community churchyard one afternoon not long after his daughter had gone to London. He heard Tom playing on the organ and decided that he should like to hear the fellow practice while he rested. He slipped softly into the church and went to his own pew, where he thought of surprising Tom when the latter finished practicing. Pecksniff's corner was a tempting spot: a red-curtained and soft-cushioned pew. Hidden from view, Pecksniff stretched himself comfortably in order to listen to Tom's music. In five minutes the arch-hypocrite was sound asleep. But his slumber was interrupted by voices--familiar voices which he very soon recognized as Mary's and Tom's. In a moment he discovered that they were speaking of young Martin Chuzzlewit and certain letters which apparently had been lost. Mary expressed her gratitude to Tom for allowing her to confide in him; she hastily added that she did not wish

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 466-67.

to cause trouble between him and Pecksniff. Tom's reply was quite innocent: "Oh, dear, you needn't be afraid of Pecksniff. He is not a spy."<sup>1</sup> Dickens shows us what he thinks the average person would have done in those circumstances as compared to a hypocrite:

Many a man in Mr. Pecksniff's place, if he could have dived through the floor of the pew of state and come out at Calcutta or any inhabited region on the other side of the earth, would have done it instantly. Mr. Pecksniff sat down upon a hassock, and listening more attentively than ever, smiled.<sup>2</sup>

Tom realized that Mary was prejudiced against his master, but in trying to defend him he only made matters worse. By this time Pecksniff was peering over the top of the pew and could see Tom and Mary standing close to each other. Dickens did not neglect the humorous angle either, for at this point he described the architect as he looked on the pair beyond him. Pecksniff would have shifted his eye for "nothing short of a gimlet or a red-hot wire."<sup>3</sup> Mary continued the conversation: she wanted Tom Pinch to know what sort of rascal Seth Pecksniff really was. She said that he was the "falsest, craftiest, meanest, cruellest, most sordid, most shameless"<sup>4</sup> person alive. Pecksniff dived under the pew. Tom was not quite sure that this description fitted his master, but when Mary told him the bitter details of her encounter with the architect in the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 471.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 471-72.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 472.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 473.

wood, poor Tom yielded. He was defenseless: "the star of his whole life from boyhood had become, in a moment, putrid vapour."<sup>1</sup> Tom's reflections on the matter are of value at this point:

It was not that Pecksniff, Tom's Pecksniff, had ceased to exist, but that he never had existed. In his death Tom would have had the comfort of remembering what he used to be, but in this discovery, he had the anguish of recollecting what he never was. For as Tom's blindness in this matter had been total and not partial, so was his restored sight. His Pecksniff could never have worked the wickedness of which he had just now heard, but any other Pecksniff could; and the Pecksniff who could do that could do anything, and no doubt had been doing anything and everything except the right thing all through his career. From the lofty height on which poor Tom had placed his idol it was tumbled down headlong, and

Not all the king's horses, nor all the king's men,  
Could have set Mr. Pecksniff up again.<sup>2</sup>

It was Tom who suffered: "his compass was broken, his chart destroyed, his chronometer had stopped, his masts were gone by the board; his anchor was adrift, ten thousand leagues away."<sup>3</sup>

Pecksniff, who was not only "moral" but intelligent, surmised Tom's thoughts and thus decided not to leave the church until after Tom had gone. As soon as the organist walked away, Pecksniff descended from his pew. Because he was in a curious frame of mind, this official dignitary of the church opened one of the vestry cupboards and served himself a light refreshment of port-wine and biscuits. Afterwards he opened a

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 474.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 474-75.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 475.



casement window and went straight home. Within the hour Pecksniff told his houseguest, old Martin Chuzzlewit, that Tom Pinch had "presumed to address Miss Graham with un-retained professions of attachment and proposals of love."<sup>1</sup> Pecksniff, overwrought by his own emotions, burst into tears as he exclaimed over Tom's "deceitfulness." But Tom, who had been in the room all the time, remained calm in the face of this false accusation. On returning to the church to close the window at Mr. Pecksniff's request, he discovered his master's double eye-glass and knew immediately where his listener had been. Tom was prompt in leaving the Pecksniff household, but as he packed, Seth Pecksniff, who now felt relieved of his duty to society, went into the back garden "to shed a few tears"<sup>2</sup> over his servant's desertion.

Meanwhile, Mark Tapley and young Martin Chuzzlewit having failed in their attempts to establish a business in America, were both equally anxious to return to England as quickly as possible. Their reflections are slightly reminiscent of Dickens's own remarks after his return from America in 1842:

A year had passed, since those same spires and roofs had faded from their eyes. It seemed, to them, a dozen years. Some trifling changes, here and there, they called to mind; and wondered that they were so few and slight. In health and fortune, prospect and resource, they came back poorer men than they had gone away. But it was home.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 480.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 482.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 526.

Mark and Martin had been in the city only a short time when they found out that Pecksniff was in the vicinity, and that furthermore he was there "to help lay the first stone of a new and splendid public building."<sup>1</sup> The curious, new spectators followed the crowd to the proposed site, and there Martin saw his own designs and plans unrolled by the moral Pecksniff. Mark could hardly believe it when Martin told him that the plans were those of his grammar school---the building he designed when a pupil of Mr. Pecksniff's. The crowd cheered Mr. Pecksniff, while Martin cursed him. The architect rose magnificently to the occasion by saying, "My friends! . . . . My duty is to build, not to speak; to act, not talk; to deal with marble, stone, and brick: not language. I am very much affected. God bless you!"<sup>2</sup>

In another part of London, Thomas Pinch arrived at the home of John Westlock and told him of his recent experiences with his former master. Westlock procured lodgings for Tom; afterwards, they visited Tom's sister, Ruth, whom they found quite unhappy in her position as a governess. Tom decided to take her away, for he felt that he could support the two of them within a short time. Ruth soon radiated happiness: she loved her brother, and she admired Westlock. Tom's friend, young Martin, who had returned to the Blue Dragon Inn, found out about Mr. Pinch's separation from Mr. Pecksniff, as well as the daughters' separation.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 529.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 532.

from their father. Tapley, who was a shrewd fellow, was not surprised at Pecksniff's antics; he called him a "wagabond, scoundrel, and a willain."<sup>1</sup> While the two travellers visited Mrs. Lupin, proprietess of the Inn, Mr. Pecksniff himself appeared, but refused righteously to take a letter to Martin's grandfather from his nephew. Young Martin was not defeated, however; he went to Pecksniff's home to beg the forgiveness of his elder relative. Pecksniff was, of course, present during their meeting. When he saw that old Martin was weakening, Pecksniff exclaimed:

"My dear sir, . . . . you must not give way to this. It is very natural, and very amiable, but you must not allow the shameless conduct of one whom you long ago cast off, to move you so far. Rouse yourself. Think, . . . . think of me, my friend."<sup>2</sup>

Old Martin roused himself enough to ask Pecksniff to speak for him. And that service Pecksniff was quite willing to perform. Tears filled his eyes as he criticized young Martin, although he explained that those tears were not shed for him, but for his poor old grandfather. Young Martin could not believe that his grandfather seemingly wanted to disown him. He tried to intervene once more; this time Old Martin gave him a note worth twenty pounds. Pecksniff's reproaches were useless, but his emotions served as an excellent substitute:

The tears rose in such abundance to Mr. Pecksniff's eyes at this proof of unlimited confidence on the part of his friend, that he was fain to clasp the bridge of his nose convulsively before he could at all compose himself.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 634.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 640.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 643.

Mark, who had waited outside for young Martin, mused that Pecksniff was the sort of man that "would squeeze soft."<sup>1</sup>

In the forty-fourth chapter of Martin Chuzzlewit Dickens diverted his reader's interest by concentrating briefly on Pecksniff's character:

It was a special quality among the many admirable qualities possessed by Mr. Pecksniff, that the more he was found out, the more hypocrisy he practised. Let him be discomfited in one quarter, and he refreshed and recompensed himself by carrying the war into another. If his workings and windings were detected by A, so much the greater reason was there for practising without loss of time on B, if it were only to keep his hand in.<sup>2</sup>

No words rang truer, for he soon made certain confidential financial arrangements with his kinsman, Jonas Chuzzlewit. The agreement was disrupted, however, by the sudden death of the third member of the party, Mr. Montague, a speculator and capitalist.

Although Tom Pinch felt, no doubt, that his life amounted to very little in this world, an eventful day was yet in store for him. Young Martin and Mark Tapley visited him one afternoon while John Westlock was there; and a fourth visitor arrived--old Martin Chuzzlewit--Tom's unidentified employer. The old gentleman walked over to Tom, shook his hand firmly, and said:

"I have lived in his [Pecksniff's] house, Pinch, and had him fawning on me days and weeks and months. You know it. I have suffered him to treat me like his tool and instrument. You know it; you have seen me there. I have

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 646.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 647.

undergone ten thousand times as much as I could have endured if I had been the miserable weak old man he took me for. You know it. I have seen him offer love to Mary. You know it; who better--who better, my true heart! I have had his base soul bare before me, day by day, and have not betrayed myself once. I never could have undergone such torture but for looking forward to this time."<sup>1</sup>

Old Martin helped to solve many of the problems which confronted the entire Chuzzlewit family. With the aid of Tom and his friends, Jonas Chuzzlewit was indicted for the murder of his father, Anthony, as well as for the murder of Mr. Montague. Westlock aided the group in obtaining the necessary witnesses and testimony to convict the cruel Jonas. At the last, however, Jonas defeated himself, for he committed suicide. One other person remained in Martin's way: Seth Pecksniff. Martin bided his time, and, at length, Pecksniff visited Tom Pinch in London. Fortunately, the whole group was present on this momentous occasion, and Dickens described it vividly in Pecksniff's speech to the assemblage:

"Horde of unnatural plunderers and robbers! . . . . leave him! [old Martin] leave him, I say! Begone! Abscond! You had better be off! Wander over the face of the earth, young sirs, like vagabonds as you are, and do not presume to remain in a spot which is hallowed by the grey hairs of the patriarchal gentleman to whose tottering limbs I have the honour to act as an unworthy, but I hope an unassuming prop and staff. And you, my tender sir," said Mr. Pecksniff, addressing himself in a tone of gentle remonstrance to the old man, "how could you ever leave me, though even for this short period! You have absented yourself, I do not doubt, upon some act of kindness to me; bless you for it: but you must not do it; you must not be so venturesome. I should really be angry with you if I could, my friend!"

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 738.

He advanced with outstretched arms to take the old man's hand. But he had not seen how the hand clasped and clutched the stick within its grasp. As he came smiling on, and got within his reach, old Martin, with his burning indignation crowded into one vehement burst, and flashing out of every line and wrinkle in his face, rose up, and struck him down upon the ground.<sup>1</sup>

Old Martin talked rapidly and excitedly as he asked Mary and his young nephew to stand near him. In a very sincere tone he said that the curse of his family had always been the love of self. By this time Pecksniff had risen to his feet, and although he was bewildered by the preceding statement, he professed not to be angry with Old Martin. On the contrary, Pecksniff appeared to give his devout approval of Mary's betrothal to young Martin. He did not, however, concede instantly to old Martin:

. . . . he stood with his eyes fixed upon the floor and his hands clasping one another alternately, as if a host of penal sentences were being passed upon him. Not only did his figure appear to have shrunk, but his discomfiture seemed to have extended itself even to his dress. His clothes seemed to have grown shabbier, his lien to have turned yellow, and his hair to have become lank and frowsy; his very boots looked villanous and dim, as if their gloss had departed with his own.

Feeling, rather than seeing, that the old man now pointed to the door, he raised his eyes, picked up his hat, and thus addressed him:

"Mr. Chuzzlewit, sir! you have partaken of my hospitality."

"And paid for it," he [Old Martin] observed.

"Thank you. That savours," said Mr. Pecksniff, taking out his pocket-handkerchief, "of your old familiar frankness. You have paid for it. I was about to make that remark. You have deceived me, sir. Thank you again. I am glad of it. To see you in the possession of your health and faculties on any terms, is, in itself, a sufficient recompense. To have been

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 767-68.



deceived implies a trusting nature. Mine is a trusting nature. I am thankful for it. I would rather have a trusting nature, do you know, sir, than a doubting one!"

Here Mr. Pecksniff, with a sad smile, bowed, and wiped his eyes.

" . . . . You have mentioned, sir, my being bankrupt in my purse. Yes, sir, I am. By an unfortunate speculation, combined with treachery, I find myself reduced to poverty; at a time, sir, when the child of my bosom is widowed, and affliction and disgrace are in my family."

Here Mr. Pecksniff wiped his eyes again, and gave himself two or three little knocks upon the breast, as if he were answering two or three other little knocks from within, given by the tinkling hammer of his conscience, to express "Cheer up, my boy!"<sup>1</sup>

Having finished his eloquent speech, Pecksniff left his host and friends to meditate on his sermonic thoughts. The group, however, dispensed with him quickly and turned to matters of vital importance.

Dickens wrote a concluding chapter which gave the reader a glimpse into the later lives of the characters after the story itself was finished. As in most of his novels, his miniature people lived peacefully to the end of their days, that is, with the exception of one--the arch-hypocrite--the moral Pecksniff, who believed until the bitter end that he was right and everyone else was wrong. Dickens shows us that the hypocrite does not change through the years:

For a drunken, squalid, begging-letter-writing man, called Pecksniff (with a shrewish daughter), haunts thee, Tom [Pinch] ; and when he makes appeals to thee for cash, reminds thee that he built thy fortunes better than his own; and when he spends it, entertains the alehouse company with tales of thine ingratitude and his munificence towards thee once upon a time; and then he shows his elbows worn in holes, and puts his soleless shoes up on a bench, and begs his auditors look there, while thou art comfortably housed and clothed. All known to thee, and yet all borne with, Tom!<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 775-76.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 800.

CHAPTER V  
THE PROLIFIC YEARS

Disregarding the financial difficulties involved in the publication of Martin Chuzzlewit, Dickens continued writing at a rapid pace. During the years 1843 to 1845 he wrote a series of fantasies: The Christmas Carol, The Chimes, and The Cricket on the Hearth. Assured of their success, he decided to tour the Continent in order to rest and rehabilitate himself. Between the years 1844 and 1848 he and Kate travelled throughout France, Italy, and Switzerland. While living in Italy, he wrote Pictures from Italy, which he contributed to the Daily News in 1846. In Switzerland he wrote the major portions of his eighth novel, Dombey and Son, which was published in England in 1848. His tour, as well as his writing, was interrupted frequently because of urgent business trips to England concerning his publications. He quite often consulted with his friend Forster as to the feeling of his readers about some proposed incident or episode in Dombey and Son. Gissing believed he used that method not because he feared that he might offend his public, but because his view of Art involved compliance with the ideals of ordinary simple folk.<sup>1</sup>

In Dombey and Son, another treatment of the theme of education for children, the story is centered around the child character Paul Dombey, whom Dickens loved as much as little Nell. Upon the death of

---

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit., p. 101.



Paul, the plot followed the wandering father, who, having centered his life around the boy, was left desolate. Ward compared the book to the fiction of the great historical romancer; he said that in Dombey and Son there was a "romantic charm more nearly akin to Scott than any other novel Dickens produced."<sup>1</sup> Chesterton believed that this novel marked the real beginning of Dickens's career as a serious novelist, "a serious constructor of fiction in the serious sense."<sup>2</sup>

The relationship between Dombey and Son and the problem stated in this thesis lies in the figure of a hypocritical character, Major Joseph Bagstock, a retired army officer. Although he is not linked in any way with the main plot, his relations to the minor female characters serve to exemplify the characteristics befitting his nature. In a word, Major Bagstock is the type who "pretends to be sincere by the simple operation of being explosively obvious."<sup>3</sup> Bagstock is a subtle hypocrite. He flatters brutally and cringes with a swagger.<sup>4</sup> Dickens described him as a "wooden-featured, blue-faced Major, with his eyes starting out of his head."<sup>5</sup> One wonders at but does not doubt the authenticity of Dickens's portrait of the gouty, retired army officer:

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Dickens, Dombey and Son (Everyman's Library; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1946), Introduction, p. x.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. xii.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. xiii.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

. . . Major Bagstock had arrived at what is called in polite literature, the grand meridian of life, and was proceeding on his journey down-hill with hardly any throat, and a very rigid pair of jaw-bones, and long-flapped elephantine ears, and his eyes and complexion in the state of artificial excitement already mentioned . . . .<sup>1</sup>

The Major, believing that there was light humor in being on familiar terms with one's own name, frequently referred to himself as old Joe, or Joey, or Josh Bagstock. More than one person had heard the conceited Joey say:

"Joey B., Sir, . . . . is worth a dozen of you. If you had a few more of the Bagstock breed among you, Sir, you'd be none the worse for it. Old Joe, Sir, needn't look far for a wife . . . . but he's hard-hearted, Sir, is Joe--he's tough, Sir, tough, and de-vilish sly!"<sup>2</sup>

Through Miss Tox, a spinster lady with high ambitions to become Paul Dombey's step-mother, the Major met Paul and his father. The Major, too, had an interest in Miss Tox, for they lived across the Court from each other in Princess's Place. When Paul died the Major suggested that Mr. Dombey take a trip in his company. When the final arrangements were complete, Bagstock informed his friend that Miss Tox was quite interested in him in a matrimonial way. Dombey, who was unaware of Miss Tox's affection, declined to comment on the matter. Bagstock could not refrain from offering further advice:

"Dombey, . . . . I hint at nothing. But Joey B. has lived in the world, Sir: lived in the world with his eyes open, Sir, and his ears cocked: and Joe tells you, Dombey, that there's a dev-ilish artful and ambitious woman over the way!"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 258.

Once at Leamington, where the two gentlemen proposed to stay for a while, the Major began to see people whom he had known in former years--that is, he thought he knew them. He introduced numerous ladies to Dombey, but each time the ladies were always more attentive to Joey B. than to poor Dombey. The journey did little more for the latter than to make him wish that he were back in his offices in London. Dombey entertained the Major's friends, however, and through his companion met Edith Skewton Granger, who later became his second wife. The marriage of the two was contrived by the Major and Edith's designing mother, Mrs. Skewton.

Just before the wedding ceremony Dombey told Bagstock how much he appreciated his friendship. Even on such an occasion as this, Joe's reply was typical:

"Dombey, that is the hand of Joseph Bagstock: of plain old Joey B., Sir, if you like that better! That is the hand of which His Royal Highness the late Duke of York did me the honour to observe, Sir, to His Royal Highness the late Duke of Kent, that it was the hand of Josh.: a rough and tough, and possibly an up-to-snuff, old vagabond. Dombey, may the present moment be the least unhappy of our lives. God bless you!"<sup>1</sup>

The Major disappeared from the narrative for a time and reappeared only to tell Dombey that he could regain Edith, who had supposedly eloped with Mr. Carker, Dombey's business manager. Bagstock reiterated his loyalty to his friend by saying, "You have J. B. at your elbow. He claims the name of friend."<sup>2</sup> The Major's loyalty decreased after Dombey's

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 411.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 666.

business firm collapses, and no further mention was made of the person who thought Dombey was a prosperous but susceptible and foolish man.

Bagstock leaves no particular impression on the reader other than that of a conceited, merciless pretender--a man interested only in the pleasures of the moment. His appearance in the novel is always enhanced by the descriptions of his gruesome countenance and his loathesome table manners. Despite his faults, however, the reader laughs at his practical jokes and absurd bits of advice, for Dickens indicated very clearly that Joe B. was a facetious old rascal.

Writing consumed most of Dickens's time from 1847 to 1851. Having finished Dombey, the novelist devoted his time to a weekly journal, Household Words, and to a new novel, David Copperfield. The latter was published in 1850 with the imposing title of The Personal History, Experience and Observation of David Copperfield the Younger, of Blunderstone Rookery, which he never meant to be published on any account. Becker tells us that in this book Dickens was to "lay the ghost of an old grief by writing them [events during his childhood] ." <sup>1</sup> Dickens himself said upon finishing it that he "felt that he was 'dismissing a portion of himself into the shadowy world.'" <sup>2</sup> Although the Victorian reading public did not realize that the story was in part autobiographical, it became exceedingly popular and has been widely acclaimed in our own century. Of

---

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Pope-Hennessy, op. cit., p. 350.



the ninety-eight characters in the narrative we find only one hypocrite --one whose "humours" are more devastating than they are amusing. The portrait of the conniving Uriah Heep, always an "umble" man, is unsurpassed. The reader feels Dickens's own intense hatred for Uriah and is amused only when the convivial Wilkins Micawber denounced the hypocrite, who, for years, had assumed mastery over his employer, Mr. Wickfield. The climax is thrilling, and heartening as well, for the reader wants Uriah Heep to be exposed. Smacking his lips as he talked, Micawber seemed to enjoy reading to a private audience the charges he had drawn up in a letter against Uriah Heep:

In appearing before you to denounce probably the most consummate Villain that has ever existed--Mr. Micawber, without looking off the letter, pointed the ruler, like a ghostly truncheon, at Uriah Heep--I ask no consideration for myself.

. . . . .  
In an accumulation of Ignominy, Want, Despair, and Madness, I entered the office--or, as our lively neighbour the Gaul would term it, the Bureau--of the Firm, nominally conducted under the appellation of Wickfield and--Heep, but, in reality, wielded by--Heep alone. Heep, and only Heep, is the mainspring of that machine. Heep, and only Heep, is the Forger and the Cheat.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, Uriah had to remit all the records and correspondence in his possession and to repay the money which he had allegedly borrowed. Without further hindrance from the hypocrite then, Dickens concluded the history of David Copperfield satisfactorily.

Dickens's tenth novel, Bleak House, begun in March 1852, was published serially through September, 1853. The novel is a vigorous

---

<sup>1</sup>Dickens, David Copperfield (Modern Library; New York: Random House, n. d.), p. 789.

satire on the abuses of the old Court of Chancery; in it the author shows the chicanery and evasion which gather around the Chancery system of handling property.<sup>1</sup> Included in the complex narrative is the portrait of a hypocrite—the Reverend Mr. Chadband—a "large, greasy, self-satisfied man, of no particular denomination."<sup>2</sup> The characterization is in reality a further development of the character of the Reverend Mr. Stiggins, the ranting hypocrite depicted in Pickwick Papers. Several critics are agreed that Chadband will, for all time to come, serve as the exemplar of hypocrisy and cant.

Chadband described himself as a vessel in the ministry.<sup>3</sup> Like other Dickensian hypocrites, Chadband was very fond of good food and often referred to himself as a consuming vessel. The persecutors, however, called him a gorging vessel.<sup>4</sup> On one occasion the Chadbands visited the Snagsbys, religious followers of Mr. Chadband. Dickens's picture of the minister upon his arrival is neither complimentary nor captivating:

Mr. Chadband is a large yellow man, with a fat smile, and a general appearance of having a good deal of train oil in his system . . . . Mr. Chadband moves softly and cumbrously, not unlike a bear who has been taught to walk upright. He is very much embarrassed about the arms, as if they were inconvenient to him, and he wanted to grovel; is very much in a

<sup>1</sup>Burton, op. cit., p. 164.

<sup>2</sup>Dickens, Bleak House (Everyman's Library; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1948), Introduction, p. xxiii.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 249.

perspiration about the head; and never speaks without first putting up his great hand, as delivering a token to his hearers that he is going to edify them.

"My friends . . . . Peace be on this house! On the master thereof, on the mistress thereof, on the young maidens, and on the young men! My friends, why do I wish for peace? What is peace? Is it war? No. Is it strife? No. Is it lovely, and gentle, and beautiful, and pleasant, and serene, and joyful? O yes! Therefore, my friends, I wish for peace, upon you and upon yours."<sup>1</sup>

In the estimation of the writer of this thesis, Chadband appears to echo the pious exclamations of another hypocrite--Seth Pecksniff--the arch-hypocrite.

At last the Snagsbys' desire to entertain the Chadbands was fulfilled, and when the food was brought before the minister, he exclaimed:

. . . . what is this which we now behold as being spread before us? Refreshment. Do we need refreshment then, my friends? We do. And why do we need refreshment, my friends? Because we are but mortal, because we are but sinful, because we are but of the earth, because we are not of the air. Can we fly, my friends? We cannot. Why can we not fly, my friends?<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Snagsby, who had remained quiet during this excessive questioning period, offered an answer: "No wings," he said.<sup>3</sup> Chadband, who ignored his ridiculous comment, continued his sermon:

. . . . why can we not fly? Is it because we are calculated to walk? It is. Could we walk, my friends, without strength? We could not. What should we do without strength, my friends? Our legs would refuse to bear us, our knees would double up, our ankles would turn over, and we should come to the ground. Then from whence, my friends, in a human point of

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 250.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

view, do we derive the strength that is necessary to our limbs? Is it . . . from bread in various forms, from butter which is churned from the milk which is yielded unto us by the cow, from the eggs which are laid by the fowl, from ham, from tongue, from sausage, and from such like? It is. Then let us partake of the good things which are set before us!<sup>1</sup>

However boring the minister's brief sermon might have been, the Snagsbys accepted and apparently admired Chadband's style of oratory.

Before the evening was over Chadband had met Jo, the crossing-sweeper. The room was hushed as Chadband rose to speak to the poor boy:

"My young friend, . . . you are to us a pearl, you are to us a diamond, you are to us a gem, you are to us a jewel. And why, my young friend?

. . . it is because you know nothing that you are to us a gem and jewel. For what are you, my young friend? Are you a beast of the field? No. A bird of the air? No. You are a human boy, my young friend. A human boy. O glorious to be a human boy! And why glorious, my young friend? Because you are capable of receiving the lessons of wisdom, because you are capable of profiting by this discourse, which I now deliver for your own good, because you are not a stick, or a staff, or a stock, or a stone, or a post, or a pillar."<sup>2</sup>

When Chadband finished, Jo yawned in his face, much to the embarrassment of Mrs. Snagsby. Not to be outdone, however, Chadband asked the boy to visit him during the following days in order to hear more discourses.

Whether by chance or by proper planning, Chadband and Jo met several evenings later in the Snagsby residence. Dickens diverts the reader's attention to explain the spiritual power peculiar to the Reverend:

It happens that Mr. Chadband has a pulpit habit of fixing some member of his congregation with his eye, and fatly arguing his points with that particular person; who is understood

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 251-52.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 257.



to be expected to be moved to an occasional grunt, groan, grasp, or other audible expression of inward working; which expression of inward working, being echoed by some elderly lady in the next pew, and so communicated like a game of forfeits, through a circle of the more fermentable sinners present, serves the purpose of parliamentary cheering, and gets Mr. Chadband's steam up.<sup>1</sup>

Upon this occasion Mr. Snagsby was the victim of the Reverend's glassy stare, and before he could say a word, Chadband was saying that he [Snagsby] was devoid of a light which shines in some people. Chadband's remarks on the subject of "Terewth"<sup>2</sup> were the words of the religious humbug at his best. Chadband paused between illustrations to dab his head with his pocket-handkerchief; then he resumed his speech.

Although Chadband is a minor character in Bleak House, his contribution as a character-type is important; and he and Mrs. Chadband like the other characters, are involved in certain proceedings at the Chancery Court. His oratorical outbursts, unheeded in the Court, are in contrast to his apparent successes from the pulpit.

Dickens's first novel-length story in his own periodical, Household Words, was entitled Hard Times, published in 1854. He again attacked lifelong enemies, the honorable members of the High Court of Parliament.<sup>3</sup> Hard Times is not only a shorter novel than the others, but it also has fewer characters. Among the major characters, however, is

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 341.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 342.

<sup>3</sup>Dickens, Hard Times (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), Introduction, p. v.

a hypocrite--Josiah Bounderby. Dickens described him as a self-made man devoid of sentiment and a very wealthy bachelor:

He was a rich man: banker, merchant, manufacturer, and what not. A big, loud man, with a stare, and a metallic laugh. A man made out of a coarse material, which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him. A man with a great puffed head and forehead, swelled veins in his temples, and such a strained skin to his face that it seemed to hold his eyes open, and lift his eyebrows up. A man with a pervading appearance on him of being inflated like a balloon, and ready to start. . . . a man who was always proclaiming, through that brassy speaking-trumpet of a voice of his, his old ignorance and his old poverty. A man who was the Bully of humility.<sup>1</sup>

In the very early pages of the book Bounderby began to annoy his friends and associates with the long and pitifully sad tale of his difficult childhood. Born with an inflammation of the lungs, he was a neglected and miserable child. With great emphasis on the pronoun "I," he frequently told his listeners that he was so ragged and dirty that no one would have touched him with a pair of tongs!<sup>2</sup> His own mother deserted him, and his grandmother drank--"why, I have known that grandmother of mine lie in her bed and drink her four-teen glasses of liqour before breakfast!"<sup>3</sup>

Upon going to Coketown one day with Mr. Gradgrind, a business associate, Mr. Bounderby reiterated the fact that his mother ran away from him. In fact, he started at the very beginning:

. . . . I was born in a ditch, and my mother ran away from me. Do I excuse her for it? No. Have I ever excused her for

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

it? Not I. What do I call her for it? I call her probably the very worst woman that ever lived in the world, except my drunken grandmother. There's no family pride about me, there's no imaginative sentimental humbug about me. I call a spade a spade . . . .<sup>1</sup>

Gradgrind's daughter, Louisa, although considerably younger than Josiah Bounderby was persuaded by her father to marry the wealthy manufacturer. A son, Tom Gradgrind, was already employed at the factory. At the wedding breakfast Josiah addressed the guests in the following manner:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am Josiah Bounderby of Coketown. Since you have done my wife and myself the honour of drinking our healths and happiness, I suppose I must acknowledge the same; though, as you all know me, and know what I am, and what my extraction was, you won't expect a speech from a man who, when he sees a Post, says 'that's a Post,' and when he sees a Pump, says 'that's a Pump,' and is not to be got to call a Post a Pump, or a Pump a Post, or either of them a Toothpick."<sup>2</sup>

The wedding journey to Lyons was made primarily so that Josiah might see "how the Hands got on in those parts."<sup>3</sup>

At this point Dickens introduced young Tom Gradgrind as a hypocritical sort of fellow. Though having worked for some time in Bounderby's factory, Tom revealed, to a casual acquaintance, James Harthouse, that he loathed his brother-in-law. The conversation became lively as Tom drank and smoked--two habits unknown to the boy before the evening began. Weeks later Bounderby's bank was robbed, and Tom was suspected of the

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 120-21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

robbery. He escaped punishment, however, by running away from England. Tom's disloyalty, injurious to Louisa's relationship with Josiah, made her realize that she, too, hated Bounderby; therefore, she returned to her father's home. Josiah then resumed the role of bachelor. Although he never admitted that he could be wrong, he was forced to face the true facts about his childhood when his mother, Mrs. Pegler, was discovered as a hard-working old woman who had scraped and saved to give her only son an education. The facetious and hard-hearted Josiah had lied about and neglected his own mother.

During the ensuing years Dickens's popularity grew immensely. While writing for his own periodical, he also took an active interest in the theater, both as an actor and as a stage manager. While he was pursuing a career in public reading, his fame increased not only in England but in Scotland and America. Between these varied activities he also found time to write novels. Little Dorrit was published in the years 1855 to 1857. In 1859 the famous historical novel, A Tale of Two Cities, was released. Two events during these years occupied much of Dickens's thought. In 1856 he purchased Gadshill Place near London, although he did not make it his permanent home until 1859. In 1858 he and Kate separated. Tragic as the incident may seem after twenty-two years of married life, he wrote Forster that the two could not live together any longer:

Poor Catherine and I are not made for each other, and there is no help for it. It is not only that she makes me uneasy and unhappy, but that I make her so too--and much, more so. . . . Her temperament will not go with mine.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Forster, op. cit., II, 244-45.

In The Letters of Charles Dickens, edited by Walter Dexter in 1938, one finds a letter from Dickens to his sub-editor, Arthur Smith, which enlightens the reader on the matter of the separation. Dickens himself wrote:

For some years past Mrs. Dickens has been in the habit of representing to me that it would be better for her to go away and live apart; that her always increasing estrangement made a mental disorder under which she sometimes labors---more, that she felt herself unfit for the life she had to lead as my wife, and that she would be better far away.<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of the domestic troubles, however, Dickens continued his work in theatricals, in public readings, and in a new periodical, All the Year Round, which succeeded Household Words in 1859. The first novel to be published in the new periodical was Great Expectations, released in book form in 1861. The narrative, though simple, is a unique story of character, the central figure being Pip, a village boy who longed to be a gentleman. The plot also includes a ponderous hypocrite, Uncle Pumblechook, who pretended to be the origin of Pip's fortune. He was a large, middle-aged show man, "with a mouth like a fish, dull staring eyes, and sandy hair standing upright on his head."<sup>2</sup>

After Pip had been introduced into the society of Miss Havisham and Estella, prosperous but strange ladies, Uncle Pumblechook's interest in the lad grew. In fact, he could hardly wait to hear Pip's story--that

---

<sup>1</sup>(Bloomsbury, England: Nonesuch Press), III, 22.

<sup>2</sup>Dickens, Great Expectations (Everyman's Library; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1947), p. 21.

is, to find out what he had seen and heard at Miss Havisham's. Pumblechook had an unusual habit not unlike a peculiarity of Chadband's: he, too, asked numerous questions of his associates. These questions, usually directed at Pip, concerned mathematics. No matter where the two met, Pumblechook would invariably ask Pip, "Seven times nine, boy? And four? And eight? And six? And two?"<sup>1</sup> Then he would ask for the pence-table until poor Pip was exhausted. Wealth came Pip's way, however, and for a time he lived in London. On finding out that a convict, whom he had once befriended, had given him the money, Pip thought more seriously of his wealth and opportunities. The money, luckily, had to be forfeited to the Crown, and Pip was once more humbled; at last he realized the dignity of wholesome labor.

In the closing pages of the book Uncle Pumblechook returned to the scene in order to ridicule poor Pip. In a roaring voice he exclaimed:

Little more than skin and bone! . . . And yet when he went away from here (I may say with my blessing), and I spread afore him my humble store, like the Bee, he was as plump as a Peach.<sup>2</sup>

Pip, who was telling his own story, remarked:

This reminded me of the wonderful difference between the servile manner in which he [Pumblechook] had offered his hand in my new prosperity, saying "May I?" and the ostentatious clemency with which he had just now exhibited the same fat five fingers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 444.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



Following Great Expectations, Our Mutual Friend was published in 1864-1865. In February, 1865, Dickens became ill; the after effects of this illness resulted in a lameness which he suffered the rest of his life. Determined, however, to continue his public reading tours, he went to the United States again in 1867 and was joyously received by the American people. Returning to England in 1868, he travelled to Scotland and continued to lecture. In 1869 he became so very weak that he had to give up his work. Forster tells us that his doctor analyzed his illness as the result of extreme hurry, overwork, and excitement.<sup>1</sup>

Back at Gadshill Place in the spring of 1869, Dickens was convinced that he could no longer lead an active life. That autumn, however he began writing The Mystery of Edwin Drood. At the age of fifty-seven he was writing his sixteenth full-length book. Chesterton has called the mystery Dickens's most ambitious book.<sup>2</sup> Today it is considered the world's best detective story because it remains unfinished.<sup>3</sup> Dickens died before the concluding chapters could be written. Of the numerous characters in Edwin Drood, one stands out among the rest as a hypocritical philanthropist; he is Luke Honeythunder. Luke is introduced into the narrative as a Professor of Philanthropy, a man whose offices are in the "Haven of Philanthropy"<sup>4</sup> in London. Mr. Honeythunder never saw a joke, and he

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit., II, 449.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Dickens, p. 236.

<sup>3</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 243.

<sup>4</sup>Dickens, The Mystery of Edwin Drood (New York: Hurst and Co., Publishers, n. d.), p. 662.

rarely smiled. On one occasion he dined with the Crisparkle family (fellow philanthropists) in Minor Canon Corner:

The dinner was almost a doleful break down. The philanthropist deranged the symmetry of the table, sat himself in the way of the waiting, blocked up the thoroughfare and drove Mr. Tope (who assisted the parlor-maid) to the verge of distraction by passing plates and dishes on, over his own head. Nobody could talk to anybody, because he held forth to every body at once, as if the company had no individual existence, but were a meeting.<sup>1</sup>

After the hero, Edwin Drood, had been murdered, Mr. Crisparkle went to see Mr. Honeythunder to ask his advice on certain matters. The two argued for a time until the philanthropist became quite insulted. His visitor, before leaving, expressed his opinion that Honeythunder was a fraud, and that his platform of principle was a nuisance. Although Dickens did not refer to Honeythunder again, the writer of this thesis believes that Dickens would have done so, had he lived long enough. This last hypocrite is typically hypocritical in his willingness to believe the worst of his fellow men and in his desire to deceive others.

Dickens's death on June 8, 1870, brought to a close the literary career of a great Victorian novelist, who, despite many shortcomings, was loved by people all over the world. Forster wrote that days after the funeral, mourners were still passing by the grave, and that "flowers were strewn upon it by unknown hands, many tears shed by unknown eyes."<sup>2</sup> Of

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 668.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., II, 513.



all the statements made concerning Dickens's death, Thomas Carlyle's is the greatest:

No death since 1866 [death of Mrs. Carlyle] has fallen on me with such a stroke. No literary man's hitherto ever did. The good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever friendly, noble Dickens,--every inch of him, an Honest Man.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., II, 490.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION: DICKENS'S HYPOCRITES UNVEILED

After perusing Dickens's novels, the writer finds that the main characteristic of the novelist's writings is a concentrated interest in various traits of human character. The character trait of hypocrisy dealt with in this investigation is outstanding in that Dickens dramatized it over and over to emphasize the vice which he despised the most.

In twelve of his major writings he depicted the characters of seventeen hypocrites. Each novel contains at least one type of hypocrite. The Sketches, Dickens's earliest writing, has two prototypes, while Pickwick Papers, the most popular of his writings, contains three. Of the major novels, only one--Martin Chuzzlewit--was centered on the complete characterization of a hypocrite--Seth Pecksniff--his influence on society and his ultimate downfall. Only one of the seventeen characters was a woman--Sarah Gamp--the disreputable old nurse in Martin Chuzzlewit.

Dickens had an unusual skill for finding or creating peculiar and sometimes absurd names for his characters, as is evidenced by the names of many of his hypocrites. The implications of these names may vary with the reader's interpretation of the character; but their sounds are probably repulsive to every reader. The following names are particularly indicative of the character-type studied in this problem: Jingle, Stiggins, Snawley, Swiveller, Pecksniff, Bagstock, Heep, Bounderby, and Honeythunder.

In exposing the hypocrite, Dickens did not show discrimination against any particular profession. Instead, he included hypocrites from all walks of life: teachers, clerks, nobles, preachers, philanthropists, manufacturers, inquisitive relatives, and "ne'er-do-wells." From this group he chose to work vigorously on the teacher, perhaps because he was intensely aware of the lack of education among children in the first half of the nineteenth century. One of his characterizations from the Sketches was that of a dancing teacher, Mr. Billsmethi. The arch-hypocrite, Seth Pecksniff, was a teacher of architecture. A closely related profession, that of the ministry, can also be linked with hypocrisy, for the Reverend Mr. Stiggins (in Pickwick Papers) and the Reverend Mr. Chadband (in Bleak House) are equally representative of the underhanded and immoral methods by which they maintained their profession. Dickens's creed might well have been: "Hypocrisy murders faith."

Because the inimitable Boz was a great creator of character, he liked to describe his portraits in detail. As a result, his hypocrites were more fully depicted than most of his other characters. They were, with few exceptions, unusually fat and very ugly. Their manners were atrocious, as were their personal habits. They were clumsy, forgetful creatures who usually drank excessively. Almost every Dickensian character had an eccentricity of some sort, and the hypocrite was no exception. Either in gesture, gait, accent, or language the hypocrite differed from his fellow men. The trait, itself, was not always odd or offensive; it was the habitual use of the singularity which differentiated the hypocrite

from other characters in the book. For example, Pecksniff always wiped his forehead with a white handkerchief when he became extremely nervous. Uriah Heep always rubbed the palms of his hands together when satisfied that his plans were proceeding satisfactorily. Major Bagstock never failed to compliment himself audibly when he finished doing a good deed, usually for himself. Jingle could not talk without pausing intermittently, and Chadband could not speak without asking innumerable questions, whether he was in the pulpit or out. And although the hypocrites were quite willing to give advice, they were never ready to take any themselves.

Dickens excelled in characterization when he first began to write; his "sketches" of people were masterpieces in themselves. As he continued to mingle with people, his literary artistry developed; and by the time he characterized the arch-hypocrite of his novels, his technique had become perfected. Dickens wrote about men and women in the Victorian world--the world he knew best. And his hypocrites were concerned with the moral, political, and educational issues of the time, petty or great. In other words, Dickens's hypocrite was the common man whom he knew, not by name necessarily, but by word and deed. He had seen since his early childhood, no doubt, the hypocrite in action. The hardships he himself endured before achieving success might have made him cognizant of the abuses imposed on others perhaps less fortunate than he.

Many critics acknowledge Dickens's genius in creating character. Although he read and loved Shakespeare, Fielding, and Smollett, his creation of the hypocrite as a fully developed character is apparently

original. Influenced primarily by his contemporary Victorians, Dickens remolded a perennial character-type to suit his didactic purposes. Because of his own hatred for snobbishness, pretentiousness, and hypocrisy, he made his readers more fully aware of the characteristics of the impostor through his humorous presentation.

The composite hypocrite of Dickens's novels is the man whom no one can trust; furthermore, his personal attitude, habits, and general behavior make him a despicable character whom no one desires to associate with, despite his friendly approach and placid humor. Not all red-faced, fat, and ugly men are hypocrites, but in Dickens's novels these types usually were. He impressed his readers with the fact that such characters were highly nervous, frustrated individuals who lacked the genuine qualities of honesty and loyalty. The writer of this thesis believes, therefore, that Dickens succeeded in achieving that which he set out to accomplish: to ridicule the hypocrite for all time by unveiling those characteristics which made him a useless member of the society in which he lived.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barker, Ernest (ed.). The Character of England. New York: Oxford University Press, 1947.
- Becker, May Lamberton. Introducing Charles Dickens. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1940.
- Boas, Ralph Philip and Hahn, Barbara M. Social Backgrounds of English Literature. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1929.
- Burton, Richard. Charles Dickens with Portrait. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1919.
- Cecil, Lord David. Early Victorian Novelists. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1935.
- Charles, Edwin. Some Dickens Women. New York: Stokes, 1926.
- Chesterton, Gilbert Keith. Charles Dickens. London: Methuen and Co., 1906.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Victorian Age in Literature. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1913.
- Crotch, W. Walter. The Pageant of Dickens. London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1915.
- Dexter, Walter (ed.). The Letters of Charles Dickens. 3 vols. Bloomsbury, England: Nonesuch Press, 1938.
- Dickens, Charles. Barnaby Rudge. Everyman's Library. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1946.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Bleak House. Everyman's Library. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1948.
- \_\_\_\_\_. David Copperfield. Modern Library. New York: Random House, n. d.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Dombey and Son. Everyman's Library. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1946.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Great Expectations. Everyman's Library. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1947.

- \_\_\_\_\_. Hard Times. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Martin Chuzzlewit. Everyman's Library. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1947.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Mystery of Edwin Drood. New York: Hurst and Co., Publishers, n. d.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Nicholas Nickleby. Everyman's Library. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1946.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Old Curiosity Shop. Everyman's Library. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1946.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club. Modern Library. New York: Random House, n. d.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Sketches By Boz. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., n. d.
- Fitzgerald, Percy. The Life of Charles Dickens as Revealed in His Writings. 2 vols. London: Chatto and Windus, 1905.
- Forster, John. Life of Charles Dickens. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907.
- Gissing, George. Critical Studies of the Works of Charles Dickens. New York: Greenberg Publisher, Inc., 1924.
- Hayward, Arthur L. The Days of Dickens. London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., n. d.
- House, Humphry. The Dickens World. New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.
- Knight, Grant C. The Novel in English. New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931.
- Leacock, Stephen. The Greatest Pages of Charles Dickens. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1934.
- Ley, James W. T. The Dickens Circle. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1919.
- Moody, William V. and Lovett, Robert M. A History of English Literature. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930.



- Pope-Hennessy, Una. Charles Dickens. New York: Howell, Soskin, Inc., 1946.
- Priestley, J. B. The English Comic Characters. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1931.
- Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur. Charles Dickens and Other Victorians. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925.
- Reynolds, George F. English Literature in Fact and Story. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1946.
- Sitwell, Osbert. Dickens. London: Chatto and Windus, 1932.
- Stephen, Sir Leslie and Lee, Sidney (eds.). The Dictionary of National Biography. Vol. V. London: Oxford University Press, 1937-1938.
- Wagenknecht, Edward. The Man Charles Dickens. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929.
- Walters, J. Cuming. Phases of Dickens, the Man, His Message, and His Mission. London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1911.
- Ward, Adolphus W. Dickens. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1901.
- Weygandt, Cornelius. A Century of the English Novel. New York: Century Co., 1925.
- Wingfield-Stratford, Esme. Those Earnest Victorians. New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1930.
- Zweig, Stefan. Three Masters: Balzac, Dickens, Dostoeffsky. New York: The Viking Press, 1930.



4

SUPPLEMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amerongen, J. B. van. The Actor in Dickens. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1927.
- Bateson, F. W. The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. Vol. III. New York: Macmillan Co., 1941.
- Begbie, Harold. "Dickens Characters in Real Life," Century, January, 1912, pp. 322-32.
- Buck, Pearl S. "Debt to Dickens," Saturday Review of Literature, April 4, 1936, p. 11.
- Charles Dickens as Editor, Being Letters Written by Him to William Henry Wills, His Sub-editor. New York: Sturgis and Walton Co., 1912.
- Chew, Samuel C. "Charles Dickens and Respectability," Saturday Review of Literature, February 23, 1935, p. 501.
- The Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens. London: Hutchinson and Co., 1891.
- Cranfield, L. "World of Dickens," The New Statesman and Nation, February 10, 1945, pp. 95-96.
- Crothers, Samuel McCord. The Children of Dickens. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Obviousness of Dickens," Century, February, 1912, pp. 560-74.
- Davis, E. R. "Dickens and the Evolution of Caricature," Publications of the Modern Language Association, March, 1940, pp. 231-40.
- Defontaine, F. G. A Cyclopaedia of the Best Thoughts of Dickens. New York: E. J. Hale and Son, 1873.
- Dexter, Walter (ed.). Dickens to His Oldest Friend; the Letters of a Lifetime from Dickens to Thomas Beard. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932.
- Dexter, Walter. The London of Dickens. London: C. Palmer, 1924.
- Dickens, Charles. American Notes and Pictures from Italy. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907.

- \_\_\_\_\_ . Christmas Stories from Household Words and All Year Round. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1909.
- \_\_\_\_\_ . The Life of Our Lord. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1934.
- \_\_\_\_\_ . Miscellaneous Papers from The Morning Chronicle, The Daily News, The Examiner, Household Words, and Plays and Poems. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908.
- "Dickens a Best Seller after Sixty Years," Literary Digest, September 11, 1926, pp. 52-54.
- "Dickens's People on the Street Corners," Literary Digest, November 28, 1925, p. 26.
- "Dickens Then and Now," Atlantic Monthly, July, 1915, pp. 143-44.
- Dickens, Henry Fielding. "Chat About Charles Dickens," Harper, July, 1914, pp. 186-93.
- Dickens, Mary (ed.). The Letters of Charles Dickens. 3 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879-1881.
- Dickens, Monica. "Charles Dickens," Life, December 27, 1948, pp. 77-84.
- Eastman, Max. Enjoyment of Laughter. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936.
- Field, Rachael. People from Dickens. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935.
- Figgis, D. "Praise of Dickens," Nineteenth Century, February, 1912, pp. 274-84.
- Fitzgerald, Percy. Bozland; Dickens' Places and People. London: Downey and Co., 1895.
- Harrold, C. F. (ed.). "Victorian Bibliography for 1945," Modern Philology, May, 1946, pp. 269-71.
- Harvey, Sir Paul (ed.). The Oxford Companion to English Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946.
- Hayward, Arthur L. The Dickens Encyclopaedia. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1924.
- Holdsworth, William S. Charles Dickens a Legal Historian. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929.

- Hotten, John Camden. Charles Dickens. The Story of His Life. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1870.
- Howe, Mark Antony DeWolfe. Memories of a Hostess. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1922.
- Hughes, James L. Dickens as an Educator. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1906.
- Hutton, Laurence. Letters of Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1892.
- James, Henry. "Limitations of Dickens," Nation, April 24, 1943, pp. 595-96.
- Kitton, Grederick G. The Dickens Country. London: A. and C. Black, 1925.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Dickensiana. London: G. Redway, 1886.
- Kunitz, Stanley J. (ed.). British Authors of the Nineteenth Century. New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1936.
- Leacock, Stephen. Charles Dickens His Life and Work. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1934.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Charles Dickens: a Self-Portrait," Saturday Review of Literature, December 24, 1938, p. 3.
- Legouis, Emile and Cazamian, Louis. A History of English Literature. New York: Macmillan Co., 1929.
- Livingston, Flora V. Charles Dickens' Letters to Charles Lever. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933.
- Lunn, Hugh Kingsmill. The Sentimental Journey. New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1935.
- Macy, John. The Story of the World's Great Literature. Garden City, N. Y.: Garden City Publishing House, 1932.
- Marzials, Frank T. Life of Charles Dickens. London: W. Scott, 1887.
- Maugham, W. S. "Charles Dickens," Atlantic Monthly, July, 1948, pp. 50-56.
- Maurois, Andre. "Philosophy of Dickens," Forum, January, 1929, pp. 54-59.

- Miller, William. The Dickens Student and Collector. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946.
- Moses, Belle. Charles Dickens and His Girl Heroines. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1914.
- Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dickens; His Letters to Her. London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1935.
- Neff, Wanda Fraiken. Victorian Working Women. New York: Columbia University Press, 1929.
- Osborne, Charles C. Letters of Charles Dickens to the Baroness Burdett-Couttes. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1932.
- Payne, Edward F. Dickens's Days in Boston. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927.
- Phillips, Walter C. Dickens, Reade, and Collins, Sensation Novelists. New York: Columbia University Press, 1919.
- Powers, Ella M. A Dickens Reader. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911.
- Saintsbury, George. A History of Nineteenth Century Literature (1780-1895). New York: Macmillan Co., 1931.
- Santayana, George. Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934.
- Shepherd, R. H. (ed.). The Speeches of Charles Dickens. London: M. Joseph, Ltd., 1937.
- Spencer, Walter T. Forty Years in My Bookshop. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1923.
- Stoll, Elmer E. "Heroes and Villains: Shakespeare, Middleton, Byron, Dickens," Review of English Studies, July, 1942, pp. 257-69.
- Straus, Ralph. Charles Dickens; a Biography from New Sources. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1928.
- Sweetser, Kate Dickinson. Ten Boys from Dickens. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1929.
- Temperley, Harold. The Victorian Age in Politics, War, and Diplomacy. Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1928.

- Templeman, W. D. "Victorian Bibliography for 1942," Modern Philology, Mary, 1943, pp. 342-43.
- Thackeray, William M. English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853.
- Towse, J. Ranken. "Charles Dickens Genius," Saturday Review of Literature, October 20, 1928, pp. 265-67.
- Verschoye, Derek (ed.). The English Novelists. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1936.
- Victorian Prelude, a History of English Manners. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941.
- Wagenknecht, Edward. Calvacade of the English Novel. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1943.
- Welch, Deshler. "Boz and Boulogne," Harper, August, 1908, pp. 361-63.
- Wenger, Jared. "Character Types of Scott, Balzac, Dickens, Zola," Publications of the Modern Language Association, March, 1947, pp. 213-32.
- Whipple, Edwin Percy. Charles Dickens the Man and His Work. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1912.
- Wilkins, William Clyde. Charles Dickens in America. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912.
- Winterich, John T. "Once an Author, Always an Actor," Saturday Review of Literature, May 21, 1949, p. 14.
- Woollcott, Alexander. Mr. Dickens Goes to the Play. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922.