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THE LETTERS

OF

CHARLES DICKENS.

EDITED BY

HIS SISTER-IN-LAW AND HIS ELDEST DAUGHTER.

In Two Volumes.

VOL. I.

1833 to 1856.

London:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

1880.

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CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,

CRYSTAL PALACE PRESS.

TO

KATE PERUGINI,

THIS MEMORIAL OF HER FATHER

IS LOVINGLY INSCRIBED

BY HER AUNT AND SISTER.

PREFACE.

We intend this Collection of Letters to be a Supplement to the "Life of Charles Dickens," by John Forster. That work, perfect and exhaustive as a biography, is only incomplete as regards correspondence; the scheme of the book having made it impossible to include in its space any letters, or hardly any, besides those addressed to Mr. Forster. As no man ever expressed _himself_ more in his letters than Charles Dickens, we believe that in publishing this careful selection from his general correspondence we shall be supplying a want which has been universally felt.

Our request for the loan of letters was so promptly and fully responded to, that we have been provided with more than sufficient material for our work. By arranging the letters in chronological order, we find that they very frequently explain themselves and form a narrative of the events of each year. Our collection dates from 1833, the commencement of Charles Dickens's literary life, just before the starting of the "Pickwick Papers," and is carried on up to the day before his death, in 1870.

We find some difficulty in being quite accurate in the arrangements of

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letters up to the end of 1839, for he had a careless habit in those days about dating his letters, very frequently putting only the day of the week on which he wrote, curiously in contrast with the habit of his later life, when his dates were always of the very fullest.

A blank is made in Charles Dickens's correspondence with his family by the absence of any letter addressed to his daughter Kate (Mrs. Perugini), to her great regret and to ours. In 1873, her furniture and other possessions were stored in the warehouse of the Pantechnicon at the time of the great fire there. All her property was destroyed, and, among other things, a box of papers which included her letters from her father.

It was our intention as well as our desire to have thanked, individually, every one--both living friends and representatives of dead ones--for their readiness to give us every possible help to make our work complete. But the number of such friends, besides correspondents hitherto unknown, who have volunteered contributions of letters, make it impossible in our space to do otherwise than to express, collectively, our earnest and heartfelt thanks.

A separate word of gratitude, however, must be given by us to Mr. Wilkie Collins for the invaluable help which we have received from his great knowledge and experience, in the technical part of our work, and for the deep interest which he has shown from the beginning, in our undertaking.

It is a great pleasure to us to have the name of Henry Fielding Dickens associated with this book. To him, for the very important assistance he has given in making our Index, we return our loving thanks.

In writing our explanatory notes we have, we hope, left nothing out which in any way requires explanation from us. But we have purposely made them as short as possible; our great desire being to give to the public another book from Charles Dickens's own hands--as it were, a portrait of himself by himself.

Those letters which need no explanation--and of those we have many--we give without a word from us.

In publishing the more private letters, we do so with the view of showing him in his homely, domestic life--of showing how in the midst of his own constant and arduous work, no household matter was considered too trivial to claim his care and attention. He would take as much pains about the hanging of a picture, the choosing of furniture, the superintending any little improvement in the house, as he would about the more serious business of his life; thus carrying out to the very letter his favourite motto of "What is worth doing at all is worth doing well."

MAMIE DICKENS.
GEORGINA HOGARTH.

LONDON: _October_, 1879.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.

Page 111, line 6. For "because if I hear of you," _read_ "because I hear of you."

" 114, line 24. For "any old end," _read_ "or any old end."

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" 137. First paragraph, second sentence, _should read_, "All the ancient part of Rome is wonderful and impressive in the extreme, far beyond the possibility of exaggeration. As to the," etc.

" 456, line 11. For "Mr." _read_ "Mrs."

Book I.

1833 TO 1842.

THE

LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS.

1833 OR 1834, AND 1835, 1836.

NARRATIVE.

We have been able to procure so few early letters of any general interest that we put these first years together. Charles Dickens was then living, as a bachelor, in Furnival's Inn, and was engaged as a parliamentary reporter on _The Morning Chronicle_. The "Sketches by Boz" were written during these years, published first in "The Monthly Magazine" and continued in _The Evening Chronicle_. He was engaged to be married to Catherine Hogarth in 1835--the marriage took place on the 2nd April, 1836; and he continued to live in Furnival's Inn with his wife for more than a year after their marriage. They passed the summer months of that year in a lodging at Chalk, near Gravesend, in the neighbourhood associated with all his life, from his childhood to his death. The two letters which we publish, addressed to his wife as Miss Hogarth, have no date, but were written in 1835. The first of the two refers to the offer made to him by Chapman and Hall to edit a monthly periodical, the emolument (which he calls "too tempting to resist!") to be fourteen pounds a month. The bargain was concluded, and this was the starting of "The Pickwick Papers." The first number was published in March, 1836. The second letter to Miss Hogarth was written after he had completed three numbers of "Pickwick," and the character who is to "make a decided hit" is "Jingle."

The first letter of this book is addressed to Henry Austin, a friend from his boyhood, who afterwards married his second sister Letitia. It bears no date, but must have been written in 1833 or 1834, during the early days of his reporting for _The Morning Chronicle_; the journey on which he was "ordered" being for that paper.

[Sidenote: Mr. Henry Austin.]

FURNIVAL'S INN, _Wednesday Night, past 12._

DEAR HENRY,

I have just been ordered on a journey, the length of which is at present uncertain. I may be back on Sunday very probably, and start again on the following day. Should this be the case, you shall hear from me before.

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Don't laugh. I am going (alone) in a gig; and, to quote the eloquent inducement which the proprietors of Hampstead _chays_ hold out to Sunday riders--"the gen'l'm'n drives himself." I am going into Essex and Suffolk. It strikes me I shall be spilt before I pay a turnpike. I have a presentiment I shall run over an only child before I reach Chelmsford, my first stage.

Let the evident haste of this specimen of "The Polite Letter Writer" be its excuse, and

Believe me, dear Henry, most sincerely yours,

[HW: Charles Dickens]

NOTE.--To avoid the monotony of a constant repetition, we propose to dispense with the signature at the close of each letter, excepting to the first and last letters of our collection. Charles Dickens's handwriting altered so much during these years of his life, that we have thought it advisable to give a facsimile of his autograph to this our first letter; and we reproduce in the same way his latest autograph.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

FURNIVAL'S INN, _Wednesday Evening, 1835._

MY DEAREST KATE,

The House is up; but I am very sorry to say that I must stay at home. I have had a visit from the publishers this morning, and the story cannot be any longer delayed; it must be done to-morrow, as there are more important considerations than the mere payment for the story involved too. I must exercise a little self-denial, and set to work.

They (Chapman and Hall) have made me an offer of fourteen pounds a month, to write and edit a new publication they contemplate, entirely by myself, to be published monthly, and each number to contain four woodcuts. I am to make my estimate and calculation, and to give them a decisive answer on Friday morning. The work will be no joke, but the emolument is too tempting to resist.

* * * * *

[Sidenote: The same.]

Sunday Evening.

* * * * *

I have at this moment got Pickwick and his friends on the Rochester coach, and they are going on swimmingly, in company with a very different character from any I have yet described, who I flatter myself will make a decided hit. I want to get them from the ball to the inn before I go to bed; and I think that will take me until one or two o'clock at the earliest. The publishers will be here in the morning, so you will readily suppose I have no alternative but to stick at my desk.

* * * * *

1837.

NARRATIVE.

From the commencement of "The Pickwick Papers," and of Charles Dickens's

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married life, dates the commencement of his literary life and his sudden world-wide fame. And this year saw the beginning of many of those friendships which he most valued, and of which he had most reason to be proud, and which friendships were ended only by death.

The first letters which we have been able to procure to Mr. Macready and Mr. Harley will be found under this date. In January, 1837, he was living in Furnival's Inn, where his first child, a son, was born. It was an eventful year to him in many ways. He removed from Furnival's Inn to Doughty Street in March, and here he sustained the first great grief of his life. His young sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth, to whom he was devotedly attached, died very suddenly, at his house, on the 7th May. In the autumn of this year he took lodgings at Broadstairs. This was his first visit to that pleasant little watering-place, of which he became very fond, and whither he removed for the autumn months with all his household, for many years in succession.

Besides the monthly numbers of "Pickwick," which were going on through this year until November, when the last number appeared, he had commenced "Oliver Twist," which was appearing also monthly, in the magazine called "Bentley's Miscellany," long before "Pickwick" was completed. And during this year he had edited, for Mr. Bentley, "The Life of Grimaldi," the celebrated clown. To this book he wrote himself only the preface, and altered and rearranged the autobiographical MS. which was in Mr. Bentley's possession.

The letter to Mr. Harley, which bears no date, but must have been written either in 1836 or 1837, refers to a farce called "The Strange Gentleman" (founded on one of the "Sketches," called the "Great Winglebury Duel"), which he wrote expressly for Mr. Harley, and which was produced at the St. James's Theatre, under the management of Mr. Braham. The only other piece which he wrote for that theatre was the story of an operetta, called "The Village Coquettes," the music of which was composed by Mr. John Hullah.

[Sidenote: Mr. J. P. Harley.]

48, DOUGHTY STREET, _Saturday Morning._

MY DEAR SIR,

I have considered the terms on which I could afford just now to sell Mr. Braham the acting copyright in London of an entirely new piece for the St. James's Theatre; and I could not sit down to write one in a single act of about one hour long, under a hundred pounds. For a new piece in two acts, a hundred and fifty pounds would be the sum I should require.

I do not know whether, with reference to arrangements that were made with any other writers, this may or may not appear a large item. I state it merely with regard to the value of my own time and writings at this moment; and in so doing I assure you I place the remuneration below the mark rather than above it.

As you begged me to give you my reply upon this point, perhaps you will lay it before Mr. Braham. If these terms exceed his inclination or the ability of the theatre, there is an end of the matter, and no harm done.

Believe me ever faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

48, DOUGHTY STREET, _Wednesday Evening._

MY DEAR SIR,

There is a semi-business, semi-pleasure little dinner which I intend to

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give at The Prince of Wales, in Leicester Place, Leicester Square, on Saturday, at five for half-past precisely, at which only Talfourd, Forster, Ainsworth, Jerdan, and the publishers will be present. It is to celebrate (that is too great a word, but I can think of no better) the conclusion of my "Pickwick" labours; and so I intend, before you take that roll upon the grass you spoke of, to beg your acceptance of one of the first complete copies of the work. I shall be much delighted if you would join us.

I know too well the many anxieties that press upon you just now to seek to persuade you to come if you would prefer a night's repose and quiet. Let me assure you, notwithstanding, most honestly and heartily that there is no one I should be more happy or gratified to see, and that among your brilliant circle of well-wishers and admirers you number none more unaffectedly and faithfully yours than,

My dear Sir, yours most truly.

1838.

NARRATIVE.

In February of this year Charles Dickens made an expedition with his friend, and the illustrator of most of his books, Mr. Hablot K. Browne ("Phiz"), to investigate for himself the real facts as to the condition of the Yorkshire schools, and it may be observed that portions of a letter to his wife, dated Greta Bridge, Yorkshire, which will be found among the following letters, were reproduced in "Nicholas Nickleby." In the early summer he had a cottage at Twickenham Park. In August and September he was again at Broadstairs; and in the late autumn he made another bachelor excursion--Mr. Browne being again his companion--in England, which included his first visit to Stratford-on-Avon and Kenilworth. In February appeared the first number of "Nicholas Nickleby," on which work he was engaged all through the year, writing each number ready for the following month, and never being in advance, as was his habit with all his other periodical works, until his very latest ones.

The first letter which appears under this date, from Twickenham Park, is addressed to Mr. Thomas Mitton, a schoolfellow at one of his earliest schools, and afterwards for some years his solicitor. The letter contains instructions for his first will; the friend of almost his whole life, Mr. John Forster, being appointed executor to this will as he was to the last, to which he was "called upon to act" only three years before his own death.

The letter which we give in this year to Mr. Justice Talfourd is, unfortunately, the only one we have been able to procure to that friend, who was, however, one with whom he was most intimately associated, and with whom he maintained a constant correspondence.

The letter beginning "Respected Sir" was an answer to a little boy (Master Hastings Hughes), who had written to him as "Nicholas Nickleby" approached completion, stating his views and wishes as to the rewards and punishments to be bestowed on the various characters in the book. The letter was sent to him through the Rev. Thomas Barham, author of "The Ingoldsby Legends."

The two letters to Mr. Macready, at the end of this year, refer to a farce which Charles Dickens wrote, with an idea that it might be suitable for Covent Garden Theatre, then under Mr. Macready's management.

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[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

GRETA BRIDGE, _Thursday, Feb. 1st, 1838._

MY DEAREST KATE,

I am afraid you will receive this later than I could wish, as the mail does not come through this place until two o'clock to-morrow morning. However, I have availed myself of the very first opportunity of writing, so the fault is that mail's, and not this.

We reached Grantham between nine and ten on Thursday night, and found everything prepared for our reception in the very best inn I have ever put up at. It is odd enough that an old lady, who had been outside all day and came in towards dinner time, turned out to be the mistress of a Yorkshire school returning from the holiday stay in London. She was a very queer old lady, and showed us a long letter she was carrying to one of the boys from his father, containing a severe lecture (enforced and aided by many texts of Scripture) on his refusing to eat boiled meat. She was very communicative, drank a great deal of brandy and water, and towards evening became insensible, in which state we left her.

Yesterday we were up again shortly after seven A.M., came on upon our journey by the Glasgow mail, which charged us the remarkably low sum of six pounds fare for two places inside. We had a very droll male companion until seven o'clock in the evening, and a most delicious lady's-maid for twenty miles, who implored us to keep a sharp look-out at the coach-windows, as she expected the carriage was coming to meet her and she was afraid of missing it. We had many delightful vauntings of the same kind; but in the end it is scarcely necessary to say that the coach did not come, but a very dirty girl did.

As we came further north the mire grew deeper. About eight o'clock it began to fall heavily, and, as we crossed the wild heaths hereabout, there was no vestige of a track. The mail kept on well, however, and at eleven we reached a bare place with a house standing alone in the midst of a dreary moor, which the guard informed us was Greta Bridge. I was in a perfect agony of apprehension, for it was fearfully cold, and there were no outward signs of anybody being up in the house. But to our great joy we discovered a comfortable room, with drawn curtains and a most blazing fire. In half an hour they gave us a smoking supper and a bottle of mulled port (in which we drank your health), and then we retired to a couple of capital bedrooms, in each of which there was a rousing fire halfway up the chimney.

We have had for breakfast, toast, cakes, a Yorkshire pie, a piece of beef about the size and much the shape of my portmanteau, tea, coffee, ham, and eggs; and are now going to look about us. Having finished our discoveries, we start in a postchaise for Barnard Castle, which is only four miles off, and there I deliver the letter given me by Mitton's friend. All the schools are round about that place, and a dozen old abbeys besides, which we shall visit by some means or other to-morrow. We shall reach York on Saturday I hope, and (God willing) I trust I shall be at home on Wednesday morning.

I wish you would call on Mrs. Bentley and thank her for the letter; you can tell her when I expect to be in York.

A thousand loves and kisses to the darling boy, whom I see in my mind's eye crawling about the floor of this Yorkshire inn. Bless his heart, I would give two sovereigns for a kiss. Remember me too to Frederick, who I hope is attentive to you.

Is it not extraordinary that the same dreams which have constantly visited me since poor Mary died follow me everywhere? After all the change of scene and fatigue, I have dreamt of her ever since I left home, and no doubt shall till I return. I should be sorry to lose such visions, for they are very happy ones, if it be only the seeing her in

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one's sleep. I would fain believe, too, sometimes, that her spirit may have some influence over them, but their perpetual repetition is extraordinary.

Love to all friends.

Ever, my dear Kate,
Your affectionate Husband.

[Sidenote: Mr. Thomas Mitton.]

TWICKENHAM PARK, _Tuesday Night._

DEAR TOM,

I sat down this morning and put on paper my testamentary meaning. Whether it is sufficiently legal or not is another question, but I hope it is. The rough draft of the clauses which I enclose will be preceded by as much of the fair copy as I send you, and followed by the usual clause about the receipts of the trustees being a sufficient discharge. I also wish to provide that if all our children should die before twenty-one, and Kate married again, half the surplus should go to her and half to my surviving brothers and sisters, share and share alike.

This will be all, except a few lines I wish to add which there will be no occasion to consult you about, as they will merely bear reference to a few tokens of remembrance and one or two slight funeral directions. And so pray God that you may be gray, and Forster bald, long before you are called upon to act as my executors.

I suppose I shall see you at the water-party on Thursday? We will then make an appointment for Saturday morning, and if you think my clauses will do, I will complete my copy, seal it up, and leave it in your hands. There are some other papers which you ought to have. We must get a box.

Ever yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, M.P.]

TWICKENHAM PARK, _Sunday, July 15th, 1838._

MY DEAR TALFOURD,

I cannot tell you how much pleasure I have derived from the receipt of your letter. I have heard little of you, and seen less, for so long a time, that your handwriting came like the renewal of some old friendship, and gladdened my eyes like the face of some old friend.

If I hear from Lady Holland before you return, I shall, as in duty bound, present myself at her bidding; but between you and me and the general post, I hope she may not renew her invitation until I can visit her with you, as I would much rather avail myself of your personal introduction. However, whatever her ladyship may do I shall respond to, and anyway shall be only too happy to avail myself of what I am sure cannot fail to form a very pleasant and delightful introduction.

Your kind invitation and reminder of the subject of a pleasant conversation in one of our pleasant rides, has thrown a gloom over the brightness of Twickenham, for here I am chained. It is indispensably necessary that "Oliver Twist" should be published in three volumes, in September next. I have only just begun the last one, and, having the constant drawback of my monthly work, shall be sadly harassed to get it finished in time, especially as I have several very important scenes (important to the story I mean) yet to write. Nothing would give me so much pleasure as to be with you for a week or so. I can only imperfectly

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console myself with the hope that when you see "Oliver" you will like the close of the book, and approve my self-denial in staying here to write it. I should like to know your address in Scotland when you leave town, so that I may send you the earliest copy if it be produced in the vacation, which I pray Heaven it may.

Meanwhile, believe that though my body is on the banks of the Thames, half my heart is going the Oxford circuit.

Mrs. Dickens and Charley desire their best remembrances (the latter expresses some anxiety, not unmixed with apprehension, relative to the Copyright Bill, in which he conceives himself interested), with hearty wishes that you may have a fine autumn, which is all you want, being sure of all other means of enjoyment that a man can have.

I am, my dear Talfourd,
Ever faithfully yours.

P.S.--I hope you are able to spare a moment now and then to glance at "Nicholas Nickleby," and that you have as yet found no reason to alter the opinion you formed on the appearance of the first number.

You know, I suppose, that they elected me at the Athenæum? Pray thank Mr. Serjeant Storks for me.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

LION HOTEL, SHREWSBURY, _Thursday, Nov. 1st, 1838._

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I received your welcome letter on arriving here last night, and am rejoiced to hear that the dear children are so much better. I hope that in your next, or your next but one, I shall learn that they are quite well. A thousand kisses to them. I wish I could convey them myself.

We found a roaring fire, an elegant dinner, a snug room, and capital beds all ready for us at Leamington, after a very agreeable (but very cold) ride. We started in a postchaise next morning for Kenilworth, with which we were both enraptured, and where I really think we MUST have lodgings next summer, please God that we are in good health and all goes well. You cannot conceive how delightful it is. To read among the ruins in fine weather would be perfect luxury. From here we went on to Warwick Castle, which is an ancient building, newly restored, and possessing no very great attraction beyond a fine view and some beautiful pictures; and thence to Stratford-upon-Avon, where we sat down in the room where Shakespeare was born, and left our autographs and read those of other people and so forth.

We remained at Stratford all night, and found to our unspeakable dismay that father's plan of proceeding by Bridgenorth was impracticable, as there were no coaches. So we were compelled to come here by way of Birmingham and Wolverhampton, starting at eight o'clock through a cold wet fog, and travelling, when the day had cleared up, through miles of cinder-paths and blazing furnaces, and roaring steam-engines, and such a mass of dirt, gloom, and misery as I never before witnessed. We got pretty well accommodated here when we arrived at half-past four, and are now going off in a postchaise to Llangollen--thirty miles--where we shall remain to-night, and where the Bangor mail will take us up to-morrow. Such are our movements up to this point, and when I have received your letter at Chester I shall write to you again and tell you when I shall be back. I can say positively that I shall not exceed the fortnight, and I think it very possible that I may return a day or two before it expires.

We were at the play last night. It was a bespeak--"The Love Chase," a ballet (with a phenomenon!), divers songs, and "A Roland for an Oliver."

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It is a good theatre, but the actors are very funny. Browne laughed with such indecent heartiness at one point of the entertainment, that an old gentleman in the next box suffered the most violent indignation. The bespeak party occupied two boxes, the ladies were full-dressed, and the gentlemen, to a man, in white gloves with flowers in their button-holes. It amused us mightily, and was really as like the Miss Snevellicci business as it could well be.

My side has been very bad since I left home, although I have been very careful not to drink much, remaining to the full as abstemious as usual, and have not eaten any great quantity, having no appetite. I suffered such an ecstasy of pain all night at Stratford that I was half dead yesterday, and was obliged last night to take a dose of henbane. The effect was most delicious. I slept soundly, and without feeling the least uneasiness, and am a great deal better this morning; neither do I find that the henbane has affected my head, which, from the great effect it had upon me--exhilarating me to the most extraordinary degree, and yet keeping me sleepy--I feared it would. If I had not got better I should have turned back to Birmingham, and come straight home by the railroad. As it is, I hope I shall make out the trip.

God bless you, my darling. I long to be back with you again and to see the sweet Babs.

Your faithful and most affectionate Husband.

[Sidenote: Master Hastings Hughes.]

DOUGHTY STREET, LONDON, _Dec. 12th, 1838._

RESPECTED SIR,

I have given Squeers one cut on the neck and two on the head, at which he appeared much surprised and began to cry, which, being a cowardly thing, is just what I should have expected from him--wouldn't you?

I have carefully done what you told me in your letter about the lamb and the two "sheeps" for the little boys. They have also had some good ale and porter, and some wine. I am sorry you didn't say _what_ wine you would like them to have. I gave them some sherry, which they liked very much, except one boy, who was a little sick and choked a good deal. He was rather greedy, and that's the truth, and I believe it went the wrong way, which I say served him right, and I hope you will say so too.

Nicholas had his roast lamb, as you said he was to, but he could not eat it all, and says if you do not mind his doing so he should like to have the rest hashed to-morrow with some greens, which he is very fond of, and so am I. He said he did not like to have his porter hot, for he thought it spoilt the flavour, so I let him have it cold. You should have seen him drink it. I thought he never would have left off. I also gave him three pounds of money, all in sixpences, to make it seem more, and he said directly that he should give more than half to his mamma and sister, and divide the rest with poor Smike. And I say he is a good fellow for saying so; and if anybody says he isn't I am ready to fight him whenever they like--there!

Fanny Squeers shall be attended to, depend upon it. Your drawing of her is very like, except that I don't think the hair is quite curly enough. The nose is particularly like hers, and so are the legs. She is a nasty disagreeable thing, and I know it will make her very cross when she sees it; and what I say is that I hope it may. You will say the same I know--at least I think you will.

I meant to have written you a long letter, but I cannot write very fast when I like the person I am writing to, because that makes me think about them, and I like you, and so I tell you. Besides, it is just eight o'clock at night, and I always go to bed at eight o'clock, except when

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it is my birthday, and then I sit up to supper. So I will not say anything more besides this--and that is my love to you and Neptune; and if you will drink my health every Christmas Day I will drink yours--come.

I am,
Respected Sir,
Your affectionate Friend.

P.S.--I don't write my name very plain, but you know what it is you know, so never mind.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DOUGHTY STREET, _Monday Morning._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

I have not seen you for the past week, because I hoped when we next met to bring "The Lamplighter" in my hand. It would have been finished by this time, but I found myself compelled to set to work first at the "Nickleby" on which I am at present engaged, and which I regret to say--after my close and arduous application last month--I find I cannot write as quickly as usual. I must finish it, at latest, by the 24th (a doubtful comfort!), and the instant I have done so I will apply myself to the farce. I am afraid to name any particular day, but I pledge myself that you shall have it this month, and you may calculate on that promise. I send you with this a copy of a farce I wrote for Harley when he left Drury Lane, and in which he acted for some seventy nights. It is the best thing he does. It is barely possible you might like to try it. Any local or temporary allusions could be easily altered.

Believe me that I only feel gratified and flattered by your inquiry after the farce, and that if I had as much time as I have inclination, I would write on and on and on, farce after farce and comedy after comedy, until I wrote you something that would run. You do me justice when you give me credit for good intentions; but the extent of my good-will and strong and warm interest in you personally and your great undertaking, you cannot fathom nor express.

Believe me, my dear Macready,
Ever faithfully yours.

P.S.--For Heaven's sake don't fancy that I hold "The Strange Gentleman" in any estimation, or have a wish upon the subject.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C Macready.]

48, DOUGHTY STREET, _December 13th, 1838._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

I can have but one opinion on the subject--withdraw the farce at once, by all means.

I perfectly concur in all you say, and thank you most heartily and cordially for your kind and manly conduct, which is only what I should have expected from you; though, under such circumstances, I sincerely believe there are few but you--if any--who would have adopted it.

Believe me that I have no other feeling of disappointment connected with this matter but that arising from the not having been able to be of some use to you. And trust me that, if the opportunity should ever arrive, my ardour will only be increased--not damped--by the result of this experiment.

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Believe me always, my dear Macready,
Faithfully yours.

1839.

NARRATIVE.

Charles Dickens was still living in Doughty Street, but he removed at the end of this year to 1, Devonshire Terrace, Regent's Park. He hired a cottage at Petersham for the summer months, and in the autumn took lodgings at Broadstairs.

The cottage at Alphington, near Exeter, mentioned in the letter to Mr. Mitton, was hired by Charles Dickens for his parents.

He was at work all through this year on "Nicholas Nickleby."

We have now the commencement of his correspondence with Mr. George Cattermole. His first letter was written immediately after Mr. Cattermole's marriage with Miss Elderton, a distant connection of Charles Dickens; hence the allusions to "cousin," which will be found in many of his letters to Mr. Cattermole. The bride and bridegroom were passing their honeymoon in the neighbourhood of Petersham, and the letter refers to a request from them for the loan of some books, and also to his having lent them his pony carriage and groom, during their stay in this neighbourhood.

The first letter in this year to Mr. Macready is in answer to one from him, announcing his retirement from the management of Covent Garden Theatre.

The portrait by Mr. Maclise, mentioned to Mr. Harley, was the, now, well-known one, which appeared as a frontispiece to "Nicholas Nickleby."

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DOUGHTY STREET, _Sunday._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

I will have, if you please, three dozen of the extraordinary champagne; and I am much obliged to you for recollecting me.

I ought not to be sorry to hear of your abdication, but I am, notwithstanding, most heartily and sincerely sorry, for my own sake and the sake of thousands, who may now go and whistle for a theatre--at least, such a theatre as you gave them; and I do now in my heart believe that for a long and dreary time that exquisite delight has passed away. If I may jest with my misfortunes, and quote the Portsmouth critic of Mr. Crummles's company, I say that: "As an exquisite embodiment of the poet's visions and a realisation of human intellectuality, gilding with refulgent light our dreamy moments, and laying open a new and magic world before the mental eye, the drama is gone--perfectly gone."

With the same perverse and unaccountable feeling which causes a heart-broken man at a dear friend's funeral to see something irresistibly comical in a red-nosed or one-eyed undertaker, I receive your communication with ghostly facetiousness; though on a moment's reflection I find better cause for consolation in the hope that, relieved from your most trying and painful duties, you will now have leisure to return to pursuits more congenial to your mind, and to move more easily and pleasantly among your friends. In the long catalogue of the latter, I believe that there is not one prouder of the name, or more

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grateful for the store of delightful recollections you have enabled him to heap up from boyhood, than,

My dear Macready,
Yours always faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. Thomas Mitton.]

NEW LONDON INN, EXETER,
Wednesday Morning, March 6th, 1839.

DEAR TOM,

Perhaps you have heard from Kate that I succeeded yesterday in the very first walk, and took a cottage at a place called Alphington, one mile from Exeter, which contains, on the ground-floor, a good parlour and kitchen, and above, a full-sized country drawing-room and three bedrooms; in the yard behind, coal-holes, fowl-houses, and meat-safes out of number; in the kitchen, a neat little range; in the other rooms, good stoves and cupboards; and all for twenty pounds a year, taxes included. There is a good garden at the side well stocked with cabbages, beans, onions, celery, and some flowers. The stock belonging to the landlady (who lives in the adjoining cottage), there was some question whether she was not entitled to half the produce, but I settled the point by paying five shillings, and becoming absolute master of the whole!

I do assure you that I am charmed with the place and the beauty of the country round about, though I have not seen it under very favourable circumstances, for it snowed when I was there this morning, and blew bitterly from the east yesterday. It is really delightful, and when the house is to rights and the furniture all in, I shall be quite sorry to leave it. I have had some few things second-hand, but I take it seventy pounds will be the mark, even taking this into consideration. I include in that estimate glass and crockery, garden tools, and such like little things. There is a spare bedroom of course. That I have furnished too.

I am on terms of the closest intimacy with Mrs. Samuell, the landlady, and her brother and sister-in-law, who have a little farm hard by. They are capital specimens of country folks, and I really think the old woman herself will be a great comfort to my mother. Coals are dear just now--twenty-six shillings a ton. They found me a boy to go two miles out and back again to order some this morning. I was debating in my mind whether I should give him eighteenpence or two shillings, when his fee was announced--twopence!

The house is on the high road to Plymouth, and, though in the very heart of Devonshire, there is as much long-stage and posting life as you would find in Piccadilly. The situation is charming. Meadows in front, an orchard running parallel to the garden hedge, richly-wooded hills closing in the prospect behind, and, away to the left, before a splendid view of the hill on which Exeter is situated, the cathedral towers rising up into the sky in the most picturesque manner possible. I don't think I ever saw so cheerful or pleasant a spot. The drawing-room is nearly, if not quite, as large as the outer room of my old chambers in Furnival's Inn. The paint and paper are new, and the place clean as the utmost excess of snowy cleanliness can be.

You would laugh if you could see me powdering away with the upholsterer, and endeavouring to bring about all sorts of impracticable reductions and wonderful arrangements. He has by him two second-hand carpets; the important ceremony of trying the same comes off at three this afternoon. I am perpetually going backwards and forwards. It is two miles from here, so I have plenty of exercise, which so occupies me and prevents my being lonely that I stopped at home to read last night, and shall to-night, although the theatre is open. Charles Kean has been the star for the last two evenings. He was stopping in this house, and went away

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this morning. I have got his sitting-room now, which is smaller and more comfortable than the one I had before.

You will have heard perhaps that I wrote to my mother to come down to-morrow. There are so many things she can make comfortable at a much less expense than I could, that I thought it best. If I had not, I could not have returned on Monday, which I now hope to do, and to be in town at half-past eight.

Will you tell my father that if he could devise any means of bringing him down, I think it would be a great thing for him to have Dash, if it be only to keep down the trampers and beggars. The cheque I send you below.

* * * * *

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

ELM COTTAGE, PETERSHAM, _Wednesday Morning._

MY DEAR CATTERMOLE,

Why is "Peveril" lingering on my dusty shelves in town, while my fair cousin and your fair bride remains in blissful ignorance of his merits? There he is, I grieve to say, but there he shall not be long, for I shall be visiting my other home on Saturday morning, and will bring him bodily down and forward him the moment he arrives.

Not having many of my books here, I don't find any among them which I think more suitable to your purpose than a carpet-bagful sent herewith, containing the Italian and German novelists (convenient as being easily taken up and laid down again; and I suppose you won't read long at a sitting), Leigh Hunt's "Indicator" and "Companion" (which have the same merit), "Hood's Own" (complete), "A Legend of Montrose," and "Kenilworth," which I have just been reading with greater delight than ever, and so I suppose everybody else must be equally interested in. I have Goldsmith, Swift, Fielding, Smollett, and the British Essayists "handy;" and I need not say that you have them on hand too, if you like.

You know all I would say from my heart and soul on the auspicious event of yesterday; but you don't know what I could say about the delightful recollections I have of your "good lady's" charming looks and bearing, upon which I discoursed most eloquently here last evening, and at considerable length. As I am crippled in this respect, however, by the suspicion that possibly she may be looking over your shoulder while you read this note (I would lay a moderate wager that you have looked round twice or thrice already), I shall content myself with saying that I am ever heartily, my dear Cattermole,

Hers and yours.

P.S.--My man (who with his charge is your man while you stay here) waits to know if you have any orders for him.

[Sidenote: Mr. J. P. Harley.]

ELM COTTAGE, PETERSHAM, NEAR RICHMOND,
June 28th, 1839.

MY DEAR HARLEY,

I have "left my home," and been here ever since the end of April, and shall remain here most probably until the end of September, which is the reason that we have been such strangers of late.

I am very sorry that I cannot dine with you on Sunday, but some people are coming here, and I cannot get away. Better luck next time, I hope.

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I was on the point of writing to you when your note came, to ask you if you would come down here next Saturday--to-morrow week, I mean--and stop till Monday. I will either call for you at the theatre, at any time you name, or send for you, "punctual," and have you brought down. Can you come if it's fine? Say yes, like a good fellow as you are, and say it per post.

I have countermanded that face. Maclise has made another face of me, which all people say is astonishing. The engraving will be ready soon, and I would rather you had that, as I am sure you would if you had seen it.

In great haste to save the post, I am, my dear Harley,

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. William Longman.]

DOUGHTY STREET, _Monday Morning._

MY DEAR SIR,

On Friday I have a family dinner at home--uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, cousins--an annual gathering.

By what fatality is it that you always ask me to dine on the wrong day?

While you are tracing this non-consequence to its cause, I wish you would tell Mr. Sydney Smith that of all the men I ever heard of and never saw, I have the greatest curiosity to see and the greatest interest to know him.

Begging my best compliments at home,

I am, my dear Sir,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

PETERSHAM, _July 26th, 1839._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

Fix your visit for whenever you please. It can never give us anything but delight to see you, and it is better to look forward to such a pleasure than to look back upon it, as the last gratification is enjoyable all our lives, and the first for a few short stages in the journey.

I feel more true and cordial pleasure than I can express to you in the request you have made. Anything which can serve to commemorate our friendship and to keep the recollection of it alive among our children is, believe me, and ever will be, most deeply prized by me. I accept the office with hearty and fervent satisfaction; and, to render this pleasant bond between us the more complete, I must solicit you to become godfather to the last and final branch of a genteel small family of three which I am told may be looked for in that auspicious month when Lord Mayors are born and guys prevail. This I look upon as a bargain between us, and I have shaken hands with you in spirit upon it. Family topics remind me of Mr. Kenwigs. As the weather is wet, and he is about to make his last appearance on my little stage, I send Mrs. Macready an early proof of the next number, containing an account of his baby's progress.

I am going to send you something else on Monday--a tragedy. Don't be

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alarmed. I didn't write it, nor do I want it acted. A young Scotch lady whom I don't know (but she is evidently very intelligent and accomplished) has sent me a translation of a German play, soliciting my aid and advice in the matter of its publication. Among a crowd of Germanisms, there are many things in it which are so very striking, that I am sure it will amuse you very much. At least I think it will; it has me. I am going to send it back to her--when I come to Elstree will be time enough; and meantime, if you bestow a couple of hours upon it, you will not think them thrown away.

It's a large parcel, and I must keep it here till somebody goes up to town and can book it by the coach. I warrant it, large as it looks, readable in two hours; and I very much want to know what you think of the first act, and especially the opening, which seems to me quite famous. The metre is very odd and rough, but now and then there's a wildness in it which helps the thing very much; and altogether it has left a something on my mind which I can't get rid of.

Mrs. Dickens joins with me in kindest regards to yourself, Mrs., and Miss Macready. And I am always,

My dear Macready,
Faithfully and truly yours.

P.S.--A dreadful thought has just occurred to me--that this is a quadruple letter, and that Elstree may not be within the twopenny post. Pray Heaven my fears are unfounded.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

40, ALBION STREET, BROADSTAIRS,
September 21st, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY,

I am so anxious to prefer a request to you which does not admit of delay that I send you a double letter, with the one redeeming point though of having very little in it.

Let me prefix to the last number of "Nickleby," and to the book, a duplicate of the leaf which I now send you. Believe me that there will be no leaf in the volume which will afford me in times to come more true pleasure and gratification, than that in which I have written your name as foremost among those of the friends whom I love and honour. Believe me, there will be no one line in it conveying a more honest truth or a more sincere feeling than that which describes its dedication to you as a slight token of my admiration and regard.

So let me tell the world by this frail record that I was a friend of yours, and interested to no ordinary extent in your proceedings at that interesting time when you showed them such noble truths in such noble forms, and gave me a new interest in, and associations with, the labours of so many months.

I write to you very hastily and crudely, for I have been very hard at work, having only finished to-day, and my head spins yet. But you know what I mean. I am then always,

Believe me, my dear Macready,
Faithfully yours.

P.S.--(Proof of Dedication enclosed): "To W. C. Macready, Esq., the following pages are inscribed, as a slight token of admiration and regard, by his friend, the Author."

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[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DOUGHTY STREET, _Friday Night, Oct. 25th, 1839._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

The book, the whole book, and nothing but the book (except the binding, which is an important item), has arrived at last, and is forwarded herewith. The red represents my blushes at its gorgeous dress; the gilding, all those bright professions which I do not make to you; and the book itself, my whole heart for twenty months, which should be yours for so short a term, as you have it always.

With best regards to Mrs. and Miss Macready, always believe me,

My dear Macready,
Your faithful Friend.

[Sidenote: The same.]

DOUGHTY STREET, _Thursday, Nov. 14th, 1839._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

Tom Landseer--that is, the deaf one, whom everybody quite loves for his sweet nature under a most deplorable infirmity--Tom Landseer asked me if I would present to you from him the accompanying engraving, which he has executed from a picture by his brother Edwin; submitting it to you as a little tribute from an unknown but ardent admirer of your genius, which speaks to his heart, although it does not find its way there through his ears. I readily undertook the task, and send it herewith.

I urged him to call upon you with me and proffer it boldly; but he is a very modest and delicately-minded creature, and was shy of intruding. If you thank him through me, perhaps you will say something about my bringing him to call, and so gladden the gentle artist and make him happy.

You must come and see my new house when we have it to rights. By Christmas Day we shall be, I hope, your neighbours.

Kate progresses splendidly, and, with me, sends her best remembrances to Mrs. Macready and all your house.

Ever believe me,
Dear Macready,
Faithfully yours.

1840.

NARRATIVE.

Charles Dickens was at Broadstairs with his family for the autumn months. During all this year he was busily engaged with the periodical entitled "Master Humphrey's Clock," in which the story of "The Old Curiosity Shop" subsequently appeared. Nearly all these letters to Mr. George Cattermole refer to the illustrations for this story.

The one dated March 9th alludes to short papers written for "Master Humphrey's Clock" prior to the commencement of "The Old Curiosity Shop."

We have in this year Charles Dickens's first letter to Mr. Daniel Maclise, this and one other being, unfortunately, the only letters we

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have been able to obtain addressed to this much-loved friend and most intimate companion.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,
Monday, January 13th, 1840.

MY DEAR CATTERMOLE,

I am going to propound a mightily grave matter to you. My now periodical work appears--or I should rather say the first number does--on Saturday, the 28th of March; and as it has to be sent to America and Germany, and must therefore be considerably in advance, it is now in hand; I having in fact begun it on Saturday last. Instead of being published in monthly parts at a shilling each only, it will be published in weekly parts at threepence and monthly parts at a shilling; my object being to baffle the imitators and make it as novel as possible. The plan is a new one--I mean the plan of the fiction--and it will comprehend a great variety of tales. The title is: "Master Humphrey's Clock."

Now, among other improvements, I have turned my attention to the illustrations, meaning to have woodcuts dropped into the text and no separate plates. I want to know whether you would object to make me a little sketch for a woodcut--in indian-ink would be quite sufficient--about the size of the enclosed scrap; the subject, an old quaint room with antique Elizabethan furniture, and in the chimney-corner an extraordinary old clock--the clock belonging to Master Humphrey, in fact, and no figures. This I should drop into the text at the head of my opening page.

I want to know besides--as Chapman and Hall are my partners in the matter, there need be no delicacy about my asking or your answering the question--what would be your charge for such a thing, and whether (if the work answers our expectations) you would like to repeat the joke at regular intervals, and, if so, on what terms? I should tell you that I intend to ask Maclise to join me likewise, and that the copying the drawing on wood and the cutting will be done in first-rate style. We are justified by past experience in supposing that the sale would be enormous, and the popularity very great; and when I explain to you the notes I have in my head, I think you will see that it opens a vast number of very good subjects.

I want to talk the matter over with you, and wish you would fix your own time and place--either here or at your house or at the Athenæum, though this would be the best place, because I have my papers about me. If you would take a chop with me, for instance, on Tuesday or Wednesday, I could tell you more in two minutes than in twenty letters, albeit I have endeavoured to make this as businesslike and stupid as need be.

Of course all these tremendous arrangements are as yet a profound secret, or there would be fifty Humphreys in the field. So write me a line like a worthy gentleman, and convey my best remembrances to your worthy lady.

Believe me always, my dear Cattermole,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Tuesday Afternoon._

MY DEAR CATTERMOLE,

I think the drawing most famous, and so do the publishers, to whom I sent it to-day. If Browne should suggest anything for the future which may enable him to do you justice in copying (on which point he is very

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anxious), I will communicate it to you. It has occurred to me that perhaps you will like to see his copy on the block before it is cut, and I have therefore told Chapman and Hall to forward it to you.

In future, I will take care that you have the number to choose your subject from. I ought to have done so, perhaps, in this case; but I was very anxious that you should do the room.

Perhaps the shortest plan will be for me to send you, as enclosed, regularly; but if you prefer keeping account with the publishers, they will be happy to enter upon it when, where, and how you please.

Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,
Monday, March 9th, 1840.

MY DEAR CATTERMOLE,

I have been induced, on looking over the works of the "Clock," to make a slight alteration in their disposal, by virtue of which the story about "John Podgers" will stand over for some little time, and that short tale will occupy its place which you have already by you, and which treats of the assassination of a young gentleman under circumstances of peculiar aggravation. I shall be greatly obliged to you if you will turn your attention to this last morsel as the feature of No. 3, and still more if you can stretch a point with regard to time (which is of the last importance just now), and make a subject out of it, rather than find one in it. I would neither have made this alteration nor have troubled you about it, but for weighty and cogent reasons which I feel very strongly, and into the composition of which caprice or fastidiousness has no part.

I should tell you perhaps, with reference to Chapman and Hall, that they will never trouble you (as they never trouble me) but when there is real and pressing occasion, and that their representations in this respect, unlike those of most men of business, are to be relied upon.

I cannot tell you how admirably I think Master Humphrey's room comes out, or what glowing accounts I hear of the second design you have done. I had not the faintest anticipation of anything so good--taking into account the material and the despatch.

With best regards at home,
Believe me, dear Cattermole,
Heartily yours.

P.S.--The new (No. 3) tale begins: "I hold a lieutenant's commission in his Majesty's army, and served abroad in the campaigns of 1677 and 1678." It has at present no title.

[Sidenote: Mr. S. A. Diezman.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
LONDON, _10th March, 1840._

MY DEAR SIR,

I will not attempt to tell you how much gratified I have been by the receipt of your first English letter; nor can I describe to you with what delight and gratification I learn that I am held in such high esteem by your great countrymen, whose favourable appreciation is flattering indeed.

To you, who have undertaken the laborious (and often, I fear, very irksome) task of clothing me in the German garb, I owe a long arrear of

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thanks. I wish you would come to England, and afford me an opportunity of slightly reducing the account.

It is with great regret that I have to inform you, in reply to the request contained in your pleasant communication, that my publishers have already made such arrangements and are in possession of such stipulations relative to the proof-sheets of my new works, that I have no power to send them out of England. If I had, I need not tell you what pleasure it would afford me to promote your views.

I am too sensible of the trouble you must have already had with my writings to impose upon you now a long letter. I will only add, therefore, that I am,

My dear Sir,
With great sincerity,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Daniel Maclise.]

BROADSTAIRS, _June 2nd, 1840._

MY DEAR MACLISE,

My foot is in the house,
My bath is on the sea,
And, before I take a souse,
Here's a single note to thee.

It merely says that the sea is in a state of extraordinary sublimity; that this place is, as the Guide Book most justly observes, "unsurpassed for the salubrity of the refreshing breezes, which are wafted on the ocean's pinions from far-distant shores." That we are all right after the perils and voyages of yesterday. That the sea is rolling away in front of the window at which I indite this epistle, and that everything is as fresh and glorious as fine weather and a splendid coast can make it. Bear these recommendations in mind, and shunning Talfourdian pledges, come to the bower which is shaded for you in the one-pair front, where no chair or table has four legs of the same length, and where no drawers will open till you have pulled the pegs off, and then they keep open and won't shut again.

COME!

I can no more.

Always faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _December 21st._

MY DEAR GEORGE,

Kit, the single gentleman, and Mr. Garland go down to the place where the child is, and arrive there at night. There has been a fall of snow. Kit, leaving them behind, runs to the old house, and, with a lanthorn in one hand and the bird in its cage in the other, stops for a moment at a little distance with a natural hesitation before he goes up to make his presence known. In a window--supposed to be that of the child's little room--a light is burning, and in that room the child (unknown, of course, to her visitors, who are full of hope) lies dead.

If you have any difficulty about Kit, never mind about putting him in.

The two others to-morrow.

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Faithfully always.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Friday Morning._

MY DEAR CATTERMOLE,

I sent the MS. of the enclosed proof, marked 2, up to Chapman and Hall, from Devonshire, mentioning a subject of an old gateway, which I had put in expressly with a view to your illustrious pencil. By a mistake, however, it went to Browne instead. Chapman is out of town, and such things have gone wrong in consequence.

The subject to which I wish to call your attention is in an unwritten number to follow this one, but it is a mere echo of what you will find at the conclusion of this proof marked 2. I want the cart, gaily decorated, going through the street of the old town with the wax brigand displayed to fierce advantage, and the child seated in it also dispersing bills. As many flags and inscriptions about Jarley's Wax Work fluttering from the cart as you please. You know the wax brigands, and how they contemplate small oval miniatures? That's the figure I want. I send you the scrap of MS. which contains the subject.

Will you, when you have done this, send it with all speed to Chapman and Hall, as we are mortally pressed for time, and I must go hard to work to make up for what I have lost by being dutiful and going to see my father.

I want to see you about a frontispiece to our first "Clock" volume, which will come out (I think) at the end of September, and about other matters. When shall we meet and where?

I say nothing about our cousin or the baby, for Kate bears this, and will make me a full report and convey all loves and congratulations.

Could you dine with us on Sunday, at six o'clock sharp? I'd come and fetch you in the morning, and we could take a ride and walk. We shall be quite alone, unless Macready comes. What say you?

Don't forget despatch, there's a dear fellow, and ever believe me,

Heartily yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

December 22nd, 1840.

DEAR GEORGE,

The child lying dead in the little sleeping-room, which is behind the open screen. It is winter time, so there are no flowers; but upon her breast and pillow, and about her bed, there may be strips of holly and berries, and such free green things. Window overgrown with ivy. The little boy who had that talk with her about angels may be by the bedside, if you like it so; but I think it will be quieter and more peaceful if she is quite alone. I want it to express the most beautiful repose and tranquillity, and to have something of a happy look, if death can.

2.

The child has been buried inside the church, and the old man, who cannot be made to understand that she is dead, repairs to the grave and sits

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there all day long, waiting for her arrival, to begin another journey. His staff and knapsack, her little bonnet and basket, etc., lie beside him. "She'll come to-morrow," he says when it gets dark, and goes sorrowfully home. I think an hourglass running out would help the notion; perhaps her little things upon his knee, or in his hand.

I am breaking my heart over this story, and cannot bear to finish it.

Love to Missis.

Ever and always heartily.

1841.

NARRATIVE.

In the summer of this year Charles Dickens made, accompanied by Mrs. Dickens, his first visit to Scotland, and was received in Edinburgh with the greatest enthusiasm.

He was at Broadstairs with his family for the autumn, and at the close of the year he went to Windsor for change of air after a serious illness.

On the 17th January "The Old Curiosity Shop" was finished. In the following week the first number of his story of "Barnaby Rudge" appeared, in "Master Humphrey's Clock," and the last number of this story was written at Windsor, in November of this year.

We have the first letters to his dear and valued friends the Rev. William Harness and Mr. Harrison Ainsworth. Also his first letter to Mr. Monckton Milnes (now Lord Houghton).

Of the letter to Mr. John Tomlin we would only remark, that it was published in an American magazine, edited by Mr. E. A. Poe, in the year 1842.

"The New First Rate" (first letter to Mr. Harrison Ainsworth) must, we think, be an allusion to the outside cover of "Bentley's Miscellany," which first appeared in this year, and of which Mr. Ainsworth was editor.

The two letters to Mr. Lovejoy are in answer to a requisition from the people of Reading that he would represent them in Parliament.

The letter to Mr. George Cattermole (26th June) refers to a dinner given to Charles Dickens by the people of Edinburgh, on his first visit to that city.

The "poor Overs," mentioned in the letter to Mr. Macready of 24th August, was a carpenter dying of consumption, to whom Dr. Elliotson had shown extraordinary kindness. "When poor Overs was dying" (wrote Charles Dickens to Mr. Forster), "he suddenly asked for a pen and ink and some paper, and made up a little parcel for me, which it was his last conscious act to direct. She (his wife) told me this, and gave it me. I opened it last night. It was a copy of his little book, in which he had written my name, 'with his devotion.' I thought it simple and affecting of the poor fellow."

"The Saloon," alluded to in our last letter of this year, was an institution at Drury Lane Theatre during Mr. Macready's management. The original purpose for which this saloon was established having become perverted and degraded, Charles Dickens had it much at heart to remodel and improve it. Hence this letter to Mr. Macready.

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[Sidenote: Rev. William Harness.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Saturday Morning, Jan. 2nd, 1841._

MY DEAR HARNESS,

I should have been very glad to join your pleasant party, but all next week I shall be laid up with a broken heart, for I must occupy myself in finishing the "Curiosity Shop," and it is such a painful task to me that I must concentrate myself upon it tooth and nail, and go out nowhere until it is done.

I have delayed answering your kind note in a vague hope of being heart-whole again by the seventh. The present state of my work, however (Christmas not being a very favourable season for making progress in such doings), assures me that this cannot be, and that I must heroically deny myself the pleasure you offer.

Always believe me,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Thursday, Jan. 14th, 1841._

MY DEAR CATTERMOLE,

I cannot tell you how much obliged I am to you for altering the child, or how much I hope that my wish in that respect didn't go greatly against the grain.

I saw the old inn this morning. Words cannot say how good it is. I can't bear the thought of its being cut, and should like to frame and glaze it in _statu quo_ for ever and ever.

Will you do a little tail-piece for the "Curiosity" story?--only one figure if you like--giving some notion of the etherealised spirit of the child; something like those little figures in the frontispiece. If you will, and can despatch it at once, you will make me happy.

I am, for the time being, nearly dead with work and grief for the loss of my child.

Always, my dear George,
Heartily yours.

[Sidenote: The same.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Thursday Night, Jan. 28th, 1841._

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I sent to Chapman and Hall yesterday morning about the second subject for No. 2 of "Barnaby," but found they had sent it to Browne.

The first subject of No. 3 I will either send to you on Saturday, or, at latest, on Sunday morning. I have also directed Chapman and Hall to send you proofs of what has gone before, for reference, if you need it.

I want to know whether you feel ravens in general and would fancy Barnaby's raven in particular. Barnaby being an idiot, my notion is to have him always in company with a pet raven, who is immeasurably more knowing than himself. To this end I have been studying my bird, and think I could make a very queer character of him. Should you like the

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subject when this raven makes his first appearance?

Faithfully always.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Saturday Evening, Jan. 30th, 1841._

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I send you the first four slips of No. 48, containing the description of the locksmith's house, which I think will make a good subject, and one you will like. If you put the "'prentice" in it, show nothing more than his paper cap, because he will be an important character in the story, and you will need to know more about him as he is minutely described. I may as well say that he is very short. Should you wish to put the locksmith in, you will find him described in No. 2 of "Barnaby" (which I told Chapman and Hall to send you). Browne has done him in one little thing, but so very slightly that you will not require to see his sketch, I think.

Now, I must know what you think about the raven, my buck; I otherwise am in this fix. I have given Browne no subject for this number, and time is flying. If you would like to have the raven's first appearance, and don't object to having both subjects, so be it. I shall be delighted. If otherwise, I must feed that hero forthwith.

I cannot close this hasty note, my dear fellow, without saying that I have deeply felt your hearty and most invaluable co-operation in the beautiful illustrations you have made for the last story, that I look at them with a pleasure I cannot describe to you in words, and that it is impossible for me to say how sensible I am of your earnest and friendly aid. Believe me that this is the very first time any designs for what I have written have touched and moved me, and caused me to feel that they expressed the idea I had in my mind.

I am most sincerely and affectionately grateful to you, and am full of pleasure and delight.

Believe me, my dear Cattermole,
Always heartily yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. John Tomlin.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
LONDON, _Tuesday, Feb. 23rd, 1841._

DEAR SIR,

You are quite right in feeling assured that I should answer the letter you have addressed to me. If you had entertained a presentiment that it would afford me sincere pleasure and delight to hear from a warm-hearted and admiring reader of my books in the backwoods of America, you would not have been far wrong.

I thank you cordially and heartily both for your letter and its kind and courteous terms. To think that I have awakened a fellow-feeling and sympathy with the creatures of many thoughtful hours among the vast solitudes in which you dwell, is a source of the purest delight and pride to me; and believe me that your expressions of affectionate remembrance and approval, sounding from the green forests on the banks of the Mississippi, sink deeper into my heart and gratify it more than all the honorary distinctions that all the courts in Europe could confer.

It is such things as these that make one hope one does not live in vain,

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and that are the highest reward of an author's life. To be numbered among the household gods of one's distant countrymen, and associated with their homes and quiet pleasures; to be told that in each nook and corner of the world's great mass there lives one well-wisher who holds communion with one in the spirit, is a worthy fame indeed, and one which I would not barter for a mine of wealth.

That I may be happy enough to cheer some of your leisure hours for a very long time to come, and to hold a place in your pleasant thoughts, is the earnest wish of "Boz."

And, with all good wishes for yourself, and with a sincere reciprocation of all your kindly feeling,

I am, dear Sir,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. R. Monckton Milnes]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Wednesday, March 10th, 1841._

MY DEAR MILNES,

I thank you very much for the "Nickleby" correspondence, which I will keep for a day or two, and return when I see you. Poor fellow! The long letter is quite admirable, and most affecting.

I am not quite sure either of Friday or Saturday, for, independently of the "Clock" (which for ever wants winding), I am getting a young brother off to New Zealand just now, and have my mornings sadly cut up in consequence. But, knowing your ways, I know I may say that I will come if I can; and that if I can't I won't.

That Nellicide was the act of Heaven, as you may see any of these fine mornings when you look about you. If you knew the pain it gave me--but what am I talking of? if you don't know, nobody does. I am glad to shake you by the hand again autographically,

And am always,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Tuesday, February 9th._

MY DEAR GEORGE,

My notes tread upon each other's heels. In my last I quite forgot business.

Will you, for No. 49, do the locksmith's house, which was described in No. 48? I mean the outside. If you can, without hurting the effect, shut up the shop as though it were night, so much the better. Should you want a figure, an ancient watchman in or out of his box, very sleepy, will be just the thing for me.

I have written to Chapman and requested him to send you a block of a long shape, so that the house may come upright as it were.

Faithfully ever.

[Sidenote: The same.]

OLD SHIP HOTEL, BRIGHTON, _Feb. 26th, 1841._

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MY DEAR KITTENMOLES,

I passed your house on Wednesday, being then atop of the Brighton Era; but there was nobody at the door, saving a solitary poulterer, and all my warm-hearted aspirations lodged in the goods he was delivering. No doubt you observed a peculiar relish in your dinner. That was the cause.

I send you the MS. I fear you will have to read all the five slips; but the subject I think of is at the top of the last, when the guest, with his back towards the spectator, is looking out of window. I think, in your hands, it will be a very pretty one.

Then, my boy, when you have done it, turn your thoughts (as soon as other engagements will allow) first to the outside of The Warren--see No. 1; secondly, to the outside of the locksmith's house, by night--see No. 3. Put a penny pistol to Chapman's head and demand the blocks of him.

I have addled my head with writing all day, and have barely wit enough left to send my love to my cousin, and--there's a genealogical poser--what relation of mine may the dear little child be? At present, I desire to be commended to her clear blue eyes.

Always, my dear George,
Faithfully yours,
[HW: Boz.]

[Sidenote: Mr. William Harrison Ainsworth.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _April 29th, 1841._

MY DEAR AINSWORTH,

With all imaginable pleasure. I quite look forward to the day. It is an age since we met, and it ought not to be.

The artist has just sent home your "Nickleby." He suggested variety, pleading his fancy and genius. As an artful binder must have his way, I put the best face on the matter, and gave him his. I will bring it together with the "Pickwick" to your house-warming with me.

The old _Royal George_ went down in consequence of having too much weight on one side. I trust the new "First Rate" won't be heavy anywhere. There seems to me to be too much whisker for a shilling, but that's a matter of taste.

Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: Mr. G. Lovejoy.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
Monday Evening, May 31st, 1841.

SIR,

I am much obliged and flattered by the receipt of your letter, which I should have answered immediately on its arrival but for my absence from home at the moment.

My principles and inclinations would lead me to aspire to the distinction you invite me to seek, if there were any reasonable chance of success, and I hope I should do no discredit to such an honour if I won and wore it. But I am bound to add, and I have no hesitation in saying plainly, that I cannot afford the expense of a contested election. If I could, I would act on your suggestion instantly. I am not

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the less indebted to you and the friends to whom the thought occurred, for your good opinion and approval. I beg you to understand that I am restrained solely (and much against my will) by the consideration I have mentioned, and thank both you and them most warmly.

Yours faithfully.

[Sidenote: The same.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _June 10th, 1841._

DEAR SIR,

I am favoured with your note of yesterday's date, and lose no time in replying to it.

The sum you mention, though small I am aware in the abstract, is greater than I could afford for such a purpose; as the mere sitting in the House and attending to my duties, if I were a member, would oblige me to make many pecuniary sacrifices, consequent upon the very nature of my pursuits.

The course you suggest did occur to me when I received your first letter, and I have very little doubt indeed that the Government would support me--perhaps to the whole extent. But I cannot satisfy myself that to enter Parliament under such circumstances would enable me to pursue that honourable independence without which I could neither preserve my own respect nor that of my constituents. I confess therefore (it may be from not having considered the points sufficiently, or in the right light) that I cannot bring myself to propound the subject to any member of the administration whom I know. I am truly obliged to you nevertheless, and am,

Dear Sir,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Wednesday Evening, July 28th, 1841._

MY DEAR GEORGE,

Can you do for me by Saturday evening--I know the time is short, but I think the subject will suit you, and I am greatly pressed--a party of rioters (with Hugh and Simon Tappertit conspicuous among them) in old John Willet's bar, turning the liquor taps to their own advantage, smashing bottles, cutting down the grove of lemons, sitting astride on casks, drinking out of the best punch-bowls, eating the great cheese, smoking sacred pipes, etc. etc.; John Willet, fallen backward in his chair, regarding them with a stupid horror, and quite alone among them, with none of The Maypole customers at his back.

It's in your way, and you'll do it a hundred times better than I can suggest it to you, I know.

Faithfully always.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

BROADSTAIRS, _Friday, August 6th, 1841._

MY DEAR GEORGE,

Here is a subject for the next number; the next to that I hope to send you the MS. of very early in the week, as the best opportunities of

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illustration are all coming off now, and we are in the thick of the story.

The rioters went, sir, from John Willet's bar (where you saw them to such good purpose) straight to The Warren, which house they plundered, sacked, burned, pulled down as much of as they could, and greatly damaged and destroyed. They are supposed to have left it about half an hour. It is night, and the ruins are here and there flaming and smoking. I want--if you understand--to show one of the turrets laid open--the turret where the alarm-bell is, mentioned in No. 1; and among the ruins (at some height if possible) Mr. Haredale just clutching our friend, the mysterious file, who is passing over them like a spirit; Solomon Daisy, if you can introduce him, looking on from the ground below.

Please to observe that the M. F. wears a large cloak and a slouched hat. This is important, because Browne will have him in the same number, and he has not changed his dress meanwhile. Mr. Haredale is supposed to have come down here on horseback, pell-mell; to be excited to the last degree. I think it will make a queer picturesque thing in your hands. I have told Chapman and Hall that you may like to have a block of a peculiar shape for it. One of them will be with you almost as soon as you receive this.

We are very anxious to know that our cousin is out of her trouble, and you free from your anxiety. Mind you write when it comes off. And when she is quite comfortable come down here for a day or two, like a bachelor, as you will be. It will do you a world of good. Think of that.

Always, dear Cattermole,
Heartily yours.

P.S.--When you have done the subject, I wish you'd write me one line and tell me how, that I may be sure we agree. Loves from Kate.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Thursday, August 13th._

MY DEAR CATTERMOLE,

Will you turn your attention to a frontispiece for our first volume, to come upon the left-hand side of the book as you open it, and to face a plain printed title? My idea is, some scene from the "Curiosity Shop," in a pretty border, or scroll-work, or architectural device; it matters not what, so that it be pretty. The scene even might be a fanciful thing, partaking of the character of the story, but not reproducing any particular passage in it, if you thought that better for the effect.

I ask you to think of this, because, although the volume is not published until the end of September, there is no time to lose. We wish to have it engraved with great care, and worked very skilfully; and this cannot be done unless we get it on the stocks soon.

They will give you every opportunity of correction, alteration, revision, and all other ations and isions connected with the fine arts.

Always believe me,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

BROADSTAIRS, _August 19th, 1841._

MY DEAR GEORGE,

When Hugh and a small body of the rioters cut off from The Warren

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beckoned to their pals, they forced into a very remarkable postchaise Dolly Varden and Emma Haredale, and bore them away with all possible rapidity; one of their company driving, and the rest running beside the chaise, climbing up behind, sitting on the top, lighting the way with their torches, etc. etc. If you can express the women inside without showing them--as by a fluttering veil, a delicate arm, or so forth appearing at the half-closed window--so much the better. Mr. Tappertit stands on the steps, which are partly down, and, hanging on to the window with one hand and extending the other with great majesty, addresses a few words of encouragement to the driver and attendants. Hugh sits upon the bar in front; the driver sitting postilion-wise, and turns round to look through the window behind him at the little doves within. The gentlemen behind are also anxious to catch a glimpse of the ladies. One of those who are running at the side may be gently rebuked for his curiosity by the cudgel of Hugh. So they cut away, sir, as fast as they can.

Always faithfully.

P.S.--John Willet's bar is noble.

We take it for granted that cousin and baby are hearty. Our loves to them.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

BROADSTAIRS, _Tuesday, August 24th, 1841._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

I must thank you, most heartily and cordially, for your kind note relative to poor Overs. I can't tell you how glad I am to know that he thoroughly deserves such kindness.

What a good fellow Elliotson is. He kept him in his room a whole hour, and has gone into his case as if he were Prince Albert; laying down all manner of elaborate projects and determining to leave his friend Wood in town when he himself goes away, on purpose to attend to him. Then he writes me four sides of paper about the man, and says he can't go back to his old work, for that requires muscular exertion (and muscular exertion he mustn't make), what are we to do with him? He says: "Here's five pounds for the present."

I declare before God that I could almost bear the Jones's for five years out of the pleasure I feel in knowing such things, and when I think that every dirty speck upon the fair face of the Almighty's creation, who writes in a filthy, beastly newspaper; every rotten-hearted pander who has been beaten, kicked, and rolled in the kennel, yet struts it in the editorial "We," once a week; every vagabond that an honest man's gorge must rise at; every live emetic in that noxious drug-shop the press, can have his fling at such men and call them knaves and fools and thieves, I grow so vicious that, with bearing hard upon my pen, I break the nib down, and, with keeping my teeth set, make my jaws ache.

I have put myself out of sorts for the day, and shall go and walk, unless the direction of this sets me up again. On second thoughts I think it will.

Always, my dear Macready,
Your faithful Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

BROADSTAIRS, _Sunday, September 12th, 1841._

MY DEAR GEORGE,

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Here is a business letter, written in a scramble just before post time, whereby I dispose of loves to cousin in a line.

Firstly. Will you design, upon a block of wood, Lord George Gordon, alone and very solitary, in his prison in the Tower? The chamber as ancient as you please, and after your own fancy; the time, evening; the season, summer.

Secondly. Will you ditto upon a ditto, a sword duel between Mr. Haredale and Mr. Chester, in a grove of trees? No one close by. Mr. Haredale has just pierced his adversary, who has fallen, dying, on the grass. He (that is, Chester) tries to staunch the wound in his breast with his handkerchief; has his snuffbox on the earth beside him, and looks at Mr. Haredale (who stands with his sword in his hand, looking down on him) with most supercilious hatred, but polite to the last. Mr. Haredale is more sorry than triumphant.

Thirdly. Will you conceive and execute, after your own fashion, a frontispiece for "Barnaby"?

Fourthly. Will you also devise a subject representing "Master Humphrey's Clock" as stopped; his chair by the fireside, empty; his crutch against the wall; his slippers on the cold hearth; his hat upon the chair-back; the MSS. of "Barnaby" and "The Curiosity Shop" heaped upon the table; and the flowers you introduced in the first subject of all withered and dead? Master Humphrey being supposed to be no more.

I have a fifthly, sixthly, seventhly, and eighthly; for I sorely want you, as I approach the close of the tale, but I won't frighten you, so we'll take breath.

Always, my dear Cattermole,
Heartily yours.

P.S.--I have been waiting until I got to subjects of this nature, thinking you would like them best.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

BROADSTAIRS, _September 21st, 1841._

MY DEAR GEORGE,

Will you, before you go on with the other subjects I gave you, do one of Hugh, bareheaded, bound, tied on a horse, and escorted by horse-soldiers to jail? If you can add an indication of old Fleet Market, and bodies of foot soldiers firing at people who have taken refuge on the tops of stalls, bulk-heads, etc., it will be all the better.

Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: Miss Mary Talfourd.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _December 16th, 1841._

MY DEAR MARY,

I should be delighted to come and dine with you on your birthday, and to be as merry as I wish you to be always; but as I am going, within a very few days afterwards, a very long distance from home, and shall not see any of my children for six long months, I have made up my mind to pass all that week at home for their sakes; just as you would like your papa and mamma to spend all the time they possibly could spare with you if they were about to make a dreary voyage to America; which is what I am going to do myself.

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But although I cannot come to see you on that day, you may be sure I shall not forget that it is your birthday, and that I shall drink your health and many happy returns, in a glass of wine, filled as full as it will hold. And I shall dine at half-past five myself, so that we may both be drinking our wine at the same time; and I shall tell my Mary (for I have got a daughter of that name but she is a very small one as yet) to drink your health too; and we shall try and make believe that you are here, or that we are in Russell Square, which is the best thing we can do, I think, under the circumstances.

You are growing up so fast that by the time I come home again I expect you will be almost a woman; and in a very few years we shall be saying to each other: "Don't you remember what the birthdays used to be in Russell Square?" and "How strange it seems!" and "How quickly time passes!" and all that sort of thing, you know. But I shall always be very glad to be asked on your birthday, and to come if you will let me, and to send my love to you, and to wish that you may live to be very old and very happy, which I do now with all my heart.

Believe me always,
My dear Mary,
Yours affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Tuesday, Dec. 28th, 1841._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

This note is about the saloon. I make it as brief as possible. Read it when you have time. As we were the first experimentalists last night you will be glad to know what it wants.

First, the refreshments are preposterously dear. A glass of wine is a shilling, and it ought to be sixpence.

Secondly, they were served out by the wrong sort of people--two most uncomfortable drabs of women, and a dirty man with his hat on.

Thirdly, there ought to be a box-keeper to ring a bell or give some other notice of the commencement of the overture to the after-piece. The promenaders were in a perpetual fret and worry to get back again.

And fourthly, and most important of all--if the plan is ever to succeed--you must have some notice up to the effect that as it is now a place of resort for ladies, gentlemen are requested not to lounge there in their hats and greatcoats. No ladies will go there, though the conveniences should be ten thousand times greater, while the sort of swells who have been used to kick their heels there do so in the old sort of way. I saw this expressed last night more strongly than I can tell you.

Hearty congratulations on the brilliant triumph. I have always expected one, as you know, but nobody could have imagined the reality.

Always, my dear Macready,
Affectionately yours.

1842.

NARRATIVE.

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In January of this year Charles Dickens went, with his wife, to America, the house in Devonshire Terrace being let for the term of their absence (six months), and the four children left in a furnished house in Osnaburgh Street, Regent's Park, under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Macready. They returned from America in July, and in August went to Broadstairs for the autumn months as usual, and in October Charles Dickens made an expedition to Cornwall, with Mr. Forster, Mr. Maclise, and Mr. Stanfield for his companions.

During his stay at Broadstairs he was engaged in writing his "American Notes," which book was published in October. At the end of the year he had written the first number of "Martin Chuzzlewit," which appeared in January, 1843.

An extract from a letter, addressed to Messrs. Chapman and Hall before his departure for America, is given as a testimony of the estimation in which Charles Dickens held the firm with whom he was connected for so many years.

His letters to Mr. H. P. Smith, for many years actuary of the Eagle Insurance Office, are a combination of business and friendship. Mr. Smith gives us, as an explanation of a note to him, dated 14th July, that he alluded to the stamp of the office upon the cheque, which was, as he described it, "almost a work of art"--a truculent-looking eagle seated on a rock and scattering rays over the whole sheet.

Of letters written by Charles Dickens in America we have been able to obtain very few. One, to Dr. F. H. Deane, Cincinnati, complying with his request to write him an epitaph for the tombstone of his little child, has been kindly copied for us from an album, by Mrs. Fields, of Boston. Therefore, it is not directly received, but as we have no doubt of its authenticity, we give it here; and there is one to Mr. Halleck, the American poet.

At the close of the voyage to America (a very bad and dangerous one), a meeting of the passengers, with Lord Mulgrave in the chair, took place, and a piece of plate and thanks were voted to the captain of the _Britannia_, Captain Hewett. The vote of thanks, being drawn up by Charles Dickens, is given here. We have letters in this year to Mr. Thomas Hood, Miss Pardoe, Mrs. Trollope, and Mr. W. P. Frith. The last-named artist--then a very young man--had made great success with several charming pictures of Dolly Varden. One of these was bought by Charles Dickens, who ordered a companion picture of Kate Nickleby, from the young painter, whose acquaintance he made at the same time; and the two letters to Mr. Frith have reference to the purchase of the one picture and the commission for the other.

The letter to Mr. Cattermole is an acknowledgment also of a completed commission of two water-colour drawings, from the subjects of two of Mr. Cattermole's illustrations to "The Old Curiosity Shop."

A note to Mr. Macready, at the close of this year, refers to the first representation of Mr. Westland Marston's play, "The Patrician's Daughter." Charles Dickens took great interest in the production of this work at Drury Lane. It was, to a certain extent, an experiment of the effect of a tragedy of modern times and in modern dress; and the prologue, which Charles Dickens wrote and which we give, was intended to show that there need be no incongruity between plain clothes of this century and high tragedy. The play was quite successful.

[Sidenote: Messrs. Chapman and Hall.]

* * * * *

Having disposed of the business part of this letter, I should not feel at ease on leaving England if I did not tell you once more with my whole heart that your conduct to me on this and all other occasions has been

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honourable, manly, and generous, and that I have felt it a solemn duty, in the event of any accident happening to me while I am away, to place this testimony upon record. It forms part of a will I have made for the security of my children; for I wish them to know it when they are capable of understanding your worth and my appreciation of it.

Always believe me,
Faithfully and truly yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Thomas Mitton.]

ADELPHI HOTEL, LIVERPOOL, _Monday, Jan. 3rd, 1842._

MY DEAR MITTON,

This is a short note, but I will fulfil the adage and make it a merry one.

We came down in great comfort. Our luggage is now aboard. Anything so utterly and monstrously absurd as the size of our cabin, no "gentleman of England who lives at home at ease" can for a moment imagine. Neither of the portmanteaus would go into it. There!

These Cunard packets are not very big you know actually, but the quantity of sleeping-berths makes them much smaller, so that the saloon is not nearly as large as in one of the Ramsgate boats. The ladies' cabin is so close to ours that I could knock the door open without getting off something they call my bed, but which I believe to be a muffin beaten flat. This is a great comfort, for it is an excellent room (the only good one in the ship); and if there be only one other lady besides Kate, as the stewardess thinks, I hope I shall be able to sit there very often.

They talk of seventy passengers, but I can't think there will be so many; they talk besides (which is even more to the purpose) of a very fine passage, having had a noble one this time last year. God send it so! We are in the best spirits, and full of hope. I was dashed for a moment when I saw our "cabin," but I got over that directly, and laughed so much at its ludicrous proportions, that you might have heard me all over the ship.

God bless you! Write to me by the first opportunity. I will do the like to you. And always believe me,

Your old and faithful Friend.

NARRATIVE.

At a meeting of the passengers on board the _Britannia_ steam-ship, travelling from Liverpool to Boston, held in the saloon of that vessel, on Friday, the 21st January, 1842, it was moved and seconded:

"That the Earl of Mulgrave do take the chair."

The motion having been carried unanimously, the Earl of Mulgrave took the chair accordingly.

It was also moved and seconded, and carried unanimously:

"That Charles Dickens, Esq., be appointed
secretary and treasurer to the meeting."

The three following resolutions were then proposed and carried _nem.

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con._:

> "First. That, gratefully recognising the blessing of Divine Providence by which we are brought nearly to the termination of our voyage, we have great pleasure in expressing our high appreciation of Captain Hewett's nautical skill and of his indefatigable attention to the management and safe conduct of the ship, during a more than ordinarily tempestuous passage.
>
> "Secondly. That a subscription be opened for the purchase of a piece of silver plate, and that Captain Hewett be respectfully requested to accept it, as a sincere expression of the sentiments embodied in the foregoing resolution.
>
> "Thirdly. That a committee be appointed to carry these resolutions into effect; and that the committee be composed of the following gentlemen: Charles Dickens, Esq., E. Dunbar, Esq., and Solomon Hopkins, Esq."

The committee having withdrawn and conferred with Captain Hewett, returned, and informed the meeting that Captain Hewett desired to attend and express his thanks, which he did.

The amount of the subscription was reported at fifty pounds, and the list was closed. It was then agreed that the following inscription should be placed upon the testimonial to Captain Hewett:

> THIS PIECE OF PLATE
> was presented to
> CAPTAIN JOHN HEWETT,
> of the BRITANNIA Steam-ship,
>
> By the Passengers on board that vessel in a voyage from Liverpool to Boston, in the month of January, 1842,
>
> As a slight acknowledgment of his great ability and skill under circumstances of much difficulty and danger,
> And as a feeble token of their lasting gratitude.

Thanks were then voted to the chairman and to the secretary, and the meeting separated.

[Sidenote: Mr. Thomas Mitton.]

TREMONT HOUSE, BOSTON, _January 31st, 1842._

MY DEAR MITTON,

I am so exhausted with the life I am obliged to lead here, that I have had time to write but one letter which is at all deserving of the name, as giving any account of our movements. Forster has it, in trust, to tell you all its news; and he has also some newspapers which I had an opportunity of sending him, in which you will find further particulars of our progress.

We had a dreadful passage, the worst, the officers all concur in saying, that they have ever known. We were eighteen days coming; experienced a dreadful storm which swept away our paddle-boxes and stove our lifeboats; and ran aground besides, near Halifax, among rocks and breakers, where we lay at anchor all night. After we left the English Channel we had only one fine day. And we had the additional discomfort

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of being eighty-six passengers. I was ill five days, Kate six; though, indeed, she had a swelled face and suffered the utmost terror all the way.

I can give you no conception of my welcome here. There never was a king or emperor upon the earth so cheered and followed by crowds, and entertained in public at splendid balls and dinners, and waited on by public bodies and deputations of all kinds. I have had one from the Far West--a journey of two thousand miles! If I go out in a carriage, the crowd surround it and escort me home; if I go to the theatre, the whole house (crowded to the roof) rises as one man, and the timbers ring again. You cannot imagine what it is. I have five great public dinners on hand at this moment, and invitations from every town and village and city in the States.

There is a great deal afloat here in the way of subjects for description. I keep my eyes open pretty wide, and hope to have done so to some purpose by the time I come home.

When you write to me again--I say again, hoping that your first letter will be soon upon its way here--direct to me to the care of David Colden, Esq., New York. He will forward all communications by the quickest conveyance and will be perfectly acquainted with all my movements.

Always your faithful Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. Fitz-Greene Halleck.]

CARLTON HOUSE, _February 14th, 1842._

MY DEAR SIR,

Will you come and breakfast with me on Tuesday, the 22nd, at half-past ten? Say yes. I should have been truly delighted to have a talk with you to-night (being quite alone), but the doctor says that if I talk to man, woman, or child this evening I shall be dumb to-morrow.

Believe me, with true regard,
Faithfully your Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

BALTIMORE, _March 22nd, 1842._

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I beg your pardon, but you were speaking of rash leaps at hasty conclusions. Are you quite sure you designed that remark for me? Have you not, in the hurry of correspondence, slipped a paragraph into my letter which belongs of right to somebody else? When did you ever find me leap at wrong conclusions? I pause for a reply.

Pray, sir, did you ever find me admiring Mr. ----? On the contrary, did you never hear of my protesting through good, better, and best report that he was not an open or a candid man, and would one day, beyond all doubt, displease you by not being so? I pause again for a reply.

Are you quite sure, Mr. Macready--and I address myself to you with the sternness of a man in the pit--are you quite sure, sir, that you do not view America through the pleasant mirage which often surrounds a thing that has been, but not a thing that is? Are you quite sure that when you were here you relished it as well as you do now when you look back upon it. The early spring birds, Mr. Macready, _do_ sing in the groves that you were, very often, not over well pleased with many of the new country's social aspects. Are the birds to be trusted? Again I pause for

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a reply.

My dear Macready, I desire to be so honest and just to those who have so enthusiastically and earnestly welcomed me, that I burned the last letter I wrote to you--even to you to whom I would speak as to myself--rather than let it come with anything that might seem like an ill-considered word of disappointment. I preferred that you should think me neglectful (if you could imagine anything so wild) rather than I should do wrong in this respect. Still it is of no use. I _am_ disappointed. This is not the republic I came to see; this is not the republic of my imagination. I infinitely prefer a liberal monarchy--even with its sickening accompaniments of court circulars--to such a government as this. The more I think of its youth and strength, the poorer and more trifling in a thousand aspects it appears in my eyes. In everything of which it has made a boast--excepting its education of the people and its care for poor children--it sinks immeasurably below the level I had placed it upon; and England, even England, bad and faulty as the old land is, and miserable as millions of her people are, rises in the comparison.

You live here, Macready, as I have sometimes heard you imagining! _You!_ Loving you with all my heart and soul, and knowing what your disposition really is, I would not condemn you to a year's residence on this side of the Atlantic for any money. Freedom of opinion! Where is it? I see a press more mean, and paltry, and silly, and disgraceful than any country I ever knew. If that is its standard, here it is. But I speak of Bancroft, and am advised to be silent on that subject, for he is "a black sheep--a Democrat." I speak of Bryant, and am entreated to be more careful, for the same reason. I speak of international copyright, and am implored not to ruin myself outright. I speak of Miss Martineau, and all parties--Slave Upholders and Abolitionists, Whigs, Tyler Whigs, and Democrats, shower down upon me a perfect cataract of abuse. "But what has she done? Surely she praised America enough!" "Yes, but she told us of some of our faults, and Americans can't bear to be told of their faults. Don't split on that rock, Mr. Dickens, don't write about America; we are so very suspicious."

Freedom of opinion! Macready, if I had been born here and had written my books in this country, producing them with no stamp of approval from any other land, it is my solemn belief that I should have lived and died poor, unnoticed, and a "black sheep" to boot. I never was more convinced of anything than I am of that.

The people are affectionate, generous, open-hearted, hospitable, enthusiastic, good-humoured, polite to women, frank and candid to all strangers, anxious to oblige, far less prejudiced than they have been described to be, frequently polished and refined, very seldom rude or disagreeable. I have made a great many friends here, even in public conveyances, whom I have been truly sorry to part from. In the towns I have formed perfect attachments. I have seen none of that greediness and indecorousness on which travellers have laid so much emphasis. I have returned frankness with frankness; met questions not intended to be rude, with answers meant to be satisfactory; and have not spoken to one man, woman, or child of any degree who has not grown positively affectionate before we parted. In the respects of not being left alone, and of being horribly disgusted by tobacco chewing and tobacco spittle, I have suffered considerably. The sight of slavery in Virginia, the hatred of British feeling upon the subject, and the miserable hints of the impotent indignation of the South, have pained me very much; on the last head, of course, I have felt nothing but a mingled pity and amusement; on the other, sheer distress. But however much I like the ingredients of this great dish, I cannot but come back to the point upon which I started, and say that the dish itself goes against the grain with me, and that I don't like it.

You know that I am truly a Liberal. I believe I have as little pride as most men, and I am conscious of not the smallest annoyance from being "hail fellow well met" with everybody. I have not had greater pleasure

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in the company of any set of men among the thousands I have received (I hold a regular levée every day, you know, which is duly heralded and proclaimed in the newspapers) than in that of the carmen of Hertford, who presented themselves in a body in their blue frocks, among a crowd of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, and bade me welcome through their spokesman. They had all read my books, and all perfectly understood them. It is not these things I have in my mind when I say that the man who comes to this country a Radical and goes home again with his opinions unchanged, must be a Radical on reason, sympathy, and reflection, and one who has so well considered the subject that he has no chance of wavering.

We have been to Boston, Worcester, Hertford, New Haven, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Fredericksburgh, Richmond, and back to Washington again. The premature heat of the weather (it was eighty yesterday in the shade) and Clay's advice--how you would like Clay!--have made us determine not to go to Charleston; but having got to Richmond, I think I should have turned back under any circumstances. We remain at Baltimore for two days, of which this is one; then we go to Harrisburgh. Then by the canal boat and the railroad over the Alleghany Mountains to Pittsburgh, then down the Ohio to Cincinnati, then to Louisville, and then to St. Louis. I have been invited to a public entertainment in every town I have entered, and have refused them; but I have excepted St. Louis as the farthest point of my travels. My friends there have passed some resolutions which Forster has, and will show you. From St. Louis we cross to Chicago, traversing immense prairies. Thence by the lakes and Detroit to Buffalo, and so to Niagara. A run into Canada follows of course, and then--let me write the blessed word in capitals--we turn towards HOME.

Kate has written to Mrs. Macready, and it is useless for me to thank you, my dearest friend, or her, for your care of our dear children, which is our constant theme of discourse. Forster has gladdened our hearts with his account of the triumph of "Acis and Galatea," and I am anxiously looking for news of the tragedy. Forrest breakfasted with us at Richmond last Saturday--he was acting there, and I invited him--and he spoke very gratefully, and very like a man, of your kindness to him when he was in London.

David Colden is as good a fellow as ever lived; and I am deeply in love with his wife. Indeed we have received the greatest and most earnest and zealous kindness from the whole family, and quite love them all. Do you remember one Greenhow, whom you invited to pass some days with you at the hotel on the Kaatskill Mountains? He is translator to the State Office at Washington, has a very pretty wife, and a little girl of five years old. We dined with them, and had a very pleasant day. The President invited me to dinner, but I couldn't stay for it. I had a private audience, however, and we attended the public drawing-room besides.

Now, don't you rush at the quick conclusion that I have rushed at a quick conclusion. Pray, be upon your guard. If you can by any process estimate the extent of my affectionate regard for you, and the rush I shall make when I reach London to take you by your true right hand, I don't object. But let me entreat you to be very careful how you come down upon the sharpsighted individual who pens these words, which you seem to me to have done in what Willmott would call "one of Mr. Macready's rushes." As my pen is getting past its work, I have taken a new one to say that

I am ever, my dear Macready,
Your faithful Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. Thomas Mitton.]

BALTIMORE, UNITED STATES, _March 22nd, 1842._

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MY DEAR FRIEND,

We have been as far south as Richmond in Virginia (where they grow and manufacture tobacco, and where the labour is all performed by slaves), but the season in those latitudes is so intensely and prematurely hot, that it was considered a matter of doubtful expediency to go on to Charleston. For this unexpected reason, and because the country between Richmond and Charleston is but a desolate swamp the whole way, and because slavery is anything but a cheerful thing to live amidst, I have altered my route by the advice of Mr. Clay (the great political leader in this country), and have returned here previous to diving into the far West. We start for that part of the country--which includes mountain travelling, and lake travelling, and prairie travelling--the day after to-morrow, at eight o'clock in the morning; and shall be in the West, and from there going northward again, until the 30th of April or 1st of May, when we shall halt for a week at Niagara, before going further into Canada. We have taken our passage home (God bless the word) in the _George Washington_ packet-ship from New York. She sails on the 7th of June.

I have departed from my resolution not to accept any more public entertainments; they have been proposed in every town I have visited--in favour of the people of St. Louis, my utmost western point. That town is on the borders of the Indian territory, a trifling distance from this place--only two thousand miles! At my second halting-place I shall be able to write to fix the day; I suppose it will be somewhere about the 12th of April. Think of my going so far towards the setting sun to dinner!

In every town where we stay, though it be only for a day, we hold a regular levée or drawing-room, where I shake hands on an average with five or six hundred people, who pass on from me to Kate, and are shaken again by her. Maclise's picture of our darlings stands upon a table or sideboard the while; and my travelling secretary, assisted very often by a committee belonging to the place, presents the people in due form. Think of two hours of this every day, and the people coming in by hundreds, all fresh, and piping hot, and full of questions, when we are literally exhausted and can hardly stand. I really do believe that if I had not a lady with me, I should have been obliged to leave the country and go back to England. But for her they never would leave me alone by day or night, and as it is, a slave comes to me now and then in the middle of the night with a letter, and waits at the bedroom door for an answer.

It was so hot at Richmond that we could scarcely breathe, and the peach and other fruit trees were in full blossom; it was so cold at Washington next day that we were shivering; but even in the same town you might often wear nothing but a shirt and trousers in the morning, and two greatcoats at night, the thermometer very frequently taking a little trip of thirty degrees between sunrise and sunset.

They do lay it on at the hotels in such style! They charge by the day, so that whether one dines out or dines at home makes no manner of difference. T'other day I wrote to order our rooms at Philadelphia to be ready on a certain day, and was detained a week longer than I expected in New York. The Philadelphia landlord not only charged me half rent for the rooms during the whole of that time, but board for myself and Kate and Anne during the whole time too, though we were actually boarding at the same expense during the same time in New York! What do you say to that? If I remonstrated, the whole virtue of the newspapers would be aroused directly.

We were at the President's drawing-room while we were in Washington. I had a private audience besides, and was asked to dinner, but couldn't stay.

Parties--parties--parties--of course, every day and night. But it's not all parties. I go into the prisons, the police-offices, the

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watch-houses, the hospitals, the workhouses. I was out half the night in New York with two of their most famous constables; started at midnight, and went into every brothel, thieves' house, murdering hovel, sailors' dancing-place, and abode of villany, both black and white, in the town. I went _incog._ behind the scenes to the little theatre where Mitchell is making a fortune. He has been rearing a little dog for me, and has called him "Boz."[1] I am going to bring him home. In a word I go everywhere, and a hard life it is. But I am careful to drink hardly anything, and not to smoke at all. I have recourse to my medicine-chest whenever I feel at all bilious, and am, thank God, thoroughly well.

When I next write to you, I shall have begun, I hope, to turn my face homeward. I have a great store of oddity and whimsicality, and am going now into the oddest and most characteristic part of this most queer country.

Always direct to the care of David Colden, Esq., 28, Laight Street, Hudson Square, New York. I received your Caledonia letter with the greatest joy.

Kate sends her best remembrances.

And I am always.

P.S.--Richmond was my extreme southern point, and I turn from the South altogether the day after to-morrow. Will you let the Britannia[2] know of this change--if needful?

[Sidenote: Dr. F. H. Deane.]

CINCINNATI, OHIO, _April 4th, 1842._

MY DEAR SIR,

I have not been unmindful of your request for a moment, but have not been able to think of it until now. I hope my good friends (for whose christian-names I have left blanks in the epitaph) may like what I have written, and that they will take comfort and be happy again. I sail on the 7th of June, and purpose being at the Carlton House, New York, about the 1st. It will make me easy to know that this letter has reached you.

Faithfully yours.

This is the Grave of a Little Child,

WHOM GOD IN HIS GOODNESS CALLED TO A BRIGHT ETERNITY
WHEN HE WAS VERY YOUNG.

HARD AS IT IS FOR HUMAN AFFECTION TO RECONCILE ITSELF
TO DEATH IN ANY
SHAPE (AND MOST OF ALL, PERHAPS, AT FIRST IN THIS),

HIS PARENTS CAN EVEN NOW BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE A CONSOLATION
TO THEM THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES,

AND WHEN THEY SHALL HAVE GROWN OLD AND GRAY,

Always to think of him as a Child in Heaven.

"_And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him
in the midst of them._"

HE WAS THE SON OF Q---- AND M---- THORNTON, CHRISTENED

CHARLES JERKING.

HE WAS BORN ON THE 20TH DAY OF JANUARY, 1841,

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[Sidenote: Mr. Henry Austin.]

NIAGARA FALLS (English Side),
Sunday, May 1st, 1842.

MY DEAR HENRY,

Although I date this letter as above, it will not be so old a one as at first sight it would appear to be when it reaches you. I shall carry it on with me to Montreal, and despatch it from there by the steamer which goes to Halifax, to meet the Cunard boat at that place, with Canadian letters and passengers. Before I finally close it, I will add a short postscript, so that it will contain the latest intelligence.

We have had a blessed interval of quiet in this beautiful place, of which, as you may suppose, we stood greatly in need, not only by reason of our hard travelling for a long time, but on account of the incessant persecutions of the people, by land and water, on stage coach, railway car, and steamer, which exceeds anything you can picture to yourself by the utmost stretch of your imagination. So far we have had this hotel nearly to ourselves. It is a large square house, standing on a bold height, with overhanging eaves like a Swiss cottage, and a wide handsome gallery outside every story. These colonnades make it look so very light, that it has exactly the appearance of a house built with a pack of cards; and I live in bodily terror lest any man should venture to step out of a little observatory on the roof, and crush the whole structure with one stamp of his foot.

Our sitting-room (which is large and low like a nursery) is on the second floor, and is so close to the Falls that the windows are always wet and dim with spray. Two bedrooms open out of it--one our own; one Anne's. The secretary slumbers near at hand, but without these sacred precincts. From the three chambers, or any part of them, you can see the Falls rolling and tumbling, and roaring and leaping, all day long, with bright rainbows making fiery arches down a hundred feet below us. When the sun is on them, they shine and glow like molten gold. When the day is gloomy, the water falls like snow, or sometimes it seems to crumble away like the face of a great chalk cliff, or sometimes again to roll along the front of the rock like white smoke. But it all seems gay or gloomy, dark or light, by sun or moon. From the bottom of both Falls, there is always rising up a solemn ghostly cloud, which hides the boiling cauldron from human sight, and makes it in its mystery a hundred times more grand than if you could see all the secrets that lie hidden in its tremendous depth. One Fall is as close to us as York Gate is to No. 1, Devonshire Terrace. The other (the great Horse-shoe Fall) may be, perhaps, about half as far off as "Creedy's."[3] One circumstance in connection with them is, in all the accounts, greatly exaggerated--I mean the noise. Last night was perfectly still. Kate and I could just hear them, at the quiet time of sunset, a mile off. Whereas, believing the statements I had heard I began putting my ear to the ground, like a savage or a bandit in a ballet, thirty miles off, when we were coming here from Buffalo.

I was delighted to receive your famous letter, and to read your account of our darlings, whom we long to see with an intensity it is impossible to shadow forth, ever so faintly. I do believe, though I say it as shouldn't, that they are good 'uns--both to look at and to go. I roared out this morning, as soon as I was awake, "Next month," which we have been longing to be able to say ever since we have been here. I really do not know how we shall ever knock at the door, when that slowest of all impossibly slow hackney-coaches shall pull up--at home.

I am glad you exult in the fight I have had about the copyright. If you knew how they tried to stop me, you would have a still greater interest

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in it. The greatest men in England have sent me out, through Forster, a very manly, and becoming, and spirited memorial and address, backing me in all I have done. I have despatched it to Boston for publication, and am coolly prepared for the storm it will raise. But my best rod is in pickle.

Is it not a horrible thing that scoundrel booksellers should grow rich here from publishing books, the authors of which do not reap one farthing from their issue by scores of thousands; and that every vile, blackguard, and detestable newspaper, so filthy and bestial that no honest man would admit one into his house for a scullery door-mat, should be able to publish those same writings side by side, cheek by jowl, with the coarsest and most obscene companions with which they must become connected, in course of time, in people's minds? Is it tolerable that besides being robbed and rifled an author should be forced to appear in any form, in any vulgar dress, in any atrocious company; that he should have no choice of his audience, no control over his own distorted text, and that he should be compelled to jostle out of the course the best men in this country who only ask to live by writing? I vow before high heaven that my blood so boils at these enormities, that when I speak about them I seem to grow twenty feet high, and to swell out in proportion. "Robbers that ye are," I think to myself when I get upon my legs, "here goes!"

The places we have lodged in, the roads we have gone over, the company we have been among, the tobacco-spittle we have wallowed in, the strange customs we have complied with, the packing-cases in which we have travelled, the woods, swamps, rivers, prairies, lakes, and mountains we have crossed, are all subjects for legends and tales at home; quires, reams, wouldn't hold them. I don't think Anne has so much as seen an American tree. She never looks at a prospect by any chance, or displays the smallest emotion at any sight whatever. She objects to Niagara that "it's nothing but water," and considers that "there is too much of that."

I suppose you have heard that I am going to act at the Montreal theatre with the officers? Farce-books being scarce, and the choice consequently limited, I have selected Keeley's part in "Two o'Clock in the Morning." I wrote yesterday to Mitchell, the actor and manager at New York, to get and send me a comic wig, light flaxen, with a small whisker halfway down the cheek; over this I mean to wear two night-caps, one with a tassel and one of flannel; a flannel wrapper, drab tights and slippers, will complete the costume.

I am very sorry to hear that business is so flat, but the proverb says it never rains but it pours, and it may be remarked with equal truth upon the other side, that it never _don't_ rain but it holds up very much indeed. You will be busy again long before I come home, I have no doubt.

We purpose leaving this on Wednesday morning. Give my love to Letitia and to mother, and always believe me, my dear Henry,

Affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Henry Austin.]

MONTREAL, CANADA, _May 12th, 1842._

All well, though (with the exception of one from Fred) we have received no letters whatever by the _Caledonia_. We have experienced impossible-to-be-described attentions in Canada. Everybody's carriage and horses are at our disposal, and everybody's servants; and all the Government boats and boats' crews. We shall play, between the 20th and the 25th, "A Roland for an Oliver," "Two o'Clock in the Morning," and "Deaf as a Post."

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[Sidenote: Mr. Thomas Longman.]

ATHENÆUM, _Friday Afternoon._

MY DEAR SIR,

If I could possibly have attended the meeting yesterday I would most gladly have done so. But I have been up the whole night, and was too much exhausted even to write and say so before the proceedings came on.

I have fought the fight across the Atlantic with the utmost energy I could command; have never been turned aside by any consideration for an instant; am fresher for the fray than ever; will battle it to the death, and die game to the last.

I am happy to say that my boy is quite well again. From being in perfect health he fell into alarming convulsions with the surprise and joy of our return.

I beg my regards to Mrs. Longman,

And am always,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Pardoe.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
July 19th, 1842.

DEAR MADAM,

I beg to set you right on one point in reference to the American robbers, which perhaps you do not quite understand.

The existing law allows them to reprint any English book, without any communication whatever with the author or anybody else. My books have all been reprinted on these agreeable terms.

But sometimes, when expectation is awakened there about a book before its publication, one firm of pirates will pay a trifle to procure early proofs of it, and get so much the start of the rest as they can obtain by the time necessarily consumed in printing it. Directly it is printed it is common property, and may be reprinted a thousand times. My circular only referred to such bargains as these.

I should add that I have no hope of the States doing justice in this dishonest respect, and therefore do not expect to overtake these fellows, but we may cry "Stop thief!" nevertheless, especially as they wince and smart under it.

Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: Mr. H. P. Smith.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Thursday, July 14th, 1842._

MY DEAR SMITH,

The cheque safely received. As you say, it would be cheap at any money. My devotion to the fine arts renders it impossible for me to cash it. I have therefore ordered it to be framed and glazed.

I am really grateful to you for the interest you take in my proceedings. Next time I come into the City I will show you my introductory chapter to the American book. It may seem to prepare the reader for a much

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greater amount of slaughter than he will meet with; but it is honest and true. Therefore my hand does not shake.

Best love and regards. "Certainly" to the Richmondian intentions.

Always faithfully your Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. Harrison Ainsworth.]

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _September 14th, 1842._

MY DEAR AINSWORTH,

The enclosed has been sent to me by a young gentleman in Devonshire (of whom I know no more than that I have occasionally, at his request, read and suggested amendments in some of his writings), with a special petition that I would recommend it to you for insertion in your magazine.

I think it very pretty, and I have no doubt you will also. But it is poetry, and may be too long.

He is a very modest young fellow, and has decided ability.

I hope when I come home at the end of the month, we shall foregather more frequently. Of course you are working, tooth and nail; and of course I am.

Kate joins me in best regards to yourself and all your house (not forgetting, but especially remembering, my old friend, Mrs. Touchet), and I am always,

My dear Ainsworth,
Heartily yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Henry Austin.]

BROADSTAIRS, _Sunday, September 25th, 1842._

MY DEAR HENRY,

I enclose you the Niagara letter, with many thanks for the loan of it.

Pray tell Mr. Chadwick that I am greatly obliged to him for his remembrance of me, and I heartily concur with him in the great importance and interest of the subject, though I do differ from him, to the death, on his crack topic--the New Poor-Law.

I have been turning my thoughts to this very item in the condition of American towns, and had put their present aspects strongly before the American people; therefore I shall read his report with the greater interest and attention.

We return next Saturday night.

If you will dine with us next day or any day in the week, we shall be truly glad and delighted to see you. Let me know, then, what day you will come.

I need scarcely say that I shall joyfully talk with you about the Metropolitan Improvement Society, then or at any time; and with love to Letitia, in which Kate and the babies join, I am always, my dear Henry,

Affectionately yours.

P.S.--The children's present names are as follows:

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Katey (from a lurking propensity to fieryness), Lucifer Box.

Mamey (as generally descriptive of her bearing), Mild Glo'ster.

Charley (as a corruption of Master Toby), Flaster Floby.

Walter (suggested by his high cheek-bones), Young Skull.

Each is pronounced with a peculiar howl, which I shall have great pleasure in illustrating.

[Sidenote: Rev. William Harness.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _November 8th, 1842._

MY DEAR HARNESS,

Some time ago, you sent me a note from a friend of yours, a barrister, I think, begging me to forward to him any letters I might receive from a deranged nephew of his, at Newcastle. In the midst of a most bewildering correspondence with unknown people, on every possible and impossible subject, I have forgotten this gentleman's name, though I have a kind of hazy remembrance that he lived near Russell Square. As the Post Office would be rather puzzled, perhaps, to identify him by such an address, may I ask the favour of you to hand him the enclosed, and to say that it is the second I have received since I returned from America? The last, I think, was a defiance to mortal combat. With best remembrances to your sister, in which Mrs. Dickens joins, believe me, my dear Harness,

Always faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Saturday, Nov. 12th, 1842._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

You pass this house every day on your way to or from the theatre. I wish you would call once as you go by, and soon, that you may have plenty of time to deliberate on what I wish to suggest to you. The more I think of Marston's play, the more sure I feel that a prologue to the purpose would help it materially, and almost decide the fate of any ticklish point on the first night. Now I have an idea (not easily explainable in writing but told in five words), that would take the prologue out of the conventional dress of prologues, quite. Get the curtain up with a dash, and begin the play with a sledge-hammer blow. If on consideration, you should think with me, I will write the prologue heartily.

Faithfully yours ever.

PROLOGUE

TO MR. MARSTON'S PLAY OF "THE PATRICIAN'S DAUGHTER."

No tale of streaming plumes and harness bright
Dwells on the poet's maiden harp to-night;
No trumpet's clamour and no battle's fire
Breathes in the trembling accents of his lyre;

Enough for him, if in his lowly strain
He wakes one household echo not in vain;
Enough for him, if in his boldest word
The beating heart of MAN be dimly heard.

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Its solemn music which, like strains that sigh
Through charmèd gardens, all who hearing die;
Its solemn music he does not pursue
To distant ages out of human view;
Nor listen to its wild and mournful chime
In the dead caverns on the shore of Time;
But musing with a calm and steady gaze
Before the crackling flames of living days,
He hears it whisper through the busy roar
Of what shall be and what has been before.
Awake the Present! shall no scene display
The tragic passion of the passing day?
Is it with Man, as with some meaner things,
That out of death his single purpose springs?
Can his eventful life no moral teach
Until he be, for aye, beyond its reach?
Obscurely shall he suffer, act, and fade,
Dubb'd noble only by the sexton's spade?
Awake the Present! Though the steel-clad age
Find life alone within the storied page,
Iron is worn, at heart, by many still--
The tyrant Custom binds the serf-like will;
If the sharp rack, and screw, and chain be gone,
These later days have tortures of their own;
The guiltless writhe, while Guilt is stretched in sleep,
And Virtue lies, too often, dungeon deep.
Awake the Present! what the Past has sown
Be in its harvest garner'd, reap'd, and grown!
How pride breeds pride, and wrong engenders wrong,
Read in the volume Truth has held so long,
Assured that where life's flowers freshest blow,
The sharpest thorns and keenest briars grow,
How social usage has the pow'r to change
Good thoughts to evil; in its highest range
To cramp the noble soul, and turn to ruth
The kindling impulse of our glorious youth,
Crushing the spirit in its house of clay,
Learn from the lessons of the present day.
Not light its import and not poor its mien;
Yourselves the actors, and your homes the scene.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

Saturday Morning.

MY DEAR MACREADY,

One suggestion, though it be a late one. Do have upon the table, in the opening scene of the second act, something in a velvet case, or frame, that may look like a large miniature of Mabel, such as one of Ross's, and eschew that picture. It haunts me with a sense of danger. Even a titter at that critical time, with the whole of that act before you, would be a fatal thing. The picture is bad in itself, bad in its effect upon the beautiful room, bad in all its associations with the house. In case of your having nothing at hand, I send you by bearer what would be a million times better. Always, my dear Macready,

Faithfully yours.

P.S.--I need not remind you how common it is to have such pictures in cases lying about elegant rooms.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. P. Frith.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
November 15th, 1842.

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MY DEAR SIR,

I shall be very glad if you will do me the favour to paint me two little companion pictures; one, a Dolly Varden (whom you have so exquisitely done already), the other, a Kate Nickleby.

Faithfully yours always.

P.S.--I take it for granted that the original picture of Dolly with the bracelet is sold?

[Sidenote: The same.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _November 17th, 1842._

MY DEAR SIR,

Pray consult your own convenience in the matter of my little commission; whatever suits your engagements and prospects will best suit me.

I saw an unfinished proof of Dolly at Mitchell's some two or three months ago; I thought it was proceeding excellently well then. It will give me great pleasure to see her when completed.

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Thomas Hood.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _November 30th, 1842._

MY DEAR HOOD,

In asking your and Mrs. Hood's leave to bring Mrs. D.'s sister (who stays with us) on Tuesday, let me add that I should very much like to bring at the same time a very unaffected and ardent admirer of your genius, who has no small portion of that commodity in his own right, and is a very dear friend of mine and a very famous fellow; to wit, Maclise, the painter, who would be glad (as he has often told me) to know you better, and would be much pleased, I know, if I could say to him, "Hood wants me to bring you."

I use so little ceremony with you, in the conviction that you will use as little with me, and say, "My dear D.--Convenient;" or, "My dear D.--Ill-convenient," (as the popular phrase is), just as the case may be. Of course, I have said nothing to him.

Always heartily yours,
BOZ.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Trollope.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
December 16th, 1842.

MY DEAR MRS. TROLLOPE,

Let me thank you most cordially for your kind note, in reference to my Notes, which has given me true pleasure and gratification.

As I never scrupled to say in America, so I can have no delicacy in saying to you, that, allowing for the change you worked in many social features of American society, and for the time that has passed since you wrote of the country, I am convinced that there is no writer who has so well and accurately (I need not add so entertainingly) described it, in

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many of its aspects, as you have done; and this renders your praise the more valuable to me. I do not recollect ever to have heard or seen the charge of exaggeration made against a feeble performance, though, in its feebleness, it may have been most untrue. It seems to me essentially natural, and quite inevitable, that common observers should accuse an uncommon one of this fault, and I have no doubt that you were long ago of this opinion; very much to your own comfort.

Mrs. Dickens begs me to thank you for your kind remembrance of her, and to convey to you her best regards. Always believe me,

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _December 20th, 1842._

MY DEAR GEORGE,

It is impossible for me to tell you how greatly I am charmed with those beautiful pictures, in which the whole feeling, and thought, and expression of the little story is rendered to the gratification of my inmost heart; and on which you have lavished those amazing resources of yours with a power at which I fairly wondered when I sat down yesterday before them.

I took them to Mac, straightway, in a cab, and it would have done you good if you could have seen and heard him. You can't think how moved he was by the old man in the church, or how pleased I was to have chosen it before he saw the drawings.

You are such a queer fellow and hold yourself so much aloof, that I am afraid to say half I would say touching my grateful admiration; so you shall imagine the rest. I enclose a note from Kate, to which I hope you will bring the only one acceptable reply. Always, my dear Cattermole,

Faithfully yours.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] The little dog--a white Havana spaniel--_was_ brought home and renamed, after an incidental character in "Nicholas Nickleby," "Mr. Snittle Timbery." This was shortened to "Timber," and under that name the little dog lived to be very old, and accompanied the family in all its migrations, including the visits to Italy and Switzerland.

[2] Life Insurance Office.

[3] Mr. Macready's--so pronounced by one of Charles Dickens's little children.

Book II.

1843 TO 1857.

1843.

NARRATIVE.

We have, unfortunately, very few letters of interest in this year. But

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we are able to give the commencement of Charles Dickens's correspondence with his beloved friends, Mr. Douglas Jerrold and Mr. Clarkson Stanfield; with Lord Morpeth (afterwards Lord Carlisle), for whom he always entertained the highest regard; and with Mr. Charles Babbage.

He was at work upon "Martin Chuzzlewit" until the end of the year, when he also wrote and published the first of his Christmas stories--"The Christmas Carol."

He was much distressed by the sad fate of Mr. Elton (a respected actor), who was lost in the wreck of the _Pegasus_, and was very eager and earnest in his endeavours to raise a fund on behalf of Mr. Elton's children.

We are sorry to be unable to give any explanation as to the nature of the Cockspur Street Society, mentioned in this first letter to Mr. Charles Babbage. But we publish it notwithstanding, considering it to be one of general interest.

The "Little History of England" was never finished--not, that is to say, the one alluded to in the letter to Mr. Jerrold.

Mr. David Dickson kindly furnishes us with an explanation of the letter dated 10th May. "It was," he says, "in answer to a letter from me, pointing out that the 'Shepherd' in 'Pickwick' was apparently reflecting on the scriptural doctrine of the new birth."

The beginning of the letter to Mr. Jerrold (15th June) is, as will be readily understood, an imaginary cast of a purely imaginary play. A portion of this letter has already been published, in Mr. Blanchard Jerrold's life of his father. It originated in a proposal of Mr. Webster's--the manager of the Haymarket Theatre--to give five hundred pounds for a prize comedy by an English author.

The opera referred to in the letter to Mr. R. H. Horne was called "The Village Coquettes," and the farce was "The Strange Gentleman," already alluded to by us, in connection with a letter to Mr. Harley.

[Sidenote: Mr. Charles Babbage.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _April 27th, 1843._

MY DEAR SIR,

I write to you, _confidentially_, in answer to your note of last night, and the tenor of mine will tell you why.

You may suppose, from seeing my name in the printed letter you have received, that I am favourable to the proposed society. I am decidedly opposed to it. I went there on the day I was in the chair, after much solicitation; and being put into it, opened the proceedings by telling the meeting that I approved of the design in theory, but in practice considered it hopeless. I may tell you--I did not tell them--that the nature of the meeting, and the character and position of many of the men attending it, cried "Failure" trumpet-tongued in my ears. To quote an expression from Tennyson, I may say that if it were the best society in the world, the grossness of some natures in it would have weight to drag it down.

In the wisdom of all you urge in the notes you have sent me, taking them as statements of theory, I entirely concur. But in practice, I feel sure that the present publishing system cannot be overset until authors are different men. The first step to be taken is to move as a body in the question of copyright, enforce the existing laws, and try to obtain better. For that purpose I hold that the authors and publishers must unite, as the wealth, business habits, and interest of that latter class are of great importance to such an end. The Longmans and Murray have

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been with me proposing such an association. That I shall support. But having seen the Cockspur Street Society, I am as well convinced of its invincible hopelessness as if I saw it written by a celestial penman in the Book of Fate.

My dear Sir,
Always faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Douglas Jerrold.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _May 3rd, 1843._

MY DEAR JERROLD,

Let me thank you most cordially for your books, not only for their own sakes (and I have read them with perfect delight), but also for this hearty and most welcome mark of your recollection of the friendship we have established; in which light I know I may regard and prize them.

I am greatly pleased with your opening paper in the Illuminated. It is very wise, and capital; written with the finest end of that iron pen of yours; witty, much needed, and full of truth. I vow to God that I think the parrots of society are more intolerable and mischievous than its birds of prey. If ever I destroy myself, it will be in the bitterness of hearing those infernal and damnably good old times extolled. Once, in a fit of madness, after having been to a public dinner which took place just as this Ministry came in, I wrote the parody I send you enclosed, for Fonblanque. There is nothing in it but wrath; but that's wholesome, so I send it you.

I am writing a little history of England for my boy, which I will send you when it is printed for him, though your boys are too old to profit by it. It is curious that I have tried to impress upon him (writing, I daresay, at the same moment with you) the exact spirit of your paper, for I don't know what I should do if he were to get hold of any Conservative or High Church notions; and the best way of guarding against any such horrible result is, I take it, to wring the parrots' necks in his very cradle.

Oh Heaven, if you could have been with me at a hospital dinner last Monday! There were men there who made such speeches and expressed such sentiments as any moderately intelligent dustman would have blushed through his cindery bloom to have thought of. Sleek, slobbering, bow-paunched, over-fed, apoplectic, snorting cattle, and the auditory leaping up in their delight! I never saw such an illustration of the power of purse, or felt so degraded and debased by its contemplation, since I have had eyes and ears. The absurdity of the thing was too horrible to laugh at. It was perfectly overwhelming. But if I could have partaken it with anybody who would have felt it as you would have done, it would have had quite another aspect; or would at least, like a "classic mask" (oh d---- that word!) have had one funny side to relieve its dismal features.

Supposing fifty families were to emigrate into the wilds of North America--yours, mine, and forty-eight others--picked for their concurrence of opinion on all important subjects and for their resolution to found a colony of common-sense, how soon would that devil, Cant, present itself among them in one shape or other? The day they landed, do you say, or the day after?

That is a great mistake (almost the only one I know) in the "Arabian Nights," when the princess restores people to their original beauty by sprinkling them with the golden water. It is quite clear that she must have made monsters of them by such a christening as that.

My dear Jerrold,
Faithfully your Friend.

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[Sidenote: Mr. David Dickson.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
May 10th, 1843.

SIR,

Permit me to say, in reply to your letter, that you do not understand the intention (I daresay the fault is mine) of that passage in the "Pickwick Papers" which has given you offence. The design of "the Shepherd" and of this and every other allusion to him is, to show how sacred things are degraded, vulgarised, and rendered absurd when persons who are utterly incompetent to teach the commonest things take upon themselves to expound such mysteries, and how, in making mere cant phrases of divine words, these persons miss the spirit in which they had their origin. I have seen a great deal of this sort of thing in many parts of England, and I never knew it lead to charity or good deeds.

Whether the great Creator of the world and the creature of his hands, moulded in his own image, be quite so opposite in character as you believe, is a question which it would profit us little to discuss. I like the frankness and candour of your letter, and thank you for it. That every man who seeks heaven must be born again, in good thoughts of his Maker, I sincerely believe. That it is expedient for every hound to say so in a certain snuffling form of words, to which he attaches no good meaning, I do not believe. I take it there is no difference between us.

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Douglas Jerrold.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _June 13th, 1843._

MY DEAR JERROLD,

Yes, you have anticipated my occupation. Chuzzlewit be d----d. High comedy and five hundred pounds are the only matters I can think of. I call it "The One Thing Needful; or, A Part is Better than the Whole." Here are the characters:

Old Febrile	Mr. FARREN.
Young Febrile (his Son)	Mr. HOWE.
Jack Hessians (his Friend)	Mr. W. LACY.
Chalks (a Landlord)	Mr. GOUGH.
Hon. Harry Staggers	Mr. MELLON.
Sir Thomas Tip	Mr. BUCKSTONE.
Swig	Mr. WEBSTER.
The Duke of Leeds	Mr. COUTTS.
Sir Smivin Growler	Mr. MACREADY.

Servants, Gamblers, Visitors, etc.

Mrs. Febrile	Mrs. GALLOT.
Lady Tip	Mrs. HUMBY.
Mrs. Sour	Mrs. W. CLIFFORD.
Fanny	Miss A. SMITH.

One scene, where Old Febrile tickles Lady Tip in the ribs, and afterwards dances out with his hat behind him, his stick before, and his eye on the pit, I expect will bring the house down. There is also another point, where Old Febrile, at the conclusion of his disclosure to Swig, rises and says: "And now, Swig, tell me, have I acted well?" And Swig says: "Well, Mr. Febrile, have you ever acted ill?" which will carry off the piece.

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Herne Bay. Hum. I suppose it's no worse than any other place in this weather, but it is watery rather--isn't it? In my mind's eye, I have the sea in a perpetual state of smallpox; and the chalk running downhill like town milk. But I know the comfort of getting to work in a fresh place, and proposing pious projects to one's self, and having the more substantial advantage of going to bed early and getting up ditto, and walking about alone. I should like to deprive you of the last-named happiness, and to take a good long stroll, terminating in a public-house, and whatever they chanced to have in it. But fine days are over, I think. The horrible misery of London in this weather, with not even a fire to make it cheerful, is hideous.

But I have my comedy to fly to. My only comfort! I walk up and down the street at the back of the theatre every night, and peep in at the green-room window, thinking of the time when "Dick--ins" will be called for by excited hundreds, and won't come till Mr. Webster (half Swig and half himself) shall enter from his dressing-room, and quelling the tempest with a smile, beseech that wizard, if he be in the house (here he looks up at my box), to accept the congratulations of the audience, and indulge them with a sight of the man who has got five hundred pounds in money, and it's impossible to say how much in laurel. Then I shall come forward, and bow once--twice--thrice--roars of approbation--Brayvo--brarvo--hooray--hoorar--hooroar--one cheer more; and asking Webster home to supper, shall declare eternal friendship for that public-spirited individual.

They have not sent me the "Illustrated Magazine." What do they mean by that? You don't say your daughter is better, so I hope you mean that she is quite well. My wife desires her best regards.

I am always, my dear Jerrold,
Faithfully your Friend,
THE CONGREVE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
(which I mean to be called in the Sunday papers).

P.S.--I shall dedicate it to Webster, beginning: "My dear Sir,--When you first proposed to stimulate the slumbering dramatic talent of England, I assure you I had not the least idea"--etc. etc. etc.

[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _July 26th, 1843._

MY DEAR STANFIELD,

I am chairman of a committee, whose object is to open a subscription, and arrange a benefit for the relief of the seven destitute children of poor Elton the actor, who was drowned in the _Pegasus_. They are exceedingly anxious to have the great assistance of your name; and if you will allow yourself to be announced as one of the body, I do assure you you will help a very melancholy and distressful cause.

Faithfully always.

P.S.--The committee meet to-night at the Freemasons', at eight o'clock.

[Sidenote: Lord Morpeth.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
August 3rd, 1843.

DEAR LORD MORPETH,

In acknowledging the safe receipt of your kind donation in behalf of poor Mr. Elton's orphan children, I hope you will suffer me to address

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you with little ceremony, as the best proof I can give you of my cordial reciprocation of all you say in your most welcome note. I have long esteemed you and been your distant but very truthful admirer; and trust me that it is a real pleasure and happiness to me to anticipate the time when we shall have a nearer intercourse.

Believe me, with sincere regard,
Faithfully your Servant.

[Sidenote: Mr. William Harrison Ainsworth.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _October 13th, 1843._

MY DEAR AINSWORTH,

I want very much to see you, not having had that old pleasure for a long time. I am at this moment deaf in the ears, hoarse in the throat, red in the nose, green in the gills, damp in the eyes, twitchy in the joints, and fractious in the temper from a most intolerable and oppressive cold, caught the other day, I suspect, at Liverpool, where I got exceedingly wet; but I will make prodigious efforts to get the better of it to-night by resorting to all conceivable remedies, and if I succeed so as to be only negatively disgusting to-morrow, I will joyfully present myself at six, and bring my womankind along with me.

Cordially yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. R. H. Horne.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _November 13th, 1843._

* * * * *

Pray tell that besotted ---- to let the opera sink into its native obscurity. I did it in a fit of d----ble good nature long ago, for Hullah, who wrote some very pretty music to it. I just put down for everybody what everybody at the St. James's Theatre wanted to say and do, and that they could say and do best, and I have been most sincerely repentant ever since. The farce I also did as a sort of practical joke, for Harley, whom I have known a long time. It was funny--adapted from one of the published sketches called the "Great Winglebury Duel," and was published by Chapman and Hall. But I have no copy of it now, nor should I think they have. But both these things were done without the least consideration or regard to reputation.

I wouldn't repeat them for a thousand pounds apiece, and devoutly wish them to be forgotten. If you will impress this on the waxy mind of ---- I shall be truly and unaffectedly obliged to you.

Always faithfully yours.

1844.

NARRATIVE.

In the summer of this year the house in Devonshire Terrace was let, and Charles Dickens started with his family for Italy, going first to a villa at Albaro, near Genoa, for a few months, and afterwards to the Palazzo Pescheire, Genoa. Towards the end of this year he made excursions to the many places of interest in this country, and was joined at Milan by his wife and sister-in-law, previous to his own

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departure alone on a business visit to England. He had written his Christmas story, "The Chimes," and was anxious to take it himself to England, and to read it to some of his most intimate friends there.

Mr. Macready went to America and returned in the autumn, and towards the end of the year he paid a professional visit to Paris.

Charles Dickens's letter to his wife (26th February) treats of a visit to Liverpool, where he went to take the chair on the opening of the Mechanics' Institution and to make a speech on education. The "Fanny" alluded to was his sister, Mrs. Burnett; the _Britannia_, the ship in which he and Mrs. Dickens made their outward trip to America; the "Mrs. Bean," the stewardess, and "Hewett," the captain, of that same vessel.

The letter to Mr. Charles Knight was in acknowledgment of the receipt of a prospectus entitled "Book Clubs for all readers." The attempt, which fortunately proved completely successful, was to establish a cheap book club. The scheme was, that a number of families should combine together, each contributing about three halfpennies a week; which contribution would enable them, by exchanging the volumes among them, to have sufficient reading to last the year. The publications, which were to be made as cheap as possible, could be purchased by families at the end of the year, on consideration of their putting by an extra penny a week for that purpose. Charles Dickens, who always had the comfort and happiness of the working-classes greatly at heart, was much interested in this scheme of Mr. Charles Knight's, and highly approved of it. Charles Dickens and this new correspondent became subsequently true and fast friends.

"Martin Chuzzlewit" was dramatised in the early autumn of this year, at the Lyceum Theatre, which was then under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Keeley. Charles Dickens superintended some rehearsals, but had left England before the play was acted in public.

The man "Roche," alluded to in his letter to Mr. Maclise, was the French courier engaged to go with the family to Italy. He remained as servant there, and was with Charles Dickens through all his foreign travels. His many excellent qualities endeared him to the whole family, and his master never lost sight of this faithful servant until poor Roche's untimely death in 1849.

The Rev. Edward Tagart was a celebrated Unitarian minister, and a very highly esteemed and valued friend.

The "Chickenstalker" (letter to Mrs. Dickens, November 8th), is an instance of the eccentric names he was constantly giving to his children, and these names he frequently made use of in his books.

In this year we have our first letter to Mr. (afterwards Sir Edwin) Landseer, for whom Charles Dickens had the highest admiration and personal regard.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _January 3rd, 1844._

MY VERY DEAR MACREADY,

You know all the news, and you know I love you; so I no more know why I write than I do why I "come round" after the play to shake hands with you in your dressing-room. I say come, as if you were at this present moment the lessee of Drury Lane, and had ---- with a long face on one hand, ---- elaborately explaining that everything in creation is a joint-stock company on the other, the inimitable B. by the fire, in conversation with ----. Well-a-day! I see it all, and smell that extraordinary compound of odd scents peculiar to a theatre, which bursts upon me when I swing open the little door in the hall, accompanies me as

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I meet perspiring supers in the narrow passage, goes with me up the two steps, crosses the stage, winds round the third entrance P.S. as I wind, and escorts me safely into your presence, where I find you unwinding something slowly round and round your chest, which is so long that no man can see the end of it.

Oh that you had been at Clarence Terrace on Nina's birthday! Good God, how we missed you, talked of you, drank your health, and wondered what you were doing! Perhaps you are Falkland enough (I swear I suspect you of it) to feel rather sore--just a little bit, you know, the merest trifle in the world--on hearing that Mrs. Macready looked brilliant, blooming, young, and handsome, and that she danced a country dance with the writer hereof (Acres to your Falkland) in a thorough spirit of becoming good humour and enjoyment. Now you don't like to be told that? Nor do you quite like to hear that Forster and I conjured bravely; that a plum-pudding was produced from an empty saucepan, held over a blazing fire kindled in Stanfield's hat without damage to the lining; that a box of bran was changed into a live guinea-pig, which ran between my godchild's feet, and was the cause of such a shrill uproar and clapping of hands that you might have heard it (and I daresay did) in America; that three half-crowns being taken from Major Burns and put into a tumbler-glass before his eyes, did then and there give jingling answers to the questions asked of them by me, and knew where you were and what you were doing, to the unspeakable admiration of the whole assembly. Neither do you quite like to be told that we are going to do it again next Saturday, with the addition of demoniacal dresses from the masquerade shop; nor that Mrs. Macready, for her gallant bearing always, and her best sort of best affection, is the best creature I know. Never mind; no man shall gag me, and those are my opinions.

My dear Macready, the lecturing proposition is not to be thought of. I have not the slightest doubt or hesitation in giving you my most strenuous and decided advice against it. Looking only to its effect at home, I am immovable in my conviction that the impression it would produce would be one of failure, and a reduction of yourself to the level of those who do the like here. To us who know the Boston names and honour them, and who know Boston and like it (Boston is what I would have the whole United States to be), the Boston requisition would be a valuable document, of which you and your friends might be proud. But those names are perfectly unknown to the public here, and would produce not the least effect. The only thing known to the public here is, that they ask (when I say "they" I mean the people) everybody to lecture. It is one of the things I have ridiculed in "Chuzzlewit." Lecture you, and you fall into the roll of Lardners, Vandenhoffs, Eltons, Knowleses, Buckinghams. You are off your pedestal, have flung away your glass slipper, and changed your triumphal coach into a seedy old pumpkin. I am quite sure of it, and cannot express my strong conviction in language of sufficient force.

"Puff-ridden!" why to be sure they are. The nation is a miserable Sindbad, and its boasted press the loathsome, foul old man upon his back, and yet they will tell you, and proclaim to the four winds for repetition here, that they don't need their ignorant and brutal papers, as if the papers could exist if they didn't need them! Let any two of these vagabonds, in any town you go to, take it into their heads to make you an object of attack, or to direct the general attention elsewhere, and what avail those wonderful images of passion which you have been all your life perfecting!

I have sent you, to the charge of our trusty and well-beloved Colden, a little book I published on the 17th of December, and which has been a most prodigious success--the greatest, I think, I have ever achieved. It pleases me to think that it will bring you home for an hour or two, and I long to hear you have read it on some quiet morning. Do they allow you to be quiet, by-the-way? "Some of our most fashionable people, sir," denounced me awfully for liking to be alone sometimes.

Now that we have turned Christmas, I feel as if your face were directed

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homewards, Macready. The downhill part of the road is before us now, and we shall travel on to midsummer at a dashing pace; and, please Heaven, I will be at Liverpool when you come steaming up the Mersey, with that red funnel smoking out unutterable things, and your heart much fuller than your trunks, though something lighter! If I be not the first Englishman to shake hands with you on English ground, the man who gets before me will be a brisk and active fellow, and even then need put his best leg foremost. So I warn Forster to keep in the rear, or he'll be blown.

If you shall have any leisure to project and put on paper the outline of a scheme for opening any theatre on your return, upon a certain list subscribed, and on certain understandings with the actors, it strikes me that it would be wise to break ground while you are still away. Of course I need not say that I will see anybody or do anything--even to the calling together of the actors--if you should ever deem it desirable. My opinion is that our respected and valued friend Mr. ---- will stagger through another season, if he don't rot first. I understand he is in a partial state of decomposition at this minute. He was very ill, but got better. How is it that ---- always do get better, and strong hearts are so easy to die?

Kate sends her tender love; so does Georgy, so does Charlie, so does Mamey, so does Katey, so does Walter, so does the other one who is to be born next week. Look homeward always, as we look abroad to you. God bless you, my dear Macready.

Ever your affectionate Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. Laman Blanchard.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _January 4th, 1844._

MY DEAR BLANCHARD,

I cannot thank you enough for the beautiful manner and the true spirit of friendship in which you have noticed my "Carol." But I _must_ thank you because you have filled my heart up to the brim, and it is running over.

You meant to give me great pleasure, my dear fellow, and you have done it. The tone of your elegant and fervent praise has touched me in the tenderest place. I cannot write about it, and as to talking of it, I could no more do that than a dumb man. I have derived inexpressible gratification from what I know was a labour of love on your part. And I can never forget it.

When I think it likely that I may meet you (perhaps at Ainsworth's on Friday?) I shall slip a "Carol" into my pocket and ask you to put it among your books for my sake. You will never like it the less for having made it the means of so much happiness to me.

Always, my dear Blanchard,
Faithfully your Friend.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

LIVERPOOL, RADLEY'S HOTEL, _Monday, Feb. 26th, 1844._

MY DEAR KATE,

I got down here last night (after a most intolerably wet journey) before seven, and found Thompson sitting by my fire. He had ordered dinner, and we ate it pleasantly enough, and went to bed in good time. This morning, Mr. Yates, the great man connected with the Institution (and a brother of Ashton Yates's), called. I went to look at it with him. It is an enormous place, and the tickets have been selling at two and even three

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guineas apiece. The lecture-room, in which the celebration is held, will accommodate over thirteen hundred people. It was being fitted with gas after the manner of the ring at Astley's. I should think it an easy place to speak in, being a semicircle with seats rising one above another to the ceiling, and will have eight hundred ladies to-night, in full dress. I am raythe shaky just now, but shall pull up, I have no doubt. At dinner-time to-morrow you will receive, I hope, a facetious document hastily penned after I return to-night, telling you how it all went off.

When I came back here, I found Fanny and Hewett had picked me up just before. We all went off straight to the _Britannia_, which lay where she did when we went on board. We went into the old little cabin and the ladies' cabin, but Mrs. Bean had gone to Scotland, as the ship does not sail again before May. In the saloon we had some champagne and biscuits, and Hewett had set out upon the table a block of Boston ice, weighing fifty pounds. Scott, of the _Caledonia_, lunched with us--a very nice fellow. He saw Macready play Macbeth in Boston, and gave me a tremendous account of the effect. Poor Burroughs, of the _George Washington_, died on board, on his last passage home. His little wife was with him.

Hewett dines with us to-day, and I have procured him admission to-night. I am very sorry indeed (and so was he), that you didn't see the old ship. It was the strangest thing in the world to go on board again.

I had Bacon with me as far as Watford yesterday, and very pleasant. Sheil was also in the train, on his way to Ireland.

Give my best love to Georgy, and kisses to the darlings. Also affectionate regards to Mac and Forster.

Ever affectionately.

OUT OF THE COMMON--PLEASE.

DICKENS _against_ THE WORLD.

Charles Dickens, of No. 1, Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park, in the county of Middlesex, gentleman, the successful plaintiff in the above cause, maketh oath and saith: That on the day and date hereof, to wit at seven o'clock in the evening, he, this deponent, took the chair at a large assembly of the Mechanics' Institution at Liverpool, and that having been received with tremendous and enthusiastic plaudits, he, this deponent, did immediately dash into a vigorous, brilliant, humorous, pathetic, eloquent, fervid, and impassioned speech. That the said speech was enlivened by thirteen hundred persons, with frequent, vehement, uproarious, and deafening cheers, and to the best of this deponent's knowledge and belief, he, this deponent, did speak up like a man, and did, to the best of his knowledge and belief, considerably distinguish himself. That after the proceedings of the opening were over, and a vote of thanks was proposed to this deponent, he, this deponent, did again distinguish himself, and that the cheering at that time, accompanied with clapping of hands and stamping of feet, was in this deponent's case thundering and awful. And this deponent further saith, that his white-and-black or magpie waistcoat, did create a strong sensation, and that during the hours of promenading, this deponent heard from persons surrounding him such exclamations as, "What is it! _Is_ it a waistcoat? No, it's a shirt"--and the like--all of which this deponent believes to have been complimentary and gratifying; but this deponent further saith that he is now going to supper, and wishes he may have an appetite to eat it.

CHARLES DICKENS.

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Sworn before me, at the Adelphi }
Hotel, Liverpool, on the 26th }
of February, 1844. }

S. RADLEY.

[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _April 30th, 1844._

MY DEAR STANFIELD,

The Sanatorium, or sick house for students, governesses, clerks, young artists, and so forth, who are above hospitals, and not rich enough to be well attended in illness in their own lodgings (you know its objects), is going to have a dinner at the London Tavern, on Tuesday, the 5th of June.

The Committee are very anxious to have you for a steward, as one of the heads of a large class; and I have told them that I have no doubt you will act. There is no steward's fee or collection whatever.

They are particularly anxious also to have Mr. Etty and Edwin Landseer. As you see them daily at the Academy, will you ask them or show them this note? Sir Martin became one of the Committee some few years ago, at my solicitation, as recommending young artists, struggling alone in London, to the better knowledge of this establishment.

The dinner is to comprise the new feature of ladies dining at the tables with the gentlemen--not looking down upon them from the gallery. I hope in your reply you will not only book yourself, but Mrs. Stanfield and Mary. It will be very brilliant and cheerful I hope. Dick in the chair. Gentlemen's dinner-tickets a guinea, as usual; ladies', twelve shillings. I think this is all I have to say, except (which is nonsensical and needless) that I am always,

Affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Edwin Landseer.]

ATHENÆUM, _Monday Morning, May 27th, 1844._

MY DEAR LANDSEER,

I have let my house with such delicious promptitude, or, as the Americans would say, "with sich everlass'in slickness and al-mity sprydom," that we turn out to-night! in favour of a widow lady, who keeps it all the time we are away!

Wherefore if you, looking up into the sky this evening between five and six (as possibly you may be, in search of the spring), should see a speck in the air--a mere dot--which, growing larger and larger by degrees, appears in course of time to be an eagle (chain and all) in a light cart, accompanied by a raven of uncommon sagacity, curse that good-nature which prompted you to say it--that you would give them house-room. And do it for the love of

BOZ.

P.S.--The writer hereof may be heerd on by personal enquiry at No. 9, Osnaburgh Terrace, New Road.

[Sidenote: Mr. Charles Knight.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _June 4th, 1844._

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MY DEAR SIR,

Many thanks for your proof, and for your truly gratifying mention of my name. I think the subject excellently chosen, the introduction exactly what it should be, the allusion to the International Copyright question most honourable and manly, and the whole scheme full of the highest interest. I had already seen your prospectus, and if I can be of the feeblest use in advancing a project so intimately connected with an end on which my heart is set--the liberal education of the people--I shall be sincerely glad. All good wishes and success attend you!

Believe me always,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Dudley Costello.]

June 7th, 1844.

DEAR SIR,

Mrs. Harris, being in that delicate state (just confined, and "made comfortable," in fact), hears some sounds below, which she fancies may be the owls (or howls) of the husband to whom she is devoted. They ease her mind by informing her that these sounds are only organs. By "they" I mean the gossips and attendants. By "organs" I mean instrumental boxes with barrels in them, which are commonly played by foreigners under the windows of people of sedentary pursuits, on a speculation of being bribed to leave the street. Mrs. Harris, being of a confiding nature, believed in this pious fraud, and was fully satisfied "that his owls was organs."

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Robert Keeley.]

9, OSNABURGH TERRACE, _Monday Evening, June 24th, 1844._

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been out yachting for two or three days; and consequently could not answer your letter in due course.

I cannot, consistently with the opinion I hold and have always held, in reference to the principle of adapting novels for the stage, give you a prologue to "Chuzzlewit." But believe me to be quite sincere in saying that if I felt I could reasonably do such a thing for anyone, I would do it for you.

I start for Italy on Monday next, but if you have the piece on the stage, and rehearse on Friday, I will gladly come down at any time you may appoint on that morning, and go through it with you all. If you be not in a sufficiently forward state to render this proposal convenient to you, or likely to assist your preparations, do not take the trouble to answer this note.

I presume Mrs. Keeley will do Ruth Pinch. If so, I feel secure about her, and of Mrs. Gamp I am certain. But a queer sensation begins in my legs, and comes upward to my forehead, when I think of Tom.

Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: Mr. Daniel Maclise.]

VILLA DI BAGNARELLO, ALBARO, _Monday, July 22nd, 1844._

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MY VERY DEAR MAC,

I address you with something of the lofty spirit of an exile--a banished commoner--a sort of Anglo-Pole. I don't exactly know what I have done for my country in coming away from it; but I feel it is something--something great--something virtuous and heroic. Lofty emotions rise within me, when I see the sun set on the blue Mediterranean. I am the limpet on the rock. My father's name is Turner and my boots are green.

Apropos of blue. In a certain picture, called "The Serenade," you painted a sky. If you ever have occasion to paint the Mediterranean, let it be exactly of that colour. It lies before me now, as deeply and intensely blue. But no such colour is above me. Nothing like it. In the South of France--at Avignon, at Aix, at Marseilles--I saw deep blue skies (not _so_ deep though--oh Lord, no!), and also in America; but the sky above me is familiar to my sight. Is it heresy to say that I have seen its twin-brother shining through the window of Jack Straw's--that down in Devonshire I have seen a better sky? I daresay it is; but like a great many other heresies, it is true.

But such green--green--green--as flutters in the vineyard down below the windows, _that_ I never saw; nor yet such lilac, and such purple as float between me and the distant hills; nor yet--in anything--picture, book, or verbal boredom--such awful, solemn, impenetrable blue, as is that same sea. It has such an absorbing, silent, deep, profound effect, that I can't help thinking it suggested the idea of Styx. It looks as if a draught of it--only so much as you could scoop up on the beach, in the hollow of your hand--would wash out everything else, and make a great blue blank of your intellect.

When the sun sets clearly, then, by Heaven, it is majestic! From any one of eleven windows here, or from a terrace overgrown with grapes, you may behold the broad sea; villas, houses, mountains, forts, strewn with rose leaves--strewn with thorns--stifled in thorns! Dyed through and through and through. For a moment. No more. The sun is impatient and fierce, like everything else in these parts, and goes down headlong. Run to fetch your hat--and it's night. Wink at the right time of black night--and it's morning. Everything is in extremes. There is an insect here (I forget its name, and Fletcher and Roche are both out) that chirps all day. There is one outside the window now. The chirp is very loud, something like a Brobdingnagian grasshopper. The creature is born to chirp--to progress in chirping--to chirp louder, louder, louder--till it gives one tremendous chirp, and bursts itself. That is its life and death. Everything "is in a concatenation accordingly." The day gets brighter, brighter, brighter, till it's night. The summer gets hotter, hotter, hotter, till it bursts. The fruit gets riper, riper, riper, till it tumbles down and rots.

Ask me a question or two about fresco--will you be so good? All the houses are painted in fresco hereabout--the outside walls I mean; the fronts, and backs, and sides--and all the colour has run into damp and green seediness, and the very design has struggled away into the component atoms of the plaster. Sometimes (but not often) I can make out a Virgin with a mildewed glory round her head; holding nothing, in an indiscernible lap, with invisible arms; and occasionally the leg or arms of a cherub, but it is very melancholy and dim. There are two old fresco-painted vases outside my own gate--one on either hand--which are so faint, that I never saw them till last night; and only then because I was looking over the wall after a lizard, who had come upon me while I was smoking a cigar above, and crawled over one of these embellishments to his retreat. There is a church here--the Church of the Annunciation--which they are now (by "they" I mean certain noble families) restoring at a vast expense, as a work of piety. It is a large church, with a great many little chapels in it, and a very high dome. Every inch of this edifice is painted, and every design is set in a great gold frame or border elaborately wrought. You can imagine nothing

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so splendid. It is worth coming the whole distance to see. But every sort of splendour is in perpetual enactment through the means of these churches. Gorgeous processions in the streets, illuminations of windows on festa nights; lighting up of lamps and clustering of flowers before the shrines of saints; all manner of show and display. The doors of the churches stand wide open; and in this hot weather great red curtains flutter and wave in their palaces; and if you go and sit in one of these to get out of the sun, you see the queerest figures kneeling against pillars, and the strangest people passing in and out, and vast streams of women in veils (they don't wear bonnets), with great fans in their hands, coming and going, that you are never tired of looking on. Except in the churches, you would suppose the city (at this time of year) to be deserted, the people keep so close within doors. Indeed it is next to impossible to go out into the heat. I have only been into Genoa twice myself. We are deliciously cool here, by comparison; being high, and having the sea breeze. There is always some shade in the vineyard, too; and underneath the rocks on the sea-shore, so if I choose to saunter I can do it easily, even in the hot time of the day. I am as lazy, however, as--as you are, and do little but eat and drink and read.

As I am going to transmit regular accounts of all sight-seeings and journeyings to Forster, who will show them to you, I will not bore you with descriptions, however. I hardly think you allow enough for the great brightness and brilliancy of colour which is commonly achieved on the Continent, in that same fresco painting. I saw some--by a French artist and his pupil--in progress at the cathedral at Avignon, which was as bright and airy as anything can be,--nothing dull or dead about it; and I have observed quite fierce and glaring colours elsewhere.

We have a piano now (there was none in the house), and have fallen into a pretty settled easy track. We breakfast about half-past nine or ten, dine about four, and go to bed about eleven. We are much courted by the visiting people, of course, and I very much resort to my old habit of bolting from callers, and leaving their reception to Kate. Green figs I have already learnt to like. Green almonds (we have them at dessert every day) are the most delicious fruit in the world. And green lemons, combined with some rare hollands that is to be got here, make prodigious punch, I assure you. You ought to come over, Mac; but I don't expect you, though I am sure it would be a very good move for you. I have not the smallest doubt of that. Fletcher has made a sketch of the house, and will copy it in pen-and-ink for transmission to you in my next letter. I shall look out for a place in Genoa, between this and the winter time. In the meantime, the people who come out here breathe delightedly, as if they had got into another climate. Landing in the city, you would hardly suppose it possible that there could be such an air within two miles.

Write to me as often as you can, like a dear good fellow, and rely upon the punctuality of my correspondence. Losing you and Forster is like losing my arms and legs, and dull and lame I am without you. But at Broadstairs next year, please God, when it is all over, I shall be very glad to have laid up such a store of recollections and improvement.

I don't know what to do with Timber. He is as ill-adapted to the climate at this time of year as a suit of fur. I have had him made a lion dog; but the fleas flock in such crowds into the hair he has left, that they drive him nearly frantic, and renders it absolutely necessary that he should be kept by himself. Of all the miserable hideous little frights you ever saw, you never beheld such a devil. Apropos, as we were crossing the Seine within two stages of Paris, Roche suddenly said to me, sitting by me on the box: "The littel dog 'ave got a great lip!" I was thinking of things remote and very different, and couldn't comprehend why any peculiarity in this feature on the part of the dog should excite a man so much. As I was musing upon it, my ears were attracted by shouts of "Helo! hola! Hi, hi, hi! Le voilà! Regardez!" and the like. And looking down among the oxen--we were in the centre of a numerous drove--I saw him, Timber, lying in the road, curled up--you know his way--like a lobster, only not so stiff, yelping dismally in the pain of his "lip" from the roof of the carriage; and between the aching

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of his bones, his horror of the oxen, and his dread of me (who he evidently took to be the immediate agent in and cause of the damage), singing out to an extent which I believe to be perfectly unprecedented; while every Frenchman and French boy within sight roared for company. He wasn't hurt.

Kate and Georgina send their best loves; and the children add "theirs." Katey, in particular, desires to be commended to "Mr. Teese." She has a sore throat; from sitting in constant draughts, I suppose; but with that exception, we are all quite well. Ever believe me, my dear Mac,

Your affectionate Friend.

[Sidenote: Rev. Edward Tagart.]

ALBARO, NEAR GENOA, _Friday, August 9th, 1844._

MY DEAR SIR,

I find that if I wait to write you a long letter (which has been the cause of my procrastination in fulfilling my part of our agreement), I am likely to wait some time longer. And as I am very anxious to hear from you; not the less so, because if I hear of you through my brother, who usually sees you once a week in my absence; I take pen in hand and stop a messenger who is going to Genoa. For my main object being to qualify myself for the receipt of a letter from you, I don't see why a ten-line qualification is not as good as one of a hundred lines.

You told me it was possible that you and Mrs. Tagart might wander into these latitudes in the autumn. I wish you would carry out that infant intention to the utmost. It would afford us the truest delight and pleasure to receive you. If you come in October, you will find us in the Palazzo Peschiere, in Genoa, which is surrounded by a delicious garden, and is a most charming habitation in all respects. If you come in September, you will find us less splendidly lodged, but on the margin of the sea, and in the midst of vineyards. The climate is delightful even now; the heat being not at all oppressive, except in the actual city, which is what the Americans would call considerable fiery, in the middle of the day. But the sea-breezes out here are refreshing and cool every day, and the bathing in the early morning is something more agreeable than you can easily imagine. The orange trees of the Peschiere shall give you their most fragrant salutations if you come to us at that time, and we have a dozen spare beds in that house that I know of; to say nothing of some vast chambers here and there with ancient iron chests in them, where Mrs. Tagart might enact Ginevra to perfection, and never be found out. To prevent which, I will engage to watch her closely, if she will only come and see us.

The flies are incredibly numerous just now. The unsightly blot a little higher up was occasioned by a very fine one who fell into the inkstand, and came out, unexpectedly, on the nib of my pen. We are all quite well, thank Heaven, and had a very interesting journey here, of which, as well as of this place, I will not write a word, lest I should take the edge off those agreeable conversations with which we will beguile our walks.

Pray tell me about the presentation of the plate, and whether ---- was very slow, or trotted at all, and if so, when. He is an excellent creature, and I respect him very much, so I don't mind smiling when I think of him as he appeared when addressing you and pointing to the plate, with his head a little on one side, and one of his eyes turned up languidly.

Also let me know exactly how you are travelling, and when, and all about it; that I may meet you with open arms on the threshold of the city, if happily you bend your steps this way. You had better address me, "Poste Restante, Genoa," as the Albaro postman gets drunk, and when he has lost letters, and is sober, sheds tears--which is affecting, but hardly

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satisfactory.

Kate and her sister send their best regards to yourself, and Mrs. and Miss Tagart, and all your family. I heartily join them in all kind remembrances and good wishes. As the messenger has just looked in at the door, and shedding on me a balmy gale of onions, has protested against being detained any longer, I will only say (which is not at all necessary) that I am ever,

Faithfully yours.

P.S.--There is a little to see here, in the church way, I assure you.

[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield.]

ALBARO, _Saturday Night, August 24th, 1844._

MY DEAR STANFIELD,

I love you so truly, and have such pride and joy of heart in your friendship, that I don't know how to begin writing to you. When I think how you are walking up and down London in that portly surtout, and can't receive proposals from Dick to go to the theatre, I fall into a state between laughing and crying, and want some friendly back to smite. "Je-im!" "Aye, aye, your honour," is in my ears every time I walk upon the sea-shore here; and the number of expeditions I make into Cornwall in my sleep, the springs of Flys I break, the songs I sing, and the bowls of punch I drink, would soften a heart of stone.

We have had weather here, since five o'clock this morning, after your own heart. Suppose yourself the Admiral in "Black-eyed Susan" after the acquittal of William, and when it was possible to be on friendly terms with him. I am T. P.[4] My trousers are very full at the ankles, my black neckerchief is tied in the regular style, the name of my ship is painted round my glazed hat, I have a red waistcoat on, and the seams of my blue jacket are "paid"--permit me to dig you in the ribs when I make use of this nautical expression--with white. In my hand I hold the very box connected with the story of Sandomingerbilly. I lift up my eyebrows as far as I can (on the T. P. model), take a quid from the box, screw the lid on again (chewing at the same time, and looking pleasantly at the pit), brush it with my right elbow, take up my right leg, scrape my right foot on the ground, hitch up my trousers, and in reply to a question of yours, namely, "Indeed, what weather, William?" I deliver myself as follows:

> Lord love your honour! Weather! Such weather as would set all hands to the pumps aboard one of your fresh-water cockboats, and set the purser to his wits' ends to stow away, for the use of the ship's company, the casks and casks full of blue water as would come powering in over the gunnel! The dirtiest night, your honour, as ever you see 'atween Spithead at gun-fire and the Bay of Biscay! The wind sou'-west, and your house dead in the wind's eye; the breakers running up high upon the rocky beads, the light'us no more looking through the fog than Davy Jones's sarser eye through the blue sky of heaven in a calm, or the blue toplights of your honour's lady cast down in a modest overhauling of her catheads: avast! (_whistling_) my dear eyes; here am I a-goin' head on to the breakers (_bowing_).
>
> _Admiral_ (_smiling_). No, William! I admire plain speaking, as you know, and so does old England, William, and old England's Queen. But

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you were saying----

William. Aye, aye, your honour (_scratching his head_). I've lost my reckoning. Damme!--I ast pardon--but won't your honour throw a hencoop or any old end of towline to a man as is overboard?

Admiral (_smiling still_). You were saying, William, that the wind----

William (_again cocking his leg, and slapping the thighs very hard_). Avast heaving, your honour! I see your honour's signal fluttering in the breeze, without a glass. As I was a-saying, your honour, the wind was blowin' from the sou'-west, due sou'-west, your honour, not a pint to larboard nor a pint to starboard; the clouds a-gatherin' in the distance for all the world like Beachy Head in a fog, the sea a-rowling in, in heaps of foam, and making higher than the mainyard arm, the craft a-scuddin' by all taught and under storms'ils for the harbour; not a blessed star a-twinklin' out aloft--aloft, your honour, in the little cherubs' native country--and the spray is flying like the white foam from the Jolly's lips when Poll of Portsea took him for a tailor! (_laughs._)

Admiral (_laughing also_). You have described it well, William, and I thank you. But who are these?

Enter Supers in calico jackets to look like cloth, some in brown holland petticoat-trousers and big boots, all with very large buckles. Last Super rolls on a cask, and pretends to keep it. Other Supers apply their mugs to the bunghole and drink, previously holding them upside down.

William (_after shaking hands with everybody_). Who are these, your honour! Messmates as staunch and true as ever broke biscuit. Ain't you, my lads?

All. Aye, aye, William. That we are! that we are!

Admiral (_much affected_). Oh, England, what wonder that----! But I will no longer detain you from your sports, my humble friends (ADMIRAL _speaks very low, and looks hard at the orchestra, this being the cue for the dance_)--from your sports, my humble friends. Farewell!

All. Hurrah! hurrah! [_Exit_ ADMIRAL.

Voice behind. Suppose the dance, Mr. Stanfield. Are you all ready? Go then!

My dear Stanfield, I wish you would come this way and see me in that Palazzo Peschiere! Was ever man so welcome as I would make you! What a truly gentlemanly action it would be to bring Mrs. Stanfield and the baby. And how Kate and her sister would wave pocket-handkerchiefs from the wharf in joyful welcome! Ah, what a glorious proceeding!

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Do you know this place? Of course you do. I won't bore you with anything about it, for I know Forster reads my letters to you; but what a place it is. The views from the hills here, and the immense variety of prospects of the sea, are as striking, I think, as such scenery can be. Above all, the approach to Genoa, by sea from Marseilles, constitutes a picture which you ought to paint, for nobody else can ever do it! William, you made that bridge at Avignon better than it is. Beautiful as it undoubtedly is, you made it fifty times better. And if I were Morrison, or one of that school (bless the dear fellows one and all!), I wouldn't stand it, but would insist on having another picture gratis, to atone for the imposition.

The night is like a seaside night in England towards the end of September. They say it is the prelude to clear weather. But the wind is roaring now, and the sea is raving, and the rain is driving down, as if they had all set in for a real hearty picnic, and each had brought its own relations to the general festivity. I don't know whether you are acquainted with the coastguard and men in these parts? They are extremely civil fellows, of a very amiable manner and appearance, but the most innocent men in matters you would suppose them to be well acquainted with, in virtue of their office, that I ever encountered. One of them asked me only yesterday, if it would take a year to get to England in a ship? Which I thought for a coastguardman was rather a tidy question. It would take a long time to catch a ship going there if he were on board a pursuing cutter though. I think he would scarcely do it in twelve months, indeed.

So you were at Astley's t'other night. "Now, Mr. Stickney, sir, what can I come for to go for to do for to bring for to fetch for to carry for you, sir?" "He, he, he! Oh, I say, sir!" "Well, sir?" "Miss Woolford knows me, sir. She laughed at me!" I see him run away after this; not on his feet, but on his knees and the calves of his legs alternately; and that smell of sawdusty horses, which was never in any other place in the world, salutes my nose with painful distinctness. What do you think of my suddenly finding myself a swimmer? But I have really made the discovery, and skim about a little blue bay just below the town here, like a fish in high spirits. I hope to preserve my bathing-dress for your inspection and approval, or possibly to enrich your collection of Italian costumes on my return. Do you recollect Yarnold in "Masaniello"? I fear that I, unintentionally, "dress at him," before plunging into the sea. I enhanced the likeness very much, last Friday morning, by singing a barcarole on the rocks. I was a trifle too flesh-coloured (the stage knowing no medium between bright salmon and dirty yellow), but apart from that defect, not badly made up by any means. When you write to me, my dear Stanny, as I hope you will soon, address Poste Restante, Genoa. I remain out here until the end of September, and send in for my letters daily. There is a postman for this place, but he gets drunk and loses the letters; after which he calls to say so, and to fall upon his knees. About three weeks ago I caught him at a wine-shop near here, playing bowls in the garden. It was then about five o'clock in the afternoon, and he had been airing a newspaper addressed to me, since nine o'clock in the morning.

Kate and Georgina unite with me in most cordial remembrances to Mrs. and Miss Stanfield, and to all the children. They particularise all sorts of messages, but I tell them that they had better write themselves if they want to send any. Though I don't know that this writing would end in the safe deliverance of the commodities after all; for when I began this letter, I meant to give utterance to all kinds of heartiness, my dear Stanfield; and I come to the end of it without having said anything more than that I am--which is new to you--under every circumstance and everywhere,

Your most affectionate Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

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PALAZZO PESCHIERE, GENOA, _October 14th, 1844._

MY VERY DEAR MACREADY,

My whole heart is with you _at home_. I have not yet felt so far off as I do now, when I think of you there, and cannot fold you in my arms. This is only a shake of the hand. I couldn't _say_ much to you, if I were home to greet you. Nor can I write much, when I think of you, safe and sound and happy, after all your wanderings.

My dear fellow, God bless you twenty thousand times. Happiness and joy be with you! I hope to see you soon. If I should be so unfortunate as to miss you in London, I will fall upon you, with a swoop of love, in Paris. Kate says all kind things in the language; and means more than are in the dictionary capacity of all the descendants of all the stonemasons that worked at Babel. Again and again and again, my own true friend, God bless you!

Ever yours affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. Douglas Jerrold.]

CREMONA, _Saturday Night, October 16th, 1844._

MY DEAR JERROLD,

As half a loaf is better than no bread, so I hope that half a sheet of paper may be better than none at all, coming from one who is anxious to live in your memory and friendship. I should have redeemed the pledge I gave you in this regard long since, but occupation at one time, and absence from pen and ink at another, have prevented me.

Forster has told you, or will tell you, that I very much wish you to hear my little Christmas book; and I hope you will meet me, at his bidding, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. I have tried to strike a blow upon that part of the brass countenance of wicked Cant, when such a compliment is sorely needed at this time, and I trust that the result of my training is at least the exhibition of a strong desire to make it a staggerer. If _you_ should think at the end of the four rounds (there are no more) that the said Cant, in the language of _Bell's Life_, "comes up piping," I shall be very much the better for it.

I am now on my way to Milan; and from thence (after a day or two's rest) I mean to come to England by the grandest Alpine pass that the snow may leave open. You know this place as famous of yore for fiddles. I don't see any here now. But there is a whole street of coppersmiths not far from this inn; and they throb so d----ably and fitfully, that I thought I had a palpitation of the heart after dinner just now, and seldom was more relieved than when I found the noise to be none of mine.

I was rather shocked yesterday (I am not strong in geographical details) to find that Romeo was only banished twenty-five miles. That is the distance between Mantua and Verona. The latter is a quaint old place, with great houses in it that are now solitary and shut up--exactly the place it ought to be. The former has a great many apothecaries in it at this moment, who could play that part to the life. For of all the stagnant ponds I ever beheld, it is the greenest and weediest. I went to see the old palace of the Capulets, which is still distinguished by their cognizance (a hat carved in stone on the courtyard wall). It is a miserable inn. The court was full of crazy coaches, carts, geese, and pigs, and was ankle-deep in mud and dung. The garden is walled off and built out. There was nothing to connect it with its old inhabitants, and a very unsentimental lady at the kitchen door. The Montagues used to live some two or three miles off in the country. It does not appear quite clear whether they ever inhabited Verona itself. But there is a village bearing their name to this day, and traditions of the quarrels

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between the two families are still as nearly alive as anything can be, in such a drowsy neighbourhood.

It was very hearty and good of you, Jerrold, to make that affectionate mention of the "Carol" in _Punch_, and I assure you it was not lost on the distant object of your manly regard, but touched him as you wished and meant it should. I wish we had not lost so much time in improving our personal knowledge of each other. But I have so steadily read you, and so selfishly gratified myself in always expressing the admiration with which your gallant truths inspired me, that I must not call it time lost, either.

You rather entertained a notion, once, of coming to see me at Genoa. I shall return straight, on the 9th of December, limiting my stay in town to one week. Now couldn't you come back with me? The journey, that way, is very cheap, costing little more than twelve pounds; and I am sure the gratification to you would be high. I am lodged in quite a wonderful place, and would put you in a painted room, as big as a church and much more comfortable. There are pens and ink upon the premises; orange trees, gardens, battledores and shuttlecocks, rousing wood-fires for evenings, and a welcome worth having.

Come! Letter from a gentleman in Italy to Bradbury and Evans in London. Letter from a gentleman in a country gone to sleep to a gentleman in a country that would go to sleep too, and never wake again, if some people had their way. You can work in Genoa. The house is used to it. It is exactly a week's post. Have that portmanteau looked to, and when we meet, say, "I am coming."

I have never in my life been so struck by any place as by Venice. It is _the_ wonder of the world. Dreamy, beautiful, inconsistent, impossible, wicked, shadowy, d----able old place. I entered it by night, and the sensation of that night and the bright morning that followed is a part of me for the rest of my existence. And, oh God! the cells below the water, underneath the Bridge of Sighs; the nook where the monk came at midnight to confess the political offender; the bench where he was strangled; the deadly little vault in which they tied him in a sack, and the stealthy crouching little door through which they hurried him into a boat, and bore him away to sink him where no fisherman dare cast his net--all shown by torches that blink and wink, as if they were ashamed to look upon the gloomy theatre of sad horrors; past and gone as they are, these things stir a man's blood, like a great wrong or passion of the instant. And with these in their minds, and with a museum there, having a chamber full of such frightful instruments of torture as the devil in a brain fever could scarcely invent, there are hundreds of parrots, who will declaim to you in speech and print, by the hour together, on the degeneracy of the times in which a railroad is building across the water at Venice; instead of going down on their knees, the drivellers, and thanking Heaven that they live in a time when iron makes roads, instead of prison bars and engines for driving screws into the skulls of innocent men. Before God, I could almost turn bloody-minded, and shoot the parrots of our island with as little compunction as Robinson Crusoe shot the parrots in his.

I have not been in bed, these ten days, after five in the morning, and have been, travelling many hours every day. If this be the cause of my inflicting a very stupid and sleepy letter on you, my dear Jerrold, I hope it will be a kind of signal at the same time, of my wish to hail you lovingly even from this sleepy and unpromising state. And believe me as I am,

Always your Friend and Admirer.

[Sidenote: Mr. Thomas Mitton.]

PESCHIERE, GENOA, _Tuesday, Nov. 5th, 1844._

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MY DEAR MITTON,

The cause of my not having written to you is too obvious to need any explanation. I have worn myself to death in the month I have been at work. None of my usual reliefs have been at hand; I have not been able to divest myself of the story--have suffered very much in my sleep in consequence--and am so shaken by such work in this trying climate, that I am as nervous as a man who is dying of drink, and as haggard as a murderer.

I believe I have written a tremendous book, and knocked the "Carol" out of the field. It will make a great uproar, I have no doubt.

I leave here to-morrow for Venice and many other places; and I shall certainly come to London to see my proofs, coming by new ground all the way, cutting through the snow in the valleys of Switzerland, and plunging through the mountains in the dead of winter. I would accept your hearty offer with right goodwill, but my visit being one of business and consultation, I see impediments in the way, and insurmountable reasons for not doing so. Therefore, I shall go to an hotel in Covent Garden, where they know me very well, and with the landlord of which I have already communicated. My orders are not upon a mighty scale, extending no further than a good bedroom and a cold shower-bath.

Bradbury and Evans are going at it, ding-dong, and are wild with excitement. All news on that subject (and on every other) I must defer till I see you. That will be immediately after I arrive, of course. Most likely on Monday, 2nd December.

Kate and her sister (who send their best regards) and all the children are as well as possible. The house is _perfect_; the servants are as quiet and well-behaved as at home, which very rarely happens here, and Roche is my right hand. There never was such a fellow.

We have now got carpets down--burn fires at night--draw the curtains, and are quite wintry. We have a box at the opera, which, is close by (for nothing), and sit there when we please, as in our own drawing-room. There have been three fine days in four weeks. On every other the water has been falling down in one continual sheet, and it has been thundering and lightening every day and night.

My hand shakes in that feverish and horrible manner that I can hardly hold a pen. And I have so bad a cold that I can't see.

In haste to save the post,
Ever faithfully.

P.S.--Charley has a writing-master every day, and a French master. He and his sisters are to be waited on by a professor of the noble art of dancing, next week.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

PARMA, ALBERGO DELLA POSTA, _Friday, Nov. 8th, 1844._

MY DEAREST KATE,

"If missis could see us to-night, what would she say?" That was the brave C.'s remark last night at midnight, and he had reason. We left Genoa, as you know, soon after five on the evening of my departure; and in company with the lady whom you saw, and the dog whom I don't think you did see, travelled all night at the rate of four miles an hour over bad roads, without the least refreshment until daybreak, when the brave and myself escaped into a miserable caffé while they were changing horses, and got a cup of that drink hot. That same day, a few hours afterwards, between ten and eleven, we came to (I hope) the d----dest

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inn in the world, where, in a vast chamber, rendered still more desolate by the presence of a most offensive specimen of what D'Israeli calls the Mosaic Arab (who had a beautiful girl with him), I regaled upon a breakfast, almost as cold, and damp, and cheerless, as myself. Then, in another coach, much smaller than a small Fly, I was packed up with an old padre, a young Jesuit, a provincial avvocato, a private gentleman with a very red nose and a very wet brown umbrella, and the brave C. and I went on again at the same pace through the mud and rain until four in the afternoon, when there was a place in the coupé (two indeed), which I took, holding that select compartment in company with a very ugly but very agreeable Tuscan "gent," who said "_gia_" instead of "_si_," and rung some other changes in this changing language, but with whom I got on very well, being extremely conversational. We were bound, as you know perhaps, for Piacenza, but it was discovered that we couldn't get to Piacenza, and about ten o'clock at night we halted at a place called Stradella, where the inn was a series of queer galleries open to the night, with a great courtyard full of waggons and horses, and "_velociferi_," and what not in the centre. It was bitter cold and very wet, and we all walked into a bare room (mine!) with two immensely broad beds on two deal dining-tables, a third great empty table, the usual washing-stand tripod, with a slop-basin on it, and two chairs. And then we walked up and down for three-quarters of an hour or so, while dinner, or supper, or whatever it was, was getting ready. This was set forth (by way of variety) in the old priest's bedroom, which had two more immensely broad beds on two more deal dining-tables in it. The first dish was a cabbage boiled in a great quantity of rice and hot water, the whole flavoured with cheese. I was so cold that I thought it comfortable, and so hungry that a bit of cabbage, when I found such a thing floating my way, charmed me. After that we had a dish of very little pieces of pork, fried with pigs' kidneys; after that a fowl; after that something very red and stringy, which I think was veal; and after that two tiny little new-born-baby-looking turkeys, very red and very swollen. Fruit, of course, to wind up, and garlic in one shape or another in every course. I made three jokes at supper (to the immense delight of the company), and retired early. The brave brought in a bush or two and made a fire, and after that a glass of screeching hot brandy and water; that bottle of his being full of brandy. I drank it at my leisure, undressed before the fire, and went into one of the beds. The brave reappeared about an hour afterwards and went into the other; previously tying a pocket-handkerchief round and round his head in a strange fashion, and giving utterance to the sentiment with which this letter begins. At five this morning we resumed our journey, still through mud and rain, and at about eleven arrived at Piacenza; where we fellow-passengers took leave of one another in the most affectionate manner. As there was no coach on till six at night, and as it was a very grim, despondent sort of place, and as I had had enough of diligences for one while, I posted forward here in the strangest carriages ever beheld, which we changed when we changed horses. We arrived here before six. The hotel is quite French. I have dined very well in my own room on the second floor; and it has two beds in it, screened off from the room by drapery. I only use one to-night, and that is already made.

I purpose posting on to Bologna, if I can arrange it, at twelve to-morrow; seeing the sights here first.

It is dull work this travelling alone. My only comfort is in motion. I look forward with a sort of shudder to Sunday, when I shall have a day to myself in Bologna; and I think I must deliver my letters in Venice in sheer desperation. Never did anybody want a companion after dinner so much as I do.

There has been music on the landing outside my door to-night. Two violins and a violoncello. One of the violins played a solo, and the others struck in as an orchestra does now and then, very well. Then he came in with a small tin platter. "Bella musica," said I. "Bellissima musica, signore. Mi piace moltissimo. Sono felice, signoro," said he. I gave him a franc. "O moltissimo generoso. Tanto generoso signore!"

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It was a joke to laugh at when I was learning, but I swear unless I could stagger on, Zoppa-wise, with the people, I verily believe I should have turned back this morning.

In all other respects I think the entire change has done me undoubted service already. I am free of the book, and am red-faced; and feel marvellously disposed to sleep.

So for all the straggling qualities of this straggling letter, want of sleep must be responsible. Give my best love to Georgy, and my paternal blessing to

Mamey,
Katey,
Charley,
Wally,
and
Chickenstalker.

P.S.--Get things in their places. I can't bear to picture them otherwise.

P.P.S.--I think I saw Roche sleeping with his head on the lady's shoulder, in the coach. I couldn't swear it, and the light was deceptive. But I think I did.

Alia sign^{a}
Sign^{a} Dickens.
Palazzo Peschiere, Genova.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

FRIBOURG, _Saturday Night, November 23rd, 1844._

MY DEAREST KATE,

For the first time since I left you I am sitting in a room of my own hiring, with a fire and a bed in it. And I am happy to say that I have the best and fullest intentions of sleeping in the bed, having arrived here at half-past four this afternoon, without any cessation of travelling, night or day, since I parted from Mr. Bairr's cheap firewood.

The Alps appeared in sight very soon after we left Milan--by eight or nine o'clock in the morning; and the brave C. was so far wrong in his calculations that we began the ascent of the Simplon that same night, while you were travelling (as I would I were) towards the Peschiere. Most favourable state of circumstances for journeying up that tremendous pass! The brightest moon I ever saw, all night, and daybreak on the summit. The glory of which, making great wastes of snow a rosy red, exceeds all telling. We _sledged_ through the snow on the summit for two hours or so. The weather was perfectly fair and bright, and there was neither difficulty nor danger--except the danger that there always must be, in such a place, of a horse stumbling on the brink of an immeasurable precipice. In which case no piece of the unfortunate traveller would be left large enough to tell his story in dumb show. You may imagine something of the rugged grandeur of such a scene as this great passage of these great mountains, and indeed Glencoe, well sprinkled with snow, would be very like the ascent. But the top itself, so wild, and bleak, and lonely, is a thing by itself, and not to be likened to any other sight. The cold was piercing; the north wind high and boisterous; and when it came driving in our faces, bringing a sharp shower of little points of snow and piercing it into our very blood, it really was, what it is often said to be, "cutting"--with a very sharp edge too. There are houses of refuge here--bleak, solitary places--for travellers overtaken by the snow to hurry to, as an escape from death; and one great house, called the Hospital, kept by monks, where wayfarers

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get supper and bed for nothing. We saw some coming out and pursuing their journey. If all monks devoted themselves to such uses, I should have little fault to find with them.

The cold in Switzerland, since, has been something quite indescribable. My eyes are tingling to-night as one may suppose cymbals to tingle when they have been lustily played. It is positive pain to me to write. The great organ which I was to have had "pleasure in hearing" don't play on a Sunday, at which the brave is inconsolable. But the town is picturesque and quaint, and worth seeing. And this inn (with a German bedstead in it about the size and shape of a baby's linen-basket) is perfectly clean and comfortable. Butter is so cheap hereabouts that they bring you a great mass like the squab of a sofa for tea. And of honey, which is most delicious, they set before you a proportionate allowance. We start to-morrow morning at six for Strasburg, and from that town, or the next halting-place on the Rhine, I will report progress, if it be only in half-a-dozen words.

I am anxious to hear that you reached Genoa quite comfortably, and shall look forward with impatience to that letter which you are to indite with so much care and pains next Monday. My best love to Georgy, and to Charley, and Mamey, and Katey, and Wally, and Chickenstalker. I have treated myself to a new travelling-cap to-night (my old one being too thin), and it is rather a prodigious affair I flatter myself.

Swiss towns, and mountains, and the Lake of Geneva, and the famous suspension bridge at this place, and a great many other objects (with a very low thermometer conspicuous among them), are dancing up and down me, strangely. But I am quite collected enough, notwithstanding, to have still a very distinct idea that this hornpipe travelling is uncomfortable, and that I would gladly start for my palazzo out of hand without any previous rest, stupid as I am and much as I want it.

Ever, my dear love,
Affectionately yours.

P.S.--I hope the dancing lessons will be a success. Don't fail to let me know.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

HÔTEL BRISTOL, PARIS, _Thursday Night,
Nov. 28th, 1844, Half-past Ten._

MY DEAREST MACREADY,

Since I wrote to you what would be called in law proceedings the exhibit marked A, I have been round to the Hôtel Brighton, and personally examined and cross-examined the attendants. It is painfully clear to me that I shall not see you to-night, nor until Tuesday, the 10th of December, when, please God, I shall re-arrive here, on my way to my Italian bowers. I mean to stay all the Wednesday and all the Thursday in Paris. One night to see you act (my old delight when you little thought of such a being in existence), and one night to read to you and Mrs. Macready (if that scamp of Lincoln's Inn Fields has not anticipated me) my little Christmas book, in which I have endeavoured to plant an indignant right-hander on the eye of certain wicked Cant that makes my blood boil, which I hope will not only cloud that eye with black and blue, but many a gentle one with crystal of the finest sort. God forgive me, but I think there are good things in the little story!

I took it for granted you were, as your American friends say, "in full blast" here, and meant to have sent a card into your dressing-room, with "Mr. G. S. Hancock Muggridge, United States," upon it. But Paris looks coldly on me without your eye in its head, and not being able to shake your hand I shake my own head dolefully, which is but poor satisfaction.

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My love to Mrs. Macready. I will swear to the death that it is truly hers, for her gallantry in your absence if for nothing else, and to you, my dear Macready, I am ever a devoted friend.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

HÔTEL BRISTOL, PARIS, _Thursday Night, Nov. 28th, 1844._

MY DEAREST KATE,

With an intolerable pen and no ink, I am going to write a few lines to you to report progress.

I got to Strasburg on Monday night, intending to go down the Rhine. But the weather being foggy, and the season quite over, they could not insure me getting on for certain beyond Mayence, or our not being detained by unpropitious weather. Therefore I resolved (the malle poste being full) to take the diligence hither next day in the afternoon. I arrived here at half-past five to-night, after fifty hours of it in a French coach. I was so beastly dirty when I got to this house, that I had quite lost all sense of my identity, and if anybody had said, "Are you Charles Dickens?" I should have unblushingly answered, "No; I never heard of him." A good wash, and a good dress, and a good dinner have revived me, however; and I can report of this house, concerning which the brave was so anxious when we were here before, that it is the best I ever was in. My little apartment, consisting of three rooms and other conveniences, is a perfect curiosity of completeness. You never saw such a charming little baby-house. It is infinitely smaller than those first rooms we had at Meurice's, but for elegance, compactness, comfort, and quietude, exceeds anything I ever met with at an inn.

The moment I arrived here, I enquired, of course, after Macready. They said the English theatre had not begun yet, that they thought he was at Meurice's, where they knew some members of the company to be. I instantly despatched the porter with a note to say that if he were there, I would come round and hug him, as soon as I was clean. They referred the porter to the Hôtel Brighton. He came back and told me that the answer there was: "M. Macready's rooms were engaged, but he had not arrived. He was expected to-night!" If we meet to-night, I will add a postscript. Wouldn't it be odd if we met upon the road between this and Boulogne to-morrow?

I mean, as a recompense for my late sufferings, to get a hackney-carriage if I can and post that journey, starting from here at eight to-morrow morning, getting to Boulogne sufficiently early next morning to cross at once, and dining with Forster that same day--to wit, Saturday. I have notions of taking you with me on my next journey (if you would like to go), and arranging for Georgy to come to us by steamer--under the protection of the English captain, for instance--to Naples; there I would top and cap all our walks by taking her up to the crater of Vesuvius with me. But this is dependent on her ability to be perfectly happy for a fortnight or so in our stately palace with the children, and such foreign aid as the Simpsons. For I love her too dearly to think of any project which would involve her being uncomfortable for that space of time.

You can think this over, and talk it over; and I will join you in doing so, please God, when I return to our Italian bowers, which I shall be heartily glad to do.

They tell us that the landlord of this house, going to London some week or so ago, was detained at Boulogne two days by a high sea, in which the packet could not put out. So I hope there is the greater chance of no such bedevilment happening to me.

Paris is better than ever. Oh dear, how grand it was when I came through it in that caravan to-night! I hope we shall be very hearty here, and

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able to say with Wally, "Han't it plassant!"

Love to Charley, Mamey, Katey, Wally, and Chickenstalker. The last-named, I take it for granted, is indeed prodigious.

Best love to Georgy.

Ever, my dearest Kate,
Affectionately yours.

P.S.--I have been round to Macready's hotel; it is now past ten, and he has not arrived, nor does it seem at all certain that he seriously intended to arrive to-night. So I shall not see him, I take it for granted, until my return.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

PIAZZA COFFEE HOUSE, COVENT GARDEN,
Monday, Dec. 2nd, 1844.

MY DEAREST KATE,

I received, with great delight, your _excellent_ letter of this morning. Do not regard this as my answer to it. It is merely to say that I have been at Bradbury and Evans's all day, and have barely time to write more than that I _will_ write to-morrow. I arrived about seven on Saturday evening, and rushed into the arms of Mac and Forster. Both of them send their best love to you and Georgy, with a heartiness not to be described.

The little book is now, as far as I am concerned, all ready. One cut of Doyle's and one of Leech's I found so unlike my ideas, that I had them both to breakfast with me this morning, and with that winning manner which you know of, got them with the highest good humour to do both afresh. They are now hard at it. Stanfield's readiness, delight, wonder at my being pleased with what he has done is delicious. Mac's frontispiece is charming. The book is quite splendid; the expenses will be very great, I have no doubt.

Anybody who has heard it has been moved in the most extraordinary manner. Forster read it (for dramatic purposes) to A'Beckett. He cried so much and so painfully, that Forster didn't know whether to go on or stop; and he called next day to say that any expression of his feeling was beyond his power. But that he believed it, and felt it to be--I won't say what.

As the reading comes off to-morrow night, I had better not despatch my letters to you until _Wednesday's_ post. I must close to save this (heartily tired I am, and I dine at Gore House to-day), so with love to Georgy, Mamey, Katey, Charley, Wally, and Chickenstalker, ever, believe me,

Yours, with true affection.

P.S.--If you had seen Macready last night, undisguisedly sobbing and crying on the sofa as I read, you would have felt, as I did, what a thing it is to have power.

FOOTNOTES:

[4] T. P. Cooke, the celebrated actor of "William" in Douglas Jerrold's play of "Black-eyed Susan."

1845.

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NARRATIVE.

At the beginning of this year, Charles Dickens was still living at the Palazzo Peschiere, Genoa, with his family. In February, he went with his wife to Rome for the Carnival, leaving his sister-in-law and children at Genoa; Miss Hogarth joining them later on at Naples. They all returned to Rome for the Holy Week, and then went to Florence, and so back to Genoa. He continued his residence at Genoa until June of this year, when he returned to England by Switzerland and Belgium, the party being met at Brussels by Mr. Forster, Mr. Maclise, and Mr. Douglas Jerrold, and arriving at home at the end of June. The autumn months, until the 1st October, were again spent at Broadstairs. And in this September was the first amateur play at Miss Kelly's theatre in Dean Street, under the management of Charles Dickens, with Messrs. Jerrold, Mark Lemon, John Leech, Gilbert A'Beckett, Leigh, Frank Stone, Forster, and others as his fellow-actors. The play selected was Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," in which Charles Dickens acted Captain Bobadil. The first performance was a private one, merely as an entertainment for the actors and their friends, but its success speedily led to a repetition of the same performance, and afterwards to many other performances for public and charitable objects. "Every Man in his Humour" was shortly after repeated, at the same little theatre, for a useful charity which needed help; and later in the year Beaumont and Fletcher's play of "The Elder Brother" was given by the same company, at the same place, for the benefit of Miss Kelly. There was a farce played after the comedy on each occasion--not always the same one--in which Charles Dickens and Mark Lemon were the principal actors.

The letters which we have for this year, refer, with very few exceptions, to these theatricals, and therefore need no explanation.

He was at work at the end of this year on another Christmas book, "The Cricket on the Hearth," and was also much occupied with the project of _The Daily News_ paper, of which he undertook the editorship at its starting, which took place in the beginning of the following year, 1846.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

ROME, _Tuesday, February 4th, 1845._

MY DEAREST GEORGY,

This is a very short note, but time is still shorter. Come by the first boat by all means. If there be a good one a day or two before it, come by that. Don't delay on any account. I am very sorry you are not here. The Carnival is a very remarkable and beautiful sight. I have been regretting the having left you at home all the way here.

Kate says, will you take counsel with Charlotte about colour (I put in my word, as usual, for brightness), and have the darlings' bonnets made at once, by the same artist as before? Kate would have written, but is gone with Black to a day performance at the opera, to see Cerito dance. At two o'clock each day we sally forth in an open carriage, with a large sack of sugar-plums and at least five hundred little nosegays to pelt people with. I should think we threw away, yesterday, a thousand of the latter. We had the carriage filled with flowers three or four times. I wish you could have seen me catch a swell brigand on the nose with a handful of very large confetti every time we met him. It was the best thing I have ever done. "The Chimes" are nothing to it.

Anxiously expecting you, I am ever,

Dear Georgy,
Yours most affectionately.

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[Sidenote: Mr. Thomas Mitton.]

NAPLES, _Monday, February 17th, 1845._

MY DEAR MITTON,

This will be a hasty letter, for I am as badly off in this place as in America--beset by visitors at all times and seasons, and forced to dine out every day. I have found, however, an excellent man for me--an Englishman, who has lived here many years, and is well acquainted with _the people_, whom he doctored in the bad time of the cholera, when the priests and everybody else fled in terror.

Under his auspices, I have got to understand the low life of Naples (among the fishermen and idlers) almost as well as I understand the do. do. of my own country; always excepting the language, which is very peculiar and extremely difficult, and would require a year's constant practice at least. It is no more like Italian than English is to Welsh. And as they don't say half of what they mean, but make a wink or a kick stand for a whole sentence, it's a marvel to me how they comprehend each other. At Rome they speak beautiful Italian (I am pretty strong at that, I believe); but they are worse here than in Genoa, which I had previously thought impossible.

It is a fine place, but nothing like so beautiful as people make it out to be. The famous bay is, to my thinking, as a piece of scenery, immeasurably inferior to the Bay of Genoa, which is the most lovely thing I have ever seen. The city, in like manner, will bear no comparison with Genoa. But there is none in Italy that will, except Venice. As to houses, there is no palace like the Peschiere for architecture, situation, gardens, or rooms. It is a great triumph to me, too, to find how cheap it is. At Rome, the English people live in dirty little fourth, fifth, and sixth floors, with not one room as large as your own drawing-room, and pay, commonly, seven or eight pounds a week.

I was a week in Rome on my way here, and saw the Carnival, which is perfectly delirious, and a great scene for a description. All the ancient part of Rome is wonderful and impressive in the extreme. Far beyond the possibility of exaggeration as to the modern part, it might be anywhere or anything--Paris, Nice, Boulogne, Calais, or one of a thousand other places.

The weather is so atrocious (rain, snow, wind, darkness, hail, and cold) that I can't get over into Sicily. But I don't care very much about it, as I have planned out ten days of excursion into the neighbouring country. One thing of course--the ascent of Vesuvius, Herculaneum and Pompeii, the two cities which were covered by its melted ashes, and dug out in the first instance accidentally, are more full of interest and wonder than it is possible to imagine. I have heard of some ancient tombs (quite unknown to travellers) dug in the bowels of the earth, and extending for some miles underground. They are near a place called Viterbo, on the way from Rome to Florence. I shall lay in a small stock of torches, etc., and explore them when I leave Rome. I return there on the 1st of March, and shall stay there nearly a month.

Saturday, February 22nd.--Since I left off as above, I have been away on an excursion of three days. Yesterday evening, at four o'clock, we began (a small party of six) the ascent of Mount Vesuvius, with six saddle-horses, an armed soldier for a guard, and twenty-two guides. The latter rendered necessary by the severity of the weather, which is greater than has been known for twenty years, and has covered the precipitous part of the mountain with deep snow, the surface of which is glazed with one smooth sheet of ice from the top of the cone to the bottom. By starting at that hour I intended to get the sunset about halfway up, and night at the top, where the fire is raging. It was an inexpressibly lovely night without a cloud; and when the day was quite gone, the moon (within a few hours of the full) came proudly up, showing

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the sea, and the Bay of Naples, and the whole country, in such majesty as no words can express. We rode to the beginning of the snow and then dismounted. Catherine and Georgina were put into two litters, just chairs with poles, like those in use in England on the 5th of November; and a fat Englishman, who was of the party, was hoisted into a third, borne by eight men. I was accommodated with a tough stick, and we began to plough our way up. The ascent was as steep as this line /--very nearly perpendicular. We were all tumbling at every stop; and looking up and seeing the people in advance tumbling over one's very head, and looking down and seeing hundreds of feet of smooth ice below, was, I must confess, anything but agreeable. However, I knew there was little chance of another clear night before I leave this, and gave the word to get up, somehow or other. So on we went, winding a little now and then, or we should not have got on at all. By prodigious exertions we passed the region of snow, and came into that of fire--desolate and awful, you may well suppose. It was like working one's way through a dry waterfall, with every mass of stone burnt and charred into enormous cinders, and smoke and sulphur bursting out of every chink and crevice, so that it was difficult to breathe. High before us, bursting out of a hill at the top of the mountain, shaped like this [HW: A], the fire was pouring out, reddening the night with flames, blackening it with smoke, and spotting it with red-hot stones and cinders that fell down again in showers. At every step everybody fell, now into a hot chink, now into a bed of ashes, now over a mass of cindered iron; and the confusion in the darkness (for the smoke obscured the moon in this part), and the quarrelling and shouting and roaring of the guides, and the waiting every now and then for somebody who was not to be found, and was supposed to have stumbled into some pit or other, made such a scene of it as I can give you no idea of. My ladies were now on foot, of course; but we dragged them on as well as we could (they were thorough game, and didn't make the least complaint), until we got to the foot of that topmost hill I have drawn so beautifully. Here we all stopped; but the head guide, an English gentleman of the name of Le Gros--who has been here many years, and has been up the mountain a hundred times--and your humble servant, resolved (like jackasses) to climb that hill to the brink, and look down into the crater itself. You may form some notion of what is going on inside it, when I tell you that it is a hundred feet higher than it was six weeks ago. The sensation of struggling up it, choked with the fire and smoke, and feeling at every step as if the crust of ground between one's feet and the gulf of fire would crumble in and swallow one up (which is the real danger), I shall remember for some little time, I think. But we did it. We looked down into the flaming bowels of the mountain and came back again, alight in half-a-dozen places, and burnt from head to foot. You never saw such devils. And _I_ never saw anything so awful and terrible.

Roche had been tearing his hair like a madman, and crying that we should all three be killed, which made the rest of the company very comfortable, as you may suppose. But we had some wine in a basket, and all swallowed a little of that and a great deal of sulphur before we began to descend. The usual way, after the fiery part is past--you will understand that to be all the flat top of the mountain, in the centre of which, again, rises the little hill I have drawn--is to slide down the ashes, which, slipping from under you, make a gradually increasing ledge under your feet, and prevent your going too fast. But when we came to this steep place last night, we found nothing there but one smooth solid sheet of ice. The only way to get down was for the guides to make a chain, holding by each other's hands, and beat a narrow track in it into the snow below with their sticks. My two unfortunate ladies were taken out of their litters again, with half-a-dozen men hanging on to each, to prevent their falling forward; and we began to descend this way. It was like a tremendous dream. It was impossible to stand, and the only way to prevent oneself from going sheer down the precipice, every time one fell, was to drive one's stick into one of the holes the guides had made, and hold on by that. Nobody could pick one up, or stop one, or render one the least assistance. Now, conceive my horror, when this Mr. Le Gros I have mentioned, being on one side of Georgina and I on the other, suddenly staggers away from the narrow path on to the smooth ice,

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gives us a jerk, lets go, and plunges headforemost down the smooth ice into the black night, five hundred feet below! Almost at the same instant, a man far behind, carrying a light basket on his head with some of our spare cloaks in it, misses his footing and rolls down in another place; and after him, rolling over and over like a black bundle, goes a boy, shrieking as nobody but an Italian can shriek, until the breath is tumbled out of him.

The Englishman is in bed to-day, terribly bruised but without any broken bones. He was insensible at first and a mere heap of rags; but we got him before the fire, in a little hermitage there is halfway down, and he so far recovered as to be able to take some supper, which was waiting for us there. The boy was brought in with his head tied up in a bloody cloth, about half an hour after the rest of us were assembled. And the man who had had the basket was not found when we left the mountain at midnight. What became of the cloaks (mine was among them) I know as little. My ladies' clothes were so torn off their backs that they would not have been decent, if there could have been any thought of such things at such a time. And when we got down to the guides' house, we found a French surgeon (one of another party who had been up before us) lying on a bed in a stable, with God knows what horrible breakage about him, but suffering acutely and looking like death. A pretty unusual trip for a pleasure expedition, I think!

I am rather stiff to-day but am quite unhurt, except a slight scrape on my right hand. My clothes are burnt to pieces. My ladies are the wonder of Naples, and everybody is open-mouthed.

Address me as usual. All letters are forwarded. The children well and happy. Best regards.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

ALBION HOTEL, BROADSTAIRS, _Sunday, Aug. 17th, 1845._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

I have been obliged to communicate with the _Punch_ men in reference to Saturday, the 20th, as that day of the week is usually their business dinner day, and I was not quite sure that it could be conveniently altered.

Jerrold now assures me that it can for such a purpose, and that it shall, and therefore consider the play as being arranged to come off on Saturday, the 20th of next month.

I don't know whether I told you that we have changed the farce; and now we are to act "Two o'clock in the Morning," as performed by the inimitable B. at Montreal.

In reference to Bruce Castle school, I think the question set at rest most probably by the fact of there being no vacancy (it is always full) until Christmas, when Howitt's two boys and Jerrold's one go in and fill it up again. But after going carefully through the school, a question would arise in my mind whether the system--a perfectly admirable one; the only recognition of education as a broad system of moral and intellectual philosophy, that I have ever seen in practice--do not require so much preparation and progress in the mind of the boy, as that he shall have come there younger and less advanced than Willy; or at all events without that very different sort of school experience which he must have acquired at Brighton. I have no warrant for this doubt, beyond a vague uneasiness suggesting a suspicion of its great probability. On such slight ground I would not hint it to anyone but you, who I know will give it its due weight, and no more and no less.

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I have the paper setting forth the nature of the higher classical studies, and the books they read. It is the usual course, and includes the great books in Greek and Latin. They have a miscellaneous library, under the management of the boys themselves, of some five or six thousand volumes, and every means of study and recreation, and every inducement to self-reliance and self-exertion that can easily be imagined. As there is no room just now, you can turn it over in your mind again. And if you would like to see the place yourself, when you return to town, I shall be delighted to go there with you. I come home on Wednesday. It is our rehearsal night; and of course the active and enterprising stage-manager must be at his post.

Ever, my dear Macready,
Affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. George Cattermole.]

August 27th, 1845.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I write a line to tell you a project we have in view. A little party of us have taken Miss Kelly's theatre for the night of the 20th of next month, and we are going to act a play there, with correct and pretty costume, good orchestra, etc. etc. The affair is strictly private. The admission will be by cards of invitation; every man will have from thirty to thirty-five. Nobody can ask any person without the knowledge and sanction of the rest, my objection being final; and the expense to each (exclusive of the dress, which every man finds for himself) will not exceed two guineas. Forster plays, and Stone plays, and I play, and some of the _Punch_ people play. Stanfield, having the scenery and carpenters to attend to, cannot manage his part also. It is Downright, in "Every Man in his Humour," not at all long, but very good; he wants you to take it. And so help me. We shall have a brilliant audience. The uphill part of the thing is already done, our next rehearsal is next Tuesday, and if you will come in you will find everything to your hand, and all very merry and pleasant.

Let me know what you decide, like a Kittenmolian Trojan. And with love from all here to all there,

Believe me, ever,
Heartily yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Thursday, Sept. 18th, 1845._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

We have a little supper, sir, after the farce, at No. 9, Powis Place, Great Ormond Street, in an empty house belonging to one of the company. There I am requested by my fellows to beg the favour of thy company and that of Mrs. Macready. The guests are limited to the actors and their ladies--with the exception of yourselves, and D'Orsay, and George Cattermole, "or so"--that sounds like Bobadil a little.

I am going to adopt your reading of the fifth act with the worst grace in the world. It seems to me that you don't allow enough for Bobadil having been frequently beaten before, as I have no doubt he had been. The part goes down hideously on this construction, and the end is mere lees. But never mind, sir, I intend bringing you up with the farce in the most brilliant manner.

Ever yours affectionately.

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N.B.--Observe. I think of changing my present mode of life, and am open to an engagement.

N.B. No. 2.--I will undertake not to play tragedy, though passion is my strength.

N.B. No. 3.--I consider myself a chained lion.[5]

[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _October 2nd, 1845._

MY DEAR STANNY,

I send you the claret jug. But for a mistake, you would have received the little remembrance almost immediately after my return from abroad.

I need not say how much I should value another little sketch from your extraordinary hand in this year's small volume, to which Mac again does the frontispiece. But I cannot hear of it, and will not have it (though the gratification of such aid, to me, is really beyond all expression), unless you will so far consent to make it a matter of business as to receive, without asking any questions, a cheque in return from the publishers. Do not misunderstand me--though I am not afraid there is much danger of your doing so, for between us misunderstanding is, I hope, not easy. I know perfectly well that nothing can pay you for the devotion of any portion of your time to such a use of your art. I know perfectly well that no terms would induce you to go out of your way, in such a regard, for perhaps anybody else. I cannot, nor do I desire to, vanquish the friendly obligation which help from you imposes on me. But I am not the sole proprietor of those little books; and it would be monstrous in you if you were to dream of putting a scratch into a second one without some shadowy reference to the other partners, ten thousand times more monstrous in me if any consideration on earth could induce me to permit it, which nothing will or shall.

So, see what it comes to. If you will do me a favour on my terms it will be more acceptable to me, my dear Stanfield, than I can possibly tell you. If you will not be so generous, you deprive me of the satisfaction of receiving it at your hands, and shut me out from that possibility altogether. What a stony-hearted ruffian you must be in such a case!

Ever affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Friday Evening, Oct. 17th, 1845._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

You once--only once--gave the world assurance of a waistcoat. You wore it, sir, I think, in "Money." It was a remarkable and precious waistcoat, wherein certain broad stripes of blue or purple disported themselves as by a combination of extraordinary circumstances, too happy to occur again. I have seen it on your manly chest in private life. I saw it, sir, I think, the other day in the cold light of morning--with feelings easier to be imagined than described. Mr. Macready, sir, are you a father? If so, lend me that waistcoat for five minutes. I am bidden to a wedding (where fathers are made), and my artist cannot, I find (how should he?), imagine such a waistcoat. Let me show it to him as a sample of my tastes and wishes; and--ha, ha, ha, ha!--eclipse the bridegroom!

I will send a trusty messenger at half-past nine precisely, in the morning. He is sworn to secrecy. He durst not for his life betray us, or swells in ambuscade would have the waistcoat at the cost of his heart's

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blood.

Thine,
THE UNWAISTCOATED ONE.

[Sidenote: Viscount Morpeth.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Nov. 28th, 1845._

MY DEAR LORD MORPETH,

I have delayed writing to you until now, hoping I might have been able to tell you of our dramatic plans, and of the day on which we purpose playing. But as these matters are still in abeyance, I will give you that precious information when I come into the receipt of it myself. And let me heartily assure you, that I had at least as much pleasure in seeing you the other day as you can possibly have had in seeing me; and that I shall consider all opportunities of becoming better known to you among the most fortunate and desirable occasions of my life. And that I am with your conviction about the probability of our liking each other, and, as Lord Lyndhurst might say, with "something more."

Ever faithfully yours.

FOOTNOTE:

[5] This alludes to a theatrical story of a second-rate actor, who described himself as a "chained lion," in a theatre where he had to play inferior parts to Mr. Macready.

1846.

NARRATIVE.

In the spring of this year Charles Dickens gave up the editorship of, and finally, all connection with _The Daily News_, and went again abroad with his family; the house in Devonshire Terrace being let for twelve months. He made his summer residence at Lausanne, taking a villa (Rosemont) there, from May till November. Here he wrote "The Battle of Life," and the first number of "Dombey and Son." In November he removed to Paris, where he took a house in the Rue de Courcelles for the winter, and where he lived and was at work upon "Dombey" until March, 1847. Among the English residents that summer at Lausanne he made many friendships, in proof of which he dedicated the Christmas book written there to his "English friends in Lausanne." The especially intimate friendships which he formed were with M. de Cerjat, who was always a resident of Lausanne with his family; Mr. Haldimand, whose name is identified with the place, and with the Hon. Richard and Mrs. Watson, of Rockingham Castle. He maintained a constant correspondence with them, and to Mr. and Mrs. Watson he afterwards dedicated his own favourite of all his books, "David Copperfield." M. de Cerjat, from the time of Charles Dickens leaving Lausanne, began a custom, which he kept up almost without an interval to the time of his own death, of writing him a long letter every Christmas, to which he returned answers, which will be given in this and the following years.

In this year we have the commencement of his association and correspondence with Mr. W. H. Wills. Their connection began in the short term of his editorship of _The Daily News_, when he at once fully appreciated Mr. Wills's invaluable business qualities. And when, some time later, he started his own periodical, "Household Words," he thought himself very fortunate in being able to secure Mr. Wills's co-operation as editor of that journal, and afterwards of "All the Year Round," with

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which "Household Words" was incorporated. They worked together on terms of the most perfect mutual understanding, confidence, and affectionate regard, until Mr. Wills's health made it necessary for him to retire from the work in 1868. Besides his first notes to Mr. Wills in this year, we have our first letters to his dear friends, the Rev. James White, Walter Savage Landor, and Miss Marion Ely, the niece of Lady Talfourd.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _February 18th, 1846._

MY DEAR MR. WILLS,

Do look at the enclosed from Mrs. What's-her-name. For a surprising audacity it is remarkable even to me, who am positively bullied, and all but beaten, by these people. I wish you would do me the favour to write to her (in your own name and from your own address), stating that you answered her letter as you did, because if I were the wealthiest nobleman in England I could not keep pace with one-twentieth part of the demands upon me, and because you saw no internal evidence in her application to induce you to single it out for any especial notice. That the tone of this letter renders you exceedingly glad you did so; and that you decline, from me, holding any correspondence with her. Something to that effect, after what flourish your nature will.

Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: Rev. James White.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
February 24th, 1846.

I cannot help telling you, my dear White, for I can think of no formal use of Mister to such a writer as you, that I have just now read your tragedy, "The Earl of Gowrie," with a delight which I should in vain endeavour to express to you. Considered with reference to its story, or its characters, or its noble poetry, I honestly regard it as a work of most remarkable genius. It has impressed me powerfully and enduringly. I am proud to have received it from your hand. And if I have to tell you what complete possession it has taken of me--that is, if I _could_ tell you--I do believe you would be glad to know it.

Always faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Monday Morning, March 2nd, 1846._

MY DEAR MR. WILLS,

I really don't know what to say about the New Brunswicker. The idea will obtrude itself on my mind, that he had no business to come here on such an expedition; and that it is a piece of the wild conceit for which his countrymen are so remarkable, and that I can hardly afford to be steward to such adventurers. On the other hand, your description of him pleases me. Then that purse which I could never keep shut in my life makes mouths at me, saying, "See how empty I am." Then I fill it, and it looks very rich indeed.

I think the best way is to say, that if you think you can do him any _permanent_ good with five pounds (that is, get him home again) I will give you the money. But I should be very much indisposed to give it him, merely to linger on here about town for a little time and then be hard up again.

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As to employment, I do in my soul believe that if I were Lord Chancellor of England, I should have been aground long ago, for the patronage of a messenger's place.

Say all that is civil for me to the proprietor of _The Illustrated London News_, who really seems to be very liberal. "Other engagements," etc. etc., "prevent me from entertaining," etc. etc.

Faithfully yours ever.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _March 4th, 1846._

MY DEAR MR. WILLS,

I assure you I am very truly and unaffectedly sensible of your earnest friendliness, and in proof of my feeling its worth I shall unhesitatingly trouble you sometimes, in the fullest reliance on your meaning what you say. The letter from Nelson Square is a very manly and touching one. But I am more helpless in such a case as that than in any other, having really fewer means of helping such a gentleman to employment than I have of firing off the guns in the Tower. Such, appeals come to me here in scores upon scores.

The letter from Little White Lion Street does not impress me favourably. It is not written in a simple or truthful manner, I am afraid, and is _not_ a good reference. Moreover, I think it probable that the writer may have deserted some pursuit for which he is qualified, for vague and laborious strivings which he has no pretensions to make. However, I will certainly act on your impression of him, whatever it may be. And if you could explain to the gentleman in Nelson Square, that I am not evading his request, but that I do not know of anything to which I can recommend him, it would be a great relief to me.

I trust this new printer _is_ a Tartar; and I hope to God he will so proclaim and assert his Tartar breeding, as to excommunicate ---- from the "chapel" over which he presides.

Tell Powell (with my regards) that he needn't "deal with" the American notices of the "Cricket." I never read one word of their abuse, and I should think it base to read their praises. It is something to know that one is righted so soon; and knowing that, I can afford to know no more.

Ever faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _March 6th, 1846._

MY DEAR STANNY,

In reference to the damage of the candlesticks, I beg to quote (from "The Cricket on the Hearth," by the highly popular and deservedly so Dick) this reply:

"I'll damage you if you enquire."

Ever yours,
My block-reeving,
Main-brace splicing,
Lead-heaving,
Ship-conning,
Stun'sail-bending,
Deck-swabbing

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Son of a sea-cook,
HENRY BLUFF,
H.M.S. _Timber._

[Sidenote: Mr. Charles Knight.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Saturday, April 13th, 1846._

MY DEAR SIR,

Do you recollect sending me your biography of Shakespeare last autumn, and my not acknowledging its receipt? I do, with remorse.

The truth is, that I took it out of town with me, read it with great pleasure as a charming piece of honest enthusiasm and perseverance, kept it by me, came home, meant to say all manner of things to you, suffered the time to go by, got ashamed, thought of speaking to you, never saw you, felt it heavy on my mind, and now fling off the load by thanking you heartily, and hoping you will not think it too late.

Always believe me,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Ely.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Sunday, April 19th, 1846._

MY DEAR MISS ELY,

A mysterious emissary brought me a note in your always welcome handwriting at the Athenæum last night. I enquired of the servant in attendance whether the bearer of this letter was of my vast establishment. To which he replied "Yezzir." "Then," said I, "tell him not to wait."

Maclise was with me. It was then half-past seven. We had been walking, and were splashed to the eyes. We debated upon the possibility of getting to Russell Square in reasonable time--decided that it would be in the worst taste to appear when the performance would be half over--and very reluctantly decided not to come. You may suppose how dirty and dismal we were when we went to the Thames Tunnel, of all places in the world, instead!

When I came home here at midnight I found another letter from you (I left off in this place to press it dutifully to my lips). Then my mind misgave me that _you_ must have sent to the Athenæum. At the apparent rudeness of my reply, my face, as Hadji Baba says, was turned upside down, and fifty donkeys sat upon my father's grave--or would have done so, but for his not being dead yet.

Therefore I send this humble explanation--protesting, however, which I do most solemnly, against being invited under such untoward circumstances; and claiming as your old friend and no less old admirer to be instantly invited to the next performance, if such a thing is ever contemplated.

Ever, my dear Miss Ely,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Douglas Jerrold.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Tuesday, May 26th, 1846._

MY DEAR JERROLD,

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I send you herewith some books belonging to you. A thousand thanks for the "Hermit." He took my fancy mightily when I first saw him in the "Illuminated;" and I have stowed him away in the left-hand breast pocket of my travelling coat, that we may hold pleasant converse together on the Rhine. You see what confidence I have in him!

I wish you would seriously consider the expediency and feasibility of coming to Lausanne in the summer or early autumn. I must be at work myself during a certain part of every day almost, and you could do twice as much there as here. It is a wonderful place to see--and what sort of welcome you would find I will say nothing about, for I have vanity enough to believe that you would be willing to feel yourself as much at home in my household as in any man's.

Do think it over. I could send you the minutest particular of the journey. It is really all railroad and steamboat, and the easiest in the world.

At Macready's on Thursday, we shall meet, please God!

Always, my dear Jerrold,
Cordially yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

GENEVA, _Saturday, October 24th, 1846._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

The welcome sight of your handwriting moves me (though I have nothing to say) to show you mine, and if I could recollect the passage in Virginius I would paraphrase it, and say, "Does it seem to tremble, boy? Is it a loving autograph? Does it beam with friendship and affection?" all of which I say, as I write, with--oh Heaven!--such a splendid imitation of you, and finally give you one of those grasps and shakes with which I have seen you make the young Icilius stagger again.

Here I am, running away from a bad headache as Tristram Shandy ran away from death, and lodging for a week in the Hôtel de l'Écu de Genève, wherein there is a large mirror shattered by a cannon-ball in the late revolution. A revolution, whatever its merits, achieved by free spirits, nobly generous and moderate, even in the first transports of victory, elevated by a splendid popular education, and bent on freedom from all tyrants, whether their crowns be shaven or golden. The newspapers may tell you what they please. I believe there is no country on earth but Switzerland in which a violent change could have been effected in the Christian spirit shown in this place, or in the same proud, independent, gallant style. Not one halfpennyworth of property was lost, stolen, or strayed. Not one atom of party malice survived the smoke of the last gun. Nothing is expressed in the Government addresses to the citizens but a regard for the general happiness, and injunctions to forget all animosities; which they are practically obeying at every turn, though the late Government (of whose spirit I had some previous knowledge) did load the guns with such material as should occasion gangrene in the wounds, and though the wounded _do_ die, consequently, every day, in the hospital, of sores that in themselves were nothing.

You a mountaineer! _You_ examine (I have seen you do it) the point of your young son's bâton de montagne before he went up into the snow! And _you_ talk of coming to Lausanne in March! Why, Lord love your heart, William Tell, times are changed since you lived at Altorf. There is not a mountain pass open until June. The snow is closing in on all the panorama already. I was at the Great St. Bernard two months ago, and it was bitter cold and frosty then. Do you think I could let you hazard your life by going up any pass worth seeing in bleak March? Never shall it be said that Dickens sacrificed his friend upon the altar of his hospitality! Onward! To Paris! (Cue for band. Dickens points off with

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truncheon, first entrance P.S. Page delivers gauntlets on one knee. Dickens puts 'em on and gradually falls into a fit of musing. Mrs. Dickens lays her hand upon his shoulder. Business. Procession. Curtain.)

It is a great pleasure to me, my dear Macready, to hear from yourself, as I had previously heard from Forster, that you are so well pleased with "Dombey," which is evidently a great success and a great hit, thank God! I felt that Mrs. Brown was strong, but I was not at all afraid of giving as heavy a blow as I could to a piece of hot iron that lay ready at my hand. For that is my principle always, and I hope to come down with some heavier sledge-hammers than that.

I know the lady of whom you write. ---- left there only yesterday. The story may arise only in her manner, which is extraordinarily free and careless. He was visiting her here, when I was here last, three weeks ago. I knew her in Italy. It is not her fault if scandal ever leaves her alone, for such a braver of all conventionalities never wore petticoats. But I should be sorry to hear there was anything guilty in her conduct. She is very clever, really learned, very pretty, much neglected by her husband, and only four-and-twenty years of age.

Kate and Georgy send their best loves to Mrs. and Miss Macready and all your house.

Your most affectionate Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. Haldimand.]

PARIS, _November, 1846._

* * * * *

Talking of which[6] reminds me to say, that I have written to my printers, and told them to prefix to "The Battle of Life" a dedication that is printed in illuminated capitals on my heart. It is only this:

"This Christmas book is cordially inscribed to
my English friends in Switzerland."

I shall trouble you with a little parcel of three or four copies to distribute to those whose names will be found written in them, as soon as they can be made ready, and believe me, that there is no success or approval in the great world beyond the Jura that will be more precious and delightful to me, than the hope that I shall be remembered of an evening in the coming winter time, at one or two friends' I could mention near the Lake of Geneva. It runs with a spring tide, that will always flow and never ebb, through my memory; and nothing less than the waters of Lethe shall confuse the music of its running, until it loses itself in that great sea, for which all the currents of our life are desperately bent.

* * * * *

[Sidenote: Mr. Walter Savage Landor.]

PARIS, _Sunday, November 22nd, 1846._

YOUNG MAN,

I will not go there if I can help it. I have not the least confidence in the value of your introduction to the Devil. I can't help thinking that it would be of better use "the other way, the other way," but I won't try it there, either, at present, if I can help it. Your godson says is that your duty? and he begs me to enclose a blush newly blushed for you.

As to writing, I have written to you twenty times and twenty more to that,

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if you only knew it. I have been writing a little Christmas book, besides, expressly for you. And if you don't like it, I shall go to the font of Marylebone Church as soon as I conveniently can and renounce you: I am not to be trifled with. I write from Paris. I am getting up some French steam. I intend to proceed upon the longing-for-a-lap-of-blood-at-last principle, and if you _do_ offend me, look to it.

We are all well and happy, and they send loves to you by the bushel. We are in the agonies of house-hunting. The people are frightfully civil, and grotesquely extortionate. One man (with a house to let) told me yesterday that he loved the Duke of Wellington like a brother. The same gentleman wanted to hug me round the neck with one hand, and pick my pocket with the other.

Don't be hard upon the Swiss. They are a thorn in the sides of European despots, and a good wholesome people to live near Jesuit-ridden kings on the brighter side of the mountains. My hat shall ever be ready to be thrown up, and my glove ever ready to be thrown down for Switzerland. If you were the man I took you for, when I took you (as a godfather) for better and for worse, you would come to Paris and amaze the weak walls of the house I haven't found yet with that steady snore of yours, which I once heard piercing the door of your bedroom in Devonshire Terrace, reverberating along the bell-wire in the hall, so getting outside into the street, playing Eolian harps among the area railings, and going down the New Road like the blast of a trumpet.

I forgive you your reviling of me: there's a shovelful of live coals for your head--does it burn? And am, with true affection--does it burn now?--

Ever yours.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Richard Watson.]

PARIS, 48, RUE DE COURCELLES, ST. HONORÉ,
Friday, Nov. 27th, 1846.

MY DEAR WATSON,

We were housed only yesterday. I lose no time in despatching this memorandum of our whereabouts, in order that you may not fail to write me a line before you come to Paris on your way towards England, letting me know on what day we are to expect you to dinner.

We arrived here quite happily and well. I don't mean here, but at the Hôtel Brighton, in Paris, on Friday evening, between six and seven o'clock. The agonies of house-hunting were frightfully severe. It was one paroxysm for four mortal days. I am proud to express my belief, that we are lodged at last in the most preposterous house in the world. The like of it cannot, and so far as my knowledge goes does not, exist in any other part of the globe. The bedrooms are like opera-boxes. The dining-rooms, staircases, and passages, quite inexplicable. The dining-room is a sort of cavern, painted (ceiling and all) to represent a grove, with unaccountable bits of looking-glass sticking in among the branches of the trees. There is a gleam of reason in the drawing-room. But it is approached through a series of small chambers, like the joints in a telescope, which are hung with inscrutable drapery. The maddest man in Bedlam, having the materials given him, would be likely to devise such a suite, supposing his case to be hopeless and quite incurable.

Pray tell Mrs. Watson, with my best regards, that the dance of the two sisters in the little Christmas book is being done as an illustration by Maclise; and that Stanfield is doing the battle-ground and the outside of the Nutmeg Grater Inn. Maclise is also drawing some smaller subjects for the little story, and they write me that they hope it will be very pretty, and they think that I shall like it. I shall have been in London before I see you, probably, and I hope the book itself will then be on

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its road to Lausanne to speak for itself, and to speak a word for me too. I have never left so many friendly and cheerful recollections in any place; and to represent me in my absence, its tone should be very eloquent and affectionate indeed.

Well, if I don't turn up again next summer it shall not be my fault. In the meanwhile, I shall often and often look that way with my mind's eye, and hear the sweet, clear, bell-like voice of ---- with the ear of my imagination. In the event of there being any change--but it is not likely--in the appearance of his cravat behind, where it goes up into his head, I mean, and frets against his wig--I hope some one of my English friends will apprise me of it, for the love of the great Saint Bernard.

I have not seen Lord Normanby yet. I have not seen anything up to this time but houses and lodgings. There seems to be immense excitement here on the subject of ---- however, and a perfectly stupendous sensation getting up. I saw the king the other day coming into Paris. His carriage was surrounded by guards on horseback, and he sat very far back in it, I thought, and drove at a great pace. It was strange to see the préfet of police on horseback some hundreds of yards in advance, looking to the right and left as he rode, like a man who suspected every twig in every tree in the long avenue.

The English relations look anything but promising, though I understand that the Count St. Aulaire is to remain in London, notwithstanding the newspaper alarms to the contrary. If there be anything like the sensation in England about ---- that there is here, there will be a bitter resentment indeed. The democratic society of Paris have announced, this morning, their intention of printing and circulating fifty thousand copies of an appeal in every European language. It is a base business beyond question, and comes at an ill time.

Mrs. Dickens and her sister desire their best regards to be sent to you and their best loves to Mrs. Watson, in which I join, as nearly as I may. Believe me, with great truth,

Very sincerely yours.

P.S.--Mrs. Dickens is going to write to Mrs. Watson next week, she says.

[Sidenote: M. Cerjat.]

PARIS, 48, RUE DE COURCELLES, ST. HONORÉ,
Friday, Nov. 27th, 1846.

MY DEAR CERJAT,

When we turned out of your view on that disconsolate Monday, when you so kindly took horse and rode forth to say good-bye, we went on in a very dull and drowsy manner, I can assure you. I could have borne a world of punch in the rumble and been none the worse for it. There was an uncommonly cool inn that night, and quite a monstrous establishment at Auxonne the next night, full of flatulent passages and banging doors. The next night we passed at Montbard, where there is one of the very best little inns in all France. The next at Sens, and so we got here. The roads were bad, but not very for French roads. There was no deficiency of horses anywhere; and after Pontarlier the weather was really not too cold for comfort. They weighed our plate at the frontier custom-house, spoon by spoon, and fork by fork, and we lingered about there, in a thick fog and a hard frost, for three long hours and a half, during which the officials committed all manner of absurdities, and got into all sorts of disputes with my brave courier. This was the only misery we encountered--except leaving Lausanne, and that was enough to last us and _did_ last us all the way here. We are living on it now. I felt, myself, much as I should think the murderer felt on that fair morning when, with his gray-haired victim (those unconscious gray hairs,

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soon to be bedabbled with blood), he went so far towards heaven as the top of that mountain of St. Bernard without one touch of remorse. A weight is on my breast. The only difference between me and the murderer is, that his weight was guilt and mine is regret.

I haven't a word of news to tell you. I shouldn't write at all if I were not the vainest man in the world, impelled by a belief that you will be glad to hear from me, even though you hear no more than that I have nothing to say. "Dombey" is doing wonders. It went up, after the publication of the second number, over the thirty thousand. This is such a very large sale, so early in the story, that I begin to think it will beat all the rest. Keeley and his wife are making great preparations for producing the Christmas story, and I have made them (as an old stage manager) carry out one or two expensive notions of mine about scenery and so forth--in particular a sudden change from the inside of the doctor's house in the midst of the ball to the orchard in the snow--which ought to tell very well. But actors are so bad, in general, and the best are spread over so many theatres, that the "cast" is black despair and moody madness. There is no one to be got for Marion but a certain Miss ----, I am afraid--a pupil of Miss Kelly's, who acted in the private theatricals I got up a year ago. Macready took her afterwards to play Virginia to his Virginius, but she made nothing of it, great as the chance was. I have promised to show her what I mean, as near as I can, and if you will look into the English Opera House on the morning of the 17th, 18th, or 19th of next month, between the hours of eleven and four, you will find me in a very hot and dusty condition, playing all the parts of the piece, to the immense diversion of all the actors, actresses, scene-shifters, carpenters, musicians, chorus people, tailors, dressmakers, scene-painters, and general ragamuffins of the theatre.

Moore, the poet, is very ill--I fear dying. The last time I saw him was immediately before I left London, and I thought him sadly changed and tamed, but not much more so than such a man might be under the heavy hand of time. I believe he suffered severe grief in the death of a son some time ago. The first man I met in Paris was ----, who took hold of me as I was getting into a coach at the door of the hotel. He hadn't a button on his shirt (but I don't think he ever has), and you might have sown what boys call "mustard and cress" in the dust on his coat. I have not seen Lord Normanby yet, as we have only just got a house (the queerest house in Europe!) to lay our heads in; but there seems reason to fear that the growing dissensions between England and France, and the irritation of the French king, may lead to the withdrawal of the minister on each side of the Channel.

Have you cut down any more trees, played any more rubbers, propounded any more teasers to the players at the game of Yes and No? How is the old horse? How is the gray mare? How is Crab (to whom my respectful compliments)? Have you tried the punch yet; if yes, did it succeed; if no, why not? Is Mrs. Cerjat as happy and as well as I would have her, and all your house ditto ditto? Does Haldimand play whist with any science yet? Ha, ha, ha! the idea of his saying _I_ hadn't any! And are those damask-cheeked virgins, the Miss ----, still sleeping on dewy rose leaves near the English church?

Remember me to all your house, and most of all to its other head, with all the regard and earnestness that a "numble individual" (as they always call it in the House of Commons) who once travelled with her in a car over a smooth country may charge you with. I have added two lines to the little Christmas book, that I hope both you and she may not dislike. Haldimand will tell you what they are. Kate and Georgy send their kindest loves, and Kate is "going" to write "next week." Believe me always, my dear Cerjat, full of cordial and hearty recollections of this past summer and autumn, and your part in my part of them,

Very faithfully your Friend.

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[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

58, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, _Saturday, Dec. 19th, 1846._

MY DEAREST KATE,

I really am bothered to death by this confounded _dramatization_ of the Christmas book. They were in a state so horrible at Keeley's yesterday (as perhaps Forster told you when he wrote), that I was obliged to engage to read the book to them this morning. It struck me that Mrs. Leigh Murray, Miss Daly, and Vining seemed to understand it best. Certainly Miss Daly knew best what she was about yesterday. At eight to-night we have a rehearsal with scenery and band, and everything but dresses. I see no possibility of escaping from it before one or two o'clock in the morning. And I was at the theatre all day yesterday. Unless I had come to London, I do not think there would have been much hope of the version being more than just tolerated, even that doubtful. All the actors bad, all the business frightfully behindhand. The very words of the book confused in the copying into the densest and most insufferable nonsense. I must exempt, however, from the general slackness both the Keeleys. I hope they will be very good. I have never seen anything of its kind better than the manner in which they played the little supper scene between Clemency and Britain, yesterday. It was quite perfect, even to me.

The small manager, Forster, Talfourd, Stanny, and Mac dine with me at the Piazza to-day, before the rehearsal. I have already one or two uncommonly good stories of Mac. I reserve them for narration. I have also a dreadful cold, which I would not reserve if I could help it. I can hardly hold up my head, and fight through from hour to hour, but had serious thoughts just now of walking off to bed.

Christmas book published to-day--twenty-three thousand copies already gone!!! Browne's plates for next "Dombey" much better than usual.

I have seen nobody yet, of course. But I sent Roche up to your mother this morning, to say I am in town and will come shortly. There is a great thaw here to-day, and it is raining hard. I hope you have the advantage (if it be one, which I am not sure of) of a similar change in Paris. Of course I start again on Thursday. We are expecting (Roche and I) a letter from the malle poste people, to whom we have applied for places. The journey here was long and cold--twenty-four hours from Paris to Boulogne. Passage not very bad, and made in two hours.

I find I can't write at all, so I had best leave off. I am looking impatiently for your letter on Monday morning. Give my best love to Georgy, and kisses to all the dear children. And believe me, my love,

Most affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

PIAZZA COFFEE-HOUSE, COVENT GARDEN,
Monday, Dec. 21st, 1846.

MY DEAREST KATE,

In a quiet interval of half an hour before going to dine at Macready's, I sit down to write you a few words. But I shall reserve my letter for to-morrow's post, in order that you may hear what _I_ hear of the "going" of the play to-night. Think of my being there on Saturday, with a really frightful cold, and working harder than ever I did at the amateur plays, until two in the morning. There was no supper to be got, either here or anywhere else, after coming out; and I was as hungry and thirsty as need be. The scenery and dresses are very good indeed, and they have spent money on it _liberally_. The great change from the ball-room to the snowy night is most effective, and both the departure

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and the return will tell, I think, strongly on an audience. I have made them very quick and excited in the passionate scenes, and so have infused some appearance of life into those parts of the play. But I can't make a Marion, and Miss ---- is awfully bad. She is a mere nothing all through. I put Mr. Leigh Murray into such a state, by making him tear about, that the perspiration ran streaming down his face. They have a great let. I believe every place in the house is taken. Roche is going.

Tuesday Morning.--The play went, as well as I can make out--I hoped to have had Stanny's report of it, but he is ill--with great effect. There was immense enthusiasm at its close, and great uproar and shouting for me. Forster will go on Wednesday, and write you his account of it. I saw the Keeleys on the stage at eleven o'clock or so, and they were in prodigious spirits and delight.

[Sidenote: Mr. John Forster.]

48, RUE DE COURCELLES, PARIS,
Sunday Night, Dec. 27th, 1846.

MY VERY DEAR FORSTER,

Amen, amen. Many merry Christmases, many happy new years, unbroken friendship, great accumulation of cheerful recollections, affection on earth, and heaven at last, for all of us.

I enclose you a letter from Jeffrey, which you may like to read. _Bring it to me back when you come over._ I have told him all he wants to know. Is it not a strange example of the hazards of writing in numbers that a man like him should form his notion of Dombey and Miss Tox on three months' knowledge? I have asked him the same question, and advised him to keep his eye on both of them as time rolls on.

We had a cold journey here from Boulogne, but the roads were not very bad. The malle poste, however, now takes the trains at Amiens. We missed it by ten minutes, and had to wait three hours--from twelve o'clock until three, in which interval I drank brandy and water, and slept like a top. It is delightful travelling for its speed, that malle poste, and really for its comfort too. But on this occasion it was not remarkable for the last-named quality. The director of the post at Boulogne told me a lamentable story of his son at Paris being ill, and implored me to bring him on. The brave doubted the representations altogether, but I couldn't find it in my heart to say no; so we brought the director, bodkinwise, and being a large man, in a great number of greatcoats, he crushed us dismally until we got to the railroad. For two passengers (and it never carries more) it is capital. For three, excruciating.

Write to ---- what you have said to me. You need write no more. He is full of vicious fancies and wrong suspicions, even of Hardwick, and I would rather he heard it from you than from me, whom he is not likely to love much in his heart. I doubt it may be but a rusty instrument for want of use, the ----ish heart.

My most important present news is that I am going to take a jorum of hot rum and egg in bed immediately, and to cover myself up with all the blankets in the house. Love from all. I have a sensation in my head, as if it were "on edge." It is still very cold here, but the snow had disappeared on my return, both here and on the road, except within ten miles or so of Boulogne.

Ever affectionately.

FOOTNOTE:

[6] "The Battle of Life."

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1847.

NARRATIVE.

At the beginning of the year Charles Dickens was still living in Paris--Rue de Courcelles. His stay was cut shorter than he intended it to have been, by the illness from scarlet fever of his eldest son, who was at school in London. Consequent upon this, he and his wife went to London at the end of February, taking up their abode at the Victoria Hotel, Euston Square, the Devonshire Terrace house being still occupied by its tenant, Sir James Duke, and the sick boy under the care of his grandmother, Mrs. Hogarth, in Albany Street. The children, with their aunt, remained in Paris, until a temporary house had been taken for the family in Chester Place, Regent's Park; and Roche was then sent back to take _all_ home. In Chester Place another son was born--Sydney Smith Haldimand--his godfathers being Mr. Haldimand, of Lausanne, and Mr. H. P. Smith, of the Eagle Life Assurance office. He was christened at the same time as a daughter of Mr. Macready's, and the letters to Mr. Smith have reference to the postponement of the christening on Mr. Smith's account. In May, Charles Dickens had lodgings in Brighton for some weeks, for the recovery of Mrs. Dickens's health; going there first with his wife and sister-in-law and the eldest boy--now recovered from his fever--and being joined at the latter part of the time by his two little daughters, to whom there are some letters among those which follow here. He removed earlier than usual this summer to Broadstairs, which remained his head-quarters until October, with intervals of absence for amateur theatrical tours (which Mr. Forster calls "splendid strolling"), in which he was usually accompanied by his wife and sister-in-law. Several new recruits had been added to the theatrical company, from among distinguished literary men and artists, and it now included, besides those previously named, Mr. George Cruikshank, Mr. George Henry Lewes, and Mr. Augustus Egg; the supreme management and arrangement of everything being always left to Charles Dickens. "Every Man in his Humour" and farces were again played at Manchester and Liverpool, for the benefit of Mr. Leigh Hunt, and the dramatic author, Mr. John Poole.

By the end of the Broadstairs holiday, the house in Devonshire Terrace was vacant, and the family returned to it in October. All this year Charles Dickens had been at work upon the monthly numbers of "Dombey and Son," in spite of these many interruptions. He began at Broadstairs a Christmas book. But he found that the engrossing interest of his novel approaching completion made it impossible for him to finish the other work in time. So he decided to let this Christmas pass without a story, and postponed the publication of "The Haunted Man" until the following year.

At the close of the year he went to Leeds, to take the chair at a meeting of the Mechanics' Institute, and on the 28th December he presided at the opening of the Glasgow Athenæum; he and his wife being the guests of the historian--_then_ Mr. Sheriff, afterwards Sir Archibald Alison. From a letter to his sister-in-law, written from Edinburgh, it will be seen that Mrs. Dickens was prevented by sudden illness from being present at the "demonstration." At the end of that letter there is another illustration of the odd names he was in the habit of giving to his children, the last of the three, the "Hoshen Peck," being a corruption of "Ocean Spectre"--a name which had, afterwards, a sad significance, as the boy (Sydney Smith) became a sailor, and died and was buried at sea two years after his father's death.

The letters in this year need very little explanation. In the first letter to Mrs. Watson, he alludes to a sketch which she had made from "The Battle of Life," and had sent to Charles Dickens, as a remembrance, when her husband paid a short visit to Paris in this winter.

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And there are two letters to Miss Marguerite Power, the niece of the Countess of Blessington--a lady for whom he had then, and until her death, a most affectionate friendship and respect, for the sake of her own admirable qualities, and in remembrance of her delightful association with Gore House, where he was a frequent visitor. For Lady Blessington he had a high admiration and great regard, and she was one of his earliest appreciators; and Alfred, Comte D'Orsay, was also a much-loved friend. His "own marchioness," alluded to in the second letter to Miss Power, was the younger and very charming sister of his correspondent.

We much regret having been unable to procure any letters addressed to Mr. Egg. His intimacy with him began first in the plays of this year; but he became, almost immediately, one of the friends for whom he had an especial affection; and Mr. Egg was a regular visitor at his house and at his seaside places of resort for many years after this date.

The letter to Mr. William Sandys has reference to an intention which Charles Dickens _had_ entertained, of laying the scene of a story in Cornwall; Mr. Sandys, himself a Cornishman, having proposed to send him some books to help him as to the dialect.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

PARIS, 48, RUE DE COURCELLES, _Jan. 25th, 1847._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I cannot allow your wandering lord to return to your--I suppose "arms" is not improper--arms, then, without thanking you in half-a-dozen words for your letter, and assuring you that I had great interest and pleasure in its receipt, and that I say Amen to all _you_ say of our happy past and hopeful future. There is a picture of Lausanne--St. Bernard--the tavern by the little lake between Lausanne and Vevay, which is kept by that drunken dog whom Haldimand believes to be so sober--and of many other such scenes, within doors and without--that rises up to my mind very often, and in the quiet pleasure of its aspect rather daunts me, as compared with the reality of a stirring life; but, please God, we will have some more pleasant days, and go up some more mountains, somewhere, and laugh together, at somebody, and form the same delightful little circle again, somehow.

I quite agree with you about the illustrations to the little Christmas book. I was delighted with yours. Your good lord before-mentioned will inform you that it hangs up over my chair in the drawing-room here; and when you come to England (after I have seen you again in Lausanne) I will show it you in my little study at home, quietly thanking you on the bookcase. Then we will go and see some of Turner's recent pictures, and decide that question to Haldimand's utmost confusion.

You will find Watson looking wonderfully well, I think. When he was first here, on his way to England, he took an extraordinary bath, in which he was rubbed all over with chemical compounds, and had everything done to him that could be invented for seven francs. It _may_ be the influence of this treatment that I see in his face, but I think it's the prospect of coming back to Elysée. All I can say is, that when _I_ come that way, and find myself among those friends again, I expect to be perfectly lovely--a kind of Glorious Apollo, radiant and shining with joy.

Kate and her sister send all kinds of love in this hasty packet, and I am always, my dear Mrs. Watson,

Faithfully yours.

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[Sidenote: Rev. Edward Tagart.]

PARIS, 48, RUE DE COURCELLES, ST. HONORÉ,
Thursday, Jan. 28th, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

Before you read any more, I wish you would take those tablets out of your drawer, in which you have put a black mark against my name, and erase it neatly. I don't deserve it, on my word I don't, though appearances are against me, I unwillingly confess.

I had gone to Geneva, to recover from an uncommon depression of spirits consequent on too much sitting over "Dombey" and the little Christmas book, when I received your letter as I was going out walking, one sunshiny, windy day. I read it on the banks of the Rhone, where it runs, very blue and swift, between two high green hills, with ranges of snowy mountains filling up the distance. Its cordial and unaffected tone gave me the greatest pleasure--did me a world of good--set me up for the afternoon, and gave me an evening's subject of discourse. For I talked to "them" (that is, Kate and Georgy) about those bright mornings at the Peschiere, until bedtime, and threatened to write you such a letter next day as would--I don't exactly know what it was to do, but it was to be a great letter, expressive of all kinds of pleasant things, and, perhaps the most genial letter that ever was written.

From that hour to this, I have again and again and again said, "I'll write to-morrow," and here I am to-day full of penitence--really sorry and ashamed, and with no excuse but my writing-life, which makes me get up and go out, when my morning work is done, and look at pen and ink no more until I begin again.

Besides which, I have been seeing Paris--wandering into hospitals, prisons, dead-houses, operas, theatres, concert-rooms, burial-grounds, palaces, and wine-shops. In my unoccupied fortnight of each month, every description of gaudy and ghastly sight has been passing before me in a rapid panorama. Before that, I had to come here from Switzerland, over frosty mountains in dense fogs, and through towns with walls and drawbridges, and without population, or anything else in particular but soldiers and mud. I took a flight to London for four days, and went and came back over one sheet of snow, sea excepted; and I wish that had been snow too. Then Forster (who is here now, and begs me to send his kindest regards) came to see Paris for himself, and in showing it to him, away I was borne again, like an enchanted rider. In short, I have had no rest in my play; and on Monday I am going to work again. A fortnight hence the play will begin once more; a fortnight after that the work will follow round, and so the letters that I care for go unwritten.

Do you care for French news? I hope not, because I don't know any. There is a melodrama, called "The French Revolution," now playing at the Cirque, in the first act of which there is the most tremendous representation of _a people_ that can well be imagined. There are wonderful battles and so forth in the piece, but there is a power and massiveness in the mob which is positively awful. At another theatre, "Clarissa Harlowe" is still the rage. There are some things in it rather calculated to astonish the ghost of Richardson, but Clarissa is very admirably played, and dies better than the original to my thinking; but Richardson is no great favourite of mine, and never seems to me to take his top-boots off, whatever he does. Several pieces are in course of representation, involving rare portraits of the English. In one, a servant, called "Tom Bob," who wears a particularly English waistcoat, trimmed with gold lace and concealing his ankles, does very good things indeed. In another, a Prime Minister of England, who has ruined himself by railway speculations, hits off some of our national characteristics very happily, frequently making incidental mention of "Vishmingster," "Regeenstreet," and other places with which you are well acquainted. "Sir Fakson" is one of the characters in another play--"English to the Core;" and I saw a Lord Mayor of London at one of the small theatres the

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other night, looking uncommonly well in a stage-coachman's waistcoat, the order of the Garter, and a very low-crowned broad-brimmed hat, not unlike a dustman.

I was at Geneva at the time of the revolution. The moderation and mildness of the successful party were beyond all praise. Their appeals to the people of all parties--printed and pasted on the walls--have no parallel that I know of, in history, for their real good sterling Christianity and tendency to promote the happiness of mankind. My sympathy is strongly with the Swiss radicals. They know what Catholicity is; they see, in some of their own valleys, the poverty, ignorance, misery, and bigotry it always brings in its train wherever it is triumphant; and they would root it out of their children's way at any price. I fear the end of the struggle will be, that some Catholic power will step in to crush the dangerously well-educated republics (very dangerous to such neighbours); but there is a spirit in the people, or I very much mistake them, that will trouble the Jesuits there many years, and shake their altar steps for them.

This is a poor return (I look down and see the end of the paper) for your letter, but in its cordial spirit of reciprocal friendship, it is not so bad a one if you could read it as I do, and it eases my mind and discharges my conscience. We are coming home, please God, at the end of March. Kate and Georgy send their best regards to you, and their loves to Mrs. and Miss Tagart and the children. _Our_ children wish to live too in _your_ children's remembrance. You will be glad, I know, to hear that "Dombey" is doing wonders, and that the Christmas book shot far ahead of its predecessors. I hope you will like _the last chapter of No. 5_. If you can spare me a scrap of your handwriting in token of forgiveness, do; if not, I'll come and beg your pardon on the 31st of March.

Ever believe me,
Cordially and truly yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Dickens.]

VICTORIA HOTEL, EUSTON SQUARE,
Thursday, March 4th, 1847.

MY DEAREST MAMEY,

I have not got much to say, and that's the truth; but I cannot let this letter go into the post without wishing you many many happy returns of your birthday, and sending my love to Auntey and to Katey, and to all of them. We were at Mrs. Macready's last night, where there was a little party in honour of Mr. Macready's birthday. We had some dancing, and they wished very much that you and Katey had been there; so did I and your mamma. We have not got back to Devonshire Terrace yet, but are living at an hotel until Sir James Duke returns from Scotland, which will be on Saturday or Monday. I hope when he comes home and finds us here he will go out of Devonshire Terrace, and let us get it ready for you. Roche is coming back to you very soon. He will leave here on Saturday morning. He says he hopes you will have a very happy birthday, and he means to drink your health on the road to Paris.

Always your affectionate.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

CHESTER PLACE, _Tuesday Night._

MY DEAREST GEORGY,

* * * * *

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So far from having "got through my agonies," as you benevolently hope, I have not yet begun them. No, on this _ninth of the month_ I have not yet written a single slip. What could I do; house-hunting at first, and beleaguered all day to-day and yesterday by furniture that must be altered, and things that must be put away? My wretchedness, just now, is inconceivable. Tell Anne, by-the-bye (not with reference to my wretchedness, but in connection with the arrangements generally), that I can't get on at all without her.

If Kate has not mentioned it, get Katey and Mamey to write and send a letter to Charley; of course not hinting at our being here. He wants to hear from them.

Poor little Hall is dead, as you will have seen, I dare say, in the paper. This house is very cheerful on the drawing-room floor and above, looking into the park on one side and Albany Street on the other. Forster is mild. Maclise, exceedingly bald on the crown of his head. Roche has just come in to know if he may "blow datter light." Love to all the darlings. Regards to everybody else. Love to yourself.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Miss Dickens and Miss Katey Dickens.]

148, KING'S ROAD, BRIGHTON, _Monday, May 24, 1847._

MY DEAR MAMEY AND KATEY,

I was very glad to receive your nice letter. I am going to tell you something that I hope will please you. It is this: I am coming to London Thursday, and I mean to bring you both back here with me, to stay until we all come home together on the Saturday. I hope you like this.

Tell John to come with the carriage to the London Bridge Station, on Thursday morning at ten o'clock, and to wait there for me. I will then come home and fetch you.

Mamma and Auntey and Charley send their loves. I send mine too, to Walley, Spim, and Alfred, and Sydney.

Always, my dears,
Your affectionate Papa.

[Sidenote: Mr. William Sandys.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _June 13th, 1847._

DEAR SIR,

Many thanks for your kind note. I shall hope to see you when we return to town, from which we shall now be absent (with a short interval in next month) until October. Your account of the Cornishmen gave me great pleasure; and if I were not sunk in engagements so far, that the crown of my head is invisible to my nearest friends, I should have asked you to make me known to them. The new dialogue I will ask you by-and-by to let me see. I have, for the present, abandoned the idea of sinking a shaft in Cornwall.

I have sent your Shakesperian extracts to Collier. It is a great comfort, to my thinking, that so little is known concerning the poet. It is a fine mystery; and I tremble every day lest something should come out. If he had had a Boswell, society wouldn't have respected his grave, but would calmly have had his skull in the phrenological shop-windows.

Believe me,

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Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. H. P. Smith.]

CHESTER PLACE, _June 14th, 1847._

MY DEAR SMITH,

Haldimand stayed at No. 7, Connaught Place, Hyde Park, when I saw him yesterday. But he was going to cross to Boulogne to-day.

The young Pariah seems pretty comfortable. He is of a cosmopolitan spirit I hope, and stares with a kind of leaden satisfaction at his spoons, without afflicting himself much about the established church.

Affectionately yours.

P.S.--I think of bringing an action against you for a new sort of breach of promise, and calling all the bishops to estimate the damage of having our christening postponed for a fortnight. It appears to me that I shall get a good deal of money in this way. If you have any compromise to offer, my solicitors are Dodson and Fogg.

[Sidenote: Miss Power.]

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _July 2nd, 1847._

MY DEAR MISS POWER,

Let me thank you, very sincerely, for your kind note and for the little book. I read the latter on my way down here with the greatest pleasure. It is a charming story gracefully told, and very gracefully and worthily translated. I have not been better pleased with a book for a long time.

I cannot say I take very kindly to the illustrations. They are a long way behind the tale to my thinking. The artist understands it very well, I dare say, but does not express his understanding of it, in the least degree, to any sense of mine.

Ah Rosherville! That fated Rosherville, when shall we see it! Perhaps in one of those intervals when I am up to town from here, and suddenly appear at Gore House, somebody will propose an excursion there, next day. If anybody does, somebody else will be ready to go. So this deponent maketh oath and saith.

I am looking out upon a dark gray sea, with a keen north-east wind blowing it in shore. It is more like late autumn than midsummer, and there is a howling in the air as if the latter were in a very hopeless state indeed. The very Banshee of Midsummer is rattling the windows drearily while I write. There are no visitors in the place but children, and they (my own included) have all got the hooping-cough, and go about the beach choking incessantly. A miserable wanderer lectured in a library last night about astronomy; but being in utter solitude he snuffed out the transparent planets he had brought with him in a box and fled in disgust. A white mouse and a little tinkling box of music that stops at "come," in the melody of the Buffalo Gals, and can't play "out to-night," are the only amusements left.

I beg from my solitude to send my love to Lady Blessington, and your sister, and Count D'Orsay. I think of taming spiders, as Baron Trenck did. There is one in my cell (with a speckled body and twenty-two very decided knees) who seems to know me.

Dear Miss Power,
Faithfully yours ever.

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[Sidenote: Mr. H. P. Smith.]

BROADSTAIRS, _July 9th, 1847._

MY DEAR SMITH,

I am really more obliged to you for your kindness about "The Eagle" (as I always call your house) than I can say. But when I come to town to-morrow week, for the Liverpool and Manchester plays, I shall have Kate and Georgy with me. Moreover I shall be continually going out and coming in at unholy hours. Item, the timid will come at impossible seasons to "go over" their parts with the manager. Item, two Jews with musty sacks of dresses will be constantly coming backwards and forwards. Item, sounds as of "groans" will be heard while the inimitable Boz is "getting" his words--which happens all day. Item, Forster will incessantly deliver an address by Bulwer. Item, one hundred letters per diem will arrive from Manchester and Liverpool; and five actresses, in very limp bonnets, with extraordinary veils attached to them, will be always calling, protected by five mothers.

No, no, my actuary. Some congenial tavern is the fitting scene for these things, if I don't get into Devonshire Terrace, whereof I have some spark of hope. Eagles couldn't look the sun in the face and have such enormities going on in their nests.

I am, for the time, that obscene thing, in short, now chronicled in the Marylebone Register of Births--

A PLAYER,
Though still yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Power.]

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _Tuesday, July 14th, 1847._

MY DEAR MISS POWER,

Though I am hopeless of Rosherville until after the 28th--for am I not beckoned, by angels of charity and by local committees, to Manchester and Liverpool, and to all sorts of bedevilments (if I may be allowed the expression) in the way of managerial miseries in the meantime--here I find myself falling into parenthesis within parenthesis, like Lord Brougham--yet will I joyfully come up to London on Friday, to dine at your house and meet the Dane, whose Books I honour, and whose--to make the sentiment complete, I want something that would sound like "Bones, I love!" but I can't get anything that unites reason with beauty. You, who have genius and beauty in your own person, will supply the gap in your kindness.

An advertisement in the newspapers mentioning the dinner-time, will be esteemed a favour.

Some wild beasts (in cages) have come down here, and involved us in a whirl of dissipation. A young lady in complete armour--at least, in something that shines very much, and is exceedingly scaley--goes into the den of ferocious lions, tigers, leopards, etc., and pretends to go to sleep upon the principal lion, upon which a rustic keeper, who speaks through his nose, exclaims, "Behold the abazid power of woobad!" and we all applaud tumultuously.

Seriously, she beats Van Amburgh. And I think the Duke of Wellington must have her painted by Landseer.

My penitent regards to Lady Blessington, Count D'Orsay, and my own Marchioness.

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Ever, dear Miss Power,
Very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Dickens.]

BROADSTAIRS, _Wednesday, August 4th, 1847._

MY DEAREST MAMEY,

I am delighted to hear that you are going to improve in your spelling, because nobody can write properly without spelling well. But I know you will learn whatever you are taught, because you are always good, industrious, and attentive. That is what I always say of my Mamey.

The note you sent me this morning is a very nice one, and the spelling is beautiful.

Always, my dear Mamey,
Your affectionate Papa.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Tuesday Morning, Nov. 23rd, 1847._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

I am in the whirlwind of finishing a number with a crisis in it; but I can't fall to work without saying, in so many words, that I feel all words insufficient to tell you what I think of you after a night like last night. The multitudes of new tokens by which I know you for a great man, the swelling within me of my love for you, the pride I have in you, the majestic reflection I see in you of all the passions and affections that make up our mystery, throw me into a strange kind of transport that has no expression but in a mute sense of an attachment, which, in truth and fervency, is worthy of its subject.

What is this to say! Nothing, God knows, and yet I cannot leave it unsaid.

Ever affectionately yours.

P.S.--I never saw you more gallant and free than in the gallant and free scenes last night. It was perfectly captivating to behold you. However, it shall not interfere with my determination to address you as Old Parr in all future time.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

EDINBURGH, _Thursday, December 13th, 1847._

MY DEAR GEORGY,

I "take up my pen," as the young ladies write, to let you know how we are getting on; and as I shall be obliged to put it down again very soon, here goes. We lived with very hospitable people in a very splendid house near Glasgow, and were perfectly comfortable. The meeting was the most stupendous thing as to numbers, and the most beautiful as to colours and decorations I ever saw. The inimitable did wonders. His grace, elegance, and eloquence, enchanted all beholders. _Kate didn't go!_ having been taken ill on the railroad between here and Glasgow.

It has been snowing, sleeting, thawing, and freezing, sometimes by turns and sometimes all together, since the night before last. Lord Jeffrey's household are in town here, not at Craigcrook, and jogging on in a cosy,

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old-fashioned, comfortable sort of way. We have some idea of going to York on Sunday, passing that night at Alfred's, and coming home on Monday; but of this, Kate will advise you when she writes, which she will do to-morrow, after I shall have seen the list of railway trains.

She sends her best love. She is a little poorly still, but nothing to speak of. She is frightfully anxious that her not having been to the great demonstration should be kept a secret. But I say that, like murder, it will out, and that to hope to veil such a tremendous disgrace from the general intelligence is out of the question. In one of the Glasgow papers she is elaborately described. I rather think Miss Alison, who is seventeen, was taken for her, and sat for the portrait.

Best love from both of us, to Charley, Mamey, Katey, Wally, Chickenstalker, Skittles, and the Hoshen Peck; last, and not least, to you. We talked of you at the Macreadys' party on Monday night. I hope ---- came out lively, also that ---- was truly amiable. Finally, that ---- took everybody to their carriages, and that ---- wept a good deal during the festivities? God bless you. Take care of yourself, for the sake of mankind in general.

Ever affectionately, dear Georgy.

1848.

NARRATIVE.

In March of this year Charles Dickens went with his wife for two or three weeks to Brighton, accompanied by Mrs. Macready, who was in delicate health, and we give a letter to Mr. Macready from Brighton. Early in the year, "Dombey and Son" was finished, and he was again busy with an amateur play, with the same associates and some new adherents; the proceeds being, at first, intended to go towards the curatorship of Shakespeare's house, which post was to be given to Mr. Sheridan Knowles. The endowment was abandoned, upon the town and council of Stratford-on-Avon taking charge of the house; the large sum realised by the performances being handed over to Mr. Sheridan Knowles. The play selected was "The Merry Wives of Windsor;" the farce, "Love, Law, and Physic." There were two performances at the Haymarket in April, at one of which her Majesty and the Prince Consort were present; and in July there were performances at Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. Some ladies accompanied the "strollers" on this theatrical provincial tour, and Mrs. Dickens and her sister were of the party. Many of the following letters bear reference to these plays.

In this summer, his eldest sister Fanny (Mrs. Burnett) died, and there are sorrowful allusions to her illness in several of the letters.

The autumn months were again spent at Broadstairs, where he wrote "The Haunted Man," which was illustrated by Mr. Frank Stone, Mr. Leech, and others. At the end of the year and at the end of his work, he took another short holiday at Brighton with his wife and sister-in-law; and the letters to Mr. Stone on the subject of his illustrations to "The Haunted Man" are written from Brighton. The first letters which we have to Mr. Mark Lemon come here. We regret to have been unable to procure any letters addressed to Mr. Leech, with whom, as with Mr. Lemon, Charles Dickens was very intimately associated for many years.

Also, we have the beginning of his correspondence with Mr. Charles Kent. He wrote (an unusual thing for him to do) to the editor of _The Sun_ newspaper, begging him to thank the writer of a particularly sympathetic and earnest review of "Dombey and Son," which appeared in _The Sun_ at the close of the book. Mr. Charles Kent replied in his proper person, and from that time dates a close friendship and constant correspondence.

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With the letter to Mr. Forster we give, as a note, a letter which Baron Taüchnitz published in his edition of Mr. Forster's "Life of Oliver Goldsmith."

Mr. Peter Cunningham, as an important member of the "Shakespeare's House" committee, managed the _un_-theatrical part of this Amateur Provincial Tour, and was always pleasantly connected with the plays.

The book alluded to in the last letter for this year, to be dedicated to Charles Dickens's daughters by Mr. Mark Lemon, was called "The Enchanted Doll."

[Sidenote: Mr. Charles Babbage.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _February 26th, 1848._

MY DEAR SIR,

Pray let me thank you for your pamphlet.

I confess that I am one of the unconvinced grumblers, and that I doubt the present or future existence of any government in England, strong enough to convert the people to your income-tax principles. But I do not the less appreciate the ability with which you advocate them, nor am I the less gratified by any mark of your remembrance.

Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

JUNCTION HOUSE, BRIGHTON, _March 2nd, 1848._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

We have migrated from the Bedford and come here, where we are very comfortably (not to say gorgeously) accommodated. Mrs. Macready is certainly better already, and I really have very great hopes that she will come back in a condition so blooming, as to necessitate the presentation of a piece of plate to the undersigned trainer.

You mean to come down on Sunday and on Sunday week. If you don't, I shall immediately take the Victoria, and start Mr. ----, of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, as a smashing tragedian. Pray don't impose upon me this cruel necessity.

I think Lamartine, so far, one of the best fellows in the world; and I have lively hopes of that great people establishing a noble republic. Our court had best be careful not to overdo it in respect of sympathy with ex-royalty and ex-nobility. Those are not times for such displays, as, it strikes me, the people in some of our great towns would be apt to express pretty plainly.

However, we'll talk of all this on these Sundays, and Mr. ---- shall _not_ be raised to the pinnacle of fame.

Ever affectionately yours,
My dear Macready.

[Sidenote: Editor of _The Sun_.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
Friday, April 14th, 1848.

Private.

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Mr. Charles Dickens presents his compliments to the Editor of _The Sun_, and begs that gentleman will have the goodness to convey to the writer of the notice of "Dombey and Son," in last evening's paper, Mr. Dickens's warmest acknowledgments and thanks. The sympathy expressed in it is so very earnestly and unaffectedly stated, that it is particularly welcome and gratifying to Mr. Dickens, and he feels very desirous indeed to convey that assurance to the writer of that frank and genial farewell.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. Charles M. Kent.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
April 18th, 1848.

DEAR SIR,

Pray let me repeat to you personally what I expressed in my former note, and allow me to assure you, as an illustration of my sincerity, that I have never addressed a similar communication to anybody except on one occasion.

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. John Forster.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Saturday, April 22nd, 1848._

MY DEAR FORSTER,[7]

I finished Goldsmith yesterday, after dinner, having read it from the first page to the last with the greatest care and attention.

As a picture of the time, I really think it impossible to give it too much praise. It seems to me to be the very essence of all about the time that I have ever seen in biography or fiction, presented in most wise and humane lights, and in a thousand new and just aspects. I have never liked Johnson half so well. Nobody's contempt for Boswell ought to be capable of increase, but I have never seen him in my mind's eye half so plainly. The introduction of him is quite a masterpiece. I should point to that, if I didn't know the author, as being done by somebody with a remarkably vivid conception of what he narrated, and a most admirable and fanciful power of communicating it to another. All about Reynolds is charming; and the first account of the Literary Club and of Beauclerc as excellent a piece of description as ever I read in my life. But to read the book is to be in the time. It lives again in as fresh and lively a manner as if it were presented on an impossibly good stage by the very best actors that ever lived, or by the real actors come out of their graves on purpose.

And as to Goldsmith himself, and _his_ life, and the tracing of it out in his own writings, and the manful and dignified assertion of him without any sobs, whines, or convulsions of any sort, it is throughout a noble achievement, of which, apart from any private and personal affection for you, I think (and really believe) I should feel proud, as one who had no indifferent perception of these books of his--to the best of my remembrance--when little more than a child. I was a little afraid in the beginning, when he committed those very discouraging imprudences, that you were going to champion him somewhat indiscriminately; but I very soon got over that fear, and found reason in every page to admire the sense, calmness, and moderation with which you make the love and admiration of the reader cluster about him from his youth, and strengthen with his strength--and weakness too, which is better still.

I don't quite agree with you in two small respects. First, I question very much whether it would have been a good thing for every great man to

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have had his Boswell, inasmuch as I think that two Boswells, or three at most, would have made great men extraordinarily false, and would have set them on always playing a part, and would have made distinguished people about them for ever restless and distrustful. I can imagine a succession of Boswells bringing about a tremendous state of falsehood in society, and playing the very devil with confidence and friendship. Secondly, I cannot help objecting to that practice (begun, I think, or greatly enlarged by Hunt) of italicising lines and words and whole passages in extracts, without some very special reason indeed. It does appear to be a kind of assertion of the editor over the reader--almost over the author himself--which grates upon me. The author might almost as well do it himself to my thinking, as a disagreeable thing; and it is such a strong contrast to the modest, quiet, tranquil beauty of "The Deserted Village," for instance, that I would almost as soon hear "the town crier" speak the lines. The practice always reminds me of a man seeing a beautiful view, and not thinking how beautiful it is half so much as what he shall say about it.

In that picture at the close of the third book (a most beautiful one) of Goldsmith sitting looking out of window at the Temple trees, you speak of the "gray-eyed" rooks. Are you sure they are "gray-eyed"? The raven's eye is a deep lustrous black, and so, I suspect, is the rook's, except when the light shines full into it.

I have reserved for a closing word--though I _don't_ mean to be eloquent about it, being far too much in earnest--the admirable manner in which the case of the literary man is stated throughout this book. It is splendid. I don't believe that any book was ever written, or anything ever done or said, half so conducive to the dignity and honour of literature as "The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith," by J. F., of the Inner Temple. The gratitude of every man who is content to rest his station and claims quietly on literature, and to make no feint of living by anything else, is your due for evermore. I have often said, here and there, when you have been at work upon the book, that I was sure it would be; and I shall insist on that debt being due to you (though there will be no need for insisting about it) as long as I have any tediousness and obstinacy to bestow on anybody. Lastly, I never will hear the biography compared with Boswell's except under vigorous protest. For I do say that it is mere folly to put into opposite scales a book, however amusing and curious, written by an unconscious coxcomb like that, and one which surveys and grandly understands the characters of all the illustrious company that move in it.

My dear Forster, I cannot sufficiently say how proud I am of what you have done, or how sensible I am of being so tenderly connected with it. When I look over this note, I feel as if I had said no part of what I think; and yet if I were to write another I should say no more, for I can't get it out. I desire no better for my fame, when my personal dustiness shall be past the control of my love of order, than such a biographer and such a critic. And again I say, most solemnly, that literature in England has never had, and probably never will have, such a champion as you are, in right of this book.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. Mark Lemon.]

Wednesday, May 3rd, 1848.

MY DEAR LEMON,

Do you think you could manage, before we meet to-morrow, to get from the musical director of the Haymarket (whom I don't know) a note of the overtures he purposes playing on our two nights? I am obliged to correct and send back the bill proofs to-morrow (they are to be brought to Miss Kelly's)--and should like, for completeness' sake, to put the music in. Before "The Merry Wives," it must be something Shakespearian. Before

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"Animal Magnetism," something very telling and light--like "Fra Diavolo."

Wednesday night's music in a concatenation accordingly, and jolly little polkas and quadrilles between the pieces, always beginning the moment the act-drop is down. If any little additional strength should be really required in the orchestra, so be it.

Can you come to Miss Kelly's by _three_? I should like to show you bills, tickets, and so forth, before they are worked. In order that they may not interfere with or confuse the rehearsal, I have appointed Peter Cunningham to meet me there at three, instead of half-past.

Faithfully ever.

P.S.--If you should be disposed to chop together early, send me a line to the Athenæum. I have engaged to be with Barry at ten, to go over the Houses of Parliament. When I have done so, I will go to the club on the chance of a note from you, and would meet you where you chose.

[Sidenote: Rev. James White.]

ATHENÆUM, _Thursday, May 4th, 1848._

MY DEAR WHITE,

I have not been able to write to you until now. I have lived in hope that Kate and I might be able to run down to see you and yours for a day, before our design for enforcing the Government to make Knowles the first custodian of the Shakespeare house should come off. But I am so perpetually engaged in drilling the forces, that I see no hope of making a pleasant expedition to the Isle of Wight until about the twentieth. Then I shall hope to do so for one day. But of this I will advise you further, in due course.

My doubts about the house you speak of are twofold, First, I could not leave town so soon as May, having affairs to arrange for a sick sister. And secondly, I fear Bonchurch is not sufficiently bracing for my chickens, who thrive best in breezy and cool places. This has set me thinking, sometimes of the Yorkshire coast, sometimes of Dover. I would not have the house at Bonchurch reserved for me, therefore. But if it should be empty, we will go and look at it in a body. I reserve the more serious part of my letter until the last, my dear White, because it comes from the bottom of my heart. None of your friends have thought and spoken oftener of you and Mrs. White than we have these many weeks past. I should have written to you, but was timid of intruding on your sorrow. What you say, and the manner in which you tell me I am connected with it in your recollection of your dear child, now among the angels of God, gives me courage to approach your grief--to say what sympathy we have felt with it, and how we have not been unimaginative of these deep sources of consolation to which you have had recourse. The traveller who journeyed in fancy from this world to the next was struck to the heart to find the child he had lost, many years before, building him a tower in heaven. Our blessed Christian hopes do not shut out the belief of love and remembrance still enduring there, but irradiate it and make it sacred. Who should know that better than you, or who more deeply feel the touching truths and comfort of that story in the older book, where, when the bereaved mother is asked, "Is it well with the child?" she answers, "It _is_ well."

God be with you. Kate and her sister desire their kindest love to yourself and Mrs. White, in which I heartily join.

Being ever, my dear White,
Your affectionate Friend.

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[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Wednesday, May 10th, 1848._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

We are rehearsing at the Haymarket now, and Lemon mentioned to me yesterday that Webster had asked him if he would sound Forster or me as to your intention of having a farewell benefit before going to America, and whether you would like to have it at the Haymarket, and also as to its being preceded by a short engagement there. I don't know what your feelings may be on this latter head, but thinking it well that you may know how the land lies in these seas, send you this; the rather (excuse Elizabethan phrase, but you know how indispensable it is to me under existing circumstances)--the rather that I am thereto encouraged by thy consort, who has just come a-visiting here, with thy fair daughters, Mistress Nina and the little Kate. Wherefore, most selected friend, perpend at thy leisure, and so God speed thee!

And no more at present from,
Thine ever.

From my tent in my garden.

ANOTHER "BOBADIL" NOTE.

I must tell you this, sir, I am no general man; but for William Shakespeare's sake (you may embrace it at what height of favour you please) I will communicate with you on the twenty-first, and do esteem you to be a gentleman of some parts--of a good many parts in truth. I love few words.

[Illustration: HW: Signature: Bobadil]

At Cobb's, a water-bearer,
October 11th.

[Sidenote: Mr. Peter Cunningham.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Thursday Morning, June 22nd, 1848._

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,

I will be at Miss Kelly's to-morrow evening, from seven to eight, and shall hope to see you there, for a little conversation, touching the railroad arrangements.

All preparations completed in Edinburgh and Glasgow. There will be a great deal of money taken, especially at the latter place.

I wish I could persuade you, seriously, to come into training for Nym, in "The Merry Wives." He is never on by himself, and all he has to do is good, without being difficult. If you could screw yourself up to the doing of that part in Scotland, it would prevent our taking some new man, and would cover you (all over) with glory.

Faithfully yours always.

P.S.--I am fully persuaded that an amateur manager has more correspondence than the Home Secretary.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, REGENT'S PARK,
July 27th, 1848.

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MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I thought to have been at Rockingham long ago! It seems a century since I, standing in big boots on the Haymarket stage, saw you come into a box upstairs and look down on the humbled Bobadil, since then I have had the kindest of notes from you, since then the finest of venison, and yet I have not seen the Rockingham flowers, and they are withering I daresay.

But we have acted at Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Edinburgh, and Glasgow; and the business of all this--and graver and heavier daily occupation in going to see a dying sister at Hornsey--has so worried me that I have hardly had an hour, far less a week. I shall never be quite happy, in a theatrical point of view, until you have seen me play in an English version of the French piece, "L'Homme Blasé," which fairly turned the head of Glasgow last Thursday night as ever was; neither shall I be quite happy, in a social point of view, until I have been to Rockingham again. When the first event will come about Heaven knows. The latter will happen about the end of the November fogs and wet weather. For am I not going to Broadstairs now, to walk about on the sea-shore (why don't you bring your rosy children there?) and think what is to be done for Christmas! An idea occurs to me all at once. I must come down and read you that book before it's published. Shall it be a bargain? Were you all in Switzerland? I don't believe _I_ ever was. It is such a dream now. I wonder sometimes whether I ever disputed with a Haldimand; whether I ever drank mulled wine on the top of the Great St. Bernard, or was jovial at the bottom with company that have stolen into my affection; whether I ever was merry and happy in that valley on the Lake of Geneva, or saw you one evening (when I didn't know you) walking down among the green trees outside Elysée, arm-in-arm with a gentleman in a white hat. I am quite clear that there is no foundation for these visions. But I should like to go somewhere, too, and try it all over again. I don't know how it is, but the ideal world in which my lot is cast has an odd effect on the real one, and makes it chiefly precious for such remembrances. I get quite melancholy over them sometimes, especially when, as now, those great piled-up semicircles of bright faces, at which I have lately been looking--all laughing, earnest and intent--have faded away like dead people. They seem a ghostly moral of everything in life to me.

Kate sends her best love, in which Georgy would as heartily unite, I know, but that she is already gone to Broadstairs with the children. We think of following on Saturday morning, but that depends on my poor sister. Pray give my most cordial remembrances to Watson, and tell him they include a great deal. I meant to have written you a letter. I don't know what this is. There is no word for it. So, if you will still let me owe you one, I will pay my debt, on the smallest encouragement, from the seaside. Here, there, and elsewhere, I am, with perfect truth, believe me,

Very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _Saturday, August 26th, 1848._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

I was about to write to you when I received your welcome letter. You knew I should come from a somewhat longer distance than this to give you a hearty God-speed and farewell on the eve of your journey. What do you say to Monday, the fourth, or Saturday, the second? Fix either day, let me know which suits you best--at what hour you expect the Inimitable, and the Inimitable will come up to the scratch like a man and a brother.

Permit me, in conclusion, to nail my colours to the mast. Stars and stripes are so-so--showy, perhaps; but my colours is THE UNION JACK,

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which I am told has the remarkable property of having braved a thousand years the battle AND the breeze. Likewise, it is the flag of Albion--the standard of Britain; and Britons, as I am informed, never, never, never--will--be--slaves!

My sentiment is: Success to the United States as a golden campaigning ground, but blow the United States to 'tarnal smash as an Englishman's place of residence. Gentlemen, are you all charged?

Affectionately ever.

[Sidenote: Miss Dickens.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Friday, Sept. 8th, 1848._

MY DEAREST MAMEY,

We shall be very glad to see you all again, and we hope you will be very glad to see us. Give my best love to dear Katey, also to Frankey, Alley, and the Peck.

I have had a nice note from Charley just now. He says it is expected at school that when Walter puts on his jacket, all the Miss Kings will fall in love with him to desperation and faint away.

Ever, my dear Mamey,
Most affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Effingham William Wilson.]

1, DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
Nov. 7th, 1848.

"A NATIONAL THEATRE."

SIR,

I beg you to accept my best thanks for your pamphlet and your obliging note. That such a theatre as you describe would be but worthy of this nation, and would not stand low upon the list of its instructors, I have no kind of doubt. I wish I could cherish a stronger faith than I have in the probability of its establishment on a rational footing within fifty years.

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Tuesday, Nov. 21st, 1848._

MY DEAR STONE,

I send you herewith the second part of the book, which I hope may interest you. If you should prefer to have it read to you by the Inimitable rather than to read it, I shall be at home this evening (loin of mutton at half-past five), and happy to do it. The proofs are full of printers' errors, but with the few corrections I have scrawled upon it, you will be able to make out what they mean.

I send you, on the opposite side, a list of the subjects already in hand from this second part. If you should see no other in it that you like (I think it important that you should keep Milly, as you have begun with her), I will, in a day or two, describe you an unwritten subject for the third part of the book.

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Ever faithfully.

SUBJECTS IN HAND FOR THE SECOND PART.

1. Illuminated page. Tenniel. Representing Redlaw going upstairs, and the Tetterby family below.

2. The Tetterby supper. Leech.

3. The boy in Redlaw's room, munching his food and staring at the fire.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone.]

BRIGHTON, _Thursday Night, Nov. 23rd, 1848._

MY DEAR STONE,

We are unanimous.

The drawing of Milly on the chair is CHARMING. I cannot tell you how much the little composition and expression please me. Do that, by all means.

I fear she must have a little cap on. There is something coming in the last part, about her having had a dead child, which makes it yet more desirable than the existing text does that she should have that little matronly sign about her. Unless the artist is obdurate indeed, and then he'll do as he likes.

I am delighted to hear that you have your eye on her in the students' room. You will really, pictorially, make the little woman whom I love.

Kate and Georgy send their kindest remembrances. I write hastily to save the post.

Ever, my dear Stone,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone.]

BEDFORD HOTEL, BRIGHTON, _Monday Night, Nov. 27th, 1848._

MY DEAR STONE,

You are a TRUMP, emphatically a TRUMP, and such are my feelings towards you at this moment that I think (but I am not sure) that if I saw you about to place a card on a wrong pack at Bibeck (?), I wouldn't breathe a word of objection.

Sir, there is a subject I have written to-day for the third part, that I think and hope will just suit you. Scene, Tetterby's. Time, morning. The power of bringing back people's memories of sorrow, wrong and trouble, has been given by the ghost to Milly, though she don't know it herself. As she comes along the street, Mr. and Mrs. Tetterby recover themselves, and are mutually affectionate again, and embrace, closing _rather_ a good scene of quarrel and discontent. The moment they do so, Johnny (who has seen her in the distance and announced her before, from which moment they begin to recover) cries "Here she is!" and she comes in, surrounded by the little Tetterbys, the very spirit of morning, gladness, innocence, hope, love, domesticity, etc. etc. etc. etc.

I would limit the illustration to her and the children, which will make a fitness between it and your other illustrations, and give them all a character of their own. The exact words of the passage I endorsed on another slip of paper. Note. There are six boy Tetterbys present (young

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'Dolphus is not there), including Johnny; and in Johnny's arms is Moloch, the baby, who is a girl. I hope to be back in town next Monday, and will lose no time in reporting myself to you. Don't wait to send me the drawing of this. I know how pretty she will be with the children in your hands, and should be a stupendous jackass if I had any distrust of it.

The Duke of Cambridge is staying in this house, and they are driving me mad by having Life Guards bands under our windows, playing _our_ overtures! I have been at work all day, and am going to wander into the theatre, where (for the comic man's benefit) "two gentlemen of Brighton" are performing two counts in a melodrama. I was quite addle-headed for the time being, and think an amateur or so would revive me. No 'Tone! I don't in the abstract approve of Brighton. I couldn't pass an autumn here; but it is a gay place for a week or so; and when one laughs and cries, and suffers the agitation that some men experience over their books, it's a bright change to look out of window, and see the gilt little toys on horseback going up and down before the mighty sea, and thinking nothing of it.

Kate's love and Georgy's. They say you'll contradict every word of this letter.

Faithfully ever.

[SLIP OF PAPER ENCLOSED.]

"Hurrah! here's Mrs. Williams!" cried Johnny.

So she was, and all the Tetterby children with her; and as she came in, they kissed her and kissed one another, and kissed the baby and kissed their father and mother, and then ran back and flocked and danced about her, trooping on with her in triumph.

(After which, she is going to say: "What, are _you_ all glad to see me too! Oh, how happy it makes me to find everyone so glad to see me this bright morning!")

[Sidenote: Mr. Mark Lemon.]

BEDFORD HOTEL, BRIGHTON, _Nov. 28th, 1848._

MY DEAR MARK,

I assure you, most unaffectedly and cordially, that the dedication of that book to Mary and _Kate_ (not Catherine) will be a real delight to me, and to all of us. I know well that you propose it in "affectionate regard," and value and esteem it, therefore, in a way not easy of expression.

You were talking of "coming" down, and now, in a mean and dodging way, you write about "sending" the second act! I have a propogician to make. Come down on Friday. There is a train leaves London Bridge at two--gets here at four. By that time I shall be ready to strike work. We can take a little walk, dine, discuss, and you can go back in good time next morning. I really think this ought to be done, and indeed MUST be done. Write and say it shall be done.

A little management will be required in dramatising the third part, where there are some things I _describe_ (for effect's sake, and as a matter of art) which must be _said_ on the stage. Redlaw is in a new condition of mind, which fact must be shot point-blank at the audience, I suppose, "as from the deadly level of a gun." By anybody who knew how to play Milly, I think it might be made very good. Its effect is very pleasant upon me. I have also given Mr. and Mrs. Tetterby another innings.

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I went to the play last night--fifth act of Richard the Third. Richmond by a stout _lady_, with a particularly well-developed bust, who finished all the speeches with the soubrette simper. Also, at the end of the tragedy she came forward (still being Richmond) and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, on Wednesday next the entertainments will be for _My_ benefit, when I hope to meet your approbation and support." Then, having bowed herself into the stage-door, she looked out of it, and said, winningly, "Won't you come?" which was enormously applauded.

Ever affectionately.

FOOTNOTE:

[7] LETTER OF BARON TAÜCHNITZ.

Having had the privilege to see a letter which the late Mr. Charles Dickens wrote to the author of this work upon its first appearance, and which there was no intention to publish in England, it became my lively wish to make it known to the readers of my edition.

I therefore addressed an earnest request to Mr. Forster, that he would permit the letter to be prefixed to a reprint not designed for circulation in England, where I could understand his reluctance to sanction its publication. Its varied illustration of the subject of the book, and its striking passages of personal feeling and character, led me also to request that I might be allowed to present it in facsimile.

Mr. Forster complied; and I am most happy to be thus enabled to give to my public, on the following pages, so attractive and so interesting a letter, reproduced in the exact form in which it was written, by the most popular and admired-of writers--too early gone.

TAÜCHNITZ.

Leipsic, _May 23, 1873._

1849.

NARRATIVE.

This, as far as correspondence is concerned, was an uneventful year. In the spring Charles Dickens took one of his holidays at Brighton, accompanied by his wife and sister-in-law and two daughters, and they were joined in their lodgings by Mr. and Mrs. Leech. From Brighton he writes the letter--as a song--which we give, to Mr. Mark Lemon, who had been ill, asking him to pay them a visit.

In the summer, Charles Dickens went with his family, for the first time, to Bonchurch, Isle of Wight, having hired for six months the charming villa, Winterbourne, belonging to the Rev. James White. And now began that close and loving intimacy which for the future was to exist between these two families. Mr. Leech also took a house at Bonchurch. All through this year Charles Dickens was at work upon "David Copperfield."

As well as giving eccentric names to his children and friends, he was also in the habit of giving such names to himself--that of "Sparkler" being one frequently used by him.

Miss Joll herself gives us the explanation of the letter to her on capital punishment: "Soon after the appearance of his 'Household Words,' some friends were discussing an article in it on 'Private Executions.' They contended that it went to prove Mr. Dickens was an advocate of capital punishment. I, however, took a different view of the matter, and

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ventured to write and inquire his views on the subject, and to my letter he sent me a courteous reply."

[Sidenote: Mr. Dudley Costello.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Friday Night, Jan. 26th, 1849._

MY DEAR COSTELLO,

I am desperate! Engaged in links of adamant to a "monster in human form"--a remarkable expression I think I remember to have once met with in a newspaper--whom I encountered at Franconi's, whence I have just returned, otherwise I would have done all three things right heartily and with my accustomed sweetness. Think of me another time when chops are on the carpet (figuratively speaking), and see if I won't come and eat 'em!

Ever faithfully yours.

P.S.--I find myself too despondent for the flourish.

[Sidenote: Miss Dickens.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Tuesday Night, Feb. 27th, 1849._

MY DEAREST MAMEY,

I am not engaged on the evening of your birthday. But even if I had an engagement of the most particular kind, I should excuse myself from keeping it, so that I might have the pleasure of celebrating at home, and among my children, the day that gave me such a dear and good daughter as you.

Ever affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _May 25th, 1849._

MY DEAR STANFIELD.

No--no--no! Murder, murder! Madness and misconception! Any _one_ of the subjects--not the whole. Oh, blessed star of early morning, what do you think I am made of, that I should, on the part of any man, prefer such a pig-headed, calf-eyed, donkey-eared, imp-hoofed request!

Says my friend to me, "Will you ask _your_ friend, Mr. Stanfield, what the damage of a little picture of that size would be, that I may treat myself with the same, if I can afford it?" Says I, "I will." Says he, "Will you suggest that I should like it to be _one_ of those subjects?" Says I, "I will."

I am beating my head against the door with grief and frenzy, and I shall continue to do so, until I receive your answer.

Ever heartily yours,
THE MISCONCEIVED ONE.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Monday, June 4th, 1849._

MY DEAR STONE,

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Leech and Sparkler having promised their ladies to take them to Ascot, and having failed in their truths, propoge to take them to Greenwich instead, next Wednesday. Will that alteration in the usual arrangements be agreeable to Gaffin, S.? If so, the place of meeting is the Sparkler's Bower, and the hour, one exactly.

Ever yours.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

SHANKLIN, ISLE OF WIGHT, _Monday Night, June 16th, 1849._

MY DEAR KATE,

I have but a moment. Just got back and post going out. I have taken a most delightful and beautiful house, belonging to White, at Bonchurch; cool, airy, private bathing, everything delicious. I think it is the prettiest place I ever saw in my life, at home or abroad. Anne may begin to dismantle Devonshire Terrace. I have arranged for carriages, luggage, and everything.

The man with the post-bag is swearing in the passage.

Ever affectionately.

P.S.--A waterfall on the grounds, which I have arranged with a carpenter to convert into a perpetual shower-bath.

[Sidenote: Mr. Mark Lemon.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Monday, June 25th, 1849._

MY DEAR LEMON,

I am very unwilling to deny Charley the pleasure you so kindly offer him. But as it is just the close of the half-year when they are getting together all the half-year's work--and as that day's pleasure would weaken the next day's duty, I think I must be "more like an ancient Roman than a ----" Sparkler, and that it will be wisest in me to say nothing about it.

Get a clean pocket-handkerchief ready for the close of "Copperfield" No. 3; "simple and quiet, but very natural and touching."--_Evening Bore._

Ever affectionately.

NEW SONG.

TUNE--"Lesbia hath a beaming eye."

1.

Lemon is a little hipped,
  And this is Lemon's true position;
He is not pale, he's not white-lipped,
  Yet wants a little fresh condition.
Sweeter 'tis to gaze upon
  Old ocean's rising, falling billows,
Than on the houses every one,
  That form the street called Saint Anne's Willers.
    Oh, my Lemon, round and fat,
      Oh, my bright, my right, my tight 'un,
    Think a little what you're at--
      Don't stay at home, but come to Brighton!

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Lemon has a coat of frieze,
  But all so seldom Lemon wears it,
That it is a prey to fleas,
  And ev'ry moth that's hungry tears it.
Oh, that coat's the coat for me,
  That braves the railway sparks and breezes,
Leaving every engine free
  To smoke it, till its owner sneezes!
        Then my Lemon, round and fat,
          L., my bright, my right, my tight 'un,
        Think a little what you're at--
          On Tuesday first, come down to Brighton!

T. SPARKLER.

Also signed,

CATHERINE DICKENS,
ANNIE LEECH,
GEORGINA HOGARTH,
MARY DICKENS,
KATIE DICKENS,
JOHN LEECH.

[Sidenote: Rev. James White.]

WINTERBOURNE, _Sunday Evening, Sept. 23rd, 1849._

MY DEAR WHITE,

I have a hundred times at least wanted to say to you how good I thought those papers in "Blackwood"--how excellent their purpose, and how delicately and charmingly worked out. Their subtle and delightful humour, and their grasp of the whole question, were something more pleasant to me than I can possibly express.

"How comes this lumbering Inimitable to say this, on this Sunday night of all nights in the year?" you naturally ask. Now hear the Inimitable's honest avowal! I make so bold because I heard that Morning Service better read this morning than ever I have heard it read in my life. And because--for the soul of me--I cannot separate the two things, or help identifying the wise and genial man out of church with the earnest and unaffected man in it. Midsummer madness, perhaps, but a madness I hope that will hold us true friends for many and many a year to come. The madness is over as soon as you have burned this letter (see the history of the Gunpowder Plot), but let us be friends much longer for these reasons and many included in them not herein expressed.

Affectionately always.

[Sidenote: Miss Joll.]

ROCKINGHAM CASTLE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE,
Nov. 27th, 1849.

Mr. Charles Dickens presents his compliments to Miss Joll. He is, on principle, opposed to capital punishment, but believing that many earnest and sincere people who are favourable to its retention in extreme cases would unite in any temperate effort to abolish the evils of public executions, and that the consequences of public executions are disgraceful and horrible, he has taken the course with which Miss Joll is acquainted as the most hopeful, and as one undoubtedly calculated to benefit society at large.

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[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Friday Night, Nov. 30th, 1849._
A Quarter-past Ten.

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

Plunged in the deepest gloom, I write these few words to let you know that, just now, when the bell was striking ten, I drank to

[Illustration: H. E. R.!]

and to all the rest of Rockingham; as the wine went down my throat, I felt distinctly that it was "changing those thoughts to madness."

On the way here I was a terror to my companions, and I am at present a blight and mildew on my home.

Think of me sometimes, as I shall long think of our glorious dance last night. Give my most affectionate regards to Watson, and my kind remembrances to all who remember me, and believe me,

Ever faithfully yours.

P.S.--I am in such an incapable state, that after executing the foregoing usual flourish I swooned, and remained for some time insensible. Ha, ha, ha! Why was I ever restored to consciousness!!!

P.P.S.--"Changing" those thoughts ought to be "driving." But my recollection is incoherent and my mind wanders.

[Sidenote: M. Cerjat.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Saturday, Dec. 29th, 1849._

MY DEAR CERJAT,

I received your letter at breakfast-time this morning with a pleasure my eloquence is unable to express and your modesty unable to conceive. It is so delightful to be remembered at this time of the year in your house where we have been so happy, and in dear old Lausanne, that we always hope to see again, that I can't help pushing away the first page of "Copperfield" No. 10, now staring at me with what I may literally call a blank aspect, and plunging energetically into this reply.

What a strange coincidence that is about Blunderstone House! Of all the odd things I have ever heard (and their name is Legion), I think it is the oddest. I went down into that part of the country on the 7th of January last year, when I was meditating the story, and chose Blunderstone for the sound of its name. I had previously observed much of what you say about the poor girls. In all you suggest with so much feeling about their return to virtue being cruelly cut off, I concur with a sore heart. I have been turning it over in my mind for some time, and hope, in the history of Little Em'ly (who _must_ fall--there is no hope for her), to put it before the thoughts of people in a new and pathetic way, and perhaps to do some good. You will be glad to hear, I know, that "Copperfield" is a great success. I think it is better liked than any of my other books.

We had a most delightful time at Watsons' (for both of them we have preserved and strengthened a real affection), and were the gayest of the gay. There was a Miss Boyle staying in the house, who is an excellent amateur actress, and she and I got up some scenes from "The School for Scandal" and from "Nickleby," with immense success. We played in the old hall, with the audience filled up and running over with servants. The entertainments concluded with feats of legerdemain (for the performance

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of which I have a pretty good apparatus, collected at divers times and in divers places), and we then fell to country dances of a most frantic description, and danced all night. We often spoke of you and Mrs. Cerjat and of Haldimand, and wished you were all there. Watson and I have some fifty times "registered a vow" (like O'Connell) to come to Lausanne together, and have even settled in what month and week. Something or other has always interposed to prevent us; but I hope, please God, most certainly to see it again, when my labours-Copperfieldian shall have terminated.

You have no idea what that hanging of the Mannings really was. The conduct of the people was so indescribably frightful, that I felt for some time afterwards almost as if I were living in a city of devils. I feel, at this hour, as if I never could go near the place again. My letters have made a great to-do, and led to a great agitation of the subject; but I have not a confident belief in any change being made, mainly because the total abolitionists are utterly reckless and dishonest (generally speaking), and would play the deuce with any such proposition in Parliament, unless it were strongly supported by the Government, which it would certainly not be, the Whig motto (in office) being "_laissez aller_." I think Peel might do it if he came in. Two points have occurred to me as being a good commentary to the objections to my idea. The first is that a most terrific uproar was made when the hanging processions were abolished, and the ceremony shrunk from Tyburn to the prison door. The second is that, at this very time, under the British Government in New South Wales, executions take place _within the prison walls_, with decidedly improved results. (I am waiting to explode this fact on the first man of mark who gives me the opportunity.)

Unlike you, we have had no marriages or giving in marriage here. We might have had, but a certain young lady, whom you know, is hard to please. The children are all well, thank God! Charley is going to Eton the week after next, and has passed a first-rate examination. Kate is quite well, and unites with me and Georgina in love to you and Mrs. Cerjat and Haldimand, whom I would give a good deal (tell him) to have several hours' contradiction of at his own table. Good heavens, how obstinate we would both be! I see him leaning back in his chair, with his right forefinger out, and saying, "Good God!" in reply to some proposition of mine, and then laughing.

All in a moment a feeling comes over me, as if you and I have been still talking, smoking cigars outside the inn at Martigny, the piano sounding inside, and Lady Mary Taylour singing. I look into my garden (which is covered with snow) rather dolefully, but take heart again, and look brightly forward to another expedition to the Great St. Bernard, when Mrs. Cerjat and I shall laugh as I fancy I have never laughed since, in one of those one-sided cars; and when we shall again learn from Haldimand, in a little dingy cabaret, at lunch-time, how to secure a door in travelling (do you remember?) by balancing a chair against it on its two hind-legs.

I do hope that we may all come together again once more, while there is a head of hair left among us; and in this hope remain, my dear Cerjat,

Your faithful Friend.

1850.

NARRATIVE.

In the spring Charles Dickens took a short holiday again, with his wife and sister-in-law, at Brighton, from whence he wrote to Mr. Wills, on "Household Words" business. The first number of this journal appeared on the 30th March.

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This autumn he succeeded, for the first time, in getting possession of the "Fort House," Broadstairs, on which he had always set his affections. He was hard at work on the closing numbers of "David Copperfield" during all the summer and autumn. The family moved to Broadstairs in July, but as a third daughter was born in August, they were not joined by Mrs. Dickens until the end of September. "David Copperfield" was finished in October.

The beginning of his correspondence with Mrs. Gaskell is in his asking her to contribute to "Household Words," which she did from the first number, and very frequently afterwards both to "Household Words" and "All the Year Round."

The letter to Mr. David Roberts, R.A., is one thanking him for a remembrance of his (Mr. Roberts's) travels in the East--a picture of a "Simoom in the Desert," which was one of Charles Dickens's most highly prized possessions.

A letter to Mr. Sheridan Knowles contains allusions which we have no means of explaining, but we publish it, as it is characteristic, and addressed to a literary celebrity. Its being inscribed to "Daddy" Knowles illustrates a habit of Charles Dickens--as does a letter later in this year to Mr. Stone, beginning, "My dear P."--of giving nicknames to the friends with whom he was on the most affectionate and intimate terms. Mr. Stone--especially included in this category--was the subject of many such names; "Pump," or "Pumpion," being one by which he was frequently addressed--a joke as good-humouredly and gladly received as it was kindly and pleasantly intended.

There were no public amateur theatricals this year; but in November, the greater part of the amateur company played for three nights at Knebworth Park, as the guests of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton (afterwards Lord Lytton), who entertained all his county neighbours to witness the performances. The play was "Every Man in his Humour," and farces, varied each night.

This year we have our first letter to Miss Mary Boyle, a cousin of Mrs. Watson, well known as an amateur actress and an accomplished lady. Miss Boyle was to have acted with the amateur company at Knebworth, but was prevented by domestic affliction. Early in the following year there was a private play at Rockingham Castle, when Miss Boyle acted with Charles Dickens, the play being "Used Up," in which Mrs. Dickens also acted; and the farce, "Animal Magnetism," in which Miss Boyle and Miss Hogarth played. The letters to Mrs. Watson in this year refer chiefly to the preparations for the play in her house.

The accident mentioned in the letter addressed to Mr. Henry Bicknell (son-in-law of Mr. David Roberts, R.A., and a much-esteemed friend of Charles Dickens) was an accident which happened to Mrs. Dickens, while rehearsing at a theatre. She fell through a trap-door, spraining her ankle so badly as to be incapacitated from taking her part in the theatricals at Knebworth.

[Sidenote: Mr. David Roberts, R.A.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _January 3rd, 1850._

MY DEAR ROBERTS,

I am more obliged to you than I can tell you for the beautiful mark of your friendly remembrance which you have sent me this morning. I shall set it up among my household gods with pride. It gives me the highest gratification, and I beg you to accept my most cordial and sincere thanks. A little bit of the tissue paper was sticking to the surface of the picture, and has slightly marked it. It requires but a touch, as one would dot an "i" or cross a "t," to remove the blemish; but as I cannot

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think of a recollection so full of poetry being touched by any hand but yours, I have told Green the framer, whenever he shall be on his way with it, to call on you by the road. I enclose a note from Mrs. Dickens, which I hope will impress you into a country dance, with which we hope to dismiss Christmas merrily.

Ever, my dear Roberts,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. James Sheridan Knowles.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _January 3rd, 1850._

MY DEAR GOOD KNOWLES,

Many happy New Years to you, and to all who are near and dear to you. Your generous heart unconsciously exaggerates, I am sure, my merit in respect of that most honourable gentleman who has been the occasion of our recent correspondence. I cannot sufficiently admire the dignity of his conduct, and I really feel indebted to you for giving me the gratification of observing it.

As to that "cross note," which, rightly considered, was nothing of the sort, if ever you refer to it again, I'll do--I don't exactly know what, but something perfectly desperate and ferocious. If I have ever thought of it, it has only been to remember with delight how soon we came to a better understanding, and how heartily we confirmed it with a most expressive shake of the hand, one evening down in that mouldy little den of Miss Kelly's.

Heartily and faithfully yours.
"Daddy" Knowles.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Gaskell.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _January 31st, 1850._

MY DEAR MRS. GASKELL,

You may perhaps have seen an announcement in the papers of my intention to start a new cheap weekly journal of general literature.

I do not know what your literary vows of temperance or abstinence may be, but as I do honestly know that there is no living English writer whose aid I would desire to enlist in preference to the authoress of "Mary Barton" (a book that most profoundly affected and impressed me), I venture to ask you whether you can give me any hope that you will write a short tale, or any number of tales, for the projected pages.

No writer's name will be used, neither my own nor any other; every paper will be published without any signature, and all will seem to express the general mind and purpose of the journal, which is the raising up of those that are down, and the general improvement of our social condition. I should set a value on your help which your modesty can hardly imagine; and I am perfectly sure that the least result of your reflection or observation in respect of the life around you, would attract attention and do good.

Of course I regard your time as valuable, and consider it so when I ask you if you could devote any of it to this purpose.

If you could and would prefer to speak to me on the subject, I should be very glad indeed to come to Manchester for a few hours and explain anything you might wish to know. My unaffected and great admiration of your book makes me very earnest in all relating to you. Forgive my troubling you for this reason, and believe me ever,

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Faithfully yours.

P.S.--Mrs. Dickens and her sister send their love.

[Sidenote: Rev. James White.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Tuesday, Feb. 5th, 1850._

MY DEAR WHITE,

I have been going to write to you for a long time, but have always had in my mind that you might come here with Lotty any day. As Lotty has come without you, however (witness a tremendous rampaging and ravaging now going on upstairs!), I despatch this note to say that I suppose you have seen the announcement of "the" new weekly thing, and that if you would ever write anything for it, you would please me better than I can tell you. We hope to do some solid good, and we mean to be as cheery and pleasant as we can. (And, putting our hands in our breeches pockets, we say complacently, that our money is as good as Blackwood's any day in the week.)

Now the murder's out!

Are you never coming to town any more? Must I come to Bonchurch? Am I born (for the eight-and-thirtieth time) next Thursday, at half-past five, and do you mean to say you are _not_ coming to dinner? Well, well, I can always go over to Puseyism to spite my friends, and that's some comfort.

Poor dear Jeffrey! I had heard from him but a few days, and the unopened proof of No. 10 was lying on his table when he died. I believe I have lost as affectionate a friend as I ever had, or ever shall have, in this world.

Ever heartily yours, my dear White.

[Sidenote: Mr. Charles Knight.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _February 8th, 1850._

MY DEAR KNIGHT,

Let me thank you in the heartiest manner for your most kind and gratifying mention of me in your able pamphlet. It gives me great pleasure, and I sincerely feel it.

I quite agree with you in all you say so well of the injustice and impolicy of this excessive taxation. But when I think of the condition of the great mass of the people, I fear that I could hardly find the heart to press for justice in this respect, before the window-duty is removed. They cannot read without light. They cannot have an average chance of life and health without it. Much as we feel our wrong, I fear that they feel their wrong more, and that the things just done in this wise must bear a new physical existence.

I never see you, and begin to think we must have another play--say in Cornwall--expressly to bring us together.

Very faithfully yours.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TITLES OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS."

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A Weekly Journal,

Conducted by Charles Dickens.

"Thus at the glowing Forge of Life our actions must be wrought,
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought."--_Longfellow._

THE HEARTH.
THE FORGE.
THE CRUCIBLE.
THE ANVIL OF THE TIME.
CHARLES DICKENS'S OWN.
SEASONABLE LEAVES.
EVERGREEN LEAVES.
HOME.
HOME-MUSIC.
CHANGE.
TIME AND TIDE.
TWOPENCE.
ENGLISH BELLS.
WEEKLY BELLS.
THE ROCKET.
GOOD HUMOUR.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

148, KING'S ROAD, BRIGHTON,
Tuesday Night, March 12th, 1850.

MY DEAR WILLS,

I have made a correction or two in my part of the post-office article. I still observe the top-heavy "Household Words" in the title. The title of "The Amusements of the People" has to be altered as I have marked it. I would as soon have my hair cut off as an intolerable Scotch shortness put into my titles by the elision of little words. "The Seasons" wants a little punctuation. Will the "Incident in the Life of Mademoiselle Clairon" go into those two pages? I fear not, but one article would be infinitely better, I am quite certain, than two or three short ones. If it will go in, in with it.

I shall be back, please God, by dinner-time to-morrow week. I will be ready for Smithfield either on the following Monday morning at four, or any other morning you may arrange for.

Would it do to make up No. 2 on Wednesday, the 20th, instead of Saturday? If so, it would be an immense convenience to me. But if it be distinctly necessary to make it up on Saturday, say by return, and I am to be relied upon. Don't fail in this.

I really _can't_ promise to be comic. Indeed, your note put me out a little, for I had just sat down to begin, "It will last my time." I will shake my head a little, and see if I can shake a more comic substitute out of it.

As to _two_ comic articles, or two any sort of articles, out of me, that's the intensest extreme of no-goism.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Rev. James White.]

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DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _July 13th, 1850._

MY DEAR WHITE,

Being obliged (sorely against my will) to leave my work this morning and go out, and having a few spare minutes before I go, I write a hasty note, to hint how glad I am to have received yours, and how happy and tranquil we feel it to be for you all, that the end of that long illness has come.[8] Kate and Georgy send best loves to Mrs. White, and we hope she will take all needful rest and relief after those arduous, sad, and weary weeks. I have taken a house at Broadstairs, from early in August until the end of October, as I don't want to come back to London until I shall have finished "Copperfield." I am rejoiced at the idea of your going there. You will find it the healthiest and freshest of places; and there are Canterbury, and all varieties of what Leigh Hunt calls "greenery," within a few minutes' railroad ride. It is not very picturesque ashore, but extremely so seaward; all manner of ships continually passing close inshore. So come, and we'll have no end of sports, please God.

I am glad to say, as I know you will be to hear, that there seems a bright unanimity about "Copperfield." I am very much interested in it and pleased with it myself. I have carefully planned out the story, for some time past, to the end, and am making out my purposes with great care. I should like to know what you see from that tower of yours. I have little doubt you see the real objects in the prospect.

"Household Words" goes on _thoroughly well_. It is expensive, of course, and demands a large circulation; but it is taking a great and steady stand, and I have no doubt already yields a good round profit.

To-morrow week I shall expect you. You shall have a bottle of the "Twenty." I have kept a few last lingering caskets with the gem enshrined therein, expressly for you.

Ever, my dear White,
Cordially yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

HÔTEL WINDSOR, PARIS, _Thursday, July 27th, 1850._
After post-time.

MY DEAR WILLS,

I have had much ado to get to work; the heat here being so intense that I can do nothing but lie on the bare floor all day. I never felt it anything like so hot in Italy.

There is nothing doing in the theatres, and the atmosphere is so horribly oppressive there that one can hardly endure it. I came out of the Français last night half dead. I am writing at this moment with nothing on but a shirt and pair of white trousers, and have been sitting four hours at this paper, but am as faint with the heat as if I had been at some tremendous gymnastics; and yet we had a thunderstorm last night.

I hope we are doing pretty well in Wellington Street. My anxiety makes me feel as if I had been away a year. I hope to be home on Tuesday evening, or night at latest. I have picked up a very curious book of French statistics that will suit us, and an odd proposal for a company connected with the gambling in California, of which you will also be able to make something.

I saw a certain "Lord Spleen" mentioned in a playbill yesterday, and will look after that distinguished English nobleman to-night, if possible. Rachel played last night for the last time before going to

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London, and has not so much in her as some of our friends suppose.

The English people are perpetually squeezing themselves into courtyards, blind alleys, closed edifices, and other places where they have no sort of business. The French people, as usual, are making as much noise as possible about everything that is of no importance, but seem (as far as one can judge) pretty quiet and good-humoured. They made a mighty hullabaloo at the theatre last night, when Brutus (the play was "Lucretia") declaimed about liberty.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _August 9th, 1850._

MY DEAR WILLS,

I shall be obliged to you if you will write to this man, and tell him that what he asks I never do--firstly, because I have no kind of connection with any manager or theatre; secondly, because I am asked to read so many manuscripts, that compliance is impossible, or I should have no other occupation or relaxation in the world.

[Symbol: right hand] A foreign gentleman, with a beard, name unknown, but signing himself "A Fellow Man," and dating from nowhere, declined, twice yesterday, to leave this house for any less consideration than the insignificant one of "twenty pounds." I have had a policeman waiting for him all day.

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

BROADSTAIRS, _Tuesday, Sept. 3rd, 1850._

MY DEAREST KATE,

I enclose a few lines from Georgy, and write these to say that I purpose going home at some time on Thursday, but I cannot say precisely when, as it depends on what work I do to-morrow. Yesterday Charles Knight, White, Forster, Charley, and I walked to Richborough Castle and back. Knight dined with us afterwards; and the Whites, the Bicknells, and Mrs. Gibson came in in the evening and played vingt-et-un.

Having no news I must tell you a story of Sydney. The children, Georgy, and I were out in the garden on Sunday evening (by-the-bye, I made a beautiful passage down, and got to Margate a few minutes after one), when I asked Sydney if he would go to the railroad and see if Forster was coming. As he answered very boldly "Yes," I opened the garden-gate, upon which he set off alone as fast as his legs would carry him; and being pursued, was not overtaken until he was through the Lawn House Archway, when he was still going on at full speed--I can't conceive where. Being brought back in triumph, he made a number of fictitious starts, for the sake of being overtaken again, and we made a regular game of it. At last, when he and Ally had run away, instead of running after them, we came into the garden, shut the gate, and crouched down on the ground. Presently we heard them come back and say to each other with some alarm, "Why, the gate's shut, and they're all gone!" Ally began in a dismayed way to cry out, but the Phenomenon shouting, "Open the gate!" sent an enormous stone flying into the garden (among our heads) by way of alarming the establishment. I thought it a wonderful piece of character, showing great readiness of resource. He would have fired a perfect battery of stones, or very likely have broken the pantry window, I think, if we hadn't let him in.

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They are all in great force, and send their loves. They are all much excited with the expectation of receiving you on Friday, and would start me off to fetch you now if I would go.

Our train on Friday will be half-past twelve. I have spoken to Georgy about the partridges, and hope we may find some.

Ever, my dearest Kate,
Most affectionately.

[Sidenote: Miss Mary Boyle.]

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _Monday Night, Sept. 16th, 1850._

MY DEAR MISS BOYLE,

Your letter having arrived in time for me to write a line by the evening post, I came out of a paroxysm of "Copperfield," to say that I am _perfectly delighted_ to read it, and to know that we are going to act together in that merry party. We dress "Every Man" in Queen Elizabeth's time. The acting copy is much altered from the old play, but we still smooth down phrases when needful. I don't remember anyone that is changed. Georgina says she can't describe the dress Mrs. Kitely used to wear. I shall be in town on Saturday, and will then get Maclise to make me a little sketch, of it, carefully explained, which I will post to you. At the same time I will send you the book. After consideration of forces, it has occurred to me (old Ben being, I daresay, rare; but I _do_ know rather heavy here and there) that Mrs. Inchbald's "Animal Magnetism," which we have often played, will "go" with a greater laugh than anything else. That book I will send you on Saturday too. You will find your part (Lisette, I think it is called, but it is a waiting-maid) a most admirable one; and I have seen people laugh at the piece until they have hung over the front of the boxes like ripe fruit. You may dress the part to please yourself after reading it. We wear powder. I will take care (bringing a theatrical hairdresser for the company) of your wig! We will rehearse the two pieces when we go down, or at least anything with which you have to do, over and over again. You will find my company so well used to it, and so accustomed to consider it a grave matter of business, as to make it easy. I am now awaiting the French books with a view to "Rockingham," and I hope to report of that too, when I write to you on Saturday.

My dear Miss Boyle, very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Mary Boyle.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Friday, Sept. 20th, 1850._

MY DEAR MISS BOYLE,

I enclose you the book of "Animal Magnetism," and the book of "Every Man in his Humour;" also a sketch by Mr. Maclise of a correct and picturesque Mrs. Kitely. Mr. Forster is Kitely; Mr. Lemon, Brainworm; Mr. Leech, Master Matthew; Mr. Jerrold, Master Stephen; Mr. Stone, Downright. Kitely's dress is a very plain purple gown, like a Bluecoat-boy's. Downright's dress is also very sober, chiefly brown and gray. All the rest of us are very bright. I am flaming red. Georgina will write you about your colour and hers in "Animal Magnetism;" the gayer the better. I am the Doctor, in black, with red stockings. Mr. Lemon (an excellent actor), the valet, as far as I can remember, in blue and yellow, and a chintz waistcoat. Mr. Leech is the Marquis, and Mr. Egg the one-eyed servant.

What do you think of doing "Animal Magnetism" as the last piece (we may play three in all, I think) at Rockingham? If so, we might make Quin the one-eyed servant, and beat up with Mrs. Watson for a Marquis. Will you

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tell me what you think of this, addressed to Broadstairs? I have not heard from Bulwer again. I daresay I have crossed a letter from him by coming up to-day; but I have every reason to believe that the last week in October is the time.

Ever very faithfully yours.

P.S.--This is quite a managerial letter, which I write with all manner of appointments and business discussions going on about me, having my pen on the paper and my eye on "Household Words," my head on "Copperfield" and my ear nowhere particularly.

I will let you know about "A Day after the Wedding." I have sent for the book on Monday.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _September 24th, 1850._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

Coming out of "Copperfield" into a condition of temporary and partial consciousness, I plunge into histrionic duties, and hold enormous correspondence with Miss Boyle, between whom and myself the most portentous packets are continually passing. I send you a piece we purpose playing last at Rockingham, which "my company" played in London, Scotland, Manchester, Liverpool, and I don't know where else. It is one of the most ridiculous things ever done. We purpose, as I have said, playing it last. Why do I send it to you? Because there is an excellent part (played in my troupe by George Cruikshank) for your brother in it--Jeffrey; with a black patch on his eye, and a lame leg, he would be charming--noble! If he is come home, give him my love and tell him so. If he is not come home, do me that favour when he does come. And add that I have a wig for him belonging to the part, which I have an idea of sending to the Exposition of '51, as a triumph of human ingenuity.

I am the Doctor; Miss Boyle, Lisette; Georgy, the other little woman. We have nearly arranged our "bill" for Rockingham. We shall want one more reasonably good actor, besides your brother and Miss Boyle's, to play the Marquis in this piece. Do you know a being endowed by nature with the requisite qualities?

There are some things in the next "Copperfield" that I think better than any that have gone before. After I have been believing such things with all my heart and soul, two results always ensue: first, I can't write plainly to the eye; secondly, I can't write sensibly to the mind. So "Copperfield" is to blame, and I am not, for this wandering note; and if you like it, you'll forgive me. With my affectionate remembrances to Watson,

Ever, my dear Mrs. Watson,
Very faithfully yours.

P.S.--I find I am not equal to the flourish.

[Sidenote: Miss Mary Boyle.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Wednesday, Oct 30th, 1850._

MY DEAR MISS BOYLE,

We are all extremely concerned and distressed to lose you. But we feel that it cannot be otherwise, and we do not, in our own expectation of amusement, forget the sad cause of your absence.

Bulwer was here yesterday; and if I were to tell you how earnestly he

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and all the other friends whom you don't know have looked forward to the projected association with you, and in what a friendly spirit they all express their disappointment, you would be quite moved by it, I think. Pray don't give yourself the least uneasiness on account of the blank in our arrangements. I did not write to you yesterday, in the hope that I might be able to tell you to-day that I had replaced you, in however poor a way. I cannot do that yet, but I am busily making out some means of filling the parts before we rehearse to-morrow night, and I trust to be able to do so in some out-of-the-way manner.

Mrs. Dickens and Bridget send you their kindest remembrances. They are bitterly disappointed at not seeing you to-day, but we all hope for a better time.

Dear Miss Boyle,
Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Saturday Evening, Nov. 23rd, 1850._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

Being well home from Knebworth, where everything has gone off in a whirl of triumph and fired the whole length and breadth of the county of Hertfordshire, I write a short note to say that we are yours any time after Twelfth-night, and that we look forward to seeing you with the greatest pleasure. I should have made this reply to your last note sooner, but that I have been waiting to send you "Copperfield" in a new waistcoat. His tailor is so slow that it has not yet appeared; but when the resplendent garment comes home it shall be forwarded.

I have not your note at hand, but I think you said "any time after Christmas." At all events, and whatever you said, we will conclude a treaty on any terms you may propose. And if it should include any of Charley's holidays, perhaps you would allow us to put a brass collar round his neck, and chain him up in the stable.

Kate and Georgina (who has covered herself with glory) join me in best remembrances and regards to Watson and you and all the house. I have stupendous proposals to make concerning Switzerland in the spring.

I promised Bulwer to make enquiry of you about "Miss Watson," whom he once knew and greatly wished to hear of. He associated her (but was not clear how) with Lady Palmer.

My dear Mrs. Watson,
Ever faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Henry Bicknell.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _November 28th, 1850._

MY DEAR MR. BICKNELL,

If I ever did such a thing, believe me I would do it at your request. But I don't, and if you could see the ramparts of letters from similar institutions with which my desk bristles every now and then, you would feel that nothing lies between total abstinence (in this regard) and utter bewilderment and lecturation.

Mrs. Dickens and her sister unite with me in kind regards to you and Mrs. Bicknell. The consequences of the accident are fast fading, I am happy to say. We all hope to hear shortly that Mrs. Bicknell has recovered that other little accident, which (as you and I know) will occasionally happen in well-regulated families.

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Very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Walter Savage Landor.]

OFFICE OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS,"
Wednesday, Dec. 4th, 1850.

MY DEAR LANDOR,

I have been (a strange thing for me) so very unwell since Sunday, that I have hardly been able to hold up my head--a bilious attack, I believe, and a very miserable sort of business. This, my dear friend, is the reason why I have not sooner written to you in reference to your noble letter, which I read in _The Examiner_, and for which--as it exalts me--I cannot, cannot thank you in words.

We had been following up the blow in Kinkel's[9] favour, and I was growing sanguine, in the hope of getting him out (having enlisted strong and active sympathy in his behalf), when the news came of his escape. Since then we have heard nothing of him. I rather incline to the opinion that the damnable powers that be connived at his escape, but know nothing. Whether he be retaken or whether he appear (as I am not without hope he may) in the streets of London, I shall be a party to no step whatever without consulting you; and if any scrap of intelligence concerning him shall reach me, it shall be yours immediately.

Horne wrote the article. I shall see him here to-night, and know how he will feel your sympathy and support. But I do not wait to see him before writing, lest you should think me slow to feel your generosity. We said at home when we read your letter, that it was like the opening of your whole munificent and bare heart.

Ever most affectionately yours,
My dear Landor.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

[Symbol: right hand] THIS IS NO. 2.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Monday Morning, Dec. 9th, 1850._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

Your note to me of Saturday has crossed mine to you, I find. If you open both of mine together, please to observe _this is No. 2_.

You may rely on Mr. Tucker's doing his work thoroughly well and charging a fair price. It is not possible for him to say aforehand, in such a case, what it will cost, I imagine, as he will have to adapt his work to the place. Nathan's stage knowledge may be stated in the following figures: 00000000000. Therefore, I think you had best refer Mr. Tucker to _me_, and I will apply all needful screws and tortures to him.

I have thought of one or two very ingenious (hem!) little contrivances for adapting the difficulties of "Used Up" to the small stage. They will require to be so exactly explained to your carpenter (though very easy little things in themselves), that I think I had better, before Christmas, send my servant down for an hour--he is quite an old stager now--to show him precisely what I mean. It is not a day's work, but it would be extremely difficult to explain in writing. I developed these wonderful ideas to the master carpenter at one of the theatres, and he shook his head with an intensely mournful air, and said, "Ah, sir, it's a universal observation in the profession, sir, that it was a great loss to the public when you took to writing books!" which I thought

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complimentary to "Copperfield."

Ever faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: The same.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Saturday, Dec. 14th, 1850._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I shall be delighted to come on the seventh instead of the eighth. We consider it an engagement. Over and above the pleasure of a quiet day with you, I think I can greatly facilitate the preparations (that's the way, you see, in which we cheat ourselves into making duties of pleasures) by being at Rockingham a day earlier. So that's settled.

I was quite certain when that Child of Israel mentioned those dimensions, that he must be wrong. For which wooden-headedness the Child shall be taken to task on Monday morning, when I am going to look at his preparations, by appointment, about the door. Don't you observe, that the scenery not being made expressly for the room, it may be impossible to use it as you propose? There is a scene before that wall, and unless the door in the scene (supposing there to be one, which I am not sure of) should come exactly into the place of the door of the room, the door of the room might as well be in Africa. If it could be used it would still require to be backed (excuse professional technicality) by another scene in the passage. And if it be rather in the side of the bottom of the room (as I seem to remember it), it would be shut out of sight, or partially, by the side scenes. Do you comprehend these stage managerial sagacities? That piece of additional room in so small a stage would be of immense service, if we could avail ourselves of it. If we can't, I have another means (I think) of discovering Leech, Saville, and Coldstream at table. I am constantly turning over in my mind the capacities of the place, and hope by one means or other to make something more than the best of it. As to the fireplace, you will never be able to use that. The heat of the lamp will be very great, and ventilation will be the thing wanted. Thirteen feet and a half of depth, diminished by stage fittings and furniture, is a small space. I think the doorway could be used in the last scene, with the castle steps and platform for the staircase running straight through it toward the hall. _Nous verrons._ I will write again about my visit of inspection, probably on Monday.

Will you let them know that Messrs. Nathan, of Titchborne Street, Haymarket, will dress them, please, and that I will engage for their doing it thoroughly well; also that Mr. Wilson, theatrical hairdresser, Strand, near St. Clement's Churchyard, will come down with wigs, etc., to "make up" everybody; that he has a list of the pieces from me, and that he will be glad to measure the heads and consult the tastes of all concerned, if they will give him the opportunity beforehand? I should like to see Sir Adonis Leech and the Hon. T. Saville if I can. For they ought to be wonderfully made up, and to be as unlike themselves as possible, and to contrast well with each other and with me. I rather grudge _caro sposo_ coming into the company. I should like him so much to see the play. If we do it all well together it ought to be so very pleasant. I never saw a great mass of people so charmed with a little story as when we acted it at the Glasgow Theatre. But I have no other reason for faltering when I take him to my arms. I feel that he is the man for the part.[10] I see him with a blue bag, a flaxen wig, and green spectacles. I know what it will be. I foresee how all that sessional experience will come out. I reconcile myself to it, in spite of the selfish consideration of wanting him elsewhere; and while I have a heavy sense of a light being snuffed out in the audience, perceive a new luminary shining on the stage!

Your brother[11] would make a capital tiger, too! Very short tight surtout, doeskins, bright top-boots, white cravat, bouquet in

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button-hole, close wig--very good, ve--ry good. It clearly must be so. The thing is done. I told you we were opening a tremendous correspondence when we first began to write on such a long subject. But do let me tell you, once and for all, that I am in the business heart and soul, and that you cannot trouble me respecting it, and that I wouldn't willingly or knowingly leave the minutest detail unprovided for. It cannot possibly be a success if the smallest peppercorn of arrangement be omitted. And a success it must be! I couldn't go into such a thing, or help to bring you poorly out of it, for any earthly consideration. Talking of forgetting, isn't it odd? I doubt if I could forget words I had learned, so long as I wanted them. But the moment the necessity goes, they go. I know my place and everybody's place in this identical piece of "Used Up" perfectly, and could put every little object on its own square inches of room exactly where it ought to be. But I have no more recollection of my words now (I took the book up yesterday) than if I had only seen the play as one of the audience at a theatre. Perhaps not so much. With cordial remembrances,

Ever, dear Mrs. Watson,
Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _December 19th, 1850._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I am sorry to say that business ("Household Words" business) will keep me in town to-morrow. But on Monday I propose coming down and returning the same day. The train for my money appears to be the half-past six A.M. (horrible initials!), and to that invention for promoting early rising I design to commit myself.

I am shocked if I also made the mistake of confounding those two (and too) similar names.[12] But I think Mr. S-T-A-F-F-O-R-D had better do the Marquis. I am glad to find that we agree, but we always do.

I have closely overhauled the little theatre, and the carpenter and painter. The whole has been entirely repainted (I mean the proscenium and scenery) for this especial purpose, and is extremely pretty. I don't think, the scale considered, that anything better _could_ be done. It is very elegant. I have brought "the Child" to this. For the hire of the theatre, fifteen pounds. The carriage to be extra. The Child's fares and expenses (which will be very moderate) to be extra. The stage carpenter's wages to be extra--seven shillings a day. I don't think, when you see the things, that you will consider this too much. It is as good as the Queen's little theatre at Windsor, raised stage excepted. I have had an extraction made, which will enable us to use the door. I am at present breaking my man's heart, by teaching him how to imitate the sounds of the smashing of the windows and the breaking of the balcony in "Used Up." In the event of his death from grief, I have promised to do something for his mother. Thinking it possible that you might not see the enclosed until next month, and hoping that it is seasonable for Christmas, I send it. Being, with cordial regards and all seasonable good wishes,

Ever, dear Mrs. Watson,
Faithfully yours.

P.S.--This [blot] is a tear over the devotion of Captain Boyle, who (as I learned from the Child of Israel this morning) would not decide upon Farmer Wurzel's coat, without referring the question of buttons to managerial approval.

[Sidenote: Mr. John Poole.]

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DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Tuesday Night, Christmas Eve, 1850._

MY DEAR POOLE,

On the Sunday when I last saw you, I went straight to Lord John's with the letter you read. He was out of town, and I left it with my card.

On the following Wednesday I received a note from him, saying that he did not bear in mind exactly what I had told him of you before, and asking me to tell it again. I immediately replied, of course, and gave him an exact description of you and your condition, and your way of life in Paris and everything else; a perfect diorama in little, with you pervading it. To-day I got a letter from him, announcing that you have a pension of _a hundred a year_! of which I heartily wish you joy.

He says: "I am happy to say that the Queen has approved of a pension of one hundred pounds a year to Mr. Poole.

"The Queen, in her gracious answer, informs me that she meant to have mentioned Mr. Poole to me, and that she had wished to place him in the Charter House, but found the society there was not such as he could associate with.

"Be so good as to inform Mr. Poole that directions are given for his pension, which will date from the end of June last."

I have lost no time in answering this, but you must brace up your energies to write him a short note too, and another for the Queen.

If you are in Paris, shall I ascertain what authority I shall need from you to receive the half-year, which I suppose will be shortly due? I can receive it as usual.

With all good wishes and congratulations, seasonable and unseasonable,

Always faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Monday Morning, Dec. 30th, 1850._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

As your letter is _decided_, the scaffolding shall be re-erected round Charley's boots (it has been taken down, and the workmen had retired to their respective homes in various parts of England and Wales) and his dressing proceeded with. I have been very much pleased with him in the matter, as he has never made the least demonstration of disappointment or mortification, and was perfectly contented to give in. (_Here I break off to go to Boxall._) (_Here I return much exhausted._)

Your time shall be stated in the bills for both nights. I propose to rehearse on the day, on Thursday and Friday, and in the evening on Saturday, that we may try our lights. Therefore:

NATHAN AND STAGE CARPENTER	will come on Tuesday, 7th January, as there must be a responsible person to anathematise, and as the company seem so slow about their dresses, that I foresee the strong probability of Nathan having a good deal to do at Rockingham without respect.
WILSON	will come on Saturday, 11th January.
TUCKER	will come on Saturday, 11th January.

I shall be delighted to see your brother, and so no more at present from

Yours ever,

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P.S.--As Boxall (with his head very much on one side and his spectacles on) danced backward from the canvas incessantly with great nimbleness, and returned, and made little digs at it with his pencil, with a horrible grin on his countenance, I augur that he pleased himself this morning.

"Tag" added by Mr. Dickens to "Animal Magnetism," played at Rockingham Castle.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.--TAG.

[After LA FLEUR says to the Marquis: "Sir, return him the wand; and the ladies, I daresay, will fall in love with him again."]

DOCTOR. I'm cheated, robbed! I don't believe! I hate
Wand, Marquis, Doctor, Ward, Lisette, and Fate!

LA FLEUR. Not me?

DOCTOR. _You_ worse, you rascal, than the rest.

LA FLEUR. (_bowing_). To merit it, good sir, I've done my best.

LISETTE. (_sharply_). And I.

CONSTANCE. I fear that I too have a claim
Upon your anger.

LISETTE. Anger, madam? Shame!
He's justly treated, as he might have known.
And if the wand were a divining one
It would have turn'd, within his very hands,
Point-blank to where your handsome husband stands.

CONSTANCE (_glancing at_ DOCTOR). I would it were the wand of Harlequin,
To change his temper and his favour win.

JEFFREY (_peeping in_). In that case, mistress, you might be so kind
As wave me back the eye of which I'm blind.

MARQUIS (_laughing and examining it_). 'Tis nothing but a piece of senseless wood,
And has no influence for harm or good.
Yet stay! It surely draws me towards those
Indulgent, pleasant, smiling, beaming rows!
It surely charms me.

ALL. And us too.

MARQUIS. To bend
Before their gen'rous efforts to commend;
To cheer us on, through these few happy hours,
And strew our mimic way with real flowers.

[_All make obeisance._

Stay yet again. Among us all, I feel
One subtle, all-pervading influence steal,
Stirring one wish within one heart and head,
Bright be the path our host and hostess tread!
Blest be their children, happy be their race,
Long may they live, this ancient hall to grace
Long bear of English virtues noble fruit--
Green-hearted ROCKINGHAM! strike deep thy root

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FOOTNOTES:

[8] The last illness of Mrs. White's mother.

[9] Dr. Gottfried Kinkel, a distinguished scholar and Professor in the University of Bonn, who was at that time undergoing very rigorous State imprisonment in Prussia, for political reasons. Dr. Kinkel was afterwards well known as a teacher and lecturer on Art in London, where he resided for many years.

[10] The part of the lawyer in "Used Up." It was _not_ played after all by Mr. Watson, but by Mr. (now Sir William) Boxall, R.A., a very old and intimate friend of Mr. and Mrs. Watson, and of Charles Dickens.

[11] This part, finally, was played by Charles Dickens, junior.

[12] Mr. Stafford and Mr. Stopford, who both acted in the plays at Rockingham.

1851.

NARRATIVE.

In February this year, Charles Dickens made a short bachelor excursion with Mr. Leech and the Hon. Spencer Lyttelton to Paris, from whence we give a letter to his wife. She was at this time in very bad health, and the little infant Dora had a serious illness during the winter. The child rallied for the time, but Mrs. Dickens continued so ill that she was advised to try the air--and water--of Malvern. And early in March, she and her sister were established in lodgings there, the children being left in London, and Charles Dickens dividing his time between Devonshire Terrace and Malvern. He was busily occupied before this time in superintending the arrangements for Mr. Macready's last appearance on the stage at Drury Lane, and for a great dinner which was given to Mr. Macready after it on the 1st March, at which the chair was taken by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. With him Charles Dickens was then engaged in maturing a scheme, which had been projected at the time of the amateur play at Knebworth, of a Guild of Literature and Art, which was to found a provident fund for literary men and artists; and to start which, a series of dramatic performances by the amateur company was proposed. Sir E. B. Lytton wrote a comedy, "Not so Bad as We Seem," for the purpose, to be played in London and the provinces; and the Duke of Devonshire turned one of the splendid rooms in Devonshire House into a theatre, for the first occasion of its performance. It was played early in May before her Majesty and the Prince Consort, and a large audience. Later in the season, there were several representations of the comedy (with a farce, "Mr. Nightingale's Diary," written by Charles Dickens for himself and Mr. Mark Lemon) in the Hanover Square Rooms.

But in the interval between the Macready banquet and the play at Devonshire House, Charles Dickens underwent great family trouble and sorrow. His father, whose health had been declining for some time, became seriously ill, and Charles Dickens was summoned from Malvern to attend upon him. Mr. John Dickens died on the 31st March. On the 14th April, Charles Dickens had gone from Malvern to preside at the annual dinner of the General Theatrical Fund, and found his children all well at Devonshire Terrace. He was playing with his baby, Dora, before he went to the dinner; soon after he left the house the child died suddenly in her nurse's arms. The sad news was communicated to the father after his duties at the dinner were over. The next day, Mr. Forster went to Malvern to break the news to Mrs. Dickens, and she and her sister returned with him to London, and the Malvern lodgings were given up. But Mrs. Dickens being still out of health, and London being more than

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usually full (this being the year of the Great Exhibition), Charles Dickens decided to let the town house again for a few months, and engaged the Fort House, Broadstairs, from the beginning of May until November. This, which was his longest sojourn at Broadstairs, was also the last, as the following summer he changed his seaside resort, and never returned to that pretty little watering-place, although he always retained an affectionate interest in it.

The lease of the Devonshire Terrace house was to expire this year. It was now too small for his family, so he could not renew it, although he left it with regret. From the beginning of the year, he had been in negotiation for a house in Tavistock Square, in which his friend Mr. Frank Stone had lived for some years. Many letters which follow are on the subject of this house and the improvements Charles Dickens made in it. His brother-in-law, Henry Austin--himself an architect--superintended the "works" at Tavistock House, as he did afterwards those at Gad's Hill--and there are many characteristic letters to Mr. Austin while these works were in progress. In the autumn, as a letter written in August to Mr. Stone will show, an exchange of houses was made--Mr. Stone removing with his family to Devonshire Terrace until his own new house was ready--while the alterations in Tavistock House went on, and Charles Dickens removed into it from Broadstairs, in November.

His eldest son was now an Eton boy. He had been one of the party and had played a small part in the play at Rockingham Castle, in the Christmas holidays, and his father's letters to Mrs. Watson at the beginning of this year have reference to this play.

This year he wrote and published the "Haunted Man," which he had found himself unable to finish for the previous Christmas. It was the last of the Christmas _books_. He abandoned them in favour of a Christmas number of "Household Words," which he continued annually for many years in "Household Words" and "All the Year Round," and in which he had the collaboration of other writers. The "Haunted Man" was dramatised and produced at the Adelphi Theatre, under the management of Mr. Benjamin Webster. Charles Dickens read the book himself, at Tavistock House, to a party of actors and actresses.

At the end of the year he wrote the first number of "Bleak House," although it was not published until March of the following year. With the close attention and the hard work he gave, from the time of its starting, to his weekly periodical, he found it to be most desirable, now, in beginning a new monthly serial, that he should be ready with some numbers in advance before the appearance of the first number.

A provincial tour for the "Guild" took place at the end of the year. A letter to his wife, from Clifton, in November, gives a notion of the general success and enthusiasm with which the plays were attended. The "new Hardman," to whom he alludes as taking that part in Sir E. B. Lytton's comedy in the place of Mr. Forster, was Mr. John Tenniel, who was a new addition, and a very valuable and pleasant one, to the company. Mr. Topham, the delightful water-colour painter, Mr. Dudley Costello, and Mr. Wilkie Collins were also new recruits to the company of "splendid strollers" about this time. A letter to Mr. Wills, asking him to take a part in the comedy, is given here. He never did _act_ with the company, but he complied with Charles Dickens's desire that he should be "in the scheme" by giving it all sorts of assistance, and almost invariably being one of the party in the provincial tours.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _January 24th, 1851._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

Kate will have told you, I daresay, that my despondency on coming to town was relieved by a talk with Lady John Russell, of which you were

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the subject, and in which she spoke of you with an earnestness of old affection and regard that did me good. I date my recovery (which has been slow) from that hour. I am still feeble, and liable to sudden outbursts of causeless rage and demoniacal gloom, but I shall be better presently. What a thing it is, that we can't be always innocently merry and happy with those we like best without looking out at the back windows of life! Well, one day perhaps--after a long night--the blinds on that side of the house will be down for ever, and nothing left but the bright prospect in front.

Concerning supper-toast (of which I feel bound to make some mention), you did, as you always do, right, and exactly what was most agreeable to me.

My love to your excellent husband (I wonder whether he and the dining-room have got to rights yet!), and to the jolly little boys and the calm little girl. Somehow, I shall always think of Lord Spencer as eternally walking up and down the platform at Rugby, in a high chill wind, with no apparent hope of a train--as I left him; and somehow I always think of Rockingham, after coming away, as if I belonged to it and had left a bit of my heart behind, which it is so very odd to find wanting twenty times a day.

Ever, dear Mrs. Watson, faithfully yours, and his.

[Sidenote: The same.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Tuesday Night, Jan. 28th, 1851._

MY DEAR, DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I presume you mean Mr. Stafford and Mr. Stopford to pay Wilson (as I have instructed him) a guinea each? Am I right? In that just case I still owe you a guinea for _my_ part. I was going to send you a post-office order for that amount, when a faint sense of absurdity mantled my ingenuous visage with a blush, and I thought it better to owe you the money until we met. I hope it may be soon!

I believe I may lay claim to the mysterious inkstand, also to a volume lettered on the back, "Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea, II.," which I left when I came down at Christmas. Will you take care of them as hostages until we effect an exchange?

Charley went back in great spirits, threatening to write to George. It was a very wet night, and John took him to the railway. He said, on his return: "Mas'r Charles went off very gay, sir. He found some young gen'lemen as was his friends in the train, sir." "Come," said I, "I am glad of that. How many were there? Two or three?" "Oh dear, sir, there was a matter of forty, sir! All with their heads out o' the coach-windows, sir, a-hallooing 'Dickens!' all over the station!"

Her ladyship and the ward of the FIZ-ZISH-UN send their best loves, in which I heartily join. If you and your dear husband come to town before we bring out Bulwer's comedy, I think we must have a snug reading of it.

Ever, dear Mrs. Watson, faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Mark Lemon.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Friday, Jan. 31st, 1851._

MY DEAR LEMON,

We are deeply sorry to receive the mournful intelligence of your calamity. But we know you will both have found comfort in that blessed belief, from which the sacred figure with the child upon His knee is, in

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all stages of our lives, inseparable, for of such is the kingdom of God!

We join in affectionate loves to you and your dear wife. She well deserves your praise, I am sure.

Ever affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Monday, Feb. 10th, 1851._

MY DEAR WILLS,

There is a small part in Bulwer's comedy, but very good what there is--not much--my servant, who opens the play, which I should be very glad if you would like to do.

Pray understand that there is no end of men who would do it, and that if you have the least objection to the trouble, I don't make this the expression of a wish even. Otherwise, I would like you to be in the scheme, which is a very great and important one, and which cannot have too many men who are steadily--not flightily, like some of our friends--in earnest, and who are not to be lightly discouraged.

If you do the part, I would like to have a talk with you about the secretarial duties. They must be performed by someone I clearly see, and will require good business direction. I should like to put some young fellow, to whom such work and its remuneration would be an object, under your eye, if we could find one entire and perfect chrysolite anywhere. Let me know whether I am to rate you on the ship's books or not. If yes, consider yourself "called" to the reading (by Macready) at Forster's rooms, on Wednesday, the 19th, at three.

And in the meantime you shall have a proof of the plan.

Ever yours.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

HÔTEL WAGRAM, PARIS, _Thursday, Feb. 12th, 1851._

MY DEAREST KATE,

I received your letter this morning (on returning from an expedition to a market thirteen miles away, which involved the necessity of getting up at five), and am delighted to have such good accounts of all at home.

We had D'Orsay to dinner yesterday, and I am hurried to dress now, in order to pay a promised visit to his _atelier_. He was very happy with us, and is much improved both in spirits and looks. Lord and Lady Castlereagh live downstairs here, and we went to them in the evening, and afterwards brought him upstairs to smoke. To-night we are going to see Lemaître in the renowned "Belphégor" piece. To-morrow at noon we leave Paris for Calais (the Boulogne boat does not serve our turn), and unless the weather for crossing should be absurd, I shall be at home, please God, early on the evening of Saturday. It continues to be delightful weather here--gusty, but very clear and fine. Leech and I had a charming country walk before breakfast this morning at Poissy and enjoyed it very much. The rime was on the grass and trees, and the country most delicious.

Spencer Lyttelton is a capital companion on a trip, and a great addition to the party. We have got on famously and been very facetious. With best love to Georgina and the darlings,

Ever most affectionately.

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[Sidenote: Miss Mary Boyle.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Friday Night, late, Feb. 21st, 1851._

MY DEAR MISS BOYLE,

I have devoted a couple of hours this evening to going very carefully over your paper (which I had read before) and to endeavouring to bring it closer, and to lighten it, and to give it that sort of compactness which a habit of composition, and of disciplining one's thoughts like a regiment, and of studying the art of putting each soldier into his right place, may have gradually taught me to think necessary. I hope, when you see it in print, you will not be alarmed by my use of the pruning-knife. I have tried to exercise it with the utmost delicacy and discretion, and to suggest to you, especially towards the end, how this sort of writing (regard being had to the size of the journal in which it appears) requires to be compressed, and is made pleasanter by compression. This all reads very solemnly, but only because I want you to read it (I mean the article) with as loving an eye as I have truly tried to touch it with a loving and gentle hand. I propose to call it "My Mahogany Friend." The other name is too long, and I think not attractive. Until I go to the office to-morrow and see what is actually in hand, I am not certain of the number in which it will appear, but Georgy shall write on Monday and tell you. We are always a fortnight in advance of the public or the mechanical work could not be done. I think there are many things in it that are _very pretty_. The Katie part is particularly well done. If I don't say more, it is because I have a heavy sense, in all cases, of the responsibility of encouraging anyone to enter on that thorny track, where the prizes are so few and the blanks so many; where----

But I won't write you a sermon. With the fire going out, and the first shadows of a new story hovering in a ghostly way about me (as they usually begin to do, when I have finished an old one), I am in danger of doing the heavy business, and becoming a heavy guardian, or something of that sort, instead of the light and airy Joe.

So good-night, and believe that you may always trust me, and never find a grim expression (towards you) in any that I wear.

Ever yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. David Roberts, R.A.]

February 21st, 1851.

Oh my dear Roberts, if you knew the trouble we have had and the money we pay for Drury Lane for one night for the benefit, you would never dream of it for the dinner. _There isn't possibility of getting a theatre._

I will do all I can for your charming little daughter, and hope to squeeze in half-a-dozen ladies at the last; but we must not breathe the idea or we shall not dare to execute it, there will be such an outcry.

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _February 27th, 1851._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

Forster told me to-day that you wish Tennyson's sonnet to be read after your health is given on Saturday. I am perfectly certain that it would not do at that time. I am quite convinced that the audience would not

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receive it, under these exciting circumstances, as it ought to be received. If I had to read it, I would on no account undertake to do so at that period, in a great room crowded with a dense company. I have an instinctive assurance that it would fail. Being with Bulwer this morning, I communicated your wish to him, and he immediately felt as I do. I could enter into many reasons which induce me to form this opinion. But I believe that you have that confidence in me that I may spare you the statement of them.

I want to know one thing from you. As I shall be obliged to be at the London Tavern in the afternoon of to-morrow, Friday (I write, observe, on Thursday night), I shall be much helped in the arrangements if you will send me your answer by a messenger (addressed here) on the receipt of this. Which would you prefer--that "Auld Lang Syne" should be sung after your health is given and before you return thanks, or after you have spoken?

I cannot forbear a word about last night. I think I have told you sometimes, my much-loved friend, how, when I was a mere boy, I was one of your faithful and devoted adherents in the pit; I believe as true a member of that true host of followers as it has ever boasted. As I improved myself and was improved by favouring circumstances in mind and fortune, I only became the more earnest (if it were possible) in my study of you. No light portion of my life arose before me when the quiet vision to which I am beholden, in I don't know how great a decree, or for how much--who does?--faded so nobly from my bodily eyes last night. And if I were to try to tell you what I felt--of regret for its being past for ever, and of joy in the thought that you could have taken your leave of _me_ but in God's own time--I should only blot this paper with some drops that would certainly not be of ink, and give very faint expression to very strong emotions.

What is all this in writing! It is only some sort of relief to my full heart, and shows very little of it to you; but that's something, so I let it go.

Ever, my dearest Macready,
Your most affectionate Friend.

P.S.--My very flourish departs from me for the moment.

[Sidenote: Mr. David Roberts, R.A.]

KNUTSFORD LODGE, GREAT MALVERN, _March 20th, 1851._

MY DEAR ROBERTS,

Mrs. Dickens has been unwell, and I am here with her. I want you to give a quarter of an hour to the perusal of the enclosed prospectus; to consider the immense value of the design, if it be successful, to artists young and old; and then to bestow your favourable consideration on the assistance I am going to ask of you for the sake and in the name of the cause.

For the representation of the new comedy Bulwer has written for us, to start this scheme, I am having an ingenious theatre made by Webster's people, for erection on certain nights in the Hanover Square Rooms. But it will first be put up in the Duke of Devonshire's house, where the first representation will take place before a brilliant company, including (I believe) the Queen.

Now, will you paint us a scene--the scene of which I enclose Bulwer's description from the prompter's book? It will be a cloth with a set-piece. It should be sent to your studio or put up in a theatre painting-room, as you would prefer. I have asked Stanny to do another scene, Edwin Landseer, and Louis Haghe. The Devonshire House performance will probably be on Monday, the 28th of April. I should want to have the

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scenery complete by the 20th, as it would require to be elaborately worked and rehearsed. _You_ could do it in no time after sending in your pictures, and will you?

What the value of such aid would be I need not say. I say no more of the reasons that induce me to ask it, because if they are not in the prospectus they are nowhere.

On Monday and Tuesday nights I shall be in town for rehearsal, but until then I shall be here. Will you let me have a line from you in reply?

My dear Roberts, ever faithfully yours.

Description of the Scene proposed:

STREETS OF LONDON IN THE TIME OF GEORGE I.

In perspective, an alley inscribed DEADMAN'S LANE; a large, old-fashioned, gloomy, mysterious house in the corner, marked No. 1. (_This No. 1, Deadman's Lane, has been constantly referred to in the play as the abode of a mysterious female figure, who enters masked, and passes into this house on the scene being disclosed._) It is night, and there are moonlight mediums.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

H. W. OFFICE, _Monday, March 26th, 1851._

MY DEAREST KATE,

I reserve all news of the play until I come down. The Queen appoints the 30th of April. There is no end of trouble.

My father slept well last night, and is as well this morning (they send word) as anyone in such a state, so cut and slashed, can be. I have been waiting at home for Bulwer all the morning (it is now two), and am now waiting for Lemon before I go up there. I will not close this note until I have been.

It is raining here incessantly. The streets are in a most miserable state. A van, containing the goods of some unfortunate family moving, has broken down close outside, and the whole scene is a picture of dreariness.

The children are quite well and very happy. I had Dora down this morning, who was quite charmed to see me. That Miss Ketteridge appointed two to-day for seeing the house, and probably she is at this moment disparaging it.

My father is very weak and low, but not worse, I hope, than might be expected. I am going home to dine with the children. By working here late to-night (coming back after dinner) I can finish what I have to do for the play. Therefore I hope to be with you to-morrow, in good time for dinner.

Ever affectionately.

P.S.--Love to Georgy.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, _Thursday Morning, April 3rd, 1851._

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MY DEAR WILLS,

I took my threatened walk last night, but it yielded little but generalities.

However, I thought of something for _to-night_, that I think will make a splendid paper. I have an idea that it might be connected with the gas paper (making gas a great agent in an effective police), and made one of the articles. This is it: "A Night in a Station-house." If you would go down to our friend Mr. Yardley, at Scotland Yard, and get a letter or order to the acting chief authority at that station-house in Bow Street, to enable us to hear the charges, observe the internal economy of the station-house all night, go round to the cells with the visiting policeman, etc., I would stay there, say from twelve to-night to four or five in the morning. We might have a "night-cap," a fire, and some tea at the office hard by. If you could conveniently borrow an hour or two from the night we could both go. If not, I would go alone. It would make a wonderful good paper at a most appropriate time, when the back slums of London are going to be invaded by all sorts of strangers.

You needn't exactly say that _I_ was going _in propriâ_ (unless it were necessary), and, of course, you wouldn't say that I propose to-night, because I am so worn by the sad arrangements in which I am engaged, and by what led to them, that I cannot take my natural rest. But to-morrow night we go to the gas-works. I might not be so disposed for this station-house observation as I shall be to-night for a long time, and I see a most singular and admirable chance for us in the descriptive way, not to be lost.

Therefore, if you will arrange the thing before I come down at four this afternoon, any of the Scotland Yard people will do it, I should think; if our friend by any accident should not be there, I will go into it.

If they should recommend any other station-house as better for the purpose, or would think it better for us to go to more than one under the guidance of some trustworthy man, of course we will pay any man and do as they recommend. But I think one topping station-house would be best.

Faithfully ever.

P.S.--I write from my bed.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

Saturday, May 24th, 1851.

MY DEAR MACREADY,

We are getting in a good heap of money for the Guild. The comedy has been very much improved, in many respects, since you read it. The scene to which you refer is certainly one of the most telling in the play. And there _is_ a farce to be produced on Tuesday next, wherein a distinguished amateur will sustain a variety of assumption-parts, and in particular, Samuel Weller and Mrs. Gamp, of which I say no more. I am pining for Broadstairs, where the children are at present. I lurk from the sun, during the best part of the day, in a villainous compound of darkness, canvas, sawdust, general dust, stale gas (involving a vague smell of pepper), and disenchanted properties. But I hope to get down on Wednesday or Thursday.

Ah! you country gentlemen, who live at home at ease, how little do you think of us among the London fleas! But they tell me you are coming in for Dorsetshire. You must be very careful, when you come to town to attend to your parliamentary duties, never to ask your way of people in the streets. They will misdirect you for what the vulgar call "a lark,"

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meaning, in this connection, a jest at your expense. Always go into some respectable shop or apply to a policeman. You will know him by his being dressed in blue, with very dull silver buttons, and by the top of his hat being made of sticking-plaster. You may perhaps see in some odd place an intelligent-looking man, with a curious little wooden table before him and three thimbles on it. He will want you to bet, but don't do it. He really desires to cheat you. And don't buy at auctions where the best plated goods are being knocked down for next to nothing. These, too, are delusions. If you wish to go to the play to see real good acting (though a little more subdued than perfect tragedy should be), I would recommend you to see ---- at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Anybody will show it to you. It is near the Strand, and you may know it by seeing no company whatever at any of the doors. Cab fares are eightpence a mile. A mile London measure is half a Dorsetshire mile, recollect. Porter is twopence per pint; what is called stout is fourpence. The Zoological Gardens are in the Regent's Park, and the price of admission is one shilling. Of the streets, I would recommend you to see Regent Street and the Quadrant, Bond Street, Piccadilly, Oxford Street, and Cheapside. I think these will please you after a time, though the tumult and bustle will at first bewilder you. If I can serve you in any way, pray command me. And with my best regards to your happy family, so remote from this Babel,

Believe me, my dear Friend,
Ever affectionately yours.

P.S.--I forgot to mention just now that the black equestrian figure you will see at Charing Cross, as you go down to the House, is a statue of _King Charles the First_.

[Sidenote: The Earl of Carlisle.]

BROADSTAIRS, _July 8th, 1851._

MY DEAR LORD CARLISLE,

We shall be delighted to see you, if you will come down on Saturday. Mr. Lemon may perhaps be here, with his wife, but no one else. And we can give you a bed that may be surpassed, with a welcome that certainly cannot be.

The general character of Broadstairs as to size and accommodation was happily expressed by Miss Eden, when she wrote to the Duke of Devonshire (as he told me), saying how grateful she felt to a certain sailor, who asked leave to see her garden, for not plucking it bodily up, and sticking it in his button-hole.

As we think of putting mignonette-boxes outside the windows, for the younger children to sleep in by-and-by, I am afraid we should give your servant the cramp if we hardily undertook to lodge him. But in case you should decide to bring one, he is easily disposable hard by.

Don't come by the boat. It is rather tedious, and both departs and arrives at inconvenient hours. There is a railway train from the Dover terminus to Ramsgate, at half-past twelve in the day, which will bring you in three hours. Another at half-past four in the afternoon. If you will tell me by which you come (I hope the former), I will await you at the terminus with my little brougham.

You will have for a night-light in the room we shall give you, the North Foreland lighthouse. That and the sea and air are our only lions. It is a very rough little place, but a very pleasant one, and you will make it pleasanter than ever to me.

Faithfully yours always.

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[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _July 11th, 1851._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I am so desperately indignant with you for writing me that short apology for a note, and pretending to suppose that under any circumstances I could fail to read with interest anything _you_ wrote to me, that I have more than half a mind to inflict a regular letter upon you. If I were not the gentlest of men I should do it!

Poor dear Haldimand, I have thought of him so often. That kind of decay is so inexpressibly affecting and piteous to me, that I have no words to express my compassion and sorrow. When I was at Abbotsford, I saw in a vile glass case the last clothes Scott wore. Among them an old white hat, which seemed to be tumbled and bent and broken by the uneasy, purposeless wandering, hither and thither, of his heavy head. It so embodied Lockhart's pathetic description of him when he tried to write, and laid down his pen and cried, that it associated itself in my mind with broken powers and mental weakness from that hour. I fancy Haldimand in such another, going listlessly about that beautiful place, and remembering the happy hours we have passed with him, and his goodness and truth. I think what a dream we live in, until it seems for the moment the saddest dream that ever was dreamed. Pray tell us if you hear more of him. We really loved him.

To go to the opposite side of life, let me tell you that a week or so ago I took Charley and three of his schoolfellows down the river gipsying. I secured the services of Charley's godfather (an old friend of mine, and a noble fellow with boys), and went down to Slough, accompanied by two immense hampers from Fortnum and Mason, on (I believe) the wettest morning ever seen out of the tropics.

It cleared before we got to Slough; but the boys, who had got up at four (we being due at eleven), had horrible misgivings that we might not come, in consequence of which we saw them looking into the carriages before us, all face. They seemed to have no bodies whatever, but to be all face; their countenances lengthened to that surprising extent. When they saw us, the faces shut up as if they were upon strong springs, and their waistcoats developed themselves in the usual places. When the first hamper came out of the luggage-van, I was conscious of their dancing behind the guard; when the second came out with bottles in it, they all stood wildly on one leg. We then got a couple of flys to drive to the boat-house. I put them in the first, but they couldn't sit still a moment, and were perpetually flying up and down like the toy figures in the sham snuff-boxes. In this order we went on to "Tom Brown's, the tailor's," where they all dressed in aquatic costume, and then to the boat-house, where they all cried in shrill chorus for "Mahogany"--a gentleman, so called by reason of his sunburnt complexion, a waterman by profession. (He was likewise called during the day "Hog" and "Hogany," and seemed to be unconscious of any proper name whatsoever.) We embarked, the sun shining now, in a galley with a striped awning, which I had ordered for the purpose, and all rowing hard, went down the river. We dined in a field; what I suffered for fear those boys should get drunk, the struggles I underwent in a contest of feeling between hospitality and prudence, must ever remain untold. I feel, even now, old with the anxiety of that tremendous hour. They were very good, however. The speech of one became thick, and his eyes too like lobsters' to be comfortable, but only temporarily. He recovered, and I suppose outlived the salad he took. I have heard nothing to the contrary, and I imagine I should have been implicated on the inquest if there had been one. We had tea and rashers of bacon at a public-house, and came home, the last five or six miles in a prodigious thunderstorm. This was the great success of the day, which they certainly enjoyed more than anything else. The dinner had been great, and Mahogany had informed them, after a bottle of light champagne, that he never would come up the river "with ginger company" any more. But the getting so completely wet through was the

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culminating part of the entertainment. You never in your life saw such objects as they were; and their perfect unconsciousness that it was at all advisable to go home and change, or that there was anything to prevent their standing at the station two mortal hours to see me off, was wonderful. As to getting them to their dames with any sort of sense that they were damp, I abandoned the idea. I thought it a success when they went down the street as civilly as if they were just up and newly dressed, though they really looked as if you could have rubbed them to rags with a touch, like saturated curl-paper.

I am sorry you have not been able to see our play, which I suppose you won't now, for I take it you are not going on Monday, the 21st, our last night in town? It is worth seeing, not for the getting up (which modesty forbids me to approve), but for the little bijou it is, in the scenery, dresses, and appointments. They are such as never can be got together again, because such men as Stanfield, Roberts, Grieve, Haghe, Egg, and others, never can be again combined in such a work. Everything has been done at its best from all sorts of authorities, and it is really very beautiful to look at.

I find I am "used up" by the Exhibition. I don't say "there is nothing in it"--there's too much. I have only been twice; so many things bewildered me. I have a natural horror of sights, and the fusion of so many sights in one has not decreased it. I am not sure that I have seen anything but the fountain and perhaps the Amazon. It is a dreadful thing to be obliged to be false, but when anyone says, "Have you seen ----?" I say, "Yes," because if I don't, I know he'll explain it, and I can't bear that. ---- took all the school one day. The school was composed of a hundred "infants," who got among the horses' legs in crossing to the main entrance from the Kensington Gate, and came reeling out from between the wheels of coaches undisturbed in mind. They were clinging to horses, I am told, all over the park.

When they were collected and added up by the frantic monitors, they were all right. They were then regaled with cake, etc., and went tottering and staring all over the place; the greater part wetting their forefingers and drawing a wavy pattern on every accessible object. One infant strayed. He was not missed. Ninety and nine were taken home, supposed to be the whole collection, but this particular infant went to Hammersmith. He was found by the police at night, going round and round the turnpike, which he still supposed to be a part of the Exhibition. He had the same opinion of the police, also of Hammersmith workhouse, where he passed the night. When his mother came for him in the morning, he asked when it would be over? It was a great Exhibition, he said, but he thought it long.

As I begin to have a foreboding that you will think the same of this act of vengeance of mine, this present letter, I shall make an end of it, with my heartiest and most loving remembrances to Watson. I should have liked him of all things to have been in the Eton expedition, tell him, and to have heard a song (by-the-bye, I have forgotten that) sung in the thunderstorm, solos by Charley, chorus by the friends, describing the career of a booby who was plucked at college, every verse ending:

> I don't care a fig what the people may think,
> But what WILL the governor say!

which was shouted with a deferential jollity towards myself, as a governor who had that day done a creditable action, and proved himself worthy of all confidence.

With love to the boys and girls,
Ever, dear Mrs. Watson,
Most sincerely yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone.]

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"HOUSEHOLD WORDS," _Sunday, July 20th, 1851._

MY DEAR STONE,

I have been considering the great house question since you kindly called yesterday evening, and come to the conclusion that I had better not let it go. I am convinced it is the prudent thing for me to do, and that I am very unlikely to find the same comforts for the rising generation elsewhere, for the same money. Therefore, as Robins no doubt understands that you would come to me yesterday--passing his life as he does amidst every possible phase of such negotiations--I think it hardly worth while to wait for the receipt of his coming letter. If you will take the trouble to call on him in the morning, and offer the £1,450, I shall be very much obliged to you. If you will receive from me full power to conclude the purchase (subject of course to my solicitor's approval of the lease), pray do. I give you _carte blanche_ to £1,500, but I think the £1,450 ought to win the day.

I don't make any apologies for thrusting this honour upon you, knowing what a thorough-going old pump you are. Lemon and his wife are coming here, after the rehearsal, to a gipsy sort of cold dinner. Time, half-past three. Viands, pickled salmon and cold pigeon-pie. Occupation afterwards, lying on the carpet as a preparation for histrionic strength. Will you come with us from the Hanover Square Rooms?

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. Charles Knight.]

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _Sunday, July 27th, 1851._

MY DEAR KNIGHT,

A most excellent Shadow![13] I have sent it up to the printer, and Wills is to send you a proof. Will you look carefully at all the earlier part, where the use of the past tense instead of the present a little hurts the picturesque effect? I understand each phase of the thing to be _always a thing present before the mind's eye_--a shadow passing before it. Whatever is done, must be _doing_. Is it not so? For example, if I did the Shadow of Robinson Crusoe, I should not say he _was_ a boy at Hull, when his father lectured him about going to sea, and so forth; but he _is_ a boy at Hull. There he is, in that particular Shadow, eternally a boy at Hull; his life to me is a series of shadows, but there is no "was" in the case. If I choose to go to his manhood, I can. These shadows don't change as realities do. No phase of his existence passes away, if I choose to bring it to this unsubstantial and delightful life, the only death of which, to me, is _my_ death, and thus he is immortal to unnumbered thousands. If I am right, will you look at the proof through the first third or half of the papers, and see whether the Factor comes before us in that way? If not, it is merely the alteration of the verb here and there that is requisite.

You say you are coming down to look for a place next week. Now, Jerrold says he is coming on Thursday, by the cheap express at half-past twelve, to return with me for the play early on Monday morning. Can't you make that holiday too? I have promised him our only spare bed, but we'll find you a bed hard by, and shall be delighted "to eat and drink you," as an American once wrote to me. We will make expeditions to Herne Bay, Canterbury, where not? and drink deep draughts of fresh air. Come! They are beginning to cut the corn. You will never see the country so pretty. If you stay in town these days, you'll do nothing. I feel convinced you'll not buy the "Memoirs of a Man of Quality." Say you'll come!

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone.]

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BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _Saturday, August 23rd, 1851._

MY DEAR STONE,

A "dim vision" occurs to me, arising out of your note; also presents itself to the brains of my other half.

Supposing you should find, on looking onward, a possibility of your being houseless at Michaelmas, what do you say to using Devonshire Terrace as a temporary encampment? It will not be in its usual order, but we would take care that there should be as much useful furniture of all sorts there, as to render it unnecessary for you to move a stick. If you should think this a convenience, then I should propose to you to pile your furniture in the middle of the rooms at Tavistock House, and go out to Devonshire Terrace two or three weeks _before_ Michaelmas, to enable my workmen to commence their operations. This might be to our mutual convenience, and therefore I suggest it. Certainly the sooner I can begin on Tavistock House the better. And possibly your going into Devonshire Terrace might relieve you from a difficulty that would otherwise be perplexing.

I make this suggestion (I need not say to _you_) solely on the chance of its being useful to both of us. If it were merely convenient to me, you know I shouldn't dream of it. Such an arrangement, while it would cost you nothing, would perhaps enable you to get your new house into order comfortably, and do exactly the same thing for me.

Ever affectionately.

P.S.--I anticipated your suggestion some weeks ago, when I found I couldn't build a stable. I said I ought to have permission to take the piece of ground into my garden, which was conceded. Loaden writes me this morning that he thinks he can get permission to build a stable one storey high, without a chimney. I reply that on the whole I would rather enlarge the garden than build a stable with those restrictions.

[Sidenote: Mr. Henry Austin.]

BROADSTAIRS, _Sunday, September 7th, 1851._

MY DEAR HENRY,

I am in that state of mind which you may (once) have seen described in the newspapers as "bordering on distraction;" the house given up to me, the fine weather going on (soon to break, I daresay), the painting season oozing away, my new book waiting to be born, and

NO WORKMEN ON THE PREMISES,

along of my not hearing from you!! I have torn all my hair off, and constantly beat my unoffending family. Wild notions have occurred to me of sending in my own plumber to do the drains. Then I remember that you have probably written to prepare _your_ man, and restrain my audacious hand. Then Stone presents himself, with a most exasperatingly mysterious visage, and says that a rat has appeared in the kitchen, and it's his opinion (Stone's, not the rat's) that the drains want "compo-ing;" for the use of which explicit language I could fell him without remorse. In my horrible desire to "compo" everything, the very postman becomes my enemy because he brings no letter from you; and, in short, I don't see what's to become of me unless I hear from you to-morrow, which I have not the least expectation of doing.

Going over the house again, I have materially altered the plans--abandoned conservatory and front balcony--decided to make Stone's painting-room the drawing-room (it is nearly six inches higher than the room below), to carry the entrance passage right through the house to a

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back door leading to the garden, and to reduce the once intended drawing-room--now school-room--to a manageable size, making a door of communication between the new drawing-room and the study. Curtains and carpets, on a scale of awful splendour and magnitude, are already in preparation, and still--still--

NO WORKMEN ON THE PREMISES.

To pursue this theme is madness. Where are you? When are you coming home? Where is the man who is to do the work? Does he know that an army of artificers must be turned in at once, and the whole thing finished out of hand? O rescue me from my present condition. Come up to the scratch, I entreat and implore you!

I send this to Lætitia to forward,

Being, as you well know why,
Completely floored by N. W., I
Sleep.

I hope you may be able to read this. My state of mind does not admit of coherence.

Ever affectionately.

P.S.--NO WORKMEN ON THE PREMISES!

Ha! ha! ha! (I am laughing demoniacally.)

[Sidenote: Mr. Henry Austin.]

BROADSTAIRS, _Sunday, September 21st, 1851._

MY DEAR HENRY,

It is quite clear we could do nothing else with the drains than what you have done. Will it be at all a heavy item in the estimate?

If there be the _least_ chance of a necessity for the pillar, let us have it. Let us dance in peace, whatever we do, and only go into the kitchen by the staircase.

Have they cut the door between the drawing-room and the study yet? The foreman will let Shoolbred know when the feat is accomplished.

O! and did you tell him of another brass ventilator in the dining-room, opening into the dining-room flue?

I don't think I shall come to town until you want to show the progress, whenever that may be. I shall look forward to another dinner, and I think we must encourage the Oriental, for the goodness of its wine.

I am getting a complete set of a certain distinguished author's works prepared for a certain distinguished architect, which I hope he will accept, as a slight, though very inadequate, etc. etc.; affectionate, etc.; so heartily and kindly taking so much interest, etc. etc.

Love to Lætitia.
Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. Henry Austin.]

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _October 7th, 1851._

MY DEAR HENRY,

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O! O! O! D---- the Pantechnicon. O!

I will be at Tavistock House at twelve on Saturday, and then will wait for you until I see you. If we return together--as I hope we shall--our express will start at half-past four, and we ought to dine (somewhere about Temple Bar) at three.

The infamous ---- says the stoves shall be fixed to-morrow.

O! if this were to last long; the distraction of the new book, the whirling of the story through one's mind, escorted by workmen, the imbecility, the wild necessity of beginning to write, the not being able to do so, the, O! I should go---- O!

Ever affectionately.

P.S.--None. I have torn it off.

[Sidenote: Miss Mary Boyle.]

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, _October 10th, 1851._

ON THE DEATH OF HER MOTHER.

MY DEAR MISS BOYLE,

Your remembrance at such a time--not thrown away upon me, trust me--is a sufficient assurance that you know how truly I feel towards you, and with what an earnest sympathy I must think of you now.

God be with you! There is indeed nothing terrible in such a death, nothing that we would undo, nothing that we may remember otherwise than with deeply thankful, though with softened hearts.

Kate sends you her affectionate love. I enclose a note from Georgina. Pray give my kindest remembrances to your brother Cavendish, and believe me now and ever,

Faithfully your Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. Eeles.]

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS" OFFICE,
Wednesday Evening, Oct. 22nd, 1851.

DEAR MR. EELES,

I send you the list I have made for the book-backs. I should like the "History of a Short Chancery Suit" to come at the bottom of one recess, and the "Catalogue of Statues of the Duke of Wellington" at the bottom of the other. If you should want more titles, and will let me know how many, I will send them to you.

Faithfully yours.

LIST OF IMITATION BOOK-BACKS.

Tavistock House, 1851.

Five Minutes in China. 3 vols.
Forty Winks at the Pyramids. 2 vols.
Abernethy on the Constitution. 2 vols.
Mr. Green's Overland Mail. 2 vols.
Captain Cook's Life of Savage. 2 vols.
A Carpenter's Bench of Bishops. 2 vols.
Toot's Universal Letter-Writer. 2 vols.

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Orson's Art of Etiquette.
Downeaster's Complete Calculator.
History of the Middling Ages. 6 vols.
Jonah's Account of the Whale.
Captain Parry's Virtues of Cold Tar.
Kant's Ancient Humbugs. 10 vols.
Bowwowdom. A Poem.
The Quarrelly Review. 4 vols.
The Gunpowder Magazine. 4 vols.
Steele. By the Author of "Ion."
The Art of Cutting the Teeth.
Matthew's Nursery Songs. 2 vols.
Paxton's Bloomers. 5 vols.
On the Use of Mercury by the Ancient Poets.
Drowsy's Recollections of Nothing. 3 vols.
Heavyside's Conversations with Nobody. 3 vols.
Commonplace Book of the Oldest Inhabitant. 2 vols.
Growler's Gruffiology, with Appendix. 4 vols.
The Books of Moses and Sons. 2 vols.
Burke (of Edinburgh) on the Sublime and Beautiful. 2 vols.
Teazer's Commentaries.
King Henry the Eighth's Evidences of Christianity. 5 vols.
Miss Biffin on Deportment.
Morrison's Pills Progress. 2 vols.
Lady Godiva on the Horse.
Munchausen's Modern Miracles. 4 vols.
Richardson's Show of Dramatic Literature. 12 vols.
Hansard's Guide to Refreshing Sleep. As many volumes as possible.

[Sidenote: Mr. Henry Austin.]

OFFICE OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS,"
Saturday, Oct. 25th, 1851.

MY DEAR HENRY,

On the day of our departure, I thought we were going--backward--at a most triumphant pace; but yesterday we rather recovered. The painters still mislaid their brushes every five minutes, and chiefly whistled in the intervals; and the carpenters (especially the Pantechnicon) continued to look sideways with one eye down pieces of wood, as if they were absorbed in the contemplation of the perspective of the Thames Tunnel, and had entirely relinquished the vanities of this transitory world; but still there was an improvement, and it is confirmed to-day. White lime is to be seen in kitchens, the bath-room is gradually resolving itself from an abstract idea into a fact--youthful, extremely youthful, but a fact. The drawing-room encourages no hope whatever, nor the study. Staircase painted. Irish labourers howling in the school-room, but I don't know why. I see nothing. Gardener vigorously lopping the trees, and really letting in the light and air. Foreman sweet-tempered but uneasy. Inimitable hovering gloomily through the premises all day, with an idea that a little more work is done when he flits, bat-like, through the rooms, than when there is no one looking on. Catherine all over paint. Mister McCann, encountering Inimitable in doorways, fades obsequiously into areas, and there encounters him again, and swoons with confusion. Several reams of blank paper constantly spread on the drawing-room walls, and sliced off again, which looks like insanity. Two men still clinking at the new stair-rails. I think they must be learning a tune; I cannot make out any other object in their proceedings.

Since writing the above, I have been up there again, and found the young paper-hanger putting on his slippers, and looking hard at the walls of the servants' room at the top of the house, as if he meant to paper it one of these days. May Heaven prosper his intentions!

When do you come back? I hope soon.

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Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

CLIFTON, _November 13th, 1851._

MY DEAREST KATE,

I have just received your second letter, and am quite delighted to find that all is going on so vigorously, and that you are in such a methodical, business-like, and energetic state. I shall come home by the express on Saturday morning, and shall hope to be at home between eleven and twelve.

We had a noble night last night. The room (which is the largest but one in England) was crammed in every part. The effect of from thirteen to fourteen hundred people, all well dressed, and all seated in one unbroken chamber, except that the floor rose high towards the end of the hall, was most splendid, and we never played to a better audience. The enthusiasm was prodigious; the place delightful for speaking in; no end of gas; another hall for a dressing-room; an immense stage; and every possible convenience. We were all thoroughly pleased, I think, with the whole thing, and it was a very great and striking success. To-morrow-night, having the new Hardman, I am going to try the play with all kinds of cuts, taking out, among other things, some half-dozen printed pages of "Wills's Coffee House."

We are very pleasant and cheerful. They are all going to Matthew Davenport Hill's to lunch this morning, and to see some woods about six or seven miles off. I prefer being quiet, and shall go out at my leisure and call on Elliot. We are very well lodged and boarded, and, living high up on the Downs, are quite out of the filth of Bristol.

I saw old Landor at Bath, who has bronchitis. When he was last in town, "Kenyon drove him about, by God, half the morning, under a most damnable pretence of taking him to where Walter was at school, and they never found the confounded house!" He had in his pocket on that occasion a souvenir for Walter in the form of a Union shirt-pin, which is now in my possession, and shall be duly brought home.

I am tired enough, and shall be glad when to-morrow night is over. We expect a very good house. Forster came up to town after the performance last night, and promised to report to you that all was well. Jerrold is in extraordinary force. I don't think I ever knew him so humorous. And this is all my news, which is quite enough. I am continually thinking of the house in the midst of all the bustle, but I trust it with such confidence to you that I am quite at my ease about it.

With best love to Georgy and the girls,
Ever, my dearest Kate, most affectionately yours.

P.S.--I forgot to say that Topham has suddenly come out as a juggler, and swallows candles, and does wonderful things with the poker very well indeed, but with a bashfulness and embarrassment extraordinarily ludicrous.

[Sidenote: Mr. Eeles.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, TAVISTOCK SQUARE, _Nov. 17th, 1851._

DEAR MR. EELES,

I must thank you for the admirable manner in which you have done the book-backs in my room. I feel personally obliged to you, I assure you, for the interest you have taken in my whim, and the promptitude with

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which you have completely carried it out.

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Gaskell.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Thursday Afternoon, Dec. 5th, 1851._

MY DEAR MRS. GASKELL,

I write in great haste to tell you that Mr. Wills, in the utmost consternation, has brought me your letter, just received (four o'clock), and that it is _too late_ to recall your tale. I was so delighted with it that I put it first in the number (not hearing of any objection to my proposed alteration by return of post), and the number is now made up and in the printer's hands. I cannot possibly take the tale out--it has departed from me.

I am truly concerned for this, but I hope you will not blame me for what I have done in perfect good faith. Any recollection of me from your pen cannot (as I think you know) be otherwise than truly gratifying to me; but with my name on every page of "Household Words," there would be--or at least I should feel--an impropriety in so mentioning myself. I was particular, in changing the author, to make it "Hood's _Poems_" in the most important place--I mean where the captain is killed--and I hope and trust that the substitution will not be any serious drawback to the paper in any eyes but yours. I would do anything rather than cause you a minute's vexation arising out of what has given me so much pleasure, and I sincerely beseech you to think better of it, and not to fancy that any shade has been thrown on your charming writing, by

The unfortunate but innocent.

P.S.--I write at a gallop, not to lose another post.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Gaskell.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Sunday, December 21st, 1851._

MY DEAR MRS. GASKELL,

If you were not the most suspicious of women, always looking for soft sawder in the purest metal of praise, I should call your paper delightful, and touched in the tenderest and most delicate manner. Being what you are, I confine myself to the observation that I have called it "A Love Affair at Cranford," and sent it off to the printer.

Faithfully yours ever.

[Sidenote: Mr. Peter Cunningham.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _December 26th, 1851._

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,

About the three papers.

1st. With Mr. Plowman of Oxford, Wills will communicate.

2nd. (Now returned.) I have seen, in nearly the same form, before. The list of names is overwhelming.

3rd. I am not at all earnest in the Savage matter; firstly, because I think so tremendous a vagabond never could have obtained an honest living in any station of existence or at any period of time; and

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secondly, because I think it of the highest importance that such an association as our Guild should not appear to resent upon society the faults of individuals who were flagrantly impracticable.

At its best, it is liable to that suspicion, as all such efforts have been on the part of many jealous persons, to whom it _must_ look for aid. And any stop that in the least encourages it is one of a fatal kind.

I do _not_ think myself, but this is merely an individual opinion, that Savage _was_ a man of genius, or that anything of his writing would have attracted much notice but for the bastard's reference to his mother. For these reasons combined, I should not be inclined to add my subscription of two guineas to yours, unless the inscription were altered as I have altered it in pencil. But in that case I should be very glad to respond to your suggestion, and to snuff out all my smaller disinclination.

Faithfully yours ever.

FOOTNOTE:

[13] Mr. Charles Knight was writing a series of papers in "Household Words," called "Shadows."

1852.

NARRATIVE.

In the summer of this year, Charles Dickens hired a house at Dover for three months, whither he went with his family. At the end of this time he sent his children and servants back to Tavistock House, and crossed over to Boulogne, with his wife and sister-in-law, to inspect that town and its neighbourhood, with a view of making it his summer quarters in the following year. Many amateur performances were given in the provinces in aid of the fund for the Guild of Literature and Art; Charles Dickens, as usual, taking the whole management on his own shoulders.

In March, the first number of "Bleak House" appeared, and he was at work on this book all through the year, as well as being constantly occupied with his editorship of "Household Words."

We have, in the letters for this year, Charles Dickens's first to Lord John Russell (afterwards the Earl Russell); a friend whom he held in the highest estimation, and to whom he was always grateful for many personal kindnesses. We have also his first letter to Mr. Wilkie Collins, with whom he became most intimately associated in literary work. The affectionate friendship he had for him, the high value in which he held him as a brother-artist, are constantly expressed in Charles Dickens's own letters to Mr. Collins, and in his letters to other friends.

"Those gallant men" (in the letter to Mr. J. Crofton Croker) had reference to an antiquarian club, called the Noviomagians, who were about to give a dinner in honour of Sir Edward Belcher and Captain Kellett, the officers in command of the Arctic Exploring Expedition, to which Charles Dickens was also invited. Mr. Crofton Croker was the president of this club, and to denote his office it was customary to put on a cocked hat after dinner.

The "lost character" he writes of in a letter to Mrs. Watson, refers to two different decipherings of his handwriting; this sort of study being in fashion then, and he and his friends at Rockingham Castle deriving much amusement from it.

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The letter dated July 9th was in answer to an anonymous correspondent, who wrote to him as follows: "I venture to trespass on your attention with one serious query, touching a sentence in the last number of 'Bleak House.' Do the supporters of Christian missions to the heathen really deserve the attack that is conveyed in the sentence about Jo' seated in his anguish on the door-step of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts? The allusion is severe, but is it just? Are such boys as Jo' neglected? What are ragged schools, town missions, and many of those societies I regret to see sneered at in the last number of 'Household Words'?"

The "Duke of Middlesex," in the letter we have here to Mr. Charles Knight, was the name of the character played by Mr. F. Stone, in Sir E. B. Lytton's comedy of "Not so Bad as we Seem."

Our last letter in this year, to Mr. G. Linnæus Banks, was in acknowledgment of one from him on the subject of a proposed public dinner to Charles Dickens, to be given by the people of Birmingham, when they were also to present him with a salver and a diamond ring. The dinner was given in the following year, and the ring and salver (the latter an artistic specimen of Birmingham ware) were duly presented by Mr. Banks, who acted as honorary secretary, in the names of the subscribers, at the rooms of the Birmingham Fine Arts Association. Mr. Banks, and the artist, Mr. J. C. Walker, were the originators of this demonstration.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _January 31st, 1852._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

If the "taxes on knowledge" mean the stamp duty, the paper duty, and the advertisement duty, they seem to me to be unnecessarily confounded, and unfairly too.

I have already declined to sign a petition for the removal of the stamp duty on newspapers. I think the reduced duty is some protection to the public against the rash and hasty launching of blackguard newspapers. I think the newspapers are made extremely accessible to the poor man at present, and that he would not derive the least benefit from the abolition of the stamp. It is not at all clear to me, supposing he wants _The Times_ a penny cheaper, that he would get it a penny cheaper if the tax were taken off. If he supposes he would get in competition two or three new journals as good to choose from, he is mistaken; not knowing the immense resources and the gradually perfective machinery necessary to the production of such a journal. It appears to me to be a fair tax enough, very little in the way of individuals, not embarrassing to the public in its mode of being levied, and requiring some small consideration and pauses from the American kind of newspaper projectors. Further, a committee has reported in favour of the repeal, and the subject may be held to need no present launching.

The repeal of the paper duty would benefit the producers of periodicals immensely. It would make a very large difference to me, in the case of such a journal as "Household Words." But the gain to the public would be very small. It would not make the difference of enabling me, for example, to reduce the price of "Household Words," by its fractional effect upon a copy, or to increase the quantity of matter. I might, in putting the difference into my pocket, improve the quality of the paper a little, but not one man in a thousand would notice it. It _might_ (though I am not sure even of this) remove the difficulties in the way of a deserving periodical with a small sale. Charles Knight holds that it would. But the case, on the whole, appeared to me so slight, when I went to Downing Street with a deputation on the subject, that I said (in addressing the Chancellor of the Exchequer) I could not honestly maintain it for a moment as against the soap duty, or any other pressing

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on the mass of the poor.

The advertisement duty has this preposterous anomaly, that a footman in want of a place pays as much in the way of tax for the expression of his want, as Professor Holloway pays for the whole list of his miraculous cures.

But I think, at this time especially, there is so much to be considered in the necessity the country will be under of having money, and the necessity of justice it is always under, to consider the physical and moral wants of the poor man's home, as to justify a man in saying: "I must wait a little, all taxes are more or less objectionable, and so no doubt are these, but we must have some; and I have not made up my mind that all these things that are mixed up together _are_ taxes on knowledge in reality."

Kate and Georgy unite with me in kindest and heartiest love to dear Mrs. Macready. We are always with you in spirit, and always talking about you. I am obliged to conclude very hastily, being beset to-day with business engagements. Saw the lecture and was delighted; thought the idea admirable. Again, loves upon loves to dear Mrs. Macready and to Miss Macready also, and Kate and all the house. I saw ---- play (O Heaven!) "Macbeth," the other night, in three hours and fifty minutes, which is quick, I think.

Ever and always affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. J. Crofton Croker.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _March 6th, 1852._

MY DEAR SIR,

I have the greatest interest in those gallant men, and should have been delighted to dine in their company. I feel truly obliged to you for your kind remembrance on such an occasion.

But I am engaged to Lord Lansdowne on Wednesday, and can only drink to them in the spirit, which I have often done when they have been farther off.

I hope you will find occasion to put on your cocked hat, that they may see how terrific and imposing "a fore-and-after" can be made on shore.

Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _April 6th, 1852._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

My "lost character" was one of those awful documents occasionally to be met with, which WILL be everywhere. It glared upon me from every drawer I had, fell out of books, lurked under keys, hid in empty inkstands, got into portfolios, frightened me by inscrutably passing into locked despatch-boxes, and was not one character, but a thousand. This was when I didn't want it. I look for it this morning, and it is nowhere! Probably will never be beheld again.

But it was very unlike this one; and there is no doubt that when these ventures come out good, it is only by lucky chance and coincidence. She never mentioned my love of order before, and it is so remarkable (being almost a _dis_order), that she ought to have fainted with surprise when my handwriting was first revealed to her.

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I was very sorry to leave Rockingham the other day, and came away in quite a melancholy state. The Birmingham people were very active; and the Shrewsbury gentry quite transcendent. I hope we shall have a very successful and dazzling trip. It is delightful to me to think of your coming to Birmingham; and, by-the-bye, if you will tell me in the previous week what hotel accommodation you want, Mr. Wills will look to it with the greatest pleasure.

Your bookseller ought to be cashiered. I suppose "he" (as Rogers calls everybody's husband) went out hunting with the idea of diverting his mind from dwelling on its loss. Abortive effort!

Charley brings this with himself.
With kindest regards and remembrances,
Ever, dear Mrs. Watson, most faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Charles Knight.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _June 29th, 1852._

MY DEAR KNIGHT,

A thousand thanks for the Shadow, which, is charming. May you often go (out of town) and do likewise!

I dined with Charles Kemble, yesterday, to meet Emil Devrient, the German actor. He said (Devrient is my antecedent) that Ophelia _spoke_ the snatches of ballads in their German version of "Hamlet," because they didn't know the airs. Tom Taylor said that you had published the airs in your "Shakespeare." I said that if it were so, I knew you would be happy to place them at the German's service. If you have got them and will send them to me, I will write to Devrient (who knows no English) a French explanation and reminder of the circumstance, and will tell him that you responded like a man and a--I was going to say publisher, but you are nothing of the sort, except as Tonson. Then indeed you are every inch a pub.!

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: The Lord John Russell.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Wednesday, June 30th, 1852._

MY DEAR LORD,

I am most truly obliged to you for your kind note, and for your so generously thinking of me in the midst of your many occupations. I do assure you that your ever ready consideration had already attached me to you in the warmest manner, and made me very much your debtor. I thank you unaffectedly and very earnestly, and am proud to be held in your remembrance.

Believe me always, yours faithfully and obliged.

[Sidenote: Anonymous Correspondent.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, TAVISTOCK SQUARE, _July 9th, 1852._

SIR,

I have received your letter of yesterday's date, and shall content myself with a brief reply.

There was a long time during which benevolent societies were spending immense sums on missions abroad, when there was no such thing as a

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ragged school in England, or any kind of associated endeavour to penetrate to those horrible domestic depths in which such schools are now to be found, and where they were, to my most certain knowledge, neither placed nor discovered by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

If you think the balance between the home mission and the foreign mission justly held in the present time, I do not. I abstain from drawing the strange comparison that might be drawn between the sums even now expended in endeavours to remove the darkest ignorance and degradation from our very doors, because I have some respect for mistakes that may be founded in a sincere wish to do good. But I present a general suggestion of the still-existing anomaly (in such a paragraph as that which offends you), in the hope of inducing some people to reflect on this matter, and to adjust the balance more correctly. I am decidedly of opinion that the two works, the home and the foreign, are _not_ conducted with an equal hand, and that the home claim is by far the stronger and the more pressing of the two.

Indeed, I have very grave doubts whether a great commercial country, holding communication with all parts of the world, can better Christianise the benighted portions of it than by the bestowal of its wealth and energy on the making of good Christians at home, and on the utter removal of neglected and untaught childhood from its streets, before it wanders elsewhere. For, if it steadily persist in this work, working downward to the lowest, the travellers of all grades whom it sends abroad will be good, exemplary, practical missionaries, instead of undoers of what the best professed missionaries can do.

These are my opinions, founded, I believe, on some knowledge of facts and some observation. If I could be scared out of them, let me add in all good humour, by such easily-impressed words as "antichristian" or "irreligious," I should think that I deserved them in their real signification.

I have referred in vain to page 312 of "Household Words" for the sneer to which you call my attention. Nor have I, I assure you, the least idea where else it is to be found.

I am, Sir, your faithful Servant.

[Sidenote: Miss Mary Boyle.]

10, CAMDEN CRESCENT, DOVER, _July 22nd, 1852._

MY DEAR MARY,

This is indeed a noble letter. The description of the family is quite amazing. I _must_ return it myself to say that I HAVE appreciated it.

I am going to do "Used Up" at Manchester on the 2nd of September. O, think of that! With another Mary!!! How can I ever say, "_Dear_ Joe, if you like!" The voice may fully frame the falsehood, but the heart--the heart, Mr. Wurzel--will have no part in it.

My dear Mary, you do scant justice to Dover. It is not quite a place to my taste, being too bandy (I mean musical, no reference to its legs), and infinitely too genteel. But the sea is very fine, and the walks are quite remarkable. There are two ways of going to Folkestone, both lovely and striking in the highest degree; and there are heights, and downs, and country roads, and I don't know what, everywhere.

To let you into a secret, I am not quite sure that I ever did like, or ever shall like, anything quite so well as "Copperfield." But I foresee, I think, some very good things in "Bleak House." I shouldn't wonder if they were the identical things that D'Israeli sees looming in the distance. I behold them in the months ahead and weep.

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Watson seemed, when I saw him last, to be holding on as by a sheet-anchor to theatricals at Christmas. Then, O rapture! but be still, my fluttering heart.

This is one of what I call my wandering days before I fall to work. I seem to be always looking at such times for something I have not found in life, but may possibly come to a few thousands of years hence, in some other part of some other system. God knows. At all events I won't put your pastoral little pipe out of tune by talking about it. I'll go and look for it on the Canterbury road among the hop-gardens and orchards.

Ever faithfully your Friend,
JOE.

[Sidenote: Mr. Charles Knight.]

10, CAMDEN CRESCENT, DOVER, _Sunday, Aug. 1st, 1852._

MY DEAR KNIGHT,

I don't see why you should go to the Ship, and I won't stand it. The state apartment will be occupied by the Duke of Middlesex (whom I think you know), but we can easily get a bed for you hard by. Therefore you will please to drive here next Saturday evening. Our regular dinner hour is half-past five. If you are later, you will find something ready for you.

If you go on in that way about your part, I shall think you want to play Mr. Gabblewig. Your rôle, though a small one on the stage, is a large one off it; and no man is more important to the Guild, both on and off.

My dear friend Watson! Dead after an illness of four days. He dined with us this day three weeks. I loved him as my heart, and cannot think of him without tears.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. Mark Lemon.]

DOVER, _August 5th, 1852._

MY DEAR MARK,

Poor dear Watson was dead when the paragraph in the paper appeared. He was buried in his own church yesterday. Last Sunday three weeks (the day before he went abroad) he dined with us, and was quite well and happy. She has come home, is at Rockingham with the children, and does not weakly desert his grave, but sets up her rest by it from the first. He had been wandering in his mind a little before his death, but recovered consciousness, and fell asleep (she says) quite gently and peacefully in her arms.

I loved him very much, and God knows he deserved it.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: The Earl of Carlisle.]

10, CAMDEN CRESCENT, DOVER, _Thursday, Aug. 5th, 1852._

MY DEAR LORD CARLISLE,

'Peared to me (as Uncle Tom would say) until within these last few days,

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that I should be able to write to you, joyfully accepting your Saturday's invitation after Newcastle, in behalf of all whom it concerned. But the Sunderland people rushed into the field to propose our acting there on that Saturday, the only possible night. And as it is the concluding Guild expedition, and the Guild has a paramount claim on us, I have been obliged to knock my own inclinations on the head, cut the throat of my own wishes, and bind the Company hand and foot to the Sunderland lieges. I don't mean to tell them now of your invitation until we shall have got out of that country. There might be rebellion. We are staying here for the autumn.

Is there any hope of your repeating your visit to these coasts?

Ever faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

10, CAMDEN CRESCENT, DOVER, _August 5th, 1852._

ON THE DEATH OF MR. WATSON.

MY DEAR, DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I cannot bear to be silent longer, though I know full well--no one better I think--how your love for him, and your trust in God, and your love for your children will have come to the help of such a nature as yours, and whispered better things than any friendship can, however faithful and affectionate.

We held him so close in our hearts--all of us here--and have been so happy with him, and so used to say how good he was, and what a gentle, generous, noble spirit he had, and how he shone out among commoner men as something so real and genuine, and full of every kind of worthiness, that it has often brought the tears into my eyes to talk of him; we have been so accustomed to do this when we looked forward to years of unchanged intercourse, that now, when everything but truth goes down into the dust, those recollections which make the sword so sharp pour balm into the wound. And if it be a consolation to us to know the virtues of his character, and the reasons that we had for loving him, O how much greater is your comfort who were so devoted to him, and were the happiness of his life!

We have thought of you every day and every hour; we think of you now in the dear old house, and know how right it is, for his dear children's sake, that you should have bravely set up your rest in the place consecrated by their father's memory, and within the same summer shadows that fall upon his grave. We try to look on, through a few years, and to see the children brightening it, and George a comfort and a pride and an honour to you; and although it _is_ hard to think of what we have lost, we know how something of it will be restored by your example and endeavours, and the blessing that will descend upon them. We know how the time will come when some reflection of that cordial, unaffected, most affectionate presence, which we can never forget, and never would forget if we could--such is God's great mercy--will shine out of your boy's eyes upon you, his best friend and his last consoler, and fill the void there is now.

May God, who has received into His rest through this affliction as good a man as ever I can know and love and mourn for on this earth, be good to you, dear friends, through these coming years! May all those compassionate and hopeful lessons of the great Teacher who shed divine tears for the dead bring their full comfort to you! I have no fear of that, my confidence is certainty.

I cannot write what I wish; I had so many things to say, I seem to have said none. It is so with the remembrances we send. I cannot put them into words.

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If you should ever set up a record in the little church, I would try to word it myself, and God knows out of the fulness of my heart, if you should think it well.

My dear Friend,
Yours, with the truest affection and sympathy.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

HÔTEL DES BAINS, BOULOGNE,
Tuesday Night, Oct. 5th, 1852.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. MACREADY.

MY DEAREST MACREADY,

I received your melancholy letter while we were staying at Dover, a few days after it was written; but I thought it best not to write to you until you were at home again, among your dear children.

Its tidings were not unexpected to us, had been anticipated in many conversations, often thought of under many circumstances; but the shock was scarcely lessened by this preparation. The many happy days we have passed together came crowding back; all the old cheerful times arose before us; and the remembrance of what we had loved so dearly and seen under so many aspects--all natural and delightful and affectionate and ever to be cherished--was, how pathetic and touching you know best!

But my dear, dear Macready, this is not the first time you have felt that the recollection of great love and happiness associated with the dead soothes while it wounds. And while I can imagine that the blank beside you may grow wider every day for many days to come, I _know_--I think--that from its depths such comfort will arise as only comes to great hearts like yours, when they can think upon their trials with a steady trust in God.

My dear friend, I have known her so well, have been so happy in her regard, have been so light-hearted with her, have interchanged so many tender remembrances of you with her when you were far away, and have seen her ever so simply and truly anxious to be worthy of you, that I cannot write as I would and as I know I ought. As I would press your hand in your distress, I let this note go from me. I understand your grief, I deeply feel the reason that there is for it, yet in that very feeling find a softening consolation that must spring up a hundred-thousandfold for you. May Heaven prosper it in your breast, and the spirits that have gone before, from the regions of mercy to which they have been called, smooth the path you have to tread alone! Children are left you. Your good sister (God bless her!) is by your side. You have devoted friends, and more reasons than most men to be self-reliant and stedfast. Something is gone that never in this world can be replaced, but much is left, and it is a part of her life, her death, her immortality.

Catherine and Georgina, who are with me here, send you their overflowing love and sympathy. We hope that in a little while, and for a little while at least, you will come among us, who have known the happiness of being in this bond with you, and will not exclude us from participation in your past and future.

Ever, my dearest Macready, with unchangeable affection,
Yours in all love and truth.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

HÔTEL DES BAINS, BOULOGNE, _Tuesday, Oct. 12th, 1852._

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MY DEAR WILLS,

H. W.

I have thought of the Christmas number, but not very successfully, because I have been (and still am) constantly occupied with "Bleak House." I purpose returning home either on Sunday or Monday, as my work permits, and we will, immediately thereafter, dine at the office and talk it over, so that you may get all the men to their work.

The fault of ----'s poem, besides its intrinsic meanness as a composition, is that it goes too glibly with the comfortable ideas (of which we have had a great deal too much in England since the Continental commotions) that a man is to sit down and make himself domestic and meek, no matter what is done to him. It wants a stronger appeal to rulers in general to let men do this, fairly, by governing them well. As it stands, it is at about the tract-mark ("Dairyman's Daughter," etc.) of political morality, and don't think that it is necessary to write _down_ to any part of our audience. I always hold that to be as great a mistake as can be made.

I wish you would mention to Thomas, that I think the paper on hops _extremely well done_. He has quite caught the idea we want, and caught it in the best way. In pursuing the bridge subject, I think it would be advisable to look up the _Thames police_. I have a misty notion of some capital papers coming out of it. Will you see to this branch of the tree among the other branches?

MYSELF.

To Chapman I will write. My impression is that I shall not subscribe to the Hood monument, as I am not at all favourable to such posthumous honours.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

HÔTEL DES BAINS, BOULOGNE,
Wednesday Night, Oct. 13th, 1852.

MY DEAR WILLS,

The number coming in after dinner, since my letter was written and posted, I have gone over it.

I am grievously depressed by it; it is so exceedingly bad. If you have anything else to put first, don't put ----'s paper first. (There is nothing better for a beginning in the number as it stands, but this is very bad.) It is a mistake to think of it as a first article. The article itself is in the main a mistake. Firstly, the subject requires the greatest discretion and nicety of touch. And secondly, it is all wrong and self-contradictory. Nobody can for a moment suppose that "sporting" amusements are the sports of the PEOPLE; the whole gist of the best part of the description is to show that they are the amusements of a peculiar and limited class. The greater part of them are at a miserable discount (horse-racing excepted, which has been already sufficiently done in H. W.), and there is no reason for running amuck at them at all. I have endeavoured to remove much of my objection (and I think have done so), but, both in purpose and in any general address, it is as wide of a first article as anything can well be. It would do best in the opening of the number.

About Sunday in Paris there is no kind of doubt. Take it out. Such a thing as that crucifixion, unless it were done in a masterly manner, we have no business to stagger families with. Besides, the name is a

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comprehensive one, and should include a quantity of fine matter. Lord bless me, what I could write under that head!

Strengthen the number, pray, by anything good you may have. It is a very dreary business as it stands.

The proofs want a thorough revision.

In haste, going to bed.

Ever faithfully.

P.S.--I want a name for Miss Martineau's paper.

TRIUMPHANT CARRIAGES (or TRIUMPHAL).
DUBLIN STOUTHEARTEDNESS.
PATIENCE AND PREJUDICE.

Take which you like best.

[Sidenote: Mr. John Watkins.]

MONDAY, _October 18th, 1852._

SIR,

On my return to town I find the letter awaiting me which you did me the favour to address to me, I believe--for it has no date--some days ago.

I have the greatest tenderness for the memory of Hood, as I had for himself. But I am not very favourable to posthumous memorials in the monument way, and I should exceedingly regret to see any such appeal as you contemplate made public, remembering another public appeal that was made and responded to after Hood's death. I think that I best discharge my duty to my deceased friend, and best consult the respect and love with which I remember him, by declining to join in any such public endeavours as that which you (in all generosity and singleness of purpose, I am sure) advance. I shall have a melancholy gratification in privately assisting to place a simple and plain record over the remains of a great writer that should be as modest as he was himself, but I regard any other monument in connection with his mortal resting-place as a mistake.

I am, Sir, your faithful Servant.

[Sidenote: Rev. James White.]

OFFICE OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS," _Tuesday, Oct. 19th, 1852._

MY DEAR WHITE,

We are now getting our Christmas extra number together, and I think you are the boy to do, if you will, one of the stories.

I propose to give the number some fireside name, and to make it consist entirely of short stories supposed to be told by a family sitting round the fire. _I don't care about their referring to Christmas at all_; nor do I design to connect them together, otherwise than by their names, as:

THE GRANDFATHER'S STORY.
THE FATHER'S STORY.
THE DAUGHTER'S STORY.
THE SCHOOLBOY'S STORY.
THE CHILD'S STORY.
THE GUEST'S STORY.
THE OLD NURSE'S STORY.

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The grandfather might very well be old enough to have lived in the days of the highwaymen. Do you feel disposed, from fact, fancy, or both, to do a good winter-hearth story of a highwayman? If you do, I embrace you (per post), and throw up a cap I have purchased for the purpose into mid-air.

Think of it and write me a line in reply. We are all well and blooming.

Are you never coming to town any more? Never going to drink port again, metropolitaneously, but _always_ with Fielden?

Love to Mrs. White and the children, if Lotty be not out of the list long ago.

Ever faithfully, my dear White.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

ATHENÆUM, _Monday, November 22nd, 1852._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

Having just now finished my work for the time being, I turn in here in the course of a rainy walk, to have the gratification of writing a few lines to you. If my occupations with this same right hand were less numerous, you would soon be tired of me, I should write to you so often.

You asked Catherine a question about "Bleak House." Its circulation is half as large again as "Copperfield"! I have just now come to the point I have been patiently working up to in the writing, and I hope it will suggest to you a pretty and affecting thing. In the matter of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," I partly though not entirely agree with Mr. James. No doubt a much lower art will serve for the handling of such a subject in fiction, than for a launch on the sea of imagination without such a powerful bark; but there are many points in the book very admirably done. There is a certain St. Clair, a New Orleans gentleman, who seems to me to be conceived with great power and originality. If he had not "a Grecian outline of face," which I began to be a little tired of in my earliest infancy, I should think him unexceptionable. He has a sister too, a maiden lady from New England, in whose person the besetting weaknesses and prejudices of the Abolitionists themselves, on the subject of the blacks, are set forth in the liveliest and truest colours and with the greatest boldness.

I have written for "Household Words" of this next publication-day an article on the State funeral,[14] showing why I consider it altogether a mistake, to be temperately but firmly objected to; which I daresay will make a good many of the admirers of such things highly indignant. It may have right and reason on its side, however, none the less.

Charley and I had a great talk at Dover about his going into the army, when I thought it right to set before him fairly and faithfully the objections to that career, no less than its advantages. The result was that he asked in a very manly way for time to consider. So I appointed to go down to Eton on a certain day at the beginning of this month, and resume the subject. We resumed it accordingly at the White Hart, at Windsor, and he came to the conclusion that he would rather be a merchant, and try to establish some good house of business, where he might find a path perhaps for his younger brothers, and stay at home, and make himself the head of that long, small procession. I was very much pleased with him indeed; he showed a fine sense and a fine feeling in the whole matter. We have arranged, therefore, that he shall leave Eton at Christmas, and go to Germany after the holidays, to become well acquainted with that language, now most essential in such a walk of life as he will probably tread.

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And I think this is the whole of my news. We are always talking of you at home. Mary Boyle dined with us a little while ago. You look out, I imagine, on a waste of water. When I came from Windsor, I thought I must have made a mistake and got into a boat (in the dark) instead of a railway-carriage. Catherine and Georgina send their kindest loves. I am ever, with the best and truest wishes of my heart, my dear Mrs. Watson,

Your most affectionate Friend.

[Sidenote: Rev. James White.]

OFFICE OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS," _Monday, Nov. 22nd, 1852._

MY DEAR WHITE,

First and foremost, there is no doubt whatever of your story suiting "Household Words." It is a very good story indeed, and would be serviceable at any time. I am not quite so clear of its suiting the Christmas number, for this reason. You know what the spirit of the Christmas number is. When I suggested the stories being about a highwayman, I got hold of that idea as being an adventurous one, including various kinds of wrong, expressing a state of society no longer existing among us, and pleasant to hear (therefore) from an old man. Now, your highwayman not being a real highwayman after all, the kind of suitable Christmas interest I meant to awaken in the story is not in it. Do you understand? For an ordinary number it is quite unobjectionable. If you should think of any other idea, narratable by an old man, which you think would strike the chord of the season; and if you should find time to work it out during the short remainder of this month, I should be greatly pleased to have it. In any case, this story goes straightway into type.

What tremendous weather it is! Our best loves to all at home. (I have just bought thirty bottles of the most stunning port on earth, which Ellis of the Star and Garter, Richmond, wrote to me of.)

I think you will find some good going in the next "Bleak House." I write shortly, having been working my head off.

Ever affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Gaskell.]

OFFICE OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS," _Wednesday, Dec. 1st, 1852._

MY DEAR MRS. GASKELL,

I send you the proof of "The Old Nurse's Story," with my proposed alteration. I shall be glad to know whether you approve of it. To assist you in your decision, I send you, also enclosed, the original ending. And I have made a line with ink across the last slip but one, where the alteration begins. Of course if you wish to enlarge, explain, or re-alter, you will do it. Do not keep the proof longer than you can help, as I want to get to press with all despatch.

I hope I address this letter correctly. I am far from sure. In haste.

Ever faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Thursday, December 9th, 1852._

MY DEAR WILLS,

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I am driven mad by dogs, who have taken it into their accursed heads to assemble every morning in the piece of ground opposite, and who have barked this morning _for five hours without intermission_; positively rendering it impossible for me to work, and so making what is really ridiculous quite serious to me. I wish, between this and dinner, you would send John to see if he can hire a gun, with a few caps, some powder, and a few charges of small shot. If you duly commission him with a card, he can easily do it. And if I get those implements up here to-night, I'll be the death of some of them to-morrow morning.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Rev. James White.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Thursday Evening, Dec. 9th, 1852._

MY DEAR WHITE,

I hear you are not going to poor Macready's. Now, don't you think it would do you good to come here instead? _I_ say it would, and I ought to know! We can give you everything but a bed (all ours are occupied in consequence of the boys being at home), and shall all be delighted to see you. Leave the bed to us, and we'll find one hard by. I say nothing of the last day of the old year, and the dancing out of that good old worthy that will take place here (for you might like to hear the bells at home); but after the twentieth, I shall be comparatively at leisure, and good for anything or nothing. Don't you consider it your duty to your family to come? _I_ do, and I again say that I ought to know.

Our best love to Mrs. White and Lotty--happily so much better, we rejoice to hear--and all.

So no more at present from
THE INIMITABLE B.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Gaskell.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Friday, Dec. 17th, 1852._

MY DEAR MRS. GASKELL,

I received your kind note yesterday morning with the truest gratification, for I _am_ the writer of "The Child's Story" as well as of "The Poor Relation's." I assure you, you have given me the liveliest and heartiest pleasure by what you say of it.

I don't claim for my ending of "The Nurse's Story" that it would have made it a bit better. All I can urge in its behalf is, that it is what I should have done myself. But there is no doubt of the story being admirable as it stands, and there _is_ some doubt (I think) whether Forster would have found anything wrong in it, if he had not known of my hammering over the proofs in making up the number, with all the three endings before me.

With kindest regards to Mr. Gaskell,
Ever faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. Wilkie Collins.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Monday, Dec. 20th, 1852._

MY DEAR COLLINS,

If I did not know that you are likely to have a forbearing remembrance

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of my occupation, I should be full of remorse for not having sooner thanked you for "Basil."

Not to play the sage or the critic (neither of which parts, I hope, is at all in my line), but to say what is the friendly truth, I may assure you that I have read the book with very great interest, and with a very thorough conviction that you have a call to this same art of fiction. I think the probabilities here and there require a little more respect than you are disposed to show them, and I have no doubt that the prefatory letter would have been better away, on the ground that a book (of all things) should speak for and explain itself. But the story contains admirable writing, and many clear evidences of a very delicate discrimination of character. It is delightful to find throughout that you have taken great pains with it besides, and have "gone at it" with a perfect knowledge of the jolter-headedness of the conceited idiots who suppose that volumes are to be tossed off like pancakes, and that any writing can be done without the utmost application, the greatest patience, and the steadiest energy of which the writer is capable.

For all these reasons, I have made "Basil's" acquaintance with great gratification, and entertain a high respect for him. And I hope that I shall become intimate with many worthy descendants of his, who are yet in the limbo of creatures waiting to be born.

Always faithfully yours.

P.S.--I am open to any proposal to go anywhere any day or days this week. Fresh air and change in any amount I am ready for. If I could only find an idle man (this is a general observation), he would find the warmest recognition in this direction.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Monday Evening, Dec. 20th, 1852._

MY DEAR STONE,

Every appearance of brightness! Shall I expect you to-morrow morning? If so, at what hour?

I think of taking train afterwards, and going down for a walk on Chatham lines. If you can spare the day for fresh air and an impromptu bit of fish and chop, I can recommend you one of the most delightful of men for a companion. O, he is indeed refreshing!!!

Ever affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

OFFICE OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS," _Christmas Eve, 1852._

MY DEAR WILLS,

I have gone carefully through the number--an awful one for the amount of correction required--and have made everything right. If my mind could have been materialised, and drawn along the tops of all the spikes on the outside of the Queen's Bench prison, it could not have been more agonised than by the ----, which, for imbecility, carelessness, slovenly composition, relatives without antecedents, universal chaos, and one absorbing whirlpool of jolter-headedness, beats anything in print and paper I have ever "gone at" in my life.

I shall come and see how you are to-morrow. Meantime everything is in perfect trim in these parts, and I have sent down to Stacey to come here and top up with a final interview before I go.

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Just after I had sent the messenger off to you, yesterday, concerning the toll-taker memoranda, the other idea came into my head, and in the most obliging manner came out of it.

Ever faithfully yours.

P.S.--Here is ---- perpetually flitting about Brydges Street, and hovering in the neighbourhood, with a veil of secrecy drawn down over his chin, so ludicrously transparent, that I can't help laughing while he looks at me.

[Sidenote: Mr. G. Linnæus Banks.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Sunday, Dec. 26th, 1852._

MY DEAR SIR,

I will not attempt to tell you how affected and gratified I am by the intelligence your kind letter conveys to me. Nothing would be more welcome to me than such a mark of confidence and approval from such a source, nothing more precious, or that I could set a higher worth upon.

I hasten to return the gauges, of which I have marked one as the size of the finger, from which this token will never more be absent as long as I live.

With feelings of the liveliest gratitude and cordiality towards the many friends who so honour me, and with many thanks to you for the genial earnestness with which you represent them,

I am, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours.

P.S.--Will you do me the favour to inform the dinner committee that a friend of mine, Mr. Clement, of Shrewsbury, is very anxious to purchase a ticket for the dinner, and that if they will be so good as to forward one for him to me I shall feel much obliged.

FOOTNOTE:

[14] The great Duke of Wellington's funeral.

1853.

NARRATIVE.

In this year, Charles Dickens was still writing "Bleak House," and went to Brighton for a short time in the spring. In May he had an attack of illness, a return of an old trouble of an inflammatory pain in the side, which was short but very severe while it lasted. Immediately on his recovery, early in June, a departure from London for the summer was resolved upon. He had decided upon trying Boulogne this year for his holiday sojourn, and as soon as he was strong enough to travel, he, his wife, and sister-in-law went there in advance of the family, taking up their quarters at the Hôtel des Bains, to find a house, which was speedily done. The pretty little Villa des Moulineaux, and its excellent landlord, at once took his fancy, and in that house, and in another on the same ground, also belonging to M. Beaucourt, he passed three very happy summers. And he became as much attached to "Our French Watering Place" as to "Our English" one. Having written a sketch of Broadstairs under that name in "Household Words," he did the same of Boulogne under the former title.

During the summer, besides his other work, he was employed in dictating

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"The Child's History of England," which he published in "Household Words," and which was the only book he ever wrote by dictation. But, as at Broadstairs and other seaside homes, he had always plenty of relaxation and enjoyment in the visits of his friends. In September he finished "Bleak House," and in October he started with Mr. Wilkie Collins and Mr. Egg from Boulogne, on an excursion through parts of Switzerland and Italy; his wife and family going home at the same time, and he himself returning to Tavistock House early in December. His eldest son, Charles, had left Eton some time before this, and had gone for the completion of his education to Leipsic. He was to leave Germany at the end of the year, therefore it was arranged that he should meet the travellers in Paris on their homeward journey, and they all returned together.

Just before Christmas he went to Birmingham in fulfilment of an offer which he had made at the dinner given to him at Birmingham on the 6th of January (of which he writes to Mr. Macready in the first letter that follows here), to give two readings from his own books for the benefit of the New Midland Institute. They were his first public readings. He read "The Christmas Carol" on one evening, and "The Cricket on the Hearth" on the next, before enormous audiences. The success was so great, and the sum of money realised for the institute so large, that he consented to give a second reading of "The Christmas Carol," remaining another night in Birmingham for the purpose, on the condition that seats were reserved, at prices within their means, for the working men. And to his great satisfaction they formed a large proportion, and were among the most enthusiastic and appreciative of his audience. He was accompanied by his wife and sister-in-law, and on this occasion a breakfast was given to him after his last reading, at which a silver flower-basket, duly inscribed, was very gracefully presented to _Mrs._ Charles Dickens.

The letters in this year require little explanation. Those to his wife and sister-in-law and Mr. Wills give a little history of his Italian journey. At Naples he found his excellent friend Sir James Emerson Tennent, with his wife and daughter, with whom he joined company in the ascent of Vesuvius.

The two letters to M. Regnier, the distinguished actor of the Théâtre Français--with whom Charles Dickens had formed a sincere friendship during his first residence in Paris--on the subject of a projected benefit to Miss Kelly, need no further explanation.

Mr. John Delane, editor of _The Times_, and always a highly-esteemed friend of Charles Dickens, had given him an introduction to a school at Boulogne, kept by two English gentlemen, one a clergyman and the other a former Eton master, the Rev. W. Bewsher and Mr. Gibson. He had at various times four boys at this school, and very frequently afterwards he expressed his gratitude to Mr. Delane for having given him the introduction, which turned out so satisfactory in every respect.

The letter of grateful acknowledgment from Mr. Poole and Charles Dickens to Lord Russell was for the pension for which the old dramatic author was indebted to that nobleman, and which enabled him to live comfortably until the end of his life.

A note to Mr. Marcus Stone was sent with a copy of "The Child's History of England." The sketch referred to was one of "Jo'," in "Bleak House," which showed great feeling and artistic promise, since fully fulfilled by the young painter, but very remarkable in a boy so young as he was at that time. The letter to Mr. Stanfield, in seafaring language, is a specimen of a playful way in which he frequently addressed that dear friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

"A curiosity from _him_. No date. No signature."--W. H. H.

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MY DEAR WILLS,

I have not a shadow of a doubt about Miss Martineau's story. It is certain to tell. I think it very effectively, admirably done; a fine plain purpose in it; quite a singular novelty. For the last story in the Christmas number it will be great. I couldn't wish for a better.

Mrs. Gaskell's ghost story I have got this morning; have not yet read. It is long.

[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield.]

H.M.S. _Tavistock, January 2nd, 1853._

Yoho, old salt! Neptun' ahoy! You don't forget, messmet, as you was to meet Dick Sparkler and Mark Porpuss on the fok'sle of the good ship _Owssel Words_, Wednesday next, half-past four? Not you; for when did Stanfell ever pass his word to go anywheers and not come! Well. Belay, my heart of oak, belay! Come alongside the _Tavistock_ same day and hour, 'stead of _Owssel Words_. Hail your shipmets, and they'll drop over the side and join you, like two new shillings a-droppin' into the purser's pocket. Damn all lubberly boys and swabs, and give me the lad with the tarry trousers, which shines to me like di'mings bright!

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Friday Night, Jan. 14th, 1853._

MY DEAREST MACREADY,

I have been much affected by the receipt of your kindest and best of letters; for I know out of the midst of what anxieties it comes to me, and I appreciate such remembrance from my heart. You and yours are always with us, however. It is no new thing for you to have a part in any scene of my life. It very rarely happens that a day passes without our thoughts and conversation travelling to Sherborne. We are so much there that I cannot tell you how plainly I see you as I write.

I know you would have been full of sympathy and approval if you had been present at Birmingham, and that you would have concurred in the tone I tried to take about the eternal duties of the arts to the people. I took the liberty of putting the court and that kind of thing out of the question, and recognising nothing _but_ the arts and the people. The more we see of life and its brevity, and the world and its varieties, the more we know that no exercise of our abilities in any art, but the addressing of it to the great ocean of humanity in which we are drops, and not to bye-ponds (very stagnant) here and there, ever can or ever will lay the foundations of an endurable retrospect. Is it not so? _You_ should have as much practical information on this subject, now, my dear friend, as any man.

My dearest Macready, I cannot forbear this closing word. I still look forward to our meeting as we used to do in the happy times we have known together, so far as your old hopefulness and energy are concerned. And I think I never in my life have been more glad to receive a sign, than I have been to hail that which I find in your handwriting.

Some of your old friends at Birmingham are full of interest and enquiry. Kate and Georgina send their dearest loves to you, and to Miss Macready, and to all the children. I am ever, and no matter where I am--and quite as much in a crowd as alone--my dearest Macready,

Your affectionate and most attached Friend.

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[Sidenote: Mrs. Gaskell.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _May 3rd, 1853._

MY DEAR MRS. GASKELL,

The subject is certainly not too serious, so sensibly treated. I have no doubt that you may do a great deal of good by pursuing it in "Household Words." I thoroughly agree in all you say in your note, have similar reasons for giving it some anxious consideration, and shall be greatly interested in it. Pray decide to do it. Send the papers, as you write them, to me. Meanwhile I will think of a name for them, and bring it to bear upon yours, if I think yours improvable. I am sure you may rely on being widely understood and sympathised with.

Forget that I called those two women my dear friends! Why, if I told you a fiftieth part of what I have thought about them, you would write me the most suspicious of notes, refusing to receive the fiftieth part of that. So I don't write, particularly as you laid your injunctions on me concerning Ruth. In revenge, I will now mention one word that I wish you would take out whenever you reprint that book. She would never--I am ready to make affidavit before any authority in the land--have called her seducer "Sir," when they were living at that hotel in Wales. A girl pretending to be what she really was would have done it, but she--never!

Ever most faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Monsieur Regnier.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Monday, May 9th, 1853._

MY DEAR REGNIER,

I meant to have spoken to you last night about a matter in which I hope you can assist me, but I forgot it. I think I must have been quite _bouleversé_ by your supposing (as you pretended to do, when you went away) that it was not a great pleasure and delight to me to see you act!

There is a certain Miss Kelly, now sixty-two years old, who was once one of the very best of English actresses, in the greater and better days of the English theatre. She has much need of a benefit, and I am exerting myself to arrange one for her, on about the 9th of June, if possible, at the St. James's Theatre. The first piece will be an entertainment of her own, and she will act in the last. Between these two (and at the best time of the night), it would be a great attraction to the public, and a great proof of friendship to me, if you would act. If we could manage, through your influence and with your assistance, to present a little French vaudeville, such as "_Le bon Homme jadis_," it would make the night a grand success.

Mitchell's permission, I suppose, would be required. That I will undertake to apply for, if you will tell me that you are willing to help us, and that you could answer for the other necessary actors in the little French piece, whatever the piece might be, that you would choose for the purpose. Pray write me a short note in answer, on this point.

I ought to tell you that the benefit will be "under distinguished patronage." The Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Leinster, the Duke of Beaufort, etc. etc., are members of the committee with me, and I have no doubt that the audience will be of the _élite_.

I have asked Mr. Chapman to come to me to-morrow, to arrange for the hiring of the theatre. Mr. Harley (a favourite English comedian whom you may know) is our secretary. And if I could assure the committee to-morrow afternoon of your co-operation, I am sure they would be overjoyed.

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Votre tout dévoué.

[Sidenote: Monsieur Regnier.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _May 20th, 1853._

MY DEAR REGNIER,

I am heartily obliged to you for your kind letter respecting Miss Kelly's benefit. It is to take place _on Thursday, the 16th June_; Thursday the 9th (the day originally proposed) being the day of Ascot Races, and therefore a bad one for the purpose.

Mitchell, like a brave _garçon_ as he is, most willingly consents to your acting for us. Will you think what little French piece it will be best to do, in order that I may have it ready for the bills?

Ever faithfully yours, my dear Regnier.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

BOULOGNE, _Monday, June 13th, 1853._

MY DEAR WILLS,

You will be glad, I know, to hear that we had a delightful passage yesterday, and that I made a perfect phenomenon of a dinner. It is raining hard to-day, and my back feels the draught; but I am otherwise still mending.

I have signed, sealed, and delivered a contract for a house (once occupied for two years by a man I knew in Switzerland), which is not a large one, but stands in the middle of a great garden, with what the landlord calls a "forest" at the back, and is now surrounded by flowers, vegetables, and all manner of growth. A queer, odd, French place, but extremely well supplied with all table and other conveniences, and strongly recommended.

The address is:

Château des Moulineaux,
Rue Beaurepaire, Boulogne.

There is a coach-house, stabling for half-a-dozen horses, and I don't know what.

We take possession this afternoon, and I am now laying in a good stock of creature comforts. So no more at present from

Yours ever faithfully.

P.S.--Mrs. Dickens and her sister unite in kindest regards.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

CHÂTEAU DES MOULINEAUX, BOULOGNE,
Saturday Night, June 18th, 1853.

MY DEAR WILLS,

"BLEAK HOUSE."

Thank God, I have done half the number with great care, and hope to finish on Thursday or Friday next. O how thankful I feel to be able to have done it, and what a relief to get the number out!

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GENERAL MOVEMENTS OF INIMITABLE.

I don't think (I am not sure) I shall come to London until after the completion of "Bleak House," No. 18--the number after this now in hand--for it strikes me that I am better here at present. I have picked up in the most extraordinary manner, and I believe you would never suppose to look at me that I had had that week or barely an hour of it. If there should be any occasion for our meeting in the meantime, a run over here would do you no harm, and we should be delighted to see you at any time. If you suppose this place to be in a street, you are much mistaken. It is in the country, though not more than ten minutes' walk from the post-office, and is the best doll's-house of many rooms, in the prettiest French grounds, in the most charming situation I have ever seen; the best place I have ever lived in abroad, except at Genoa. You can scarcely imagine the beauty of the air in this richly-wooded hill-side. As to comforts in the house, there are all sorts of things, beginning with no end of the coldest water and running through the most beautiful flowers down to English foot-baths and a Parisian liqueur-stand. Your parcel (frantic enclosures and all) arrived quite safely last night. This will leave by steamer to-morrow, Sunday evening. There is a boat in the morning, but having no one to send to-night I can't reach it, and to-morrow being Sunday it will come to much the same thing.

I think that's all at present.

Ever, my dear Wills, faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A.]

CHÂTEAU DES MOULINEAUX, RUE BEAUREPAIRE, BOULOGNE,
Thursday, June 23rd, 1853.

MY DEAR PUMPION,

I take the earliest opportunity, after finishing my number--ahem!--to write you a line, and to report myself (thank God) brown, well, robust, vigorous, open to fight any man in England of my weight, and growing a moustache. Any person of undoubted pluck, in want of a customer, may hear of me at the bar of Bleak House, where my money is down.

I think there is an abundance of places here that would suit you well enough; and Georgina is ready to launch on voyages of discovery and observation with you. But it is necessary that you should consider for how long a time you want it, as the folks here let much more advantageously for the tenant when they know the term--don't like to let without. It seems to me that the best thing you can do is to get a paper of the South Eastern tidal trains, fix your day for coming over here in five hours (when you will pay through to Boulogne at London Bridge), let me know the day, and come and see how you like the place. _I_ like it better than ever. We can give you a bed (two to spare, at a pinch three), and show you a garden and a view or so. The town is not so cheap as places farther off, but you get a great deal for your money, and by far the best wine at tenpence a bottle that I have ever drank anywhere. I really desire no better.

I may mention for your guidance (for I count upon your coming to overhaul the general aspect of things), that you have nothing on earth to do with your luggage when it is once in the boat, _until after you have walked ashore_. That you will be filtered with the rest of the passengers through a hideous, whitewashed, quarantine-looking custom-house, where a stern man of a military aspect will demand your passport. That you will have nothing of the sort, but will produce your card with this addition: "Restant à Boulogne, chez M. Charles Dickens, Château des Moulineaux." That you will then be passed out at a little door, like one of the ill-starred prisoners on the bloody September

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night, into a yelling and shrieking crowd, cleaving the air with the names of the different hotels, exactly seven thousand six hundred and fifty-four in number. And that your heart will be on the point of sinking with dread, then you will find yourself in the arms of the Sparkler of Albion. All unite in kindest regards.

Ever affectionately.

P.S.--I thought you might like to see the flourish again.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

BOULOGNE, _Wednesday, July 27th, 1853._

MY DEAR WILLS,

I have thought of another article to be called "Frauds upon the Fairies," _à propos_ of George Cruikshank's editing. Half playfully and half seriously, I mean to protest most strongly against alteration, for any purpose, of the beautiful little stories which are so tenderly and humanly useful to us in these times, when the world is too much with us, early and late; and then to re-write "Cinderella" according to Total Abstinence, Peace Society, and Bloomer principles, and expressly for their propagation.

I shall want his book of "Hop o' my Thumb" (Forster noticed it in the last _Examiner_), and the most simple and popular version of "Cinderella" you can get me. I shall not be able to do it until after finishing "Bleak House," but I shall do it the more easily for having the books by me. So send them, if convenient, in your next parcel.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

CHÂTEAU DES MOULINEAUX, BOULOGNE,
Sunday, Aug. 24th, 1853.

MY DEAREST MACREADY,

Some unaccountable delay in the transmission here of the parcel which contained your letter, caused me to come into the receipt of it a whole week after its date. I immediately wrote to Miss Coutts, who has written to you, and I hope some good may come of it. I know it will not be her fault if none does. I was very much concerned to read your account of poor Mrs. Warner, and to read her own plain and unaffected account of herself. Pray assure her of my cordial sympathy and remembrance, and of my earnest desire to do anything in my power to help to put her mind at ease.

We are living in a beautiful little country place here, where I have been hard at work ever since I came, and am now (after an interval of a week's rest) going to work again to finish "Bleak House." Kate and Georgina send their kindest loves to you, and Miss Macready, and all the rest. They look forward, I assure you, to their Sherborne visit, when I--a mere forlorn wanderer--shall be roaming over the Alps into Italy. I saw "The Midsummer Night's Dream" of the Opéra Comique, done here (very well) last night. The way in which a poet named Willyim Shay Kes Peer gets drunk in company with Sir John Foll Stayffe, fights with a noble 'night, Lor Latimeer (who is in love with a maid-of-honour you may have read of in history, called Mees Oleevia), and promises not to do so any more on observing symptoms of love for him in the Queen of England, is very remarkable. Queen Elizabeth, too, in the profound and impenetrable disguise of a black velvet mask, two inches deep by three broad, following him into taverns and worse places, and enquiring of persons of doubtful reputation for "the sublime Williams," was inexpressibly

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ridiculous. And yet the nonsense was done with a sense quite admirable.

I have been very much struck by the book you sent me. It is one of the wisest, the manliest, and most serviceable I ever read. I am reading it again with the greatest pleasure and admiration.

Ever most affectionately yours,
My dear Macready.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX, BOULOGNE,
Saturday, Aug. 27th, 1853.

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I received your letter--most welcome and full of interest to me--when I was hard at work finishing "Bleak House." We are always talking of you; and I had said but the day before, that one of the first things I would do on my release would be to write to you. To finish the topic of "Bleak House" at once, I will only add that I like the conclusion very much and think it _very pretty indeed_. The story has taken extraordinarily, especially during the last five or six months, when its purpose has been gradually working itself out. It has retained its immense circulation from the first, beating dear old "Copperfield" by a round ten thousand or more. I have never had so many readers. We had a little reading of the final double number here the night before last, and it made a great impression I assure you.

We are all extremely well, and like Boulogne very much indeed. I laid down the rule before we came, that we would know nobody here, and we _do_ know nobody here. We evaded callers as politely as we could, and gradually came to be understood and left to ourselves. It is a fine bracing air, a beautiful open country, and an admirable mixture of town and country. We live on a green hill-side out of the town, but are in the town (on foot) in ten minutes. Things are tolerably cheap, and exceedingly good; the people very cheerful, good-looking, and obliging; the houses very clean; the distance to London short, and easily traversed. I think if you came to know the place (which I never did myself until last October, often as I have been through it), you could be but in one mind about it.

Charley is still at Leipzig. I shall take him up somewhere on the Rhine, to bring him home for Christmas, as I come back on my own little tour. He has been in the Hartz Mountains on a walking tour, and has written a journal thereof, which he has sent home in portions. It has cost about as much in postage as would have bought a pair of ponies.

I contemplate starting from here on Monday, the 10th of October; Catherine, Georgina, and the rest of them will then go home. I shall go first by Paris and Geneva to Lausanne, for it has a separate place in my memory. If the autumn should be very fine (just possible after such a summer), I shall then go by Chamonix and Martigny, over the Simplon to Milan, thence to Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, and Naples, thence, I hope, to Sicily. Back by Bologna, Florence, Rome, Verona, Mantua, etc., to Venice, and home by Germany, arriving in good time for Christmas Day. Three nights in Christmas week, I have promised to read in the Town Hall at Birmingham, for the benefit of a new and admirable institution for working men projected there. The Friday will be the last night, and I shall read the "Carol" to two thousand working people, stipulating that they shall have that night entirely to themselves.

It just occurs to me that I mean to engage, for the two months odd, a travelling servant. I have not yet got one. If you should happen to be interested in any good foreigner, well acquainted with the countries and the languages, who would like such a master, how delighted I should be to like _him_!

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Ever since I have been here, I have been very hard at work, often getting up at daybreak to write through many hours. I have never had the least return of illness, thank God, though I was so altered (in a week) when I came here, that I doubt if you would have known me. I am redder and browner than ever at the present writing, with the addition of a rather formidable and fierce moustache. Lowestoft I know, by walking over there from Yarmouth, when I went down on an exploring expedition, previous to "Copperfield." It is a fine place. I saw the name "Blunderstone" on a direction-post between it and Yarmouth, and took it from the said direction-post for the book. We imagined the Captain's ecstasies when we saw the birth of his child in the papers. In some of the descriptions of Chesney Wold, I have taken many bits, chiefly about trees and shadows, from observations made at Rockingham. I wonder whether you have ever thought so! I shall hope to hear from you again soon, and shall not fail to write again before I go away. There seems to be nothing but "I" in this letter; but "I" know, my dear friend, that you will be more interested in that letter in the present connection, than in any other I could take from the alphabet.

Catherine and Georgina send their kindest loves, and more messages than this little sheet would hold. If I were to give you a hint of what we feel at the sight of your handwriting, and at the receipt of a word from yourself about yourself, and the dear boys, and the precious little girls, I should begin to be sorrowful, which is rather the tendency of my mind at the close of another long book. I heard from Cerjat two or three days since. Goff, by-the-bye, lived in this house two years.

Ever, my dear Mrs. Watson,
Yours, with true affection and regard.

[Sidenote: Mr. Peter Cunningham.]

CHÂTEAU DES MOULINEAUX, RUE BEAUREPAIRE, BOULOGNE.

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,

A note--Cerberus-like--of three heads.

First. I know you will be glad to hear that the manager is himself again. Vigorous, brown, energetic, muscular; the pride of Albion and the admiration of Gaul.

Secondly. I told Wills when I left home, that I was quite pained to see the end of your excellent "Bowl of Punch" altered. I was unaffectedly touched and gratified by the heartiness of the original; and saw no earthly, celestial, or subterranean objection to its remaining, as it did not so unmistakably apply to me as to necessitate the observance of my usual precaution in the case of such references, by any means.

Thirdly. If you ever have a holiday that you don't know what to do with, _do_ come and pass a little time here. We live in a charming garden in a very pleasant country, and should be delighted to receive you. Excellent light wines on the premises, French cookery, millions of roses, two cows (for milk punch), vegetables cut for the pot, and handed in at the kitchen window; five summer-houses, fifteen fountains (with no water in 'em), and thirty-seven clocks (keeping, as I conceive, Australian time; having no reference whatever to the hours on this side of the globe).

I know, my dear Cunningham, that the British nation can ill afford to lose you; and that when the Audit Office mice are away, the cats of that great public establishment will play. But pray consider that the bow may be sometimes bent too long, and that ever-arduous application, even in patriotic service, is to be avoided. No one can more highly estimate your devotion to the best interests of Britain than I. But I wish to see it tempered with a wise consideration for your own amusement, recreation, and pastime. All work and no play may make Peter a dull boy

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as well as Jack. And (if I may claim the privilege of friendship to remonstrate) I would say that you do not take enough time for your meals. Dinner, for instance, you habitually neglect. Believe me, this rustic repose will do you good. Winkles also are to be obtained in these parts, and it is well remarked by Poor Richard, that a bird in the handbook is worth two in the bush.

Ever cordially yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Walter Savage Landor.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, LONDON, _Sept. 8th, 1853._

MY DEAR LANDOR,

I am in town for a day or two, and Forster tells me I may now write to thank you for the happiness you have given me by honouring my name with such generous mention, on such a noble place, in your great book. I believe he has told you already that I wrote to him from Boulogne, not knowing what to do, as I had not received the precious volume, and feared you might have some plan of sending it to me, with which my premature writing would interfere.

You know how heartily and inexpressibly I prize what you have written to me, or you never would have selected me for such a distinction. I could never thank you enough, my dear Landor, and I will not thank you in words any more. Believe me, I receive the dedication like a great dignity, the worth of which I hope I thoroughly know. The Queen could give me none in exchange that I wouldn't laughingly snap my fingers at.

We are staying at Boulogne until the 10th of October, when I go into Italy until Christmas, and the rest come home.

Kate and Georgina would send you their best loves if they were here, and would never leave off talking about it if I went back and told them I had written to you without such mention of them. Walter is a very good boy, and comes home from school with honourable commendation. He passed last Sunday in solitary confinement (in a bath-room) on bread and water, for terminating a dispute with the nurse by throwing a chair in her direction. It is the very first occasion of his ever having got into trouble, for he is a great favourite with the whole house, and one of the most amiable boys in the boy world. (He comes out on birthdays in a blaze of shirt-pin).

If I go and look at your old house, as I shall if I go to Florence, I shall bring you back another leaf from the same tree as I plucked the last from.

Ever, my dear Landor,
Heartily and affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. John Delane.]

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX, BOULOGNE,
Monday, Sept. 12th, 1853.

MY DEAR DELANE,

I am very much obliged to you, I assure you, for your frank and full reply to my note. Nothing could be more satisfactory, and I have to-day seen Mr. Gibson and placed my two small representatives under his charge. His manner is exactly what you describe him. I was greatly pleased with his genuineness altogether.

We remain here until the tenth of next month, when I am going to desert my wife and family and run about Italy until Christmas. If I can execute

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any little commission for you or Mrs. Delane--in the Genoa street of silversmiths, or anywhere else--I shall be delighted to do so. I have been in the receipt of several letters from Macready lately, and rejoice to find him quite himself again, though I have great misgivings that he will lose his eldest boy before he can be got to India.

Mrs. Dickens and her sister are proud of your message, and beg their kind regards to be forwarded in return; my other half being particularly comforted and encouraged by your account of Mr. Gibson. In this charge I am to include Mrs. Delane, who, I hope, will make an exchange of remembrances, and give me hers for mine.

I never saw anything so ridiculous as this place at present. They expected the Emperor ten or twelve days ago, and put up all manner of triumphal arches made of evergreens, which look like tea-leaves now, and will take a withered and weird appearance hardly to be foreseen, long before the twenty-fifth, when the visit is vaguely expected to come off. In addition to these faded garlands all over the leading streets, there are painted eagles hoisted over gateways and sprawling across a hundred ways, which have been washed out by the rain and are now being blistered by the sun, until they look horribly ludicrous. And a number of our benighted compatriots who came over to see a perfect blaze of _fêtes_, go wandering among these shrivelled preparations and staring at ten thousand flag-poles without any flags upon them, with a kind of indignant curiosity and personal injury quite irresistible. With many thanks,

Very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

BOULOGNE, _Sunday, Sept. 18th, 1853._

MY DEAR WILLS,

COURIER.

Edward Kaub will bring this. He turned up yesterday, accounting for his delay by waiting for a written recommendation, and having at the last moment (as a foreigner, not being an Englishman) a passport to get. I quite agree with you as to his appearance and manner, and have engaged him. It strikes me that it would be an excellent beginning if you would deliver him a neat and appropriate address, telling him what in your conscience you can find to tell of me favourably as a master, and particularly impressing upon him _readiness and punctuality_ on his part as the great things to be observed. I think it would have a much better effect than anything I could say in this stage, if said from yourself. But I shall be much obliged to you if you will act upon this hint forthwith.

W. H. WILLS.

No letter having arrived from the popular author of "The Larboard Fin,"[15] by this morning's post, I rather think one must be on the way in the pocket of Gordon's son. If Kaub calls for this before young Scotland arrives, you will understand if I do not herein refer to an unreceived letter. But I shall leave this open, until Kaub comes for it.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: The Lord John Russell.]

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX, BOULOGNE,
Wednesday, Sept. 21st, 1853.

MY DEAR LORD,

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Your note having been forwarded to me here, I cannot forbear thanking you with all my heart for your great kindness. Mr. Forster had previously sent me a copy of your letter to him, together with the expression of the high and lasting gratification he had in your handsome response. I know he feels it most sincerely.

I became the prey of a perfect spasm of sensitive twinges, when I found that the close of "Bleak House" had not penetrated to "the wilds of the North" when your letter left those parts. I was so very much interested in it myself when I wrote it here last month, that I have a fond sort of faith in its interesting its readers. But for the hope that you may have got it by this time, I should refuse comfort. That supports me.

The book has been a wonderful success. Its audience enormous.

I fear there is not much chance of my being able to execute any little commission for Lady John anywhere in Italy. But I am going across the Alps, leaving here on the tenth of next month, and returning home to London for Christmas Day, and should indeed be happy if I could do her any dwarf service.

You will be interested, I think, to hear that Poole lives happily on his pension, and lives within it. He is quite incapable of any mental exertion, and what he would have done without it I cannot imagine. I send it to him at Paris every quarter. It is something, even amid the estimation in which you are held, which is but a foreshadowing of what shall be by-and-by as the people advance, to be so gratefully remembered as he, with the best reason, remembers you. Forgive my saying this. But the manner of that transaction, no less than the matter, is always fresh in my memory in association with your name, and I cannot help it.

My dear Lord,
Yours very faithfully and obliged.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

BOULOGNE, _Wednesday, Sept. 21st, 1853._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

The courier was unfortunately engaged. He offered to recommend another, but I had several applicants, and begged Mr. Wills to hold a grand review at the "Household Words" office, and select the man who is to bring me down as his victim. I am extremely sorry the man you recommend was not to be had. I should have been so delighted to take him.

I am finishing "The Child's History," and clearing the way through "Household Words," in general, before I go on my trip. I forget whether I told you that Mr. Egg the painter and Mr. Collins are going with me. The other day I was in town. In case you should not have heard of the condition of that deserted village, I think it worth mentioning. All the streets of any note were unpaved, mountains high, and all the omnibuses were sliding down alleys, and looking into the upper windows of small houses. At eleven o'clock one morning I was positively _alone_ in Bond Street. I went to one of my tailors, and he was at Brighton. A smutty-faced woman among some gorgeous regimentals, half finished, had not the least idea when he would be back. I went to another of my tailors, and he was in an upper room, with open windows and surrounded by mignonette boxes, playing the piano in the bosom of his family. I went to my hosier's, and two of the least presentable of "the young men" of that elegant establishment were playing at draughts in the back shop. (Likewise I beheld a porter-pot hastily concealed under a Turkish dressing-gown of a golden pattern.) I then went wandering about to look for some ingenious portmanteau, and near the corner of St. James's Street saw a solitary being sitting in a trunk-shop, absorbed in a book which, on a close inspection, I found to be "Bleak House." I thought

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this looked well, and went in. And he really was more interested in seeing me, when he knew who I was, than any face I had seen in any house, every house I knew being occupied by painters, including my own. I went to the Athenæum that same night, to get my dinner, and it was shut up for repairs. I went home late, and had forgotten the key and was locked out.

Preparations were made here, about six weeks ago, to receive the Emperor, who is not come yet. Meanwhile our countrymen (deluded in the first excitement) go about staring at these arrangements, with a personal injury upon them which is most ridiculous. And they _will_ persist in speaking an unknown tongue to the French people, who _will_ speak English to them.

Kate and Georgina send their kindest loves. We are all quite well. Going to drop two small boys here, at school with a former Eton tutor highly recommended to me. Charley was heard of a day or two ago. He says his professor "is very short-sighted, always in green spectacles, always drinking weak beer, always smoking a pipe, and always at work." The last qualification seems to appear to Charley the most astonishing one.

Ever, my dear Mrs. Watson,
Most affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

HOTEL DE LA VILLA, MILAN, _Tuesday, Oct. 25th, 1853._

MY DEAR GEORGY,

I have walked to that extent in Switzerland (walked over the Simplon on Sunday, as an addition to the other feats) that one pair of the new strong shoes has gone to be mended this morning, and the other is in but a poor way; the snow having played the mischief with them.

On the Swiss side of the Simplon, we slept at the beastliest little town, in the wildest kind of house, where some fifty cats tumbled into the corridor outside our bedrooms all at once in the middle of the night--whether through the roof or not, I don't know; for it was dark when we got up--and made such a horrible and terrific noise that we started out of our beds in a panic. I strongly objected to opening the door lest they should get into the room and tear at us; but Edward opened his, and laid about him until he dispersed them. At Domo D'Ossola we had three immense bedrooms (Egg's bed twelve feet wide!), and a sala of imperceptible extent in the dim light of two candles and a wood fire; but were very well and very cheaply entertained. Here, we are, as you know, housed in the greatest comfort.

We continue to get on very well together. We really do admirably. I lose no opportunity of inculcating the lesson that it is of no use to be out of temper in travelling, and it is very seldom wanted for any of us. Egg is an excellent fellow, and full of good qualities; I am sure a generous and staunch man at heart, and a good and honourable nature.

I shall send Catherine from Genoa a list of the places where letters will find me. I shall hope to hear from you too, and shall be very glad indeed to do so. No more at present.

Ever most affectionately.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

CROCE DI MALTA, GENOA, _Saturday, Oct. 29th, 1853._

MY DEAREST GEORGY,

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We had thirty-one hours consecutively on the road between this and Milan, and arrived here in a rather damaged condition. We live at the top of this immense house, overlooking the port and sea, pleasantly and airily enough, though it is no joke to get so high, and though the apartment is rather vast and faded.

The old walks are pretty much the same as ever, except that they have built behind the Peschiere on the San Bartolomeo hill, and changed the whole town towards San Pietro d'Arena, where we seldom went. The Bisagno looks just the same, strong just now, and with very little water in it. Vicoli stink exactly as they used to, and are fragrant with the same old flavour of very rotten cheese kept in very hot blankets. The Mezzaro pervades them as before. The old Jesuit college in the Strada Nuova is under the present government the Hôtel de Ville, and a very splendid caffé with a terrace garden has arisen between it and Palavicini's old palace. Another new and handsome caffé has been built in the Piazza Carlo Felice, between the old caffé of the Bei Arti (where Fletcher stopped for the bouquets in the green times, when we went to the ----'s party), and the Strada Carlo Felice. The old beastly gate and guardhouse on the Albaro road are still in their dear old beastly state, and the whole of that road is just as it was. The man without legs is still in the Strada Nuova; but the beggars in general are all cleared off, and our old one-armed Belisario made a sudden evaporation a year or two ago. I am going to the Peschiere to-day. The puppets are here, and the opera is open, but only with a buffo company, and without a buffet. We went to the Scala, where they did an opera of Verdi's, called "Il Trovatore," and a poor enough ballet. The whole performance miserable indeed. I wish you were here to take some of the old walks. It is quite strange to walk about alone. Good-bye, my dear Georgy. Pray tell me how Kate is. I rather fancy from her letter, though I scarcely know why, that she is not quite as well as she was at Boulogne. I was charmed with your account of the Plornishghenter and everything and everybody else. Kiss them all for me.

Ever most affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

HÔTEL DES ÉTRANGERS, NAPLES,
Friday Night, Nov. 4th, 1853.

MY DEAREST GEORGY,

Instead of embarking on Monday at Genoa, we were delayed (in consequence of the boat's being a day later when there are thirty-one days in the month) until Tuesday. Going aboard that morning at half-past nine, we found the steamer more than full of passengers from Marseilles, and in a state of confusion not to be described. We could get no places at the table, got our dinners how we could on deck, had no berths or sleeping accommodation of any kind, and had paid heavy first-class fares! To add to this, we got to Leghorn too late to steam away again that night, getting the ship's papers examined first--as the authorities said so, not being favourable to the new express English ship, English officered--and we lay off the lighthouse all night long. The scene on board beggars description. Ladies on the tables, gentlemen under the tables, and ladies and gentlemen lying indiscriminately on the open deck, arrayed like spoons on a sideboard. No mattresses, no blankets, nothing. Towards midnight, attempts were made by means of an awning and flags to make this latter scene remotely approach an Australian encampment; and we three lay together on the bare planks covered with overcoats. We were all gradually dozing off when a perfectly tropical rain fell, and in a moment drowned the whole ship. The rest of the night was passed upon the stairs, with an immense jumble of men and women. When anybody came up for any purpose we all fell down; and when anybody came down we all fell up again. Still, the good-humour in the English part of the passengers was quite extraordinary. There were excellent officers aboard, and the first mate lent me his cabin to wash in in the

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morning, which I afterwards lent to Egg and Collins. Then we and the Emerson Tennents (who were aboard) and the captain, the doctor, and the second officer went off on a jaunt together to Pisa, as the ship was to lie at Leghorn all day.

The captain was a capital fellow, but I led him, facetiously, such a life all day, that I got almost everything altered at night. Emerson Tennent, with the greatest kindness, turned his son out of his state room (who, indeed, volunteered to go in the most amiable manner), and I got a good bed there. The store-room down by the hold was opened for Egg and Collins, and they slept with the moist sugar, the cheese in cut, the spices, the cruets, the apples and pears--in a perfect chandler's shop; in company with what the ----'s would call a "hold gent"--who had been so horribly wet through overnight that his condition frightened the authorities--a cat, and the steward--who dozed in an arm-chair, and all night long fell headforemost, once in every five minutes, on Egg, who slept on the counter or dresser. Last night I had the steward's own cabin, opening on deck, all to myself. It had been previously occupied by some desolate lady, who went ashore at Civita Vecchia. There was little or no sea, thank Heaven, all the trip; but the rain was heavier than any I have ever seen, and the lightning very constant and vivid. We were, with the crew, some two hundred people; with boats, at the utmost stretch, for one hundred, perhaps. I could not help thinking what would happen if we met with any accident; the crew being chiefly Maltese, and evidently fellows who would cut off alone in the largest boat on the least alarm. The speed (it being the crack express ship for the India mail) very high; also the running through all the narrow rocky channels. Thank God, however, here we are. Though the more sensible and experienced part of the passengers agreed with me this morning that it was not a thing to try often. We had an excellent table after the first day, the best wines and so forth, and the captain and I swore eternal friendship. Ditto the first officer and the majority of the passengers. We got into the bay about seven this morning, but could not land until noon. We towed from Civita Vecchia the entire Greek navy, I believe, consisting of a little brig-of-war, with great guns, fitted as a steamer, but disabled by having burst the bottom of her boiler in her first run. She was just big enough to carry the captain and a crew of six or so, but the captain was so covered with buttons and gold that there never would have been room for him on board to put these valuables away if he hadn't worn them, which he consequently did, all night.

Whenever anything was wanted to be done, as slackening the tow-rope or anything of that sort, our officers roared at this miserable potentate, in violent English, through a speaking-trumpet, of which he couldn't have understood a word under the most favourable circumstances, so he did all the wrong things first, and the right things always last. The absence of any knowledge of anything not English on the part of the officers and stewards was most ridiculous. I met an Italian gentleman on the cabin steps, yesterday morning, vainly endeavouring to explain that he wanted a cup of tea for his sick wife. And when we were coming out of the harbour at Genoa, and it was necessary to order away that boat of music you remember, the chief officer (called aft for the purpose, as "knowing something of Italian,") delivered himself in this explicit and clear manner to the principal performer: "Now, signora, if you don't sheer off, you'll be run down; so you had better trice up that guitar of yours, and put about."

We get on as well as possible, and it is extremely pleasant and interesting, and I feel that the change is doing me great and real service, after a long continuous strain upon the mind; but I am pleased to think that we are at our farthest point, and I look forward with joy to coming home again, to my old room, and the old walks, and all the old pleasant things.

I wish I had arranged, or could have done so--for it would not have been easy--to find some letters here. It is a blank to stay for five days in a place without any.

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I don't think Edward knows fifty Italian words; but much more French is spoken in Italy now than when we were here, and he stumbles along somehow.

I am afraid this is a dull letter, for I am very tired. You must take the will for the deed, my dear, and good night.

Ever most affectionately.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

ROME, _Sunday Night, Nov. 13th, 1853._

MY DEAREST GEORGY,

We arrived here yesterday afternoon, at between three and four. On sending to the post-office this morning, I received your pleasant little letter, and one from Miss Coutts, who is still at Paris. But to my amazement there was none from Catherine! You mention her writing, and I cannot but suppose that your two letters must have been posted together. However, I received none from her, and I have all manner of doubts respecting the plainness of its direction. They will not produce the letters here as at Genoa, but persist in looking them out at the post-office for you. I shall send again to-morrow, and every day until Friday, when we leave here. If I find no letter from her _to-morrow_, I shall write to her nevertheless by that post which brings this, so that you may both hear from me together.

One night, at Naples, Edward came in, open-mouthed, to the table d'hôte where we were dining with the Tennents, to announce "The Marchese Garofalo." I at first thought it must be the little parrot-marquess who was once your escort from Genoa; but I found him to be a man (married to an Englishwoman) whom we used to meet at Ridgway's. He was very glad to see me, and I afterwards met him at dinner at Mr. Lowther's, our chargé d'affaires. Mr. Lowther was at the Rockingham play, and is a very agreeable fellow. We had an exceedingly pleasant dinner of eight, preparatory to which I was near having the ridiculous adventure of not being able to find the house and coming back dinnerless. I went in an open carriage from the hotel in all state, and the coachman, to my surprise, pulled up at the end of the Chiaja. "Behold the house," says he, "of Il Signor Larthoor!"--at the same time pointing with his whip into the seventh heaven, where the early stars were shining. "But the Signor Larthoor," returns the Inimitable darling, "lives at Pausilippo." "It is true," says the coachman (still pointing to the evening star), "but he lives high up the Salita Sant' Antonio, where no carriage ever yet ascended, and that is the house" (evening star as aforesaid), "and one must go on foot. Behold the Salita Sant' Antonio!" I went up it, a mile and a half I should think. I got into the strangest places, among the wildest Neapolitans--kitchens, washing-places, archways, stables, vineyards--was baited by dogs, answered in profoundly unintelligible Neapolitan, from behind lonely locked doors, in cracked female voices, quaking with fear; could hear of no such Englishman or any Englishman. By-and-by I came upon a Polenta-shop in the clouds, where an old Frenchman, with an umbrella like a faded tropical leaf (it had not rained for six weeks) was staring at nothing at all, with a snuff-box in his hand. To him I appealed concerning the Signor Larthoor. "Sir," said he, with the sweetest politeness, "can you speak French?" "Sir," said I, "a little." "Sir," said he, "I presume the Signor Loothere"--you will observe that he changed the name according to the custom of his country--"is an Englishman." I admitted that he was the victim of circumstances and had that misfortune. "Sir," said he, "one word more. _Has_ he a servant with a wooden leg?" "Great Heaven, sir," said I, "how do I know! I should think not, but it is possible." "It is always," said the Frenchman, "possible. Almost all the things of the world are always possible." "Sir," said I--you may imagine my condition and dismal sense of my own absurdity, by this time--"that is true." He then took an immense pinch of snuff, wiped the dust off his umbrella, led me to an

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arch commanding a wonderful view of the bay of Naples, and pointed deep into the earth from which I had mounted. "Below there, near the lamp, one finds an Englishman, with a servant with a wooden leg. It is always possible that he is the Signor Loothere." I had been asked at six, and it was now getting on for seven. I went down again in a state of perspiration and misery not to be described, and without the faintest hope of finding the place. But as I was going down to the lamp, I saw the strangest staircase up a dark corner, with a man in a white-waistcoat (evidently hired) standing on the top of it, fuming. I dashed in at a venture, found it was the place, made the most of the whole story, and was indescribably popular. The best of it was, that as nobody ever did find the place, he had put a servant at the bottom of the Salita, to "wait for an English gentleman." The servant (as he presently pleaded), deceived by the moustache, had allowed the English gentleman to pass unchallenged.

The night before we left Naples we were at the San Carlo, where, with the Verdi rage of our old Genoa time, they were again doing the "Trovatore." It seemed rubbish on the whole to me, but was very fairly done. I think "La Tenco," the prima donna, will soon be a great hit in London. She is a very remarkable singer and a fine actress, to the best of my judgment on such premises. There seems to be no opera here, at present. There was a Festa in St. Peter's to-day, and the Pope passed to the Cathedral in state. We were all there.

We leave here, please God, on Friday morning, and post to Florence in three days and a half. We came here by Vetturino. Upon the whole, the roadside inns are greatly improved since our time. Half-past three and half-past four have been, however, our usual times of rising on the road.

I was in my old place at the Coliseum this morning, and it was as grand as ever. With that exception the ruined part of Rome--the real original Rome--looks smaller than my remembrance made it. It is the only place on which I have yet found that effect. We are in the old hotel.

You are going to Bonchurch I suppose? will be there, perhaps, when this letter reaches you? I shall be pleased to think of you as at home again, and making the commodious family mansion look natural and home-like. I don't like to think of my room without anybody to peep into it now and then. Here is a world of travelling arrangements for me to settle, and here are Collins and Egg looking sideways at me with an occasional imploring glance as beseeching me to settle it. So I leave off. Good-night.

Ever, my dearest Georgy,
Most affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Sir James Emerson Tennent.]

HÔTEL DES ÎLES BRITANNIQUES, PIAZZA DEL POPOLO, ROME,
Monday, Nov. 14th, 1853.

MY DEAR TENNENT,

As I never made a good bargain in my life--except once, when, on going abroad, I let my house on excellent terms to an admirable tenant, who never paid anything--I sent Edward into the Casa Dies yesterday morning, while I invested the premises from the outside, and carefully surveyed them. It is a very clean, large, bright-looking house at the corner of the Via Gregoriana; not exactly in a part of Rome I should pick out for living in, and on what I should be disposed to call the wrong side of the street. However, this is not to the purpose. Signor Dies has no idea of letting an apartment for a short time--scouted the idea of a month--signified that he could not be brought to the contemplation of two months--was by no means clear that he could come down to the consideration of three. This of course settled the business speedily.

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This hotel is no longer kept by the Melloni I spoke of, but is even better kept than in his time, and is a very admirable house. I have engaged a small apartment for you to be ready on Thursday afternoon (at two piastres and a half--two-and-a-half per day--sitting-room and three bedrooms, one double-bedded and two not). If you would like to change to ours, which is a very good one, on Friday morning, you can of course do so. As our dining-room is large, and there is no table d'hôte here, I will order dinner in it for our united parties at six on Thursday. You will be able to decide how to arrange for the remainder of your stay, after being here and looking about you--two really necessary considerations in Rome.

Pray make my kind regards to Lady Tennent, and Miss Tennent, and your good son, who became homeless for my sake. Mr. Egg and Mr. Collins desire to be also remembered.

It has been beautiful weather since we left Naples, until to-day, when it rains in a very dogged, sullen, downcast, and determined manner. We have been speculating at breakfast on the possibility of its raining in a similar manner at Naples, and of your wandering about the hotel, refusing consolation.

I grieve to report the Orvieto considerably damaged by the general vine failure, but still far from despicable. Montefiascone (the Est wine you know) is to be had here; and we have had one bottle in the very finest condition, and one in a second-rate state.

The Coliseum, in its magnificent old decay, is as grand as ever; and with the electric telegraph darting through one of its ruined arches like a sunbeam and piercing direct through its cruel old heart, is even grander.

Believe me always, very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

ROME, _Monday, Nov. 14th, 1853._

MY DEAREST CATHERINE,

As I have mentioned in my letter to Georgy (written last night but posted with this), I received her letter without yours, to my unbounded astonishment. This morning, on sending again to the post-office, I at last got yours, and most welcome it is with all its contents.

I found Layard at Naples, who went up Vesuvius with us, and was very merry and agreeable. He is travelling with Lord and Lady Somers, and Lord Somers being laid up with an attack of malaria fever, Layard had a day to spare. Craven, who was Lord Normanby's Secretary of Legation in Paris, now lives at Naples, and is married to a French lady. He is very hospitable and hearty, and seemed to have vague ideas that something might be done in a pretty little private theatre he has in his house. He told me of Fanny Kemble and the Sartoris's being here. I have also heard of Thackeray's being here--I don't know how truly. Lockhart is here, and, I fear, very ill. I mean to go and see him.

We are living in the old hotel, which is not now kept by Meloni, who has retired. I don't know whether you recollect an apartment at the top of the house, to which we once ran up with poor Roche to see the horses start in the race at the Carnival time? That is ours, in which I at present write. We have a large back dining-room, a handsome front drawing-room, looking into the Piazza del Popolo, and three front bedrooms, all on a floor. The whole costs us about four shillings a day each. The hotel is better kept than ever. There is a little kitchen to each apartment where the dinner is kept hot. There is no house comparable to it in Paris, and it is better than Mivart's. We start for

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Florence, post, on Friday morning, and I am bargaining for a carriage to take us on to Venice.

Edward is an excellent servant, and always cheerful and ready for his work. He knows no Italian, except the names of a few things, but French is far more widely known here now than in our time. Neither is he an experienced courier as to roads and so forth; but he picks up all that I want to know, here and there, somehow or other. I am perfectly pleased with him, and would rather have him than an older hand. Poor dear Roche comes back to my mind though, often.

I have written to engage the courier from Turin into France, from _Tuesday, the 6th December_. This will bring us home some two days after the tenth, probably. I wrote to Charley from Naples, giving him his choice of meeting me at Lyons, in Paris, or at Boulogne. I gave him full instructions what to do if he arrived before me, and he will write to me at Turin saying where I shall find him. I shall be a day or so later than I supposed as the nearest calculation I could make when I wrote to him; but his waiting for me at an hotel will not matter.

We have had delightful weather, with one day's exception, until to-day, when it rained very heavily and suddenly. Egg and Collins have gone to the Vatican, and I am "going" to try whether I can hit out anything for the Christmas number. Give my love to Forster, and tell him I won't write to him until I hear from him.

I have not come across any English whom I know except Layard and the Emerson Tennents, who will be here on Thursday from Civita Vecchia, and are to dine with us. The losses up to this point have been two pairs of shoes (one mine and one Egg's), Collins's snuff-box, and Egg's dressing-gown.

We observe the managerial punctuality in all our arrangements, and have not had any difference whatever.

I have been reserving this side all through my letter, in the conviction that I had something else to tell you. If I had, I cannot remember what it is. I introduced myself to Salvatore at Vesuvius, and reminded him of the night when poor Le Gros fell down the mountains. He was full of interest directly, remembered the very hole, put on his gold-banded cap, and went up with us himself. He did not know that Le Gros was dead, and was very sorry to hear it. He asked after the ladies, and hoped they were very happy, to which I answered, "Very." The cone is completely changed since our visit, is not at all recognisable as the same place; and there is no fire from the mountain, though there is a great deal of smoke. Its last demonstration was in 1850.

I shall be glad to think of your all being at home again, as I suppose you will be soon after the receipt of this. Will you see to the invitations for Christmas Day, and write to Lætitia? I shall be very happy to be at home again myself, and to embrace you; for of course I miss you _very much_, though I feel that I could not have done a better thing to clear my mind and freshen it up again, than make this expedition. If I find Charley much ahead of me, I shall start on through a night or so to meet him, and leave the others to catch us up. I look upon the journey as almost closed at Turin. My best love to Mamey, and Katey, and Sydney, and Harry, and the darling Plornishghenter. We often talk about them, and both my companions do so with interest. They always send all sorts of messages to you, which I never deliver. God bless you! Take care of yourself.

Ever most affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

ROME, _Thursday Afternoon, Nov. 17th, 1853._

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MY DEAR WILLS,

Just as I wrote the last words of the enclosed little story for the Christmas number just now, Edward brought in your letter. Also one from Forster (tell him) which I have not yet opened. I will write again--and write to him--from Florence. I am delighted to have news of you.

The enclosed little paper for the Christmas number is in a character that nobody else is likely to hit, and which is pretty sure to be considered pleasant. Let Forster have the MS. with the proof, and I know he will correct it to the minutest point. I have a notion of another little story, also for the Christmas number. If I can do it at Venice, I will, and send it straight on. But it is not easy to work under these circumstances. In travelling we generally get up about three; and in resting we are perpetually roaming about in all manner of places. Not to mention my being laid hold of by all manner of people.

KEEP "HOUSEHOLD WORDS" IMAGINATIVE! is the solemn and continual Conductorial Injunction. Delighted to hear of Mrs. Gaskell's contributions.

Yes by all manner of means to Lady Holland. Will you ask her whether she has Sydney Smith's letters to me, which I placed (at Mrs. Smith's request) either in Mrs. Smith's own hands or in Mrs. Austin's? I cannot remember which, but I think the latter.

In making up the Christmas number, don't consider my paper or papers, with any reference saving to where they will fall best. I have no liking, in the case, for any particular place.

All perfectly well. Companion moustaches (particularly Egg's) dismal in the extreme. Kindest regards to Mrs. Wills.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

FLORENCE, _Monday, Nov. 21st, 1853._

H. W.

MY DEAR WILLS,

I sent you by post from Rome, on Wednesday last, a little story for the Christmas number, called "The Schoolboy's Story." I have an idea of another short one, to be called "Nobody's Story," which I hope to be able to do at Venice, and to send you straight home before this month is out. I trust you have received the first safely.

Edward continues to do extremely well. He is always, early and late, what you have seen him. He is a very steady fellow, a little too bashful for a courier even; settles prices of everything now, as soon as we come into an hotel; and improves fast. His knowledge of Italian is painfully defective, and, in the midst of a howling crowd at a post-house or railway station, this deficiency perfectly stuns him. I was obliged last night to get out of the carriage, and pluck him from a crowd of porters who were putting our baggage into wrong conveyances--by cursing and ordering about in all directions. I should think about ten substantives, the names of ten common objects, form his whole Italian stock. It matters very little at the hotels, where a great deal of French is spoken now; but, on the road, if none of his party knew Italian, it would be a very serious inconvenience indeed.

Will you write to Ryland if you have not heard from him, and ask him what the Birmingham reading-nights are really to be? For it is ridiculous enough that I positively don't know. Can't a Saturday Night in a Truck District, or a Sunday Morning among the Ironworkers (a fine

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subject) be knocked out in the course of the same visit?

If you should see any managing man you know in the Oriental and Peninsular Company, I wish you would very gravely mention to him from me that if they are not careful what they are about with their steamship _Valetta_, between Marseilles and Naples, they will suddenly find that they will receive a blow one fine day in _The Times_, which it will be a very hard matter for them ever to recover. When I sailed in her from Genoa, there had been taken on board, _with no caution in most cases from the agent, or hint of discomfort_, at least forty people of both sexes for whom there was no room whatever. I am a pretty old traveller as you know, but I never saw anything like the manner in which pretty women were compelled to lie among the men in the great cabin and on the bare decks. The good humour was beyond all praise, but the natural indignation very great; and I was repeatedly urged to stand up for the public in "Household Words," and to write a plain description of the facts to _The Times_. If I had done either, and merely mentioned that all these people paid heavy first-class fares, I will answer for it that they would have been beaten off the station in a couple of months. I did neither, because I was the best of friends with the captain and all the officers, and never saw such a fine set of men; so admirable in the discharge of their duty, and so zealous to do their best by everybody. It is impossible to praise them too highly. But there is a strong desire at all the ports along the coast to throw impediments in the way of the English service, and to favour the French and Italian boats. In those boats (which I know very well) great care is taken of the passengers, and the accommodation is very good. If the Peninsula and Oriental add to all this the risk of such an exposure as they are _certain_ to get (if they go on so) in _The Times_, they are dead sure to get a blow from the public which will make them stagger again. I say nothing of the number of the passengers and the room in the ship's boats, though the frightful consideration the contrast presented must have been in more minds than mine. I speak only of the taking people for whom there is no sort of accommodation as the most decided swindle, and the coolest, I ever did with my eyes behold.

Kindest regards from fellow-travellers.
Ever, my dear Wills, faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

VENICE, _Friday, November 25th, 1853._

MY DEAREST GEORGY,

We found an English carriage from Padua at Florence, and hired it to bring it back again. We travelled post with four horses all the way (from Padua to this place there is a railroad) and travelled all night. We left Florence at half-past six in the morning, and got to Padua at eleven next day--yesterday. The cold at night was most intense. I don't think I have ever felt it colder. But our carriage was very comfortable, and we had some wine and some rum to keep us warm. We came by Bologna (where we had tea) and Ferrara. You may imagine the delays in the night when I tell you that each of our passports, after receiving _six visés_ at Florence, received in the course of the one night, _nine more_, every one of which was written and sealed; somebody being slowly knocked out of bed to do it every time! It really was excruciating.

Landor had sent me a letter to his son, and on the day before we left Florence I thought I would go out to Fiesoli and leave it. So I got a little one-horse open carriage and drove off alone. We were within half a mile of the Villa Landoro, and were driving down a very narrow lane like one of those at Albaro, when I saw an elderly lady coming towards us, very well dressed in silk of the Queen's blue, and walking freshly and briskly against the wind at a good round pace. It was a bright, cloudless, very cold day, and I thought she walked with great spirit, as if she enjoyed it. I also thought (perhaps that was having him in my

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mind) that her ruddy face was shaped like Landor's. All of a sudden the coachman pulls up, and looks enquiringly at me. "What's the matter?" says I. "Ecco la Signora Landoro?" says he. "For the love of Heaven, don't stop," says I. "_I_ don't know her, I am only going to the house to leave a letter--go on!" Meanwhile she (still coming on) looked at me, and I looked at her, and we were both a good deal confused, and so went our several ways. Altogether, I think it was as disconcerting a meeting as I ever took part in, and as odd a one. Under any other circumstances I should have introduced myself, but the separation made the circumstances so peculiar that "I didn't like."

The Plornishghenter is evidently the greatest, noblest, finest, cleverest, brightest, and most brilliant of boys. Your account of him is most delightful, and I hope to find another letter from you somewhere on the road, making me informed of his demeanour on your return. On which occasion, as on every other, I have no doubt he will have distinguished himself as an irresistibly attracting, captivating May-Roon-Ti-Groon-Ter. Give him a good many kisses for me. I quite agree with Syd as to his ideas of paying attention to the old gentleman. It's not bad, but deficient in originality. The usual deficiency of an inferior intellect with so great a model before him. I am very curious to see whether the Plorn remembers me on my reappearance.

I meant to have gone to work this morning, and to have tried a second little story for the Christmas number of "Household Words," but my letters have (most pleasantly) put me out, and I defer all such wise efforts until to-morrow. Egg and Collins are out in a gondola with a servitore di piazza.

You will find this but a stupid letter, but I really have no news. We go to the opera, whenever there is one, see sights, eat and drink, sleep in a natural manner two or three nights, and move on again. Edward was a little crushed at Padua yesterday. He had been extraordinarily cold all night in the rumble, and had got out our clothes to dress, and I think must have been projecting a five or six hours' sleep, when I announced that he was to come on here in an hour and a half to get the rooms and order dinner. He fell into a sudden despondency of the profoundest kind, but was quite restored when we arrived here between eight and nine. We found him waiting at the Custom House with a gondola in his usual brisk condition.

It is extraordinary how few English we see. With the exception of a gentlemanly young fellow (in a consumption I am afraid), married to the tiniest little girl, in a brown straw hat, and travelling with his sister and her sister, and a consumptive single lady, travelling with a maid and a Scotch terrier christened Trotty Veck, we have scarcely seen any, and have certainly spoken to none, since we left Switzerland. These were aboard the _Valetta_, where the captain and I indulged in all manner of insane suppositions concerning the straw hat--the "Little Matron" we called her; by which name she soon became known all over the ship. The day we entered Rome, and the moment we entered it, there was the Little Matron, alone with antiquity--and Murray--on the wall. The very first church I entered, there was the Little Matron. On the last afternoon, when I went alone to St. Peter's, there was the Little Matron and her party. The best of it is, that I was extremely intimate with them, invited them to Tavistock House, when they come home in the spring, and have not the faintest idea of their name.

There was no table d'hôte at Rome, or at Florence, but there is one here, and we dine at it to-day, so perhaps we may stumble upon somebody. I have heard from Charley this morning, who appoints (wisely) Paris as our place of meeting. I had a letter from Coote, at Florence, informing me that his volume of "Household Songs" was ready, and requesting permission to dedicate it to me. Which of course I gave.

I am beginning to think of the Birmingham readings. I suppose you won't object to be taken to hear them? This is the last place at which we shall make a stay of more than one day. We shall stay at Parma one, and

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at Turin one, supposing De la Rue to have been successful in taking places with the courier into France for the day on which we want them (he was to write to bankers at Turin to do it), and then we shall come hard and fast home. I feel almost there already, and shall be delighted to close the pleasant trip, and get back to my own Piccola Camera--if, being English, you understand what _that_ is. My best love and kisses to Mamey, Katey, Sydney, Harry, and the noble Plorn. Last, not least, to yourself, and many of them. I will not wait over to-morrow, tell Kate, for her letter; but will write then, whether or no.

Ever, my dearest Georgy,
Most affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Marcus Stone.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _December 19th, 1853._

MY DEAR MARCUS,

You made an excellent sketch from a book of mine which I have received (and have preserved) with great pleasure. Will you accept from me, in remembrance of it, _this_ little book? I believe it to be true, though it may be sometimes not as genteel as history has a habit of being.

Faithfully yours.

FOOTNOTE:

[15] Meaning Mr. W. H. Wills himself.

1854.

NARRATIVE.

The summer of this year was also spent at Boulogne, M. Beaucourt being again the landlord; but the house, though still on the same "property," stood on the top of the hill, above the Moulineaux, and was called the Villa du Camp de Droite.

In the early part of the year Charles Dickens paid several visits to the English provinces, giving readings from his books at many of the large manufacturing towns, and always for some good and charitable purpose.

He was still at work upon "Hard Times," which was finished during the summer, and was constantly occupied with "Household Words." Many of our letters for this year are to the contributors to this journal. The last is an unusually interesting one. He had for some time past been much charmed with the writings of a certain Miss Berwick, who, he knew, to be a contributor under a feigned name. When at last the lady confided her real name, and he discovered in the young poetess the daughter of his dear friends, Mr.[16] and Mrs. Procter, the "new sensation" caused him intense surprise, and the greatest pleasure and delight. Miss Adelaide Procter was, from this time, a frequent contributor to "Household Words," more especially to the Christmas numbers.

There are really very few letters in this year requiring any explanation from us--many explaining themselves, and many having allusion to incidents in the past year, which have been duly noted by us for 1853.

The portrait mentioned in the letter to Mr. Collins, for which he was sitting to Mr. E. M. Ward, R.A., was to be one of a series of oil sketches of the then celebrated literary men of the day, in their studies. We believe this portrait to be now in the possession of Mrs.

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Ward.

In explanation of the letter to Mr. John Saunders on the subject of the production of the latter's play, called "Love's Martyrdom," we will give the dramatist's own words:

> "Having printed for private circulation a play entitled 'Love's Martyrdom,' and for which I desired to obtain the independent judgment of some of our most eminent literary men, before seeking the ordeal of the stage, I sent a copy to Mr. Dickens, and the letter in question is his acknowledgment.
>
> * * * * *
>
> "He immediately took steps for the introduction of the play to the theatre. At first he arranged with Mr. Phelps, of Sadler's Wells, but subsequently, with that gentleman's consent, removed it to the Haymarket. There it was played with Miss Helen Faucit in the character of Margaret, Miss Swanborough (who shortly after married and left the stage) as Julia, Mr. Barry Sullivan as Franklyn, and Mr. Howe as Laneham.
>
> "As far as the play itself was concerned, it was received on all sides as a genuine dramatic and poetic success, achieved, however, as an eminent critic came to my box to say, through greater difficulties than he had ever before seen a dramatic work pass through. The time has not come for me to speak freely of these, but I may point to two of them: the first being the inadequate rehearsals, which caused Mr. Dickens to tell me on the stage, four or five days only before the first performance, that the play was not then in as good a state as it would have been in at Paris three weeks earlier. The other was the breakdown of the performer of a most important secondary part; a collapse so absolute that he was changed by the management before the second representation of the piece."

This ill-luck of the beginning, pursued the play to its close.

> "The Haymarket Theatre was at the time in the very lowest state of prostration, through the Crimean War; the habitual frequenters were lovers of comedy, and enjoyers of farce and burlesque; and there was neither the money nor the faith to call to the theatre by the usual methods, vigorously and discriminatingly pursued, the multitudes that I believed could have been so called to a better and more romantic class of comedy.
>
> "Even under these and other, similarly depressing circumstances, the nightly receipts were about £60, the expenses being £80; and on the last--an author's--night, there was an excellent and enthusiastic house, yielding, to the best of my recollection, about £140, but certainly between £120 and £140. And with that night--the sixth or seventh--the experiment ended."

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[Sidenote: Mr. Walter Savage Landor.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _January 7th, 1854._

MY DEAR LANDOR,

I heartily assure you that to have your name coupled with anything I have done is an honour and a pleasure to me. I cannot say that I am sorry that you should have thought it necessary to write to me, for it is always delightful to me to see your hand, and to know (though I want no outward and visible sign as an assurance of the fact) that you are ever the same generous, earnest, gallant man.

Catherine and Georgina send their kind loves. So does Walter Landor, who came home from school with high judicial commendation and a prize into the bargain.

Ever, my dear Landor, affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Friday, January 13th, 1854._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

On the very day after I sent the Christmas number to Rockingham, I heard of your being at Brighton. I should have sent another there, but that I had a misgiving I might seem to be making too much of it. For, when I thought of the probability of the Rockingham copy going on to Brighton, and pictured to myself the advent of two of those very large envelopes at once at Junction House at breakfast time, a sort of comic modesty overcame me. I was heartily pleased with the Birmingham audience, which was a very fine one. I never saw, nor do I suppose anybody ever did, such an interesting sight as the working people's night. There were two thousand five hundred of them there, and a more delicately observant audience it is impossible to imagine. They lost nothing, misinterpreted nothing, followed everything closely, laughed and cried with most delightful earnestness, and animated me to that extent that I felt as if we were all bodily going up into the clouds together. It is an enormous place for the purpose; but I had considered all that carefully, and I believe made the most distant person hear as well as if I had been reading in my own room. I was a little doubtful before I began on the first night whether it was quite practicable to conceal the requisite effort; but I soon had the satisfaction of finding that it was, and that we were all going on together, in the first page, as easily, to all appearance, as if we had been sitting round the fire.

I am obliged to go out on Monday at five and to dine out; but I will be at home at any time before that hour that you may appoint. You say you are only going to stay one night in town; but if you could stay two, and would dine with us alone on Tuesday, _that_ is the plan that we should all like best. Let me have one word from you by post on Monday morning. Few things that I saw, when I was away, took my fancy so much as the Electric Telegraph, piercing, like a sunbeam, right through the cruel old heart of the Coliseum at Rome. And on the summit of the Alps, among the eternal ice and snow, there it was still, with its posts sustained against the sweeping mountain winds by clusters of great beams--to say nothing of its being at the bottom of the sea as we crossed the Channel. With kindest loves,

Ever, my dear Mrs. Watson,
Most faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Mary Boyle.]

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TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Monday, January 16th, 1854._

MY DEAR MARY,

It is all very well to pretend to love me as you do. Ah! If you loved as _I_ love, Mary! But, when my breast is tortured by the perusal of such a letter as yours, Falkland, Falkland, madam, becomes my part in "The Rivals," and I play it with desperate earnestness.

As thus:

> FALKLAND (_to Acres_). Then you see her, sir, sometimes?
>
> ACRES. See her! Odds beams and sparkles, yes. See her acting! Night after night.
>
> FALKLAND (_aside and furious_). Death and the devil! Acting, and I not there! Pray, sir (_with constrained calmness_), what does she act?
>
> ACRES. Odds, monthly nurses and babbies! Sairey Gamp and Betsey Prig, "which, wotever it is, my dear (_mimicking_), I likes it brought reg'lar and draw'd mild!" _That's_ very like her.
>
> FALKLAND. Confusion! Laceration! Perhaps, sir, perhaps she sometimes acts--ha! ha! perhaps she sometimes acts, I say--eh! sir?--a--ha, ha, ha! a fairy? (_With great bitterness._)
>
> ACRES. Odds, gauzy pinions and spangles, yes! You should hear her sing as a fairy. You should see her dance as a fairy. Tol de rol lol--la--lol--liddle diddle. (_Sings and dances_). _That's_ very like her.
>
> FALKLAND. Misery! while I, devoted to her image, can scarcely write a line now and then, or pensively read aloud to the people of Birmingham. (_To him._) And they applaud her, no doubt they applaud her, sir. And she--I see her! Curtsies and smiles! And they--curses on them! they laugh and--ha, ha, ha!--and clap their hands--and say it's very good. Do they not say it's very good, sir? Tell me. Do they not?
>
> ACRES. Odds, thunderings and pealings, of course they do! and the third fiddler, little Tweaks, of the county town, goes into fits. Ho, ho, ho, I can't bear it (_mimicking_); take me out! Ha, ha, ha! O what a one she is! She'll be the death of me. Ha, ha, ha, ha! _That's_ very like her!
>
> FALKLAND. Damnation! Heartless Mary! (_Rushes out._)

Scene opens, and discloses coals of fire, heaped up into form of letters, representing the following inscription:

> When the praise thou meetest
> To thine ear is sweetest,
> O then
>
> REMEMBER JOE!
>
> (_Curtain falls._)

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[Sidenote: M. de Cerjat.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Monday, Jan. 16th, 1854._

MY DEAR CERJAT,

Guilty. The accused pleads guilty, but throws himself upon the mercy of the court. He humbly represents that his usual hour for getting up, in the course of his travels, was three o'clock in the morning, and his usual hour for going to bed, nine or ten the next night. That the places in which he chiefly deviated from these rules of hardship, were Rome and Venice; and that at those cities of fame he shut himself up in solitude, and wrote Christmas papers for the incomparable publication known as "Household Words." That his correspondence at all times, arising out of the business of the said "Household Words" alone, was very heavy. That his offence, though undoubtedly committed, was unavoidable, and that a nominal punishment will meet the justice of the case.

We had only three bad days out of the whole time. After Naples, which was very hot, we had very cold, clear, bright weather. When we got to Chamounix, we found the greater part of the inns shut up and the people gone. No visitors whatsoever, and plenty of snow. These were the very best circumstances under which to see the place, and we stayed a couple of days at the Hôtel de Londres (hastily re-furbished for our entertainment), and climbed through the snow to the Mer de Glace, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Then we went, in mule procession (I walking) to the old hotel at Martigny, where Collins was ill, and I suppose I bored Egg to death by talking all the evening about the time when you and I were there together. Naples (a place always painful to me, in the intense degradation of the people) seems to have only three classes of inhabitants left in it--priests, soldiers (standing army one hundred thousand strong), and spies. Of macaroni we ate very considerable quantities everywhere; also, for the benefit of Italy, we took our share of every description of wine. At Naples I found Layard, the Nineveh traveller, who is a friend of mine and an admirable fellow; so we fraternised and went up Vesuvius together, and ate more macaroni and drank more wine. At Rome, the day after our arrival, they were making a saint at St. Peter's; on which occasion I was surprised to find what an immense number of pounds of wax candles it takes to make the regular, genuine article. From Turin to Paris, over the Mont Cenis, we made only one journey. The Rhone, being frozen and foggy, was not to be navigated, so we posted from Lyons to Chalons, and everybody else was doing the like, and there were no horses to be got, and we were stranded at midnight in amazing little cabarets, with nothing worth mentioning to eat in them, except the iron stove, which was rusty, and the billiard-table, which was musty. We left Turin on a Tuesday evening, and arrived in Paris on a Friday evening; where I found my son Charley, hot--or I should rather say cold--from Germany, with his arms and legs so grown out of his coat and trousers, that I was ashamed of him, and was reduced to the necessity of taking him, under cover of night, to a ready-made establishment in the Palais Royal, where they put him into balloon-waisted pantaloons, and increased my confusion. Leaving Calais on the evening of Sunday, the 10th of December; fact of distinguished author's being aboard, was telegraphed to Dover; thereupon authorities of Dover Railway detained train to London for distinguished author's arrival, rather to the exasperation of British public. D. A. arrived at home between ten and eleven that night, thank God, and found all well and happy.

I think you see _The Times_, and if so, you will have seen a very graceful and good account of the Birmingham readings. It was the most remarkable thing that England could produce, I think, in the way of a vast intelligent assemblage; and the success was most wonderful and prodigious--perfectly overwhelming and astounding altogether. They wound up by giving my wife a piece of plate, having given me one before; and when you come to dine here (may it be soon!) it shall be duly displayed

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in the centre of the table.

Tell Mrs. Cerjat, to whom my love, and all our loves, that I have highly excited them at home here by giving them an account in detail of all your daughters; further, that the way in which Catherine and Georgina have questioned me and cross-questioned me about you all, notwithstanding, is maddening. Mrs. Watson has been obliged to pass her Christmas at Brighton alone with her younger children, in consequence of her two eldest boys coming home to Rockingham from school with the whooping-cough. The quarantine expires to-day, however; and she drives here, on her way back into Northamptonshire, to-morrow.

The sad affair of the Preston strike remains unsettled; and I hear, on strong authority, that if that were settled, the Manchester people are prepared to strike next. Provisions very dear, but the people very temperate and quiet in general. So ends this jumble, which looks like the index to a chapter in a book, I find, when I read it over.

Ever, my dear Cerjat, heartily your Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. Arthur Ryland.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _January 18th, 1854._

MY DEAR SIR,

I am quite delighted to find that you are so well satisfied, and that the enterprise has such a light upon it. I think I never was better pleased in my life than I was with my Birmingham friends.

That principle of fair representation of all orders carefully carried out, I believe, will do more good than any of us can yet foresee. Does it not seem a strange thing to consider that I have never yet seen with these eyes of mine, a mechanic in any recognised position on the platform of a Mechanics' Institution?

Mr. Wills may be expected to sink, shortly, under the ravages of letters from all parts of England, Ireland, and Scotland, proposing readings. He keeps up his spirits, but I don't see how they are to carry him through.

Mrs. Dickens and Miss Hogarth beg their kindest regards; and I am, my dear sir, with much regard, too,

Very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Charles Knight.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _January 30th, 1854._

MY DEAR KNIGHT,

Indeed there is no fear of my thinking you the owner of a cold heart. I am more than three parts disposed, however, to be ferocious with you for ever writing down such a preposterous truism.

My satire is against those who see figures and averages, and nothing else--the representatives of the wickedest and most enormous vice of this time--the men who, through long years to come, will do more to damage the real useful truths of political economy than I could do (if I tried) in my whole life; the addled heads who would take the average of cold in the Crimea during twelve months as a reason for clothing a soldier in nankeens on a night when he would be frozen to death in fur, and who would comfort the labourer in travelling twelve miles a day to and from his work, by telling him that the average distance of one inhabited place from another in the whole area of England, is not more than four miles. Bah! What have you to do with these?

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I shall put the book upon a private shelf (after reading it) by "Once upon a Time." I should have buried my pipe of peace and sent you this blast of my war-horn three or four days ago, but that I have been reading to a little audience of three thousand five hundred at Bradford.

Ever affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Rev. James White.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Tuesday, March 7th, 1854._

MY DEAR WHITE,

I am tardy in answering your letter; but "Hard Times," and an immense amount of enforced correspondence, are my excuse. To you a sufficient one, I know.

As I should judge from outward and visible appearances, I have exactly as much chance of seeing the Russian fleet reviewed by the Czar as I have of seeing the English fleet reviewed by the Queen.

"Club Law" made me laugh very much when I went over it in the proof yesterday. It is most capitally done, and not (as I feared it might be) too directly. It is in the next number but one.

Mrs. ---- has gone stark mad--and stark naked--on the spirit-rapping imposition. She was found t'other day in the street, clothed only in her chastity, a pocket-handkerchief and a visiting card. She had been informed, it appeared, by the spirits, that if she went out in that trim she would be invisible. She is now in a madhouse, and, I fear, hopelessly insane. One of the curious manifestations of her disorder is that she can bear nothing black. There is a terrific business to be done, even when they are obliged to put coals on her fire.

---- has a thing called a Psycho-grapher, which writes at the dictation of spirits. It delivered itself, a few nights ago, of this extraordinarily lucid message:

X. Y. Z!

upon which it was gravely explained by the true believers that "the spirits were out of temper about something." Said ---- had a great party on Sunday, when it was rumoured "a count was going to raise the dead." I stayed till the ghostly hour, but the rumour was unfounded, for neither count nor plebeian came up to the spiritual scratch. It is really inexplicable to me that a man of his calibre can be run away with by such small deer.

À propos of spiritual messages comes in Georgina, and, hearing that I am writing to you, delivers the following enigma to be conveyed to Mrs. White:

"Wyon of the Mint lives _at_ the Mint."

Feeling my brain going after this, I only trust it with loves from all to all.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. Charles Knight.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _March 17th, 1854._

MY DEAR KNIGHT,

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I have read the article with much interest. It is most conscientiously done, and presents a great mass of curious information condensed into a surprisingly small space.

I have made a slight note or two here and there, with a soft pencil, so that a touch of indiarubber will make all blank again.

And I earnestly entreat your attention to the point (I have been working upon it, weeks past, in "Hard Times") which I have jocosely suggested on the last page but one. The English are, so far as I know, the hardest-worked people on whom the sun shines. Be content if, in their wretched intervals of pleasure, they read for amusement and do no worse. They are born at the oar, and they live and die at it. Good God, what would we have of them!

Affectionately yours always.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

OFFICE OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS,"
NO. 16, WELLINGTON STREET, NORTH STRAND,
Wednesday, April 12th, 1854.

* * * * *

I know all the walks for many and many miles round about Malvern, and delightful walks they are. I suppose you are already getting very stout, very red, very jovial (in a physical point of view) altogether.

Mark and I walked to Dartford from Greenwich, last Monday, and found Mrs. ---- acting "The Stranger" (with a strolling company from the Standard Theatre) in Mr. Munn's schoolroom. The stage was a little wider than your table here, and its surface was composed of loose boards laid on the school forms. Dogs sniffed about it during the performances, and _the_ carpenter's highlows were ostentatiously taken off and displayed in the proscenium.

We stayed until a quarter to ten, when we were obliged to fly to the railroad, but we sent the landlord of the hotel down with the following articles:

1 bottle superior old port,
1 do. do. golden sherry,
1 do. do. best French brandy,
1 do. do. 1st quality old Tom gin,
1 bottle superior prime Jamaica rum,
1 do. do. small still _Isla_ whiskey,
1 kettle boiling water, two pounds finest white lump sugar,
Our cards,
1 lemon,
and
Our compliments.

The effect we had previously made upon the theatrical company by being beheld in the first two chairs--there was nearly a pound in the house--was altogether electrical.

My ladies send their kindest regards, and are disappointed at your not saying that you drink two-and-twenty tumblers of the limpid element, every day. The children also unite in "loves," and the Plornishghenter, on being asked if he would send his, replies "Yes--man," which we understand to signify cordial acquiescence.

Forster just come back from lecturing at Sherborne. Describes said lecture as "Blaze of Triumph."

H. W. AGAIN.

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Miss--I mean Mrs.--Bell's story very nice. I have sent it to the printer, and entitled it "The Green Ring and the Gold Ring."

This apartment looks desolate in your absence; but, O Heavens, how tidy!

F. W.

Mrs. Wills supposed to have gone into a convent at Somers Town.

My dear Wills,
Ever faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. B. W. Procter.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Saturday Night, April 15th, 1854._

MY DEAR PROCTER,

I have read the "Fatal Revenge." Don't do what the minor theatrical people call "despi-ser" me, but I think it's very bad. The concluding narrative is by far the most meritorious part of the business. Still, the people are so very convulsive and tumble down so many places, and are always knocking other people's bones about in such a very irrational way, that I object. The way in which earthquakes won't swallow the monsters, and volcanoes in eruption won't boil them, is extremely aggravating. Also their habit of bolting when they are going to explain anything.

You have sent me a very different and a much better book; and for that I am truly grateful. With the dust of "Maturin" in my eyes, I sat down and read "The Death of Friends," and the dust melted away in some of those tears it is good to shed. I remember to have read "The Backroom Window" some years ago, and I have associated it with you ever since. It is a most delightful paper. But the two volumes are all delightful, and I have put them on a shelf where you sit down with Charles Lamb again, with Talfourd's vindication of him hard by.

We never meet. I hope it is not irreligious, but in this strange London I have an inclination to adapt a portion of the Church Service to our common experience. Thus:

"We have left unmet the people whom we ought to have met, and we have met the people whom we ought not to have met, and there seems to be no help in us."

But I am always, my dear Procter,
(At a distance),
Very cordially yours.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Gaskell.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _April 21st, 1854._

MY DEAR MRS. GASKELL,

I safely received the paper from Mr. Shaen, welcomed it with three cheers, and instantly despatched it to the printer, who has it in hand now.

I have no intention of striking. The monstrous claims at domination made by a certain class of manufacturers, and the extent to which the way is made easy for working men to slide down into discontent under such hands, are within my scheme; but I am not going to strike, so don't be afraid of me. But I wish you would look at the story yourself, and judge where and how near I seem to be approaching what you have in your mind.

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The first two months of it will show that.

I will "make my will" on the first favourable occasion. We were playing games last night, and were fearfully clever. With kind regards to Mr. Gaskell, always, my dear Mrs. Gaskell,

Faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _May 30th, 1854._

MY DEAR STONE,

I can_not_ stand a total absence of ventilation, and I should have liked (in an amiable and persuasive manner) to have punched ----'s head, and opened the register stoves. I saw the supper tables, sir, in an empty state, and was charmed with them. Likewise I recovered myself from a swoon, occasioned by long contact with an unventilated man of a strong flavour from Copenhagen, by drinking an unknown species of celestial lemonade in that enchanted apartment.

I am grieved to say that on Saturday I stand engaged to dine, at three weeks' notice, with one ----, a man who has read every book that ever was written, and is a perfect gulf of information. Before exploding a mine of knowledge he has a habit of closing one eye and wrinkling up his nose, so that he seems perpetually to be taking aim at you and knocking you over with a terrific charge. Then he looks again, and takes another aim. So you are always on your back, with your legs in the air.

How can a man be conversed with, or walked with, in the county of Middlesex, when he is reviewing the Kentish Militia on the shores of Dover, or sailing, every day for three weeks, between Dover and Calais?

Ever affectionately.

P.S.--"Humphry Clinker" is certainly Smollett's best. I am rather divided between "Peregrine Pickle" and "Roderick Random," both extraordinarily good in their way, which is a way without tenderness; but you will have to read them both, and I send the first volume of "Peregrine" as the richer of the two.

[Sidenote: Mr. Peter Cunningham.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _June 7th, 1854._

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,

I cannot become one of the committee for Wilson's statue, after entertaining so strong an opinion against the expediency of such a memorial in poor dear Talfourd's case. But I will subscribe my three guineas, and will pay that sum to the account at Coutts's when I go there next week, before leaving town.

"The Goldsmiths" admirably done throughout. It is a book I have long desired to see done, and never expected to see half so well done. Many thanks to you for it.

Ever faithfully yours.

P.S.--Please to observe the address at Boulogne: "Villa du Camp de Droite."

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

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VILLA DU CAMP DE DROITE, _Thursday, June 22nd, 1854._

MY DEAR WILLS,

I have nothing to say, but having heard from you this morning, think I may as well report all well.

We have a most charming place here. It beats the former residence all to nothing. We have a beautiful garden, with all its fruits and flowers, and a field of our own, and a road of our own away to the Column, and everything that is airy and fresh. The great Beaucourt hovers about us like a guardian genius, and I imagine that no English person in a carriage could by any possibility find the place.

Of the wonderful inventions and contrivances with which a certain inimitable creature has made the most of it, I will say nothing, until you have an opportunity of inspecting the same. At present I will only observe that I have written exactly seventy-two words of "Hard Times," since I have been here.

The children arrived on Tuesday night, by London boat, in every stage and aspect of sea-sickness.

The camp is about a mile off, and huts are now building for (they say) sixty thousand soldiers. I don't imagine it to be near enough to bother us.

If the weather ever should be fine, it might do you good sometimes to come over with the proofs on a Saturday, when the tide serves well, before you and Mrs. W. make your annual visit. Recollect there is always a bed, and no sudden appearance will put us out.

Kind regards.
Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. Wilkie Collins.]

VILLA DU CAMP DE DROITE, BOULOGNE,
Wednesday Night, July 12th, 1854.

MY DEAR COLLINS,

Bobbing up, corkwise, from a sea of "Hard Times" I beg to report this tenement--AMAZING!!! Range of view and air, most free and delightful; hill-side garden, delicious; field, stupendous; speculations in haycocks already effected by the undersigned, with the view to the keeping up of a "home" at rounders.

I hope to finish and get to town by next Wednesday night, the 19th; what do you say to coming back with me on the following Tuesday? The interval I propose to pass in a career of amiable dissipation and unbounded license in the metropolis. If you will come and breakfast with me about midnight--anywhere--any day, and go to bed no more until we fly to these pastoral retreats, I shall be delighted to have so vicious an associate.

Will you undertake to let Ward know that if he still wishes me to sit to him, he shall have me as long as he likes, at Tavistock House, on Monday, the 24th, from ten A.M.?

I have made it understood here that we shall want to be taken the greatest care of this summer, and to be fed on nourishing meats. Several new dishes have been rehearsed and have come out very well. I have met with what they call in the City "a parcel" of the celebrated 1846 champagne. It is a very fine wine, and calculated to do us good when weak.

The camp is about a mile off. Voluptuous English authors reposing from

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their literary fatigues (on their laurels) are expected, when all other things fail, to lie on straw in the midst of it when the days are sunny, and stare at the blue sea until they fall asleep. (About one hundred and fifty soldiers have been at various times billeted on Beaucourt since we have been here, and he has clinked glasses with them every one, and read a MS. book of his father's, on soldiers in general, to them all.)

I shall be glad to hear what you say to these various proposals. I write with the Emperor in the town, and a great expenditure of tricolour floating thereabouts, but no stir makes its way to this inaccessible retreat. It is like being up in a balloon. Lionising Englishmen and Germans start to call, and are found lying imbecile in the road halfway up. Ha! ha! ha!

Kindest regards from all. The Plornishghenter adds Mr. and Mrs. Goose's duty.

Ever faithfully.

P.S.--The cobbler has been ill these many months, and unable to work; has had a carbuncle in his back, and has it cut three times a week. The little dog sits at the door so unhappy and anxious to help, that I every day expect to see him beginning a pair of top boots.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

OFFICE OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS," _Saturday, July 22nd, 1854._

MY DEAR GEORGINA,

Neither you nor Catherine did justice to Collins's book.[17] I think it far away the cleverest novel I have ever seen written by a new hand. It is in some respects masterly. "Valentine Blyth" is as original, and as well done as anything can be. The scene where he shows his pictures is full of an admirable humour. Old Mat is admirably done. In short, I call it a very remarkable book, and have been very much surprised by its great merit.

Tell Kate, with my love, that she will receive to-morrow in a little parcel, the complete proofs of "Hard Times." They will not be corrected, but she will find them pretty plain. I am just now going to put them up for her. I saw Grisi the night before last in "Lucrezia Borgia"--finer than ever. Last night I was drinking gin-slings till daylight, with Buckstone of all people, who saw me looking at the Spanish dancers, and insisted on being convivial. I have been in a blaze of dissipation altogether, and have succeeded (I think), in knocking the remembrance of my work out.

Loves to all the darlings, from the Plornish-Maroon upward. London is far hotter than Naples.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Gaskell.]

VILLA DU CAMP DE DROITE, BOULOGNE,
Thursday, Aug. 17th, 1854.

MY DEAR MRS. GASKELL,

I sent your MS. off to Wills yesterday, with instructions to forward it to you without delay. I hope you will have received it before this notification comes to hand.

The usual festivity of this place at present--which is the blessing of

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soldiers by the ten thousand--has just now been varied by the baptising of some new bells, lately hung up (to my sorrow and lunacy) in a neighbouring church. An English lady was godmother; and there was a procession afterwards, wherein an English gentleman carried "the relics" in a highly suspicious box, like a barrel organ; and innumerable English ladies in white gowns and bridal wreaths walked two and two, as if they had all gone to school again.

At a review, on the same day, I was particularly struck by the commencement of the proceedings, and its singular contrast to the usual military operations in Hyde Park. Nothing would induce the general commanding in chief to begin, until chairs were brought for all the lady-spectators. And a detachment of about a hundred men deployed into all manner of farmhouses to find the chairs. Nobody seemed to lose any dignity by the transaction, either.

With kindest regards, my dear Mrs. Gaskell,
Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: Rev. William Harness.]

VILLA DU CAMP DE DROITE, BOULOGNE,
Saturday, Aug. 19th, 1854.

MY DEAR HARNESS,

Yes. The book came from me. I could not put a memorandum to that effect on the title-page, in consequence of my being here.

I am heartily glad you like it. I know the piece you mention, but am far from being convinced by it. A great misgiving is upon me, that in many things (this thing among the rest) too many are martyrs to _our_ complacency and satisfaction, and that we must give up something thereof for their poor sakes.

My kindest regards to your sister, and my love (if I may send it) to another of your relations.

Always, very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Henry Austin.]

VILLA DU CAMP DE DROITE, BOULOGNE,
Wednesday, Sept. 6th, 1854.

* * * * *

Any Saturday on which the tide serves your purpose (next Saturday excepted) will suit me for the flying visit you hint at; and we shall be delighted to see you. Although the camp is not above a mile from this gate, we never see or hear of it, unless we choose. If you could come here in dry weather you would find it as pretty, airy, and pleasant a situation as you ever saw. We illuminated the whole front of the house last night--eighteen windows--and an immense palace of light was seen sparkling on this hill-top for miles and miles away. I rushed to a distance to look at it, and never saw anything of the same kind half so pretty.

The town[18] looks like one immense flag, it is so decked out with streamers; and as the royal yacht approached yesterday--the whole range of the cliff tops lined with troops, and the artillery matches in hand, all ready to fire the great guns the moment she made the harbour; the sailors standing up in the prow of the yacht, the Prince in a blazing uniform, left alone on the deck for everybody to see--a stupendous silence, and then such an infernal blazing and banging as never was heard. It was almost as fine a sight as one could see under a deep blue

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sky. In our own proper illumination I laid on all the servants, all the children now at home, all the visitors (it is the annual "Household Words" time), one to every window, with everything ready to light up on the ringing of a big dinner-bell by your humble correspondent. St. Peter's on Easter Monday was the result.

Best love from all.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. Wilkie Collins.]

BOULOGNE, _Tuesday, Sept. 26th, 1854._

MY DEAR COLLINS,

First, I have to report that I received your letter with much pleasure.

Secondly, that the weather has entirely changed. It is so cool that we have not only a fire in the drawing-room regularly, but another to dine by. The delicious freshness of the air is charming, and it is generally bright and windy besides.

Thirdly, that ----'s intellectual faculties appear to have developed suddenly. He has taken to borrowing money; from which I infer (as he has no intention whatever of repaying) that his mental powers are of a high order. Having got a franc from me, he fell upon Mrs. Dickens for five sous. She declining to enter into the transaction, he beleaguered that feeble little couple, Harry and Sydney, into paying two sous each for "tickets" to behold the ravishing spectacle of an utterly-non-existent-and-there-fore-impossible-to-be-produced toy theatre. He eats stony apples, and harbours designs upon his fellow-creatures until he has become light-headed. From the couch rendered uneasy by this disorder he has arisen with an excessively protuberant forehead, a dull slow eye, a complexion of a leaden hue, and a croaky voice. He has become a horror to me, and I resort to the most cowardly expedients to avoid meeting him. He, on the other hand, wanting another franc, dodges me round those trees at the corner, and at the back door; and I have a presentiment upon me that I shall fall a sacrifice to his cupidity at last.

On the Sunday night after you left, or rather on the Monday morning at half-past one, Mary was taken _very ill_. English cholera. She was sinking so fast, and the sickness was so exceedingly alarming, that it evidently would not do to wait for Elliotson. I caused everything to be done that we had naturally often thought of, in a lonely house so full of children, and fell back upon the old remedy; though the difficulty of giving even it was rendered very great by the frightful sickness. Thank God, she recovered so favourably that by breakfast time she was fast asleep. She slept twenty-four hours, and has never had the least uneasiness since. I heard--of course afterwards--that she had had an attack of sickness two nights before. I think that long ride and those late dinners had been too much for her. Without them I am inclined to doubt whether she would have been ill.

Last Sunday as ever was, the theatre took fire at half-past eleven in the forenoon. Being close by the English church, it showered hot sparks into that temple through the open windows. Whereupon the congregation shrieked and rose and tumbled out into the street; ---- benignly observing to the only ancient female who would listen to him, "I fear we must part;" and afterwards being beheld in the street--in his robes and with a kind of sacred wildness on him--handing ladies over the kennel into shops and other structures, where they had no business whatever, or the least desire to go. I got to the back of the theatre, where I could see in through some great doors that had been forced open, and whence the spectacle of the whole interior, burning like a red-hot cavern, was really very fine, even in the daylight. Meantime the soldiers were at work, "saving" the scenery by pitching it into the next street; and the

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poor little properties (one spinning-wheel, a feeble imitation of a water-mill, and a basketful of the dismalest artificial flowers very conspicuous) were being passed from hand to hand with the greatest excitement, as if they were rescued children or lovely women. In four or five hours the whole place was burnt down, except the outer walls. Never in my days did I behold such feeble endeavours in the way of extinguishment. On an average I should say it took ten minutes to throw half a gallon of water on the great roaring heap; and every time it was insulted in this way it gave a ferocious burst, and everybody ran off. Beaucourt has been going about for two days in a clean collar; which phenomenon evidently means something, but I don't know what. Elliotson reports that the great conjuror lives at his hotel, has extra wine every day, and fares expensively. Is he the devil?

I have heard from the Kernel.[19] Wa'al, sir, sayin' as he minded to locate himself with us for a week, I expected to have heard from him again this morning, but have not. Beard comes to-morrow.

Kindest regards and remembrances from all. Ward lives in a little street between the two Tintilleries. The Plornish-Maroon desires his duty. He had a fall yesterday, through overbalancing himself in kicking his nurse.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A.]

BOULOGNE, _Friday, Oct. 13th, 1854._

MY DEAR STONE,

Having some little matters that rather press on my attention to see to in town, I have made up my mind to relinquish the walking project, and come straight home (by way of Folkestone) on Tuesday. I shall be due in town at midnight, and shall hope to see you next day, with the top of your coat-collar mended.

Everything that happens here we suppose to be an announcement of the taking of Sebastopol. When a church-clock strikes, we think it is the joy-bell, and fly out of the house in a burst of nationality--to sneak in again. If they practise firing at the camp, we are sure it is the artillery celebrating the fall of the Russian, and we become enthusiastic in a moment. I live in constant readiness to illuminate the whole house. Whatever anybody says I believe; everybody says, every day, that Sebastopol is in flames. Sometimes the Commander-in-Chief has blown himself up, with seventy-five thousand men. Sometimes he has "cut" his way through Lord Raglan, and has fallen back on the advancing body of the Russians, one hundred and forty-two thousand strong, whom he is going to "bring up" (I don't know where from, or how, or when, or why) for the destruction of the Allies. All these things, in the words of the catechism, "I steadfastly believe," until I become a mere driveller, a moonstruck, babbling, staring, credulous, imbecile, greedy, gaping, wooden-headed, addle-brained, wool-gathering, dreary, vacant, obstinate civilian.

Ever, my fellow-countryman, affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. John Saunders.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _October 26th, 1854._

DEAR SIR,

I have had much gratification and pleasure in the receipt of your obliging communication. Allow me to thank you for it, in the first place, with great cordiality.

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Although I cannot say that I came without any prepossessions to the perusal of your play (for I had favourable inclinings towards it before I began), I _can_ say that I read it with the closest attention, and that it inspired me with a strong interest, and a genuine and high admiration. The parts that involve some of the greatest difficulties of your task appear to me those in which you shine most. I would particularly instance the end of Julia as a very striking example of this. The delicacy and beauty of her redemption from her weak rash lover, are very far, indeed beyond the range of any ordinary dramatist, and display the true poetical strength.

As your hopes now centre in Mr. Phelps, and in seeing the child of your fancy on his stage, I will venture to point out to you not only what I take to be very dangerous portions of "Love's Martyrdom" as it stands, _for presentation on the stage_, but portions which I believe Mr. Phelps will speedily regard in that light when he sees it before him in the persons of live men and women on the wooden boards. Knowing him, I think he will be then as violently discouraged as he is now generously exalted; and it may be useful to you to be prepared for the consideration of those passages.

I do not regard it as a great stumbling-block that the play of modern times best known to an audience proceeds upon the main idea of this, namely, that there was a hunchback who, because of his deformity, mistrusted himself. But it is certainly a grain in the balance when the balance is going the wrong way, and therefore it should be most carefully trimmed. The incident of the ring is an insignificant one to look at over a row of gaslights, is difficult to convey to an audience, and the least thing will make it ludicrous. If it be so well done by Mr. Phelps himself as to be otherwise than ludicrous, it will be disagreeable. If it be either, it will be perilous, and doubly so, because you revert to it. The quarrel scene between the two brothers in the third act is now so long that the justification of blind passion and impetuosity--which can alone bear out Franklyn, before the bodily eyes of a great concourse of spectators, in plunging at the life of his own brother--is lost. That the two should be parted, and that Franklyn should again drive at him, and strike him, and then wound him, is a state of things to set the sympathy of an audience in the wrong direction, and turn it from the man you make happy to the man you leave unhappy. I would on no account allow the artist to appear, attended by that picture, more than once. All the most sudden inconstancy of Clarence I would soften down. Margaret must act much better than any actress I have ever seen, if all her lines fall in pleasant places; therefore, I think she needs compression too.

All this applies solely to the theatre. If you ever revise the sheets for readers, will you note in the margin the broken laughter and the appeals to the Deity? If, on summing them up, you find you want them all, I would leave them as they stand by all means. If not, I would blot accordingly.

It is only in the hope of being slightly useful to you by anticipating what I believe Mr. Phelps will discover--or what, if ever he should pass it, I have a strong conviction the audience will find out--that I have ventured on these few hints. Your concurrence with them generally, on reconsideration, or your preference for the poem as it stands, can not in the least affect my interest in your success. On the other hand, I have a perfect confidence in your not taking my misgivings ill; they arise out of my sincere desire for the triumph of your work.

With renewed thanks for the pleasure you have afforded me,

I am, dear Sir, faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

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TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _November 1st, 1854._
(And a constitutionally foggy day.)

MY DEAREST MACREADY,

I thought it better not to encumber the address to working men with details. Firstly, because they would detract from whatever fiery effect the words may have in them; secondly, because writing and petitioning and pressing a subject upon members and candidates are now so clearly understood; and thirdly, because the paper was meant as an opening to a persistent pressure of the whole question on the public, which would yield other opportunities of touching on such points.

In the number _for next week_--not this--is one of those following-up articles called "A Home Question." It is not written by me, but is generally of my suggesting, and is exceedingly well done by a thorough and experienced hand. I think you will find in it, generally, what you want. I have told the printers to send you a proof by post as soon as it is corrected--that is to say, as soon as some insertions I made in it last night are in type and in their places.

My dear old Parr, I don't believe a word you write about King John! That is to say, I don't believe you take into account the enormous difference between the energy summonable-up in your study at Sherborne and the energy that will fire up in you (without so much as saying "With your leave" or "By your leave") in the Town Hall at Birmingham. I know you, you ancient codger, I know you! Therefore I will trouble you to be so good as to do an act of honesty after you have been to Birmingham, and to write to me, "Ingenuous boy, you were correct. I find I could have read 'em 'King John' with the greatest ease."

In that vast hall in the busy town of Sherborne, in which our illustrious English novelist is expected to read next month--though he is strongly of opinion that he is deficient in power, and too old--I wonder what accommodation there is for reading! because our illustrious countryman likes to stand at a desk breast-high, with plenty of room about him, a sloping top, and a ledge to keep his book from tumbling off. If such a thing should not be there, however, on his arrival, I suppose even a Sherborne carpenter could knock it up out of a deal board. _Is_ there a deal board in Sherborne though? I should like to hear Katey's opinion on that point.

In this week's "Household Words" there is an exact portrait of our Boulogne landlord, which I hope you will like. I think of opening the next long book I write with a man of juvenile figure and strong face, who is always persuading himself that he is infirm. What do you think of the idea? I should like to have your opinion about it. I would make him an impetuous passionate sort of fellow, devilish grim upon occasion, and of an iron purpose. Droll, I fancy?

---- is getting a little too fat, but appears to be troubled by the great responsibility of directing the whole war. He doesn't seem to be quite clear that he has got the ships into the exact order he intended, on the sea point of attack at Sebastopol. We went to the play last Saturday night with Stanfield, whose "high lights" (as Maclise calls those knobs of brightness on the top of his cheeks) were more radiant than ever. We talked of you, and I told Stanny how they are imitating his "Acis and Galatea" sea in "Pericles," at Phelps's. He didn't half like it; but I added, in nautical language, that it was merely a piratical effort achieved by a handful of porpoise-faced swabs, and that brought him up with a round turn, as we say at sea.

We are looking forward to the twentieth of next month with great pleasure. All Tavistock House send love and kisses to all Sherborne House. If there is anything I can bring down for you, let me know in good course of time.

Ever, my dearest Macready,

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Most affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Wednesday, Nov. 1st, 1854._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I take upon myself to answer your letter to Catherine, as I am referred to in it.

The "Walk" is not my writing. It is very well done by a close imitator. Why I found myself so "used up" after "Hard Times" I scarcely know, perhaps because I intended to do nothing in that way for a year, when the idea laid hold of me by the throat in a very violent manner, and because the compression and close condensation necessary for that disjointed form of publication gave me perpetual trouble. But I really was tired, which is a result so very incomprehensible that I can't forget it. I have passed an idle autumn in a beautiful situation, and am dreadfully brown and big. For further particulars of Boulogne, see "Our French Watering Place," in this present week of "Household Words," which contains a faithful portrait of our landlord there.

If you carry out that bright Croydon idea, rely on our glad co-operation, only let me know all about it a few days beforehand; and if you feel equal to the contemplation of the moustache (which has been cut lately) it will give us the heartiest pleasure to come and meet you. This in spite of the terrific duffery of the Crystal Palace. It is a very remarkable thing in itself; but to have so very large a building continually crammed down one's throat, and to find it a new page in "The Whole Duty of Man" to go there, is a little more than even I (and you know how amiable I am) can endure.

You always like to know what I am going to do, so I beg to announce that on the 19th of December I am going to read the "Carol" at Reading, where I undertook the presidency of the Literary Institution on the death of poor dear Talfourd. Then I am going on to Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, to do the like for another institution, which is one of the few remaining pleasures of Macready's life. Then I am coming home for Christmas Day. Then I believe I must go to Bradford, in Yorkshire, to read once more to a little fireside party of four thousand. Then I am coming home again to get up a new little version of "The Children in the Wood" (yet to be written, by-the-bye), for the children to act on Charley's birthday.

I am full of mixed feeling about the war--admiration of our valiant men, burning desires to cut the Emperor of Russia's throat, and something like despair to see how the old cannon-smoke and blood-mists obscure the wrongs and sufferings of the people at home. When I consider the Patriotic Fund on the one hand, and on the other the poverty and wretchedness engendered by cholera, of which in London alone, an infinitely larger number of English people than are likely to be slain in the whole Russian war have miserably and needlessly died--I feel as if the world had been pushed back five hundred years. If you are reading new books just now, I think you will be interested with a controversy between Whewell and Brewster, on the question of the shining orbs about us being inhabited or no. Whewell's book is called, "On the Plurality of Worlds;" Brewster's, "More Worlds than One." I shouldn't wonder if you know all about them. They bring together a vast number of points of great interest in natural philosophy, and some very curious reasoning on both sides, and leave the matter pretty much where it was.

We had a fine absurdity in connection with our luggage, when we left Boulogne. The barometer had within a few hours fallen about a foot, in honour of the occasion, and it was a tremendous night, blowing a gale of wind and raining a little deluge. The luggage (pretty heavy, as you may suppose), in a cart drawn by two horses, stuck fast in a rut in our field, and couldn't be moved. Our man, made a lunatic by the extremity

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of the occasion, ran down to the town to get two more horses to help it out, when he returned with those horses and carter B, the most beaming of men; carter A, who had been soaking all the time by the disabled vehicle, descried in carter B the acknowledged enemy of his existence, took his own two horses out, and walked off with them! After which, the whole set-out remained in the field all night, and we came to town, thirteen individuals, with one comb and a pocket-handkerchief. I was upside-down during the greater part of the passage.

Dr. Rae's account of Franklin's unfortunate party is deeply interesting; but I think hasty in its acceptance of the details, particularly in the statement that they had eaten the dead bodies of their companions, which I don't believe. Franklin, on a former occasion, was almost starved to death, had gone through all the pains of that sad end, and lain down to die, and no such thought had presented itself to any of them. In famous cases of shipwreck, it is very rare indeed that any person of any humanising education or refinement resorts to this dreadful means of prolonging life. In open boats, the coarsest and commonest men of the shipwrecked party have done such things; but I don't remember more than one instance in which an officer had overcome the loathing that the idea had inspired. Dr. Rae talks about their _cooking_ these remains too. I should like to know where the fuel came from.

Kindest love and best regards.
Ever, my dear Mrs. Watson, affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Friday Night, Nov. 3rd, 1854._

MY DEAR STANNY,

First of all, here is enclosed a letter for Mrs. Stanfield, which, if you don't immediately and faithfully deliver, you will hear of in an unpleasant way from the station-house at the curve of the hill above you.

Secondly, this is not to remind you that we meet at the Athenæum next Monday at five, because none but a mouldy swab as never broke biscuit or lay out on the for'sel-yard-arm in a gale of wind ever forgot an appointment with a messmate.

But what I want you to think of at your leisure is this: when our dear old Macready was in town last, I saw it would give him so much interest and pleasure if I promised to go down and read my "Christmas Carol" to the little Sherborne Institution, which is now one of the few active objects he has in the life about him, that I came out with that promise in a bold--I may say a swaggering way. Consequently, on Wednesday, the 20th of December, I am going down to see him, with Kate and Georgina, returning to town in good time for Christmas, on Saturday, the 23rd. Do you think you could manage to go and return with us? I really believe there is scarcely anything in the world that would give him such extraordinary pleasure as such a visit; and if you would empower me to send him an intimation that he may expect it, he will have a daily joy in looking forward to the time (I am seriously sure) which we--whose light has not gone out, and who are among our old dear pursuits and associations--can scarcely estimate.

I don't like to broach the idea in a careless way, and so I propose it thus, and ask you to think of it.

Ever most affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Procter.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Sunday, Dec. 17th, 1854._

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MY DEAR MISS PROCTER,

You have given me a new sensation. I did suppose that nothing in this singular world could surprise me, but you have done it.

You will believe my congratulations on the delicacy and talent of your writing to be sincere. From the first, I have always had an especial interest in that Miss Berwick, and have over and over again questioned Wills about her. I suppose he has gone on gradually building up an imaginary structure of life and adventure for her, but he has given me the strangest information! Only yesterday week, when we were "making up" "The Poor Travellers," as I sat meditatively poking the office fire, I said to him, "Wills, have you got that Miss Berwick's proof back, of the little sailor's song?" "No," he said. "Well, but why not?" I asked him. "Why, you know," he answered, "as I have often told you before, she don't live at the place to which her letters are addressed, and so there's always difficulty and delay in communicating with her." "Do you know what age she is?" I said. Here he looked unfathomably profound, and returned, "Rather advanced in life." "You said she was a governess, didn't you?" said I; to which he replied in the most emphatic and positive manner, "A governess."

He then came and stood in the corner of the hearth, with his back to the fire, and delivered himself like an oracle concerning you. He told me that early in life (conveying to me the impression of about a quarter of a century ago) you had had your feelings desperately wounded by some cause, real or imaginary--"It does not matter which," said I, with the greatest sagacity--and that you had then taken to writing verses. That you were of an unhappy temperament, but keenly sensitive to encouragement. That you wrote after the educational duties of the day were discharged. That you sometimes thought of never writing any more. That you had been away for some time "with your pupils." That your letters were of a mild and melancholy character, and that you did not seem to care as much as might be expected about money. All this time I sat poking the fire, with a wisdom upon me absolutely crushing; and finally I begged him to assure the lady that she might trust me with her real address, and that it would be better to have it now, as I hoped our further communications, etc. etc. etc. You must have felt enormously wicked last Tuesday, when I, such a babe in the wood, was unconsciously prattling to you. But you have given me so much pleasure, and have made me shed so many tears, that I can only think of you now in association with the sentiment and grace of your verses.

So pray accept the blessing and forgiveness of Richard Watts, though I am afraid you come under both his conditions of exclusion.[20]

Very faithfully yours.

FOOTNOTES:

[16] The poet "Barry Cornwall."

[17] "Hide and Seek."

[18] On the occasion of the Prince Consort's visit to the camp at Boulogne.

[19] Mr. Egg.

[20] The inscription on the house in Rochester known as "Watts's Charity" is to the effect that it furnishes a night's lodging for six poor travellers--"not being Rogues or Proctors."

1855.

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NARRATIVE.

In the beginning of this year, Charles Dickens gave public readings at Reading, Sherborne, and Bradford in Yorkshire, to which reference is made in the first following letters. Besides this, he was fully occupied in getting up a play for his children, which was acted on the 6th January. Mr. Planché's fairy extravaganza of "Fortunio and his Seven Gifted Servants" was the play selected, the parts being filled by all his own children and some of their young friends, and Charles Dickens, Mr. Mark Lemon, and Mr. Wilkie Collins playing with them, the only grown-up members of the company. In February he made a short trip to Paris with Mr. Wilkie Collins, with an intention of going on to Bordeaux, which was abandoned on account of bad weather. Out of the success of the children's play at Tavistock House rose a scheme for a serious play at the same place. Mr. Collins undertaking to write a melodrama for the purpose, and Mr. Stanfield to paint scenery and drop-scene, Charles Dickens turned one of the rooms of the house into a very perfect little theatre, and in June "The Lighthouse" was acted for three nights, with "Mr. Nightingale's Diary" and "Animal Magnetism" as farces; the actors being himself and several members of the original amateur company, the actresses, his two daughters and his sister-in-law. Mr. Stanfield, after entering most heartily into the enterprise, and giving constant time and attention to the painting of his beautiful scenes, was unfortunately ill and unable to attend the first performance. We give a letter to him, reporting its great success.

In this summer Charles Dickens made a speech at a great meeting at Drury Lane Theatre on the subject of "Administrative Reform," of which he writes to Mr. Macready. On this subject of "Administrative Reform," too, we give two letters to the great Nineveh traveller Mr. Layard (now Sir Austen H. Layard), for whom, as his letters show, he conceived at once the affectionate friendship which went on increasing from this time for the rest of his life. Mr. Layard also spoke at the Drury Lane meeting.

Charles Dickens had made a promise to give another reading at Birmingham for the funds of the institute which still needed help; and in a letter to Mr. Arthur Ryland, asking him to fix a time for it, he gives the first idea of a selection from "David Copperfield," which was afterwards one of the most popular of his readings.

He was at all times fond of making excursions for a day--or two or three days--to Rochester and its neighbourhood; and after one of these, this year, he writes to Mr. Wills that he has seen a "small freehold" to be sold, _opposite_ the house on which he had fixed his childish affections (and which he calls in _this_ letter the "Hermitage," its real name being "Gad's Hill Place"). The latter house was not, at that time, to be had, and he made some approach to negotiations as to the other "little freehold," which, however, did not come to anything. Later in the year, however, Mr. Wills, by an accident, discovered that Gad's Hill Place, the property of Miss Lynn, the well-known authoress, and a constant contributor to "Household Words," was itself for sale; and a negotiation for its purchase commenced, which was not, however, completed until the following spring.

Later in the year, the performance of "The Lighthouse" was repeated, for a charitable purpose, at the Campden House theatre.

This autumn was passed at Folkestone. Charles Dickens had decided upon spending the following winter in Paris, and the family proceeded there from Folkestone in October, making a halt at Boulogne; from whence his sister-in-law preceded the party to Paris, to secure lodgings, with the help of Lady Olliffe. He followed, to make his choice of apartments that had been found, and he writes to his wife and to Mr. Wills, giving a description of the Paris house. Here he began "Little Dorrit." In a letter to Mrs. Watson, from Folkestone, he gives her the name which he had first proposed for this story--"Nobody's Fault."

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During his absence from England, Mr. and Mrs. Hogarth occupied Tavistock House, and his eldest son, being now engaged in business, remained with them, coming to Paris only for Christmas. Three of his boys were at school at Boulogne at this time, and one, Walter Landor, at Wimbledon, studying for an Indian army appointment.

[Sidenote: M. de Cerjat.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _January 3rd, 1855._

MY DEAR CERJAT,

When your Christmas letter did not arrive according to custom, I felt as if a bit of Christmas had fallen out and there was no supplying the piece. However, it was soon supplied by yourself, and the bowl became round and sound again.

The Christmas number of "Household Words," I suppose, will reach Lausanne about midsummer. The first ten pages or so--all under the head of "The First Poor Traveller"--are written by me, and I hope you will find, in the story of the soldier which they contain, something that may move you a little. It moved me _not_ a little in the writing, and I believe has touched a vast number of people. We have sold eighty thousand of it.

I am but newly come home from reading at Reading (where I succeeded poor Talfourd as the president of an institution), and at Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, and at Bradford, in Yorkshire. Wonderful audiences! and the number at the last place three thousand seven hundred. And yet but for the noise of their laughing and cheering, they "went" like one man.

The absorption of the English mind in the war is, to me, a melancholy thing. Every other subject of popular solicitude and sympathy goes down before it. I fear I clearly see that for years to come domestic reforms are shaken to the root; every miserable red-tapist flourishes war over the head of every protester against his humbug; and everything connected with it is pushed to such an unreasonable extent, that, however kind and necessary it may be in itself, it becomes ridiculous. For all this it is an indubitable fact, I conceive, that Russia MUST BE stopped, and that the future peace of the world renders the war imperative upon us. The Duke of Newcastle lately addressed a private letter to the newspapers, entreating them to exercise a larger discretion in respect of the letters of "Our Own Correspondents," against which Lord Raglan protests as giving the Emperor of Russia information for nothing which would cost him (if indeed he could get it at all) fifty or a hundred thousand pounds a year. The communication has not been attended with much effect, so far as I can see. In the meantime I do suppose we have the wretchedest Ministry that ever was--in whom nobody not in office of some sort believes--yet whom there is nobody to displace. The strangest result, perhaps, of years of Reformed Parliaments that ever the general sagacity did _not_ foresee.

Let me recommend you, as a brother-reader of high distinction, two comedies, both Goldsmith's--"She Stoops to Conquer" and "The Good-natured Man." Both are so admirable and so delightfully written that they read wonderfully. A friend of mine, Forster, who wrote "The Life of Goldsmith," was very ill a year or so ago, and begged me to read to him one night as he lay in bed, "something of Goldsmith's." I fell upon "She Stoops to Conquer," and we enjoyed it with that wonderful intensity, that I believe he began to get better in the first scene, and was all right again in the fifth act.

I am charmed by your account of Haldimand, to whom my love. Tell him Sydney Smith's daughter has privately printed a life of her father with selections from his letters, which has great merit, and often presents him exactly as he used to be. I have strongly urged her to publish it,

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and I think she will do so, about March.

My eldest boy has come home from Germany to learn a business life at Birmingham (I think), first of all. The whole nine are well and happy. Ditto, Mrs. Dickens. Ditto, Georgina. My two girls are full of interest in yours; and one of mine (as I think I told you when I was at Elysée) is curiously like one of yours in the face. They are all agog now about a great fairy play, which is to come off here next Monday. The house is full of spangles, gas, Jew theatrical tailors, and pantomime carpenters. We all unite in kindest and best loves to dear Mrs. Cerjat and all the blooming daughters. And I am, with frequent thoughts of you and cordial affection, ever, my dear Cerjat,

Your faithful Friend.

[Sidenote: Miss Mary Boyle.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _January 3rd, 1855._

MY DEAR MARY,

This is a word of heartfelt greeting; in exchange for yours, which came to me most pleasantly, and was received with a cordial welcome. If I had leisure to write a letter, I should write you, at this point, perhaps the very best letter that ever was read; but, being in the agonies of getting up a gorgeous fairy play for the postboys, on Charley's birthday (besides having the work of half-a-dozen to do as a regular thing), I leave the merits of the wonderful epistle to your lively fancy.

Enclosing a kiss, if you will have the kindness to return it when done with.

I have just been reading my "Christmas Carol" in Yorkshire. I should have lost my heart to the beautiful young landlady of my hotel (age twenty-nine, dress, black frock and jacket, exquisitely braided) if it had not been safe in your possession.

Many, many happy years to you! My regards to that obstinate old Wurzell[21] and his dame, when you have them under lock and key again.

Ever affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Gaskell.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _January 27th, 1855._

MY DEAR MRS. GASKELL,

Let me congratulate you on the conclusion of your story; not because it is the end of a task to which you had conceived a dislike (for I imagine you to have got the better of that delusion by this time), but because it is the vigorous and powerful accomplishment of an anxious labour. It seems to me that you have felt the ground thoroughly firm under your feet, and have strided on with a force and purpose that MUST now give you pleasure.

You will not, I hope, allow that not-lucid interval of dissatisfaction with yourself (and me?), which beset you for a minute or two once upon a time, to linger in the shape of any disagreeable association with "Household Words." I shall still look forward to the large sides of paper, and shall soon feel disappointed if they don't begin to reappear.

I thought it best that Wills should write the business letter on the conclusion of the story, as that part of our communications had always previously rested with him. I trust you found it satisfactory? I refer to it, not as a matter of mere form, but because I sincerely wish

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everything between us to be beyond the possibility of misunderstanding or reservation.

Dear Mrs. Gaskell, very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Arthur Ryland.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Monday, Jan. 29th, 1855._

MY DEAR MR. RYLAND,

I have been in the greatest difficulty--which I am not yet out of--to know what to read at Birmingham. I fear the idea of next month is now impracticable. Which of two other months do you think would be preferable for your Birmingham objects? Next May, or next December?

Having already read two Christmas books at Birmingham, I should like to get out of that restriction, and have a swim in the broader waters of one of my long books. I have been poring over "Copperfield" (which is my favourite), with the idea of getting a reading out of it, to be called by some such name as "Young Housekeeping and Little Emily." But there is still the huge difficulty that I constructed the whole with immense pains, and have so woven it up and blended it together, that I cannot yet so separate the parts as to tell the story of David's married life with Dora, and the story of Mr. Peggotty's search for his niece, within the time. This is my object. If I could possibly bring it to bear, it would make a very attractive reading, with, a strong interest in it, and a certain completeness.

This is exactly the state of the case. I don't mind confiding to you, that I never can approach the book with perfect composure (it had such perfect possession of me when I wrote it), and that I no sooner begin to try to get it into this form, than I begin to read it all, and to feel that I cannot disturb it. I have not been unmindful of the agreement we made at parting, and I have sat staring at the backs of my books for an inspiration. This project is the only one that I have constantly reverted to, and yet I have made no progress in it!

Faithfully yours always.

[Sidenote: Monsieur Regnier.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, LONDON, _Saturday Evening, Feb. 3rd, 1855._

MY DEAR REGNIER,

I am coming to Paris for a week, with my friend Collins--son of the English painter who painted our green lanes and our cottage children so beautifully. Do not tell this to Le Vieux. Unless I have the ill fortune to stumble against him in the street I shall not make my arrival known to him.

I purpose leaving here on Sunday, the 11th, but I shall stay that night at Boulogne to see two of my little boys who are at school there. We shall come to Paris on Monday, the 12th, arriving there in the evening.

Now, _mon cher_, do you think you can, without inconvenience, engage me for a week an apartment--cheerful, light, and wholesome--containing a comfortable _salon et deux chambres à coucher_. I do not care whether it is an hotel or not, but the reason why I do not write for an apartment to the Hôtel Brighton is, that there they expect one to dine at home (I mean in the apartment) generally; whereas, as we are coming to Paris expressly to be always looking about us, we want to dine wherever we like every day. Consequently, what we want to find is a good apartment, where we can have our breakfast but where we shall never dine.

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Can you engage such accommodation for me? If you can, I shall feel very much obliged to you. If the apartment should happen to contain a little bed for a servant I might perhaps bring one, but I do not care about that at all. I want it to be pleasant and gay, and to throw myself _en garçon_ on the festive _diableries de Paris_.

Mrs. Dickens and her sister send their kindest regards to Madame Regnier and you, in which I heartily join. All the children send their loves to the two brave boys and the Normandy _bonnes_.

I shall hope for a short answer from you one day next week. My dear Regnier,

Always faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

OFFICE OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS," _Friday, Feb. 9th, 1855._

MY DEAR WILLS,

I want to alter the arrangements for to-morrow, and put you to some inconvenience.

When I was at Gravesend t'other day, I saw, at Gad's Hill--just opposite to the Hermitage, where Miss Lynn used to live--a little freehold to be sold. The spot and the very house are literally "a dream of my childhood," and I should like to look at it before I go to Paris. With that purpose I must go to Strood by the North Kent, at a quarter-past ten to-morrow morning, and I want you, strongly booted, to go with me! (I know the particulars from the agent.)

Can you? Let me know. If you can, can you manage so that we can take the proofs with us? If you can't, will you bring them to Tavistock House at dinner time to-morrow, half-past five? Forster will dine with us, but no one else.

I am uncertain of your being in town to-night, but I send John up with this.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

HÔTEL MEURICE, PARIS, _Friday, Feb. 16th, 1855._

MY DEAR GEORGY,

I heard from home last night; but the posts are so delayed and put out by the snow, that they come in at all sorts of times except the right times, and utterly defy all calculation. Will you tell Catherine with my love, that I will write to her again to-morrow afternoon; I hope she may then receive my letter by Monday morning, and in it I purpose telling her when I may be expected home. The weather is so severe and the roads are so bad, that the journey to and from Bordeaux seems out of the question. We have made up our minds to abandon it for the present, and to return about Tuesday night or Wednesday. Collins continues in a queer state, but is perfectly cheerful under the stoppage of his wine and other afflictions.

We have a beautiful apartment, very elegantly furnished, very thickly carpeted, and as warm as any apartment in Paris _can_ be in such weather. We are very well waited on and looked after. We breakfast at ten, read and write till two, and then I go out walking all over Paris, while the invalid sits by the fire or is deposited in a café. We dine at five, in a different restaurant every day, and at seven or so go to the

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theatre--sometimes to two theatres, sometimes to three. We get home about twelve, light the fire, and drink lemonade, to which _I_ add rum. We go to bed between one and two. I live in peace, like an elderly gentleman, and regard myself as in a negative state of virtue and respectability.

The theatres are not particularly good, but I have seen Lemaître act in the most wonderful and astounding manner. I am afraid we must go to the Opéra Comique on Sunday. To-morrow we dine with Regnier and to-day with the Olliffes.

"La Joie fait Peur," at the Français, delighted me. Exquisitely played and beautifully imagined altogether. Last night we went to the Porte St. Martin to see a piece (English subject) called "Jane Osborne," which the characters pronounce "Ja Nosbornnne." The seducer was Lord Nottingham. The comic Englishwoman's name (she kept lodgings and was a very bad character) was Missees Christmas. She had begun to get into great difficulties with a gentleman of the name of Meestair Cornhill, when we were obliged to leave, at the end of the first act, by the intolerable stench of the place. The whole theatre must be standing over some vast cesspool. It was so alarming that I instantly rushed into a café and had brandy.

My ear has gradually become so accustomed to French, that I understand the people at the theatres (for the first time) with perfect ease and satisfaction. I walked about with Regnier for an hour and a half yesterday, and received many compliments on my angelic manner of speaking the celestial language. There is a winter Franconi's now, high up on the Boulevards, just like the round theatre on the Champs Elysées, and as bright and beautiful. A clown from Astley's is all in high favour there at present. He talks slang English (being evidently an idiot), as if he felt a perfect confidence that everybody understands him. His name is Boswell, and the whole cirque rang last night with cries for Boz Zwillllll! Boz Zweellll! Boz Zwuallll! etc. etc. etc. etc.

I must begin to look out for the box of bon-bons for the noble and fascinating Plornish-Maroon. Give him my love and a thousand kisses.

Loves to Mamey, Katey, Sydney, Harry, and the following stab to Anne--she forgot to pack me any shaving soap.

Ever, my dear Georgy, most affectionately yours.

P.S.--Collins sends kind regards.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

HÔTEL MEURICE, PARIS, _Friday, Feb. 16th, 1855._

MY DEAR WILLS,

I received your letter yesterday evening. I have not yet seen the lists of trains and boats, but propose arranging to return about Tuesday or Wednesday. In the meantime I am living like Gil Blas and doing nothing. I am very much obliged to you, indeed, for the trouble you have kindly taken about the little freehold. It is clear to me that its merits resolve themselves into the view and the spot. If I had more money these considerations might, with me, overtop all others. But, as it is, I consider the matter quite disposed of, finally settled in the negative, and to be thought no more about. I shall not go down and look at it, as I could add nothing to your report.

Paris is finer than ever, and I go wandering about it all day. We dine at all manner of places, and go to two or three theatres in the evening. I suppose, as an old farmer said of Scott, I am "makin' mysel'" all the time; but I seem to be rather a free-and-easy sort of superior vagabond.

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I live in continual terror of ----, and am strongly fortified within doors, with a means of retreat into my bedroom always ready. Up to the present blessed moment, his staggering form has not appeared.

As to yesterday's post from England, I have not, at the present moment, the slightest idea where it may be. It is under the snow somewhere, I suppose; but nobody expects it, and _Galignani_ reprints every morning leaders from _The Times_ of about a fortnight or three weeks old.

Collins, who is not very well, sends his "penitent regards," and says he is enjoying himself as much as a man with the weight of a broken promise on his conscience can.

Ever, my dear Wills, faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Arthur Ryland.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _February 26th, 1855._

MY DEAR MR. RYLAND,

Charley came home, I assure you, perfectly delighted with his visit to you, and rapturous in his accounts of your great kindness to him.

It appears to me that the first question in reference to my reading (I have not advanced an inch in my "Copperfield" trials by-the-bye) is, whether you think you could devise any plan in connection with the room at Dee's, which would certainly bring my help in money up to five hundred pounds. That is what I want. If it could be done by a subscription for two nights, for instance, I would not be chary of my time and trouble. But if you cannot see your way clearly to that result in that connection, then I think it would be better to wait until we can have the Town Hall at Christmas. I have promised to read, about Christmas time, at Sheffield and at Peterboro'. I _could_ add Birmingham to the list, then, if need were. But what I want is, to give the institution in all five hundred pounds. That is my object, and nothing less will satisfy me.

Will you think it over, taking counsel with whomsoever you please, and let me know what conclusion you arrive at. Only think of me as subservient to the institution.

My dear Mr. Ryland, always very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. David Roberts, R.A.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _February 28th, 1855._

MY DEAR DAVID ROBERTS,

I hope to make it quite plain to you, in a few words, why I think it right to stay away from the Lord Mayor's dinner to the club. If I did not feel a kind of rectitude involved in my non-acceptance of his invitation, your note would immediately induce me to change my mind.

Entertaining a strong opinion on the subject of the City Corporation as it stands, and the absurdity of its pretensions in an age perfectly different, in all conceivable respects, from that to which it properly belonged as a reality, I have expressed that opinion on more than one occasion, within a year or so, in "Household Words." I do not think it consistent with my respect for myself, or for the art I profess, to blow hot and cold in the same breath; and to laugh at the institution in print, and accept the hospitality of its representative while the ink is staring us all in the face. There is a great deal too much of this among us, and it does not elevate the earnestness or delicacy of literature.

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This is my sole consideration. Personally I have always met the present Lord Mayor on the most agreeable terms, and I think him an excellent one. As between you, and me, and him, I cannot have the slightest objection to your telling him the truth. On a more private occasion, when he was not keeping his state, I should be delighted to interchange any courtesy with that honourable and amiable gentleman, Mr. Moon.

Believe me always cordially yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Austen H. Layard.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Tuesday Evening, April 3rd, 1855._

DEAR LAYARD,

Since I had the pleasure of seeing you again at Miss Coutts's (really a greater pleasure to me than I could easily tell you), I have thought a good deal of the duty we all owe you of helping you as much as we can. Being on very intimate terms with Lemon, the editor of "Punch" (a most affectionate and true-hearted fellow), I mentioned to him in confidence what I had at heart. You will find yourself the subject of their next large cut, and of some lines in an earnest spirit. He again suggested the point to Mr. Shirley Brookes, one of their regular corps, who will do what is right in _The Illustrated London News_ and _The Weekly Chronicle_, papers that go into the hands of large numbers of people. I have also communicated with Jerrold, whom I trust, and have begged him not to be diverted from the straight path of help to the most useful man in England on all possible occasions. Forster I will speak to carefully, and I have no doubt it will quicken him a little; not that we have anything to complain of in his direction. If you ever see any new loophole, cranny, needle's-eye, through which I can present your case to "Household Words," I most earnestly entreat you, as your staunch friend and admirer--you _can_ have no truer--to indicate it to me at any time or season, and to count upon my being Damascus steel to the core.

All this is nothing; because all these men, and thousands of others, dote upon you. But I know it would be a comfort to me, in your hard-fighting place, to be assured of such sympathy, and therefore only I write.

You have other recreations for your Sundays in the session, I daresay, than to come here. But it is generally a day on which I do not go out, and when we dine at half-past five in the easiest way in the world, and smoke in the peacefulest manner. Perhaps one of these Sundays after Easter you might not be indisposed to begin to dig us out?

And I should like, on a Saturday of your appointing, to get a few of the serviceable men I know--such as I have mentioned--about you here. Will you think of this, too, and suggest a Saturday for our dining together?

I am really ashamed and moved that you should do your part so manfully and be left alone in the conflict. I felt you to be all you are the first moment I saw you. I know you will accept my regard and fidelity for what they are worth.

Dear Layard, very heartily yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Austen H. Layard.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Tuesday, April 10th, 1855._

DEAR LAYARD,

I shall of course observe the strictest silence, at present, in reference to your resolutions. It will be a most acceptable occupation

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to me to go over them with you, and I have not a doubt of their producing a strong effect out of doors.

There is nothing in the present time at once so galling and so alarming to me as the alienation of the people from their own public affairs. I have no difficulty in understanding it. They have had so little to do with the game through all these years of Parliamentary Reform, that they have sullenly laid down their cards, and taken to looking on. The players who are left at the table do not see beyond it, conceive that gain and loss and all the interest of the play are in their hands, and will never be wiser until they and the table and the lights and the money are all overturned together. And I believe the discontent to be so much the worse for smouldering, instead of blazing openly, that it is extremely like the general mind of France before the breaking out of the first Revolution, and is in danger of being turned by any one of a thousand accidents--a bad harvest--the last strain too much of aristocratic insolence or incapacity--a defeat abroad--a mere chance at home--with such a devil of a conflagration as never has been beheld since.

Meanwhile, all our English tuft-hunting, toad-eating, and other manifestations of accursed gentility--to say nothing of the Lord knows who's defiances of the proven truth before six hundred and fifty men--ARE expressing themselves every day. So, every day, the disgusted millions with this unnatural gloom are confirmed and hardened in the very worst of moods. Finally, round all this is an atmosphere of poverty, hunger, and ignorant desperation, of the mere existence of which perhaps not one man in a thousand of those not actually enveloped in it, through the whole extent of this country, has the least idea.

It seems to me an absolute impossibility to direct the spirit of the people at this pass until it shows itself. If they begin to bestir themselves in the vigorous national manner; if they would appear in political reunion, array themselves peacefully but in vast numbers against a system that they know to be rotten altogether, make themselves heard like the sea all round this island, I for one should be in such a movement heart and soul, and should think it a duty of the plainest kind to go along with it, and try to guide it by all possible means. But you can no more help a people who do not help themselves than you can help a man who does not help himself. And until the people can be got up from the lethargy, which is an awful symptom of the advanced state of their disease, I know of nothing that can be done beyond keeping their wrongs continually before them.

I shall hope to see you soon after you come back. Your speeches at Aberdeen are most admirable, manful, and earnest. I would have such speeches at every market-cross, and in every town-hall, and among all sorts and conditions of men; up in the very balloons, and down in the very diving-bells.

Ever, cordially yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. John Forster.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Saturday, April 14th, 1855._

MY DEAR FORSTER,

I cannot express to you how very much delighted I am with the "Steele." I think it incomparably the best of the series. The pleasanter humanity of the subject may commend it more to one's liking, but that again requires a delicate handling, which you have given to it in a most charming manner. It is surely not possible to approach a man with a finer sympathy, and the assertion of the claims of literature throughout is of the noblest and most gallant kind.

I don't agree with you about the serious papers in _The Spectator_,

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which I think (whether they be Steele's or Addison's) are generally as indifferent as the humour of _The Spectator_ is delightful. And I have always had a notion that Prue understood her husband very well, and held him in consequence, when a fonder woman with less show of caprice must have let him go. But these are points of opinion. The paper is masterly, and all I have got to say is, that if ---- had a grain of the honest sentiment with which it overflows, he never would or could have made so great a mistake.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. Mark Lemon.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Thursday, April 26th, 1855._

ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

MY DEAR MARK,

I will call for you at two, and go with you to Highgate, by all means.

Leech and I called on Tuesday evening and left our loves. I have not written to you since, because I thought it best to leave you quiet for a day. I have no need to tell you, my dear fellow, that my thoughts have been constantly with you, and that I have not forgotten (and never shall forget) who sat up with me one night when a little place in my house was left empty.

It is hard to lose any child, but there are many blessed sources of consolation in the loss of a baby. There is a beautiful thought in Fielding's "Journey from this World to the Next," where the baby he had lost many years before was found by him all radiant and happy, building him a bower in the Elysian Fields where they were to live together when he came.

Ever affectionately yours.

P.S.--Our kindest loves to Mrs. Lemon.

[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Sunday, May 20th, 1855._

MY DEAR STANNY,

I have a little lark in contemplation, if you will help it to fly.

Collins has done a melodrama (a regular old-style melodrama), in which there is a very good notion. I am going to act it, as an experiment, in the children's theatre here--I, Mark, Collins, Egg, and my daughter Mary, the whole _dram. pers._; our families and yours the whole audience; for I want to make the stage large and shouldn't have room for above five-and-twenty spectators. Now there is only one scene in the piece, and that, my tarry lad, is the inside of a lighthouse. Will you come and paint it for us one night, and we'll all turn to and help? It is a mere wall, of course, but Mark and I have sworn that you must do it. If you will say yes, I should like to have the tiny flats made, after you have looked at the place, and not before. On Wednesday in this week I am good for a steak and the play, if you will make your own appointment here; or any day next week except Thursday. Write me a line in reply. We mean to burst on an astonished world with the melodrama, without any note of preparation. So don't say a syllable to Forster if you should happen to see him.

Ever affectionately yours.

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[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Tuesday Afternoon, Six o'clock, May 22nd, 1855._

MY DEAR STANNY,

Your note came while I was out walking. Even if I had been at home I could not have managed to dine together to-day, being under a beastly engagement to dine out. Unless I hear from you to the contrary, I shall expect you here some time to-morrow, and will remain at home. I only wait your instructions to get the little canvases made. O, what a pity it is not the outside of the light'us, with the sea a-rowling agin it! Never mind, we'll get an effect out of the inside, and there's a storm and a shipwreck "off;" and the great ambition of my life will be achieved at last, in the wearing of a pair of very coarse petticoat trousers. So hoorar for the salt sea, mate, and bouse up!

Ever affectionately,
DICKY.

[Sidenote: Mr. Mark Lemon.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _May 23rd, 1855._

MY DEAR MARK,

Stanny says he is only sorry it is not the outside of the lighthouse with a raging sea and a transparent light. He enters into the project with the greatest delight, and I think we shall make a capital thing of it.

It now occurs to me that we may as well do a farce too. I should like to get in a little part for Katey, and also for Charley, if it were practicable. What do you think of "Animal Mag."? You and I in our old parts; Collins, Jeffrey; Charley, the Markis; Katey and Mary (or Georgina), the two ladies? Can you think of anything merry that is better? It ought to be broad, as a relief to the melodrama, unless we could find something funny with a story in it too. I rather incline myself to "Animal Mag." Will you come round and deliver your sentiments?

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Thursday, May 24th, 1855._

MY DEAR STONE,

Great projects are afoot here for a grown-up play in about three weeks' time. Former schoolroom arrangements to be reversed--large stage and small audience. Stanfield bent on desperate effects, and all day long with his coat off, up to his eyes in distemper colours.

Will you appear in your celebrated character of Mr. Nightingale? I want to wind up with that popular farce, we all playing our old parts.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _May 24th, 1855._

MY DEAR STONE,

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That's right! You will find the words come back very quickly. Why, _of course_ your people are to come, and if Stanfield don't astonish 'em, I'm a Dutchman. O Heaven, if you could hear the ideas he proposes to me, making even _my_ hair stand on end!

Will you get Marcus or some similar bright creature to copy out old Nightingale's part for you, and then return the book? This is the prompt-book, the only one I have; and Katey and Georgina (being also in wild excitement) want to write their parts out with all despatch.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. Wilkie Collins.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Thursday, May 24th, 1855._

MY DEAR COLLINS,

I shall expect you to-morrow evening at "Household Words." I have written a little ballad for Mary--"The Story of the Ship's Carpenter and the Little Boy, in the Shipwreck."

Let us close up with "Mr. Nightingale's Diary." Will you look whether you have a book of it, or your part.

All other matters and things hereunto belonging when we meet.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Trollope.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Tuesday Morning, June 19th, 1855._

MY DEAR MRS. TROLLOPE,

I was out of town on Sunday, or I should have answered your note immediately on its arrival. I cannot have the pleasure of seeing the famous "medium" to-night, for I have some theatricals at home. But I fear I shall not in any case be a good subject for the purpose, as I altogether want faith in the thing.

I have not the least belief in the awful unseen world being available for evening parties at so much per night; and, although I should be ready to receive enlightenment from any source, I must say I have very little hope of it from the spirits who express themselves through mediums, as I have never yet observed them to talk anything but nonsense, of which (as Carlyle would say) there is probably enough in these days of ours, and in all days, among mere mortality.

Very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Wednesday, June 20th, 1855._

MY DEAR STANNY,

I write a hasty note to let you know that last night was perfectly wonderful!!!

Such an audience! Such a brilliant success from first to last! The Queen had taken it into her head in the morning to go to Chatham, and had carried Phipps with her. He wrote to me asking if it were possible to give him a quarter of an hour. I got through that time before the overture, and he came without any dinner, so influenced by eager

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curiosity. Lemon and I did every conceivable absurdity, I think, in the farce; and they never left off laughing. At supper I proposed your health, which was drunk with nine times nine, and three cheers over. We then turned to at Scotch reels (having had no exercise), and danced in the maddest way until five this morning.

It is as much as I can do to guide the pen.

With loves to Mrs. Stanfield and all,
Ever most affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Saturday, June 30th, 1855._

MY VERY DEAR MACREADY,

I write shortly, after a day's work at my desk, rather than lose a post in answering your enthusiastic, earnest, and young--how young, in all the best side of youth--letter.

To tell you the truth, I confidently expected to hear from you. I knew that if there were a man in the world who would be interested in, and who would approve of, my giving utterance to whatever was in me at this time, it would be you. I was as sure of you as of the sun this morning.

The subject is surrounded by difficulties; the Association is sorely in want of able men; and the resistance of all the phalanx, who have an interest in corruption and mismanagement, is the resistance of a struggle against death. But the great, first, strong necessity is to rouse the people up, to keep them stirring and vigilant, to carry the war dead into the tent of such creatures as ----, and ring into their souls (or what stands for them) that the time for dandy insolence is gone for ever. It may be necessary to come to that law of primogeniture (I have no love for it), or to come to even greater things; but this is the first service to be done, and unless it is done, there is not a chance. For this, and to encourage timid people to come in, I went to Drury Lane the other night; and I wish you had been there and had seen and heard the people.

The Association will be proud to have your name and gift. When we sat down on the stage the other night, and were waiting a minute or two to begin, I said to Morley, the chairman (a thoroughly fine earnest fellow), "this reminds me so of one of my dearest friends, with a melancholy so curious, that I don't know whether the place feels familiar to me or strange." He was full of interest directly, and we went on talking of you until the moment of his getting up to open the business.

They are going to print my speech in a tract-form, and send it all over the country. I corrected it for the purpose last night. We are all well. Charley in the City; all the boys at home for the holidays; three prizes brought home triumphantly (one from the Boulogne waters and one from Wimbledon); I taking dives into a new book, and runs at leap-frog over "Household Words;" and Anne going to be married--which is the only bad news.

Catherine, Georgie, Mary, Katey, Charley, and all the rest, send multitudes of loves. Ever, my dearest Macready, with unalterable affection and attachment,

Your faithful Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. Wilkie Collins.]

3, ALBION VILLAS, FOLKESTONE, _Tuesday, July 17th, 1855._

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MY DEAR COLLINS,

Walter goes back to school on the 1st of August. Will you come out of school to this breezy vacation on the same day, or rather _this day fortnight, July 31st_? for that is the day on which he leaves us, and we begin (here's a parent!) to be able to be comfortable. Why a boy of that age should seem to have on at all times a hundred and fifty pair of double-soled boots, and to be always jumping a bottom stair with the whole hundred and fifty, I don't know. But the woeful fact is within my daily experience.

We have a very pleasant little house, overlooking the sea, and I think you will like the place. It rained, in honour of our arrival, with the greatest vigour, yesterday. I went out after dinner to buy some nails (you know the arrangements that would be then in progress), and I stopped in the rain, about halfway down a steep, crooked street, like a crippled ladder, to look at a little coachmaker's, where there had just been a sale. Speculating on the insolvent coachmaker's business, and what kind of coaches he could possibly have expected to get orders for in Folkestone, I thought, "What would bring together fifty people now, in this little street, at this little rainy minute?" On the instant, a brewer's van, with two mad horses in it, and the harness dangling about them--like the trappings of those horses you are acquainted with, who bolted through the starry courts of heaven--dashed by me, and in that instant, such a crowd as would have accumulated in Fleet Street sprang up magically. Men fell out of windows, dived out of doors, plunged down courts, precipitated themselves down steps, came down waterspouts, instead of rain, I think, and I never saw so wonderful an instance of the gregarious effect of an excitement.

A man, a woman, and a child had been thrown out on the horses taking fright and the reins breaking. The child is dead, and the woman very ill but will probably recover, and the man has a hand broken and other mischief done to him.

Let me know what Wigan says. If he does not take the play, and readily too, I would recommend you not to offer it elsewhere. You have gained great reputation by it, have done your position a deal of good, and (as I think) stand so well with it, that it is a pity to engender the notion that you care to stand better.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

FOLKESTONE, _September 16th, 1855._

MY DEAR WILLS,

Scrooge is delighted to find that Bob Cratchit is enjoying his holiday in such a delightful situation; and he says (with that warmth of nature which has distinguished him since his conversion), "Make the most of it, Bob; make the most of it."

[I am just getting to work on No. 3 of the new book, and am in the hideous state of mind belonging to that condition.]

I have not a word of news. I am steeped in my story, and rise and fall by turns into enthusiasm and depression.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

FOLKESTONE, _Sunday, Sept. 16th, 1855._

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MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

This will be a short letter, but I hope not unwelcome. If you knew how often I write to you--in intention--I don't know where you would find room for the correspondence.

Catherine tells me that you want to know the name of my new book. I cannot bear that you should know it from anyone but me. It will not be made public until the end of October; the title is:

"NOBODY'S FAULT."

Keep it as the apple of your eye--an expressive form of speech, though I have not the least idea of what it means.

Next, I wish to tell you that I have appointed to read at Peterboro', on Tuesday, the 18th of December. I have told the Dean that I cannot accept his hospitality, and that I am going with Mr. Wills to the inn, therefore I shall be absolutely at your disposal, and shall be more than disappointed if you don't stay with us. As the time approaches will you let me know your arrangements, and whether Mr. Wills can bespeak any rooms for you in arranging for me? Georgy will give you our address in Paris as soon as we shall have settled there. We shall leave here, I think, in rather less than a month from this time.

You know my state of mind as well as I do, indeed, if you don't know it much better, it is not the state of mind I take it to be. How I work, how I walk, how I shut myself up, how I roll down hills and climb up cliffs; how the new story is everywhere--heaving in the sea, flying with the clouds, blowing in the wind; how I settle to nothing, and wonder (in the old way) at my own incomprehensibility. I am getting on pretty well, have done the first two numbers, and am just now beginning the third; which egotistical announcements I make to you because I know you will be interested in them.

All the house send their kindest loves. I think of inserting an advertisement in _The Times_, offering to submit the Plornishghenter to public competition, and to receive fifty thousand pounds if such another boy cannot be found, and to pay five pounds (my fortune) if he can.

Ever, my dear Mrs. Watson, affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. Wilkie Collins.]

FOLKESTONE, _Sunday, Sept. 30th, 1855._

MY DEAR COLLINS,

Welcome from the bosom of the deep! If a hornpipe will be acceptable to you at any time (as a reminder of what the three brothers were always doing), I shall be, as the chairman says at Mr. Evans's, "happy to oblige."

I have almost finished No. 3, in which I have relieved my indignant soul with a scarifier. Sticking at it day after day, I am the incompletest letter-writer imaginable--seem to have no idea of holding a pen for any other purpose but that book. My fair Laura has not yet reported concerning Paris, but I should think will have done so before I see you. And now to that point. I purpose being in town on _Monday, the 8th_, when I have promised to dine with Forster. At the office, between half-past eleven and one that day, I will expect you, unless I hear from you to the contrary. Of course the H. W. stories are at your disposition. If you should have completed your idea, we might breakfast together at the G. on the Tuesday morning and discuss it. Or I shall be in town after ten on the Monday night. At the office I will tell you the idea of the Christmas number, which will put you in train, I hope, for a

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story. I have postponed the shipwreck idea for a year, as it seemed to require more force from me than I could well give it with the weight of a new start upon me.

All here send their kindest remembrances. We missed you very much, and the Plorn was quite inconsolable. We slide down Cæsar occasionally.

They launched the boat, the rapid building of which you remember, the other day. All the fishermen in the place, all the nondescripts, and all the boys pulled at it with ropes from six A.M. to four P.M. Every now and then the ropes broke, and they all fell down in the shingle. The obstinate way in which the beastly thing wouldn't move was so exasperating that I wondered they didn't shoot it, or burn it. Whenever it moved an inch they all cheered; whenever it wouldn't move they all swore. Finally, when it was quite given over, some one tumbled against it accidentally (as it appeared to me, looking out at my window here), and it instantly shot about a mile into the sea, and they all stood looking at it helplessly.

Kind regards to Pigott, in which all unite.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

FOLKESTONE, _Thursday, Oct. 4th, 1855._

MY DEAREST MACREADY,

I have been hammering away in that strenuous manner at my book, that I have had leisure for scarcely any letters but such, as I have been obliged to write; having a horrible temptation when I lay down my book-pen to run out on the breezy downs here, tear up the hills, slide down the same, and conduct myself in a frenzied manner, for the relief that only exercise gives me.

Your letter to Miss Coutts in behalf of little Miss Warner I despatched straightway. She is at present among the Pyrenees, and a letter from her crossed that one of mine in which I enclosed yours, last week.

Pray stick to that dim notion you have of coming to Paris! How delightful it would be to see your aged countenance and perfectly bald head in that capital! It will renew your youth, to visit a theatre (previously dining at the Trois Frères) in company with the jocund boy who now addresses you. Do, do stick to it.

You will be pleased to hear, I know, that Charley has gone into Baring's house under very auspicious circumstances. Mr. Bates, of that firm, had done me the kindness to place him at the brokers' where he was. And when said Bates wrote to me a fortnight ago to say that an excellent opening had presented itself at Baring's, he added that the brokers gave Charley "so high a character for ability and zeal" that it would be unfair to receive him as a volunteer, and he must begin at a fifty-pound salary, to which I graciously consented.

As to the suffrage, I have lost hope even in the ballot. We appear to me to have proved the failure of representative institutions without an educated and advanced people to support them. What with teaching people to "keep in their stations," what with bringing up the soul and body of the land to be a good child, or to go to the beershop, to go a-poaching and go to the devil; what with having no such thing as a middle class (for though we are perpetually bragging of it as our safety, it is nothing but a poor fringe on the mantle of the upper); what with flunkyism, toadyism, letting the most contemptible lords come in for all manner of places, reading _The Court Circular_ for the New Testament, I do reluctantly believe that the English people are habitually consenting parties to the miserable imbecility into which we have fallen, _and

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never will help themselves out of it_. Who is to do it, if anybody is, God knows. But at present we are on the down-hill road to being conquered, and the people WILL be content to bear it, sing "Rule Britannia," and WILL NOT be saved.

In No. 3 of my new book I have been blowing off a little of indignant steam which would otherwise blow me up, and with God's leave I shall walk in the same all the days of my life; but I have no present political faith or hope--not a grain.

I am going to read the "Carol" here to-morrow in a long carpenter's shop, which looks far more alarming as a place to hear in than the Town Hall at Birmingham.

Kindest loves from all to your dear sister, Kate and the darlings. It is blowing a gale here from the south-west and raining like mad.

Ever most affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

2, RUE ST. FLORENTIN, _Tuesday, Oct. 16th, 1855._

MY DEAREST CATHERINE,

We have had the most awful job to find a place that would in the least suit us, for Paris is perfectly full, and there is nothing to be got at any sane price. However, we have found two apartments--an _entresol_ and a first floor, with a kitchen and servants' room at the top of the house, at No. 49, Avenue des Champs Elysées.

You must be prepared for a regular Continental abode. There is only one window in each room, but the front apartments all look upon the main street of the Champs Elysées, and the view is delightfully cheerful. There are also plenty of rooms. They are not over and above well furnished, but by changing furniture from rooms we don't care for to rooms we _do_ care for, we shall be able to make them home-like and presentable. I think the situation itself almost the finest in Paris; and the children will have a window from which to look on the busy life outside.

We could have got a beautiful apartment in the Rue Faubourg St. Honoré for a very little more, most elegantly furnished; but the greater part of it was on a courtyard, and it would never have done for the children. This, that I have taken for six months, is seven hundred francs per month, and twenty more for the _concierge_. What you have to expect is a regular French residence, which a little habitation will make pretty and comfortable, with nothing showy in it, but with plenty of rooms, and with that wonderful street in which the Barrière de l'Étoile stands outside. The amount of rooms is the great thing, and I believe it to be the place best suited for us, at a not unreasonable price in Paris.

Georgina and Lady Olliffe[22] send their loves. Georgina and I add ours to Mamey, Katey, the Plorn, and Harry.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

49, AVENUE DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS,
Friday, Oct. 19th, 1855.

MY DEAR WILLS,

After going through unheard-of bedevilments (of which you shall have further particulars as soon as I come right side upwards, which may

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happen in a day or two), we are at last established here in a series of closets, but a great many of them, with all Paris perpetually passing under the windows. Letters may have been wandering after me to that home in the Rue de Balzac, which is to be the subject of more lawsuits between the man who let it to me and the man who wouldn't let me have possession, than any other house that ever was built. But I have had no letters at all, and have been--ha, ha!--a maniac since last Monday.

I will try my hand at that paper for H. W. to-morrow, if I can get a yard of flooring to sit upon; but we have really been in that state of topsy-turvyhood that even that has been an unattainable luxury, and may yet be for eight-and-forty hours or so, for anything I see to the contrary.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

49, AVENUE DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS,
Sunday Night, Oct. 21st, 1855.

MY DEAR WILLS,

Coming here from a walk this afternoon, I found your letter of yesterday awaiting me. I send this reply by my brother Alfred, who is here, and who returns home to-morrow. You should get it at the office early on Tuesday.

I will go to work to-morrow, and will send you, please God, an article by Tuesday's post, which you will get on Wednesday forenoon. Look carefully to the proof, as I shall not have time to receive it for correction. When you arrange about sending your parcels, will you ascertain, and communicate to me, the prices of telegraph messages? It will save me trouble, having no foreign servant (though French is in that respect a trump), and may be useful on an emergency.

I have two floors here--_entresol_ and first--in a doll's house, but really pretty within, and the view without astounding, as you will say when you come. The house is on the Exposition side, about half a quarter of a mile above Franconi's, of course on the other side of the way, and close to the Jardin d'Hîver. Each room has but one window in it, but we have no fewer than six rooms (besides the back ones) looking on the Champs Elysées, with the wonderful life perpetually flowing up and down. We have no spare-room, but excellent stowage for the whole family, including a capital dressing-room for me, and a really slap-up kitchen near the stairs. Damage for the whole, seven hundred francs a month.

But, sir--but--when Georgina, the servants, and I were here for the first night (Catherine and the rest being at Boulogne), I heard Georgy restless--turned out--asked: "What's the matter?" "Oh, it's dreadfully dirty. I can't sleep for the smell of my room." Imagine all my stage-managerial energies multiplied at daybreak by a thousand. Imagine the porter, the porter's wife, the porter's wife's sister, a feeble upholsterer of enormous age from round the corner, and all his workmen (four boys), summoned. Imagine the partners in the proprietorship of the apartment, and martial little man with François-Prussian beard, also summoned. Imagine your inimitable chief briefly explaining that dirt is not in his way, and that he is driven to madness, and that he devotes himself to no coat and a dirty face, until the apartment is thoroughly purified. Imagine co-proprietors at first astounded, then urging that "it's not the custom," then wavering, then affected, then confiding their utmost private sorrows to the Inimitable, offering new carpets (accepted), embraces (not accepted), and really responding like French bricks. Sallow, unbrushed, unshorn, awful, stalks the Inimitable through the apartment until last night. Then all the improvements were concluded, and I do really believe the place to be now worth eight or nine hundred francs per month. You must picture it as the smallest place

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you ever saw, but as exquisitely cheerful and vivacious, clean as anything human can be, and with a moving panorama always outside, which is Paris in itself.

You mention a letter from Miss Coutts as to Mrs. Brown's illness, which you say is "enclosed to Mrs. Charles Dickens."

It is not enclosed, and I am mad to know where she writes from that I may write to her. Pray set this right, for her uneasiness will be greatly intensified if she have no word from me.

I thought we were to give £1,700 for the house at Gad's Hill. Are we bound to £1,800? Considering the improvements to be made, it is a little too much, isn't it? I have a strong impression that at the utmost we were only to divide the difference, and not to pass £1,750. You will set me right if I am wrong. But I don't think I am.

I write very hastily, with the piano playing and Alfred looking for this.

Ever, my dear Wills, faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

49, AVENUE DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES,
Wednesday, Oct. 24th, 1855.

MY DEAR WILLS,

In the Gad's Hill matter, I too would like to try the effect of "not budging." _So do not go beyond the_ £1,700. Considering what I should have to expend on the one hand, and the low price of stock on the other, I do not feel disposed to go beyond that mark. They won't let a purchaser escape for the sake of the £100, I think. And Austin was strongly of opinion, when I saw him last, that £1,700 was enough.

You cannot think how pleasant it is to me to find myself generally known and liked here. If I go into a shop to buy anything, and give my card, the officiating priest or priestess brightens up, and says: "_Ah! c'est l'écrivain célèbre! Monsieur porte un nom très-distingué. Mais! je suis honoré et intéressé de voir Monsieur Dick-in. Je lis un des livres de monsieur tous les jours_" (in the _Moniteur_). And a man who brought some little vases home last night, said: "_On connaît bien en France que Monsieur Dick-in prend sa position sur la dignité de la littérature. Ah! c'est grande chose! Et ses caractères_" (this was to Georgina, while he unpacked) "_sont si spirituellement tournées! Cette Madame Tojare_" (Todgers), "_ah! qu'elle est drôle et précisément comme une dame que je connais à Calais._"

You cannot have any doubt about this place, if you will only recollect it is the great main road from the Place de la Concorde to the Barrière de l'Étoile.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Monsieur Regnier.]

Wednesday, November 21st, 1855.

MY DEAR REGNIER,

In thanking you for the box you kindly sent me the day before yesterday, let me thank you a thousand times for the delight we derived from the representation of your beautiful and admirable piece. I have hardly ever been so affected and interested in any theatre. Its construction is in the highest degree excellent, the interest absorbing, and the whole

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conducted by a masterly hand to a touching and natural conclusion.

Through the whole story from beginning to end, I recognise the true spirit and feeling of an artist, and I most heartily offer you and your fellow-labourer my felicitations on the success you have achieved. That it will prove a very great and a lasting one, I cannot for a moment doubt.

O my friend! If I could see an English actress with but one hundredth part of the nature and art of Madame Plessy, I should believe our English theatre to be in a fair way towards its regeneration. But I have no hope of ever beholding such a phenomenon. I may as well expect ever to see upon an English stage an accomplished artist, able to write and to embody what he writes, like you.

Faithfully yours ever.

[Sidenote: Madame Viardot.]

49, AVENUE DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES, _Monday, Dec. 3rd, 1855._

DEAR MADAME VIARDOT,

Mrs. Dickens tells me that you have only borrowed the first number of "Little Dorrit," and are going to send it back. Pray do nothing of the sort, and allow me to have the great pleasure of sending you the succeeding numbers as they reach me. I have had such delight in your great genius, and have so high an interest in it and admiration of it, that I am proud of the honour of giving you a moment's intellectual pleasure.

Believe me, very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Sunday, Dec. 23rd, 1855._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I have a moment in which to redeem my promise, of putting you in possession of my Little Friend No. 2, before the general public. It is, of course, at the disposal of your circle, but until the month is out, is understood to be a prisoner in the castle.

If I had time to write anything, I should still quite vainly try to tell you what interest and happiness I had in once more seeing you among your dear children. Let me congratulate you on your Eton boys. They are so handsome, frank, and genuinely modest, that they charmed me. A kiss to the little fair-haired darling and the rest; the love of my heart to every stone in the old house.

Enormous effect at Sheffield. But really not a better audience perceptively than at Peterboro', for that could hardly be, but they were more enthusiastically demonstrative, and they took the line, "and to Tiny Tim who did NOT die," with a most prodigious shout and roll of thunder.

Ever, my dear Friend, most faithfully yours.

FOOTNOTES:

[21] Captain Cavendish Boyle was governor of the military prison at Weedon.

[22] Wife of the late Sir Joseph Olliffe, Physician to the British Embassy.

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1856.

NARRATIVE.

Charles Dickens having taken an _appartement_ in Paris for the winter months, 49, Avenue des Champs Elysées, was there with his family until the middle of May. He much enjoyed this winter sojourn, meeting many old friends, making new friends, and interchanging hospitalities with the French artistic world. He had also many friends from England to visit him. Mr. Wilkie Collins had an _appartement de garçon_ hard by, and the two companions were constantly together. The Rev. James White and his family also spent their winter at Paris, having taken an _appartement_ at 49, Avenue des Champs Elysées, and the girls of the two families had the same masters, and took their lessons together. After the Whites' departure, Mr. Macready paid Charles Dickens a visit, occupying the vacant _appartement_.

During this winter Charles Dickens was, however, constantly backwards and forwards between Paris and London on "Household Words" business, and was also at work on his "Little Dorrit."

While in Paris he sat for his portrait to the great Ary Scheffer. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition of this year, and is now in the National Portrait Gallery.

The summer was again spent at Boulogne, and once more at the Villa des Moulineaux, where he received constant visits from English friends, Mr. Wilkie Collins taking up his quarters for many weeks at a little cottage in the garden; and there the idea of another play, to be acted at Tavistock House, was first started. Many of our letters for this year have reference to this play, and will show the interest which Charles Dickens took in it, and the immense amount of care and pains given by him to the careful carrying out of this favourite amusement.

The Christmas number of "Household Words," written by Charles Dickens and Mr. Collins, called "The Wreck of the _Golden Mary_," was planned by the two friends during this summer holiday.

It was in this year that one of the great wishes of his life was to be realised, the much-coveted house--Gad's Hill Place--having been purchased by him, and the cheque written on the 14th of March--on a "Friday," as he writes to his sister-in-law, in the letter of this date. He frequently remarked that all the important, and so far fortunate, events of his life had happened to him on a Friday. So that, contrary to the usual superstition, that day had come to be looked upon by his family as his "lucky" day.

The allusion to the "plainness" of Miss Boyle's handwriting is good-humouredly ironical; that lady's writing being by no means famous for its legibility.

The "Anne" mentioned in the letter to his sister-in-law, which follows the one to Miss Boyle, was the faithful servant who had lived with the family so long; and who, having left to be married the previous year, had found it a very difficult matter to recover from her sorrow at this parting. And the "godfather's present" was for a son of Mr. Edmund Yates.

"The Humble Petition" was written to Mr. Wilkie Collins during that gentleman's visit to Paris.

The explanation of the remark to Mr. Wills (6th April), that he had paid the money to Mr. Poole, is that Charles Dickens was the trustee through

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whom the dramatist received his pension.

The letter to the Duke of Devonshire has reference to the peace illuminations after the Crimean war.

The M. Forgues for whom, at Mr. Collins's request, he writes a short biography of himself, was the editor of the _Revue des Deux Mondes_.

The speech at the London Tavern was on behalf of the Artists' Benevolent Fund.

Miss Kate Macready had sent some clever poems to "Household Words," with which Charles Dickens had been much pleased. He makes allusion to these, in our two remaining letters to Mr. Macready.

"I did write it for you" (letter to Mrs. Watson, 17th October), refers to that part of "Little Dorrit" which treats of the visit of the Dorrit family to the Great St. Bernard. An expedition which it will be remembered he made himself, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Watson and other friends.

The letter to Mrs. Horne refers to a joke about the name of a friend of this lady's, who had once been brought by her to Tavistock House. The letter to Mr. Mitton concerns the lighting of the little theatre at Tavistock House.

Our last letter is in answer to one from Mr. Kent, asking him to sit to Mr. John Watkins for his photograph. We should add, however, that he did subsequently give this gentleman some sittings.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

49, CHAMPS ELYSÉES, _Sunday, Jan. 6th, 1856._

MY DEAR WILLS,

I should like Morley to do a Strike article, and to work into it the greater part of what is here. But I cannot represent myself as holding the opinion that all strikes among this unhappy class of society, who find it so difficult to get a peaceful hearing, are always necessarily wrong, because I don't think so. To open a discussion of the question by saying that the men are "_of course_ entirely and painfully in the wrong," surely would be monstrous in any one. Show them to be in the wrong here, but in the name of the eternal heavens show why, upon the merits of this question. Nor can I possibly adopt the representation that these men are wrong because by throwing themselves out of work they throw other people, possibly without their consent. If such a principle had anything in it, there could have been no civil war, no raising by Hampden of a troop of horse, to the detriment of Buckinghamshire agriculture, no self-sacrifice in the political world. And O, good God, when ---- treats of the suffering of wife and children, can he suppose that these mistaken men don't feel it in the depths of their hearts, and don't honestly and honourably, most devoutly and faithfully believe that for those very children, when they shall have children, they are bearing all these miseries now!

I hear from Mrs. Fillonneau that her husband was obliged to leave town suddenly before he could get your parcel, consequently he has not brought it; and White's sovereigns--unless you have got them back again--are either lying out of circulation somewhere, or are being spent by somebody else. I will write again on Tuesday. My article is to begin the enclosed.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. Mark Lemon.]

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49, CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS, _Monday, Jan. 7th, 1856._

MY DEAR MARK,

I want to know how "Jack and the Beanstalk" goes. I have a notion from a notice--a favourable notice, however--which I saw in _Galignani_, that Webster has let down the comic business.

In a piece at the Ambigu, called the "Rentrée à Paris," a mere scene in honour of the return of the troops from the Crimea the other day, there is a novelty which I think it worth letting you know of, as it is easily available, either for a serious or a comic interest--the introduction of a supposed electric telegraph. The scene is the railway terminus at Paris, with the electric telegraph office on the prompt side, and the clerks _with their backs to the audience_--much more real than if they were, as they infallibly would be, staring about the house--working the needles; and the little bell perpetually ringing. There are assembled to greet the soldiers, all the easily and naturally imagined elements of interest--old veteran fathers, young children, agonised mothers, sisters and brothers, girl lovers--each impatient to know of his or her own object of solicitude. Enter to these a certain marquis, full of sympathy for all, who says: "My friends, I am one of you. My brother has no commission yet. He is a common soldier. I wait for him as well as all brothers and sisters here wait for _their_ brothers. Tell me whom you are expecting." Then they all tell him. Then he goes into the telegraph-office, and sends a message down the line to know how long the troops will be. Bell rings. Answer handed out on slip of paper. "Delay on the line. Troops will not arrive for a quarter of an hour." General disappointment. "But we have this brave electric telegraph, my friends," says the marquis. "Give me your little messages, and I'll send them off." General rush round the marquis. Exclamations: "How's Henri?" "My love to Georges;" "Has Guillaume forgotten Elise?" "Is my son wounded?" "Is my brother promoted?" etc. etc. Marquis composes tumult. Sends message--such a regiment, such a company--"Elise's love to Georges." Little bell rings, slip of paper handed out--"Georges in ten minutes will embrace his Elise. Sends her a thousand kisses." Marquis sends message--such a regiment, such a company--"Is my son wounded?" Little bell rings. Slip of paper handed out--"No. He has not yet upon him those marks of bravery in the glorious service of his country which his dear old father bears" (father being lamed and invalided). Last of all, the widowed mother. Marquis sends message--such a regiment, such a company--"Is my only son safe?" Little bell rings. Slip of paper handed out--"He was first upon the heights of Alma." General cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "He was made a sergeant at Inkermann." Another cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "He was made colour-sergeant at Sebastopol." Another cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "He was the first man who leaped with the French banner on the Malakhoff tower." Tremendous cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "But he was struck down there by a musket-ball, and----Troops have proceeded. Will arrive in half a minute after this." Mother abandons all hope; general commiseration; troops rush in, down a platform; son only wounded, and embraces her.

As I have said, and as you will see, this is available for any purpose. But done with equal distinction and rapidity, it is a tremendous effect, and got by the simplest means in the world. There is nothing in the piece, but it was impossible not to be moved and excited by the telegraph part of it.

I hope you have seen something of Stanny, and have been to pantomimes with him, and have drunk to the absent Dick. I miss you, my dear old boy, at the play, woefully, and miss the walk home, and the partings at the corner of Tavistock Square. And when I go by myself, I come home stewing "Little Dorrit" in my head; and the best part of _my_ play is (or ought to be) in Gordon Street.

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I have written to Beaucourt about taking that breezy house--a little improved--for the summer, and I hope you and yours will come there often and stay there long. My present idea, if nothing should arise to unroot me sooner, is to stay here until the middle of May, then plant the family at Boulogne, and come with Catherine and Georgy home for two or three weeks. When I shall next run across I don't know, but I suppose next month.

We are up to our knees in mud here. Literally in vehement despair, I walked down the avenue outside the Barrière de l'Étoile here yesterday, and went straight on among the trees. I came back with top-boots of mud on. Nothing will cleanse the streets. Numbers of men and women are for ever scooping and sweeping in them, and they are always one lake of yellow mud. All my trousers go to the tailor's every day, and are ravelled out at the heels every night. Washing is awful.

Tell Mrs. Lemon, with my love, that I have bought her some Eau d'Or, in grateful remembrance of her knowing what it is, and crushing the tyrant of her existence by resolutely refusing to be put down when that monster would have silenced her. You may imagine the loves and messages that are now being poured in upon me by all of them, so I will give none of them; though I am pretending to be very scrupulous about it, and am looking (I have no doubt) as if I were writing them down with the greatest care.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. Wilkie Collins.]

49, CHAMPS ELYSÉES, _Saturday, Jan. 19th, 1856._

MY DEAR COLLINS,

I had no idea you were so far on with your book, and heartily congratulate you on being within sight of land.

It is excessively pleasant to me to get your letter, as it opens a perspective of theatrical and other lounging evenings, and also of articles in "Household Words." It will not be the first time that we shall have got on well in Paris, and I hope it will not be by many a time the last.

I purpose coming over, early in February (as soon, in fact, as I shall have knocked out No. 5 of "Little D."), and therefore we can return in a jovial manner together. As soon as I know my day of coming over, I will write to you again, and (as the merchants--say Charley--would add) "communicate same" to you.

The lodging, _en garçon_, shall be duly looked up, and I shall of course make a point of finding it close here. There will be no difficulty in that. I will have concluded the treaty before starting for London, and will take it by the month, both because that is the cheapest way, and because desirable places don't let for shorter terms.

I have been sitting to Scheffer to-day--conceive this, if you please, with No. 5 upon my soul--four hours!! I am so addleheaded and bored, that if you were here, I should propose an instantaneous rush to the Trois Frères. Under existing circumstances I have no consolation.

I think THE portrait[23] is the most astounding thing ever beheld upon this globe. It has been shrieked over by the united family as "Oh! the very image!" I went down to the _entresol_ the moment I opened it, and submitted it to the Plorn--then engaged, with a half-franc musket, in capturing a Malakhoff of chairs. He looked at it very hard, and gave it as his opinion that it was Misser Hegg. We suppose him to have confounded the Colonel with Jollins. I met Madame Georges Sand the other day at a dinner got up by Madame Viardot for that great purpose. The human mind cannot conceive any one more astonishingly opposed to all my

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preconceptions. If I had been shown her in a state of repose, and asked what I thought her to be, I should have said: "The Queen's monthly nurse." _Au reste_, she has nothing of the _bas bleu_ about her, and is very quiet and agreeable.

The way in which mysterious Frenchmen call and want to embrace me, suggests to any one who knows me intimately, such infamous lurking, slinking, getting behind doors, evading, lying--so much mean resort to craven flights, dastard subterfuges, and miserable poltroonery--on my part, that I merely suggest the arrival of cards like this:

[Illustration: HW:

  Horgues
  homme de lettres
  or
  Drouse
  membre de l'Institut
  or
  Cregibus Patalanternois
  Ecole des Beaux arts

  --every five minutes. Books also arrive with, on the flyleaf,

  Jaubaud
  Hommage à l'illustre romancier d'Angleterre

  Charles De Kean.]

--and I then write letters of terrific _empressement_, with assurances of all sorts of profound considerations, and never by any chance become visible to the naked eye.

At the Porte St. Martin they are doing the "Orestes," put into French verse by Alexandre Dumas. Really one of the absurdest things I ever saw. The scene of the tomb, with all manner of classical females, in black, grouping themselves on the lid, and on the steps, and on each other, and in every conceivable aspect of obtrusive impossibility, is just like the window of one of those artists in hair, who address the friends of deceased persons. To-morrow week a fête is coming off at the Jardin d'Hîver, next door but one here, which I must certainly go to. The fête of the company of the Folies Nouvelles! The ladies of the company are to keep stalls, and are to sell to Messieurs the Amateurs orange-water and lemonade. Paul le Grand is to promenade among the company, dressed as Pierrot. Kalm, the big-faced comic singer, is to do the like, dressed as a Russian Cossack. The entertainments are to conclude with "La Polka des Bêtes féroces, par la Troupe entière des Folies Nouvelles." I wish, without invasion of the rights of British subjects, or risk of war, ---- could be seized by French troops, brought over, and made to assist.

The _appartement_ has not grown any bigger since you last had the joy of beholding me, and upon my honour and word I live in terror of asking ---- to dinner, lest she should not be able to get in at the dining-room door. I _think_ (am not sure) the dining-room would hold her, if she could be once passed in, but I don't see my way to that. Nevertheless, we manage our own family dinners very snugly there, and have good ones, as I think you will say, every day at half-past five.

I have a notion that we may knock out a _series_ of descriptions for H. W. without much trouble. It is very difficult to get into the Catacombs, but my name is so well known here that I think I may succeed. I find that the guillotine can be got set up in private, like Punch's show. What do you think of _that_ for an article? I find myself underlining words constantly. It is not my nature. It is mere imbecility after the four hours' sitting.

All unite in kindest remembrances to you, your mother and brother.

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Ever cordially.

[Sidenote: Miss Mary Boyle.]

49, CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS, _Jan. 28th, 1856._

MY DEAR MARY,

I am afraid you will think me an abandoned ruffian for not having acknowledged your more than handsome warm-hearted letter before now. But, as usual, I have been so occupied, and so glad to get up from my desk and wallow in the mud (at present about six feet deep here), that pleasure correspondence is just the last thing in the world I have had leisure to take to. Business correspondence with all sorts and conditions of men and women, O my Mary! is one of the dragons I am perpetually fighting; and the more I throw it, the more it stands upon its hind legs, rampant, and throws me.

Yes, on that bright cold morning when I left Peterboro', I felt that the best thing I could do was to say that word that I would do anything in an honest way to avoid saying, at one blow, and make off. I was so sorry to leave you all! You can scarcely imagine what a chill and blank I felt on that Monday evening at Rockingham. It was so sad to me, and engendered a constraint so melancholy and peculiar, that I doubt if I were ever much more out of sorts in my life. Next morning, when it was light and sparkling out of doors, I felt more at home again. But when I came in from seeing poor dear Watson's grave, Mrs. Watson asked me to go up in the gallery, which I had last seen in the days of our merry play. We went up, and walked into the very part he had made and was so fond of, and she looked out of one window and I looked out of another, and for the life of me I could not decide in my own heart whether I should console or distress her by going and taking her hand, and saying something of what was naturally in my mind. So I said nothing, and we came out again, and on the whole perhaps it was best; for I have no doubt we understood each other very well without speaking a word.

Sheffield was a tremendous success and an admirable audience. They made me a present of table-cutlery after the reading was over; and I came away by the mail-train within three-quarters of an hour, changing my dress and getting on my wrappers partly in the fly, partly at the inn, partly on the platform. When we got among the Lincolnshire fens it began to snow. That changed to sleet, that changed to rain; the frost was all gone as we neared London, and the mud has all come. At two or three o'clock in the morning I stopped at Peterboro' again, and thought of you all disconsolately. The lady in the refreshment-room was very hard upon me, harder even than those fair enslavers usually are. She gave me a cup of tea, as if I were a hyena and she my cruel keeper with a strong dislike to me. I mingled my tears with it, and had a petrified bun of enormous antiquity in miserable meekness.

It is clear to me that climates are gradually assimilating over a great part of the world, and that in the most miserable part of our year there is very little to choose between London and Paris, except that London is not so muddy. I have never seen dirtier or worse weather than we have had here since I returned. In desperation I went out to the Barrières last Sunday on a headlong walk, and came back with my very eyebrows smeared with mud. Georgina is usually invisible during the walking time of the day. A turned-up nose may be seen in the midst of splashes, but nothing more.

I am settling to work again, and my horrible restlessness immediately assails me. It belongs to such times. As I was writing the preceding page, it suddenly came into my head that I would get up and go to Calais. I don't know why; the moment I got there I should want to go somewhere else. But, as my friend the Boots says (see Christmas number "Household Words"): "When you come to think what a game you've been up to ever since you was in your own cradle, and what a poor sort of a chap

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you were, and how it's always yesterday with you, or else to-morrow, and never to-day, that's where it is."

My dear Mary, would you favour me with the name and address of the professor that taught you writing, for I want to improve myself? Many a hand have I seen with many characteristics of beauty in it--some loopy, some dashy, some large, some small, some sloping to the right, some sloping to the left, some not sloping at all; but what I like in _your_ hand, Mary, is its plainness, it is like print. Them as runs may read just as well as if they stood still. I should have thought it was copper-plate if I hadn't known you. They send all sorts of messages from here, and so do I, with my best regards to Bedgy and pardner and the blessed babbies. When shall we meet again, I wonder, and go somewhere! Ah!

Believe me ever, my dear Mary,
Yours truly and affectionately,

Joe.

(That doesn't look plain.)

JOE.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS," _Friday, Feb. 8th, 1856._

MY DEAR GEORGY,

I must write this at railroad speed, for I have been at it all day, and have numbers of letters to cram into the next half-hour. I began the morning in the City, for the Theatrical Fund; went on to Shepherd's Bush; came back to leave cards for Mr. Baring and Mr. Bates; ran across Piccadilly to Stratton Street, stayed there an hour, and shot off here. I have been in four cabs to-day, at a cost of thirteen shillings. Am going to dine with Mark and Webster at half-past four, and finish the evening at the Adelphi.

The dinner was very successful. Charley was in great force, and floored Peter Cunningham and the Audit Office on a question about some bill transactions with Baring's. The other guests were B. and E., Shirley Brooks, Forster, and that's all. The dinner admirable. I never had a better. All the wine I sent down from Tavistock House. Anne waited, and looked well and happy, very much brighter altogether. It gave me great pleasure to see her so improved. Just before dinner I got all the letters from home. They could not have arrived more opportunely.

The godfather's present looks charming now it is engraved, and John is just now going off to take it to Mrs. Yates. To-morrow Wills and I are going to Gad's Hill. It will occupy the whole day, and will just leave me time to get home to dress for dinner.

And that's all that I have to say, except that the first number of "Little Dorrit" has gone to forty thousand, and the other one fast following.

My best love to Catherine, and to Mamey and Katey, and Walter and Harry, and the noble Plorn. I am grieved to hear about his black eye, and fear that I shall find it in the green and purple state on my return.

Ever affectionately.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF CHARLES DICKENS, A DISTRESSED FOREIGNER,

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioner has not been able to write one word to-day, or to

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fashion forth the dimmest shade of the faintest ghost of an idea.

That your Petitioner is therefore desirous of being taken out, and is not at all particular where.

That your Petitioner, being imbecile, says no more. But will ever, etc. (whatever that may be).

PARIS, _March 3rd, 1856._

[Sidenote: Mr. Douglas Jerrold.]

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS" OFFICE, _March 6th, 1856._

MY DEAR JERROLD,

Buckstone has been with me to-day in a state of demi-semi-distraction, by reason of Macready's dreading his asthma so much as to excuse himself (of necessity, I know) from taking the chair for the fund on the occasion of their next dinner. I have promised to back Buckstone's entreaty to you to take it; and although I know that you have an objection which you once communicated to me, I still hold (as I did then) that it is a reason _for_ and not against. Pray reconsider the point. Your position in connection with dramatic literature has always suggested to me that there would be a great fitness and grace in your appearing in this post. I am convinced that the public would regard it in that light, and I particularly ask you to reflect that we never can do battle with the Lords, if we will not bestow ourselves to go into places which they have long monopolised. Now pray discuss this matter with yourself once more. If you can come to a favourable conclusion I shall be really delighted, and will of course come from Paris to be by you; if you cannot come to a favourable conclusion I shall be really sorry, though I of course most readily defer to your right to regard such a matter from your own point of view.

Ever faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS" OFFICE, _Tuesday, March 11th, 1856_.[24]

MY DEAR GEORGY,

I have been in bed half the day with my cold, which is excessively violent, consequently have to write in a great hurry to save the post.

Tell Catherine that I have the most prodigious, overwhelming, crushing, astounding, blinding, deafening, pulverising, scarifying secret, of which Forster is the hero, imaginable by the whole efforts of the whole British population. It is a thing of that kind that, after I knew it, (from himself) this morning, I lay down flat as if an engine and tender had fallen upon me.

Love to Catherine (not a word of Forster before anyone else), and to Mamey, Katey, Harry, and the noble Plorn. Tell Collins with my kind regards that Forster has just pronounced to me that "Collins is a decidedly clever fellow." I hope he is a better fellow in health, too.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS," _Friday, March 14th, 1856._

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MY DEAR GEORGY,

I am amazed to hear of the snow (I don't know why, but it excited John this morning beyond measure); though we have had the same east wind here, and _the_ cold and _my_ cold have both been intense.

Yesterday evening Webster, Mark, Stanny, and I went to the Olympic, where the Wigans ranged us in a row in a gorgeous and immense private box, and where we saw "Still Waters Run Deep." I laughed (in a conspicuous manner) to that extent at Emery, when he received the dinner-company, that the people were more amused by me than by the piece. I don't think I ever saw anything meant to be funny that struck me as so extraordinarily droll. I couldn't get over it at all. After the piece we went round, by Wigan's invitation, to drink with him. It being positively impossible to get Stanny off the stage, we stood in the wings during the burlesque. Mrs. Wigan seemed really glad to see her old manager, and the company overwhelmed him with embraces. They had nearly all been at the meeting in the morning.

I have seen Charley only twice since I came to London, having regularly been in bed until mid-day. To my amazement, my eye fell upon him at the Adelphi yesterday.

This day I have paid the purchase-money for Gad's Hill Place. After drawing the cheque, I turned round to give it to Wills (£1,790), and said: "Now isn't it an extraordinary thing--look at the day--Friday! I have been nearly drawing it half-a-dozen times, when the lawyers have not been ready, and here it comes round upon a Friday, as a matter of course."

Kiss the noble Plorn a dozen times for me, and tell him I drank his health yesterday, and wished him many happy returns of the day; also that I hope he will not have broken all his toys before I come back.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

49, CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS, _Saturday, March 22nd, 1856._

MY DEAR MACREADY,

I want you--you being quite well again, as I trust you are, and resolute to come to Paris--so to arrange your order of march as to let me know beforehand when you will come, and how long you will stay. We owe Scribe and his wife a dinner, and I should like to pay the debt when you are with us. Ary Scheffer too would be delighted to see you again. If I could arrange for a certain day I would secure them. We cannot afford (you and I, I mean) to keep much company, because we shall have to look in at a theatre or so, I daresay!

It would suit my work best, if I could keep myself clear until Monday, the 7th of April. But in case that day should be too late for the beginning of your brief visit with a deference to any other engagements you have in contemplation, then fix an earlier one, and I will make "Little Dorrit" curtsy to it. My recent visit to London and my having only just now come back have thrown me a little behindhand; but I hope to come up with a wet sail in a few days.

You should have seen the ruins of Covent Garden Theatre. I went in the moment I got to London--four days after the fire. Although the audience part and the stage were so tremendously burnt out that there was not a piece of wood half the size of a lucifer-match for the eye to rest on, though nothing whatever remained but bricks and smelted iron lying on a great black desert, the theatre still looked so wonderfully like its old self grown gigantic that I never saw so strange a sight. The wall dividing the front from the stage still remained, and the iron

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pass-doors stood ajar in an impossible and inaccessible frame. The arches that supported the stage were there, and the arches that supported the pit; and in the centre of the latter lay something like a Titanic grape-vine that a hurricane had pulled up by the roots, twisted, and flung down there; this was the great chandelier. Gye had kept the men's wardrobe at the top of the house over the great entrance staircase; when the roof fell in it came down bodily, and all that part of the ruins was like an old Babylonic pavement, bright rays tesselating the black ground, sometimes in pieces so large that I could make out the clothes in the "Trovatore."

I should run on for a couple of hours if I had to describe the spectacle as I saw it, wherefore I will immediately muzzle myself. All here unite in kindest loves to dear Miss Macready, to Katie, Lillie, Benvenuta, my godson, and the noble Johnny. We are charmed to hear such happy accounts of Willy and Ned, and send our loving remembrance to them in the next letters. All Parisian novelties you shall see and hear for yourself.

Ever, my dearest Macready,
Your affectionate Friend.

P.S.--Mr. F.'s aunt sends her defiant respects.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

49, AVENUE DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS,
Thursday Night, March 27th, 1856 (after post time).

MY DEAREST MACREADY,

If I had had any idea of your coming (see how naturally I use the word when I am three hundred miles off!) to London so soon, I would never have written one word about the jump over next week. I am vexed that I did so, but as I did I will not now propose a change in the arrangements, as I know how methodical you tremendously old fellows are. That's your secret I suspect. That's the way in which the blood of the Mirabels mounts in your aged veins, even at your time of life.

How charmed I shall be to see you, and we all shall be, I will not attempt to say. On that expected Sunday you will lunch at Amiens but not dine, because we shall wait dinner for you, and you will merely have to tell that driver in the glazed hat to come straight here. When the Whites left I added their little apartment to this little apartment, consequently you shall have a snug bedroom (is it not waiting expressly for you?) overlooking the Champs Elysées. As to the arm-chair in my heart, no man on earth----but, good God! you know all about it.

You will find us in the queerest of little rooms all alone, except that the son of Collins the painter (who writes a good deal in "Household Words") dines with us every day. Scheffer and Scribe shall be admitted for one evening, because they know how to appreciate you. The Emperor we will not ask unless you expressly wish it; it makes a fuss.

If you have no appointed hotel at Boulogne, go to the Hôtel des Bains, there demand "Marguerite," and tell her that I commended you to her special care. It is the best house within my experience in France; Marguerite the best housekeeper in the world.

I shall charge at "Little Dorrit" to-morrow with new spirits. The sight of you is good for my boyish eyes, and the thought of you for my dawning mind. Give the enclosed lines a welcome, then send them on to Sherborne.

Ever yours most affectionately and truly.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

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49, CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS, _Sunday, April 6th, 1856._

MY DEAR WILLS,

CHRISTMAS.

Collins and I have a mighty original notion (mine in the beginning) for another play at Tavistock House. I propose opening on Twelfth Night the theatrical season of that great establishment. But now a tremendous question.

Is

MRS. WILLS!

game to do a Scotch housekeeper, in a supposed country-house, with Mary, Katey, Georgina, etc.? If she can screw her courage up to saying "Yes," that country-house opens the piece in a singular way, and that Scotch housekeeper's part shall flow from the present pen. If she says "No" (but she won't), no Scotch housekeeper can be. The Tavistock House season of four nights pauses for a reply. Scotch song (new and original) of Scotch housekeeper would pervade the piece.

YOU

had better pause for breath.

Ever faithfully.

POOLE.

I have paid him his money. Here is the proof of life. If you will get me the receipt to sign, the money can go to my account at Coutts's.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Charles Dickens.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Monday, May 5th, 1856._

MY DEAR CATHERINE,

I did nothing at Dover (except for "Household Words"), and have not begun "Little Dorrit," No. 8, yet. But I took twenty-mile walks in the fresh air, and perhaps in the long run did better than if I had been at work. The report concerning Scheffer's portrait I had from Ward. It is in the best place in the largest room, but I find the _general_ impression of the artists exactly mine. They almost all say that it wants something; that nobody could mistake whom it was meant for, but that it has something disappointing in it, etc. etc. Stanfield likes it better than any of the other painters, I think. His own picture is magnificent. And Frith, in a "Little Child's Birthday Party," is quite delightful. There are many interesting pictures. When you see Scheffer, tell him from me that Eastlake, in his speech at the dinner, referred to the portrait as "a contribution from a distinguished man of genius in France, worthy of himself and of his subject."

I did the maddest thing last night, and am deeply penitent this morning. We stayed at Webster's till any hour, and they wanted me, at last, to make punch, which couldn't be done when the jug was brought, because (to Webster's burning indignation) there was only one lemon in the house. Hereupon I then and there besought the establishment in general to come and drink punch on Thursday night, after the play; on which occasion it will become necessary to furnish fully the table with some cold viands from Fortnum and Mason's. Mark has looked in since I began this note, to suggest that the great festival may come off at "Household Words" instead. I am inclined to think it a good idea, and that I shall transfer the locality to that business establishment. But I am at present distracted with doubts and torn by remorse.

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The school-room and dining-room I have brought into habitable condition and comfortable appearance. Charley and I breakfast at half-past eight, and meet again at dinner when he does not dine in the City, or has no engagement. He looks very well.

The audiences at Gye's are described to me as absolute marvels of coldness. No signs of emotion can be hammered, out of them. Panizzi sat next me at the Academy dinner, and took it very ill that I disparaged ----. The amateurs here are getting up another pantomime, but quarrel so violently among themselves that I doubt its ever getting on the stage. Webster expounded his scheme for rebuilding the Adelphi to Stanfield and myself last night, and I felt bound to tell him that I thought it wrong from beginning to end. This is all the theatrical news I know.

I write by this post to Georgy. Love to Mamey, Katey, Harry, and the noble Plorn. I should be glad to see him here.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Miss Hogarth.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Monday, May 5th, 1856._

MY DEAR GEORGY,

You will not be much surprised to hear that I have done nothing yet (except for H. W.), and have only just settled down into a corner of the school-room. The extent to which John and I wallowed in dust for four hours yesterday morning, getting things neat and comfortable about us, you may faintly imagine. At four in the afternoon came Stanfield, to whom I no sooner described the notion of the new play, than he immediately upset all my new arrangements by making a proscenium of the chairs, and planning the scenery with walking-sticks. One of the least things he did was getting on the top of the long table, and hanging over the bar in the middle window where that top sash opens, as if he had got a hinge in the middle of his body. He is immensely excited on the subject. Mark had a farce ready for the managerial perusal, but it won't do.

I went to the Dover theatre on Friday night, which was a miserable spectacle. The pit is boarded over, and it is a drinking and smoking place. It was "for the benefit of Mrs. ----," and the town had been very extensively placarded with "Don't forget Friday." I made out four and ninepence (I am serious) in the house, when I went in. We may have warmed up in the course of the evening to twelve shillings. A Jew played the grand piano; Mrs. ---- sang no end of songs (with not a bad voice, poor creature); Mr. ---- sang comic songs fearfully, and danced clog hornpipes capitally; and a miserable woman, shivering in a shawl and bonnet, sat in the side-boxes all the evening, nursing Master ----, aged seven months. It was a most forlorn business, and I should have contributed a sovereign to the treasury, if I had known how.

I walked to Deal and back that day, and on the previous day walked over the downs towards Canterbury in a gale of wind. It was better than still weather after all, being wonderfully fresh and free.

If the Plorn were sitting at this school-room window in the corner, he would see more cats in an hour than he ever saw in his life. _I_ never saw so many, I think, as I have seen since yesterday morning.

There is a painful picture of a great deal of merit (Egg has bought it) in the exhibition, painted by the man who did those little interiors of Forster's. It is called "The Death of Chatterton." The dead figure is a good deal like Arthur Stone; and I was touched on Saturday to see that tender old file standing before it, crying under his spectacles at the idea of seeing his son dead. It was a very tender manifestation of his

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gentle old heart.

This sums up my news, which is no news at all. Kiss the Plorn for me, and expound to him that I am always looking forward to meeting him again, among the birds and flowers in the garden on the side of the hill at Boulogne.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: The Duke of Devonshire.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Sunday, June 1st, 1856._

MY DEAR DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE,

Allow me to thank you with all my heart for your kind remembrance of me on Thursday night. My house was already engaged to Miss Coutts's, and I to--the top of St. Paul's, where the sight was most wonderful! But seeing that your cards gave me leave to present some person not named, I conferred them on my excellent friend Dr. Elliotson, whom I found with some fireworkless little boys in a desolate condition, and raised to the seventh heaven of happiness. You are so fond of making people happy, that I am sure you approve.

Always your faithful and much obliged.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. Wilkie Collins.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _June 6th, 1856._

MY DEAR COLLINS,

I have never seen anything about myself in print which has much correctness in it--any biographical account of myself I mean. I do not supply such particulars when I am asked for them by editors and compilers, simply because I am asked for them every day. If you want to prime Forgues, you may tell him without fear of anything wrong, that I was born at Portsmouth on the 7th of February, 1812; that my father was in the Navy Pay Office; that I was taken by him to Chatham when I was very young, and lived and was educated there till I was twelve or thirteen, I suppose; that I was then put to a school near London, where (as at other places) I distinguished myself like a brick; that I was put in the office of a solicitor, a friend of my father's, and didn't much like it; and after a couple of years (as well as I can remember) applied myself with a celestial or diabolical energy to the study of such things as would qualify me to be a first-rate parliamentary reporter--at that time a calling pursued by many clever men who were young at the Bar; that I made my début in the gallery (at about eighteen, I suppose), engaged on a voluminous publication no longer in existence, called _The Mirror of Parliament_; that when _The Morning Chronicle_ was purchased by Sir John Easthope and acquired a large circulation, I was engaged there, and that I remained there until I had begun to publish "Pickwick," when I found myself in a condition to relinquish that part of my labours; that I left the reputation behind me of being the best and most rapid reporter ever known, and that I could do anything in that way under any sort of circumstances, and often did. (I daresay I am at this present writing the best shorthand writer in the world.)

That I began, without any interest or introduction of any kind, to write fugitive pieces for the old "Monthly Magazine," when I was in the gallery for _The Mirror of Parliament_; that my faculty for descriptive writing was seized upon the moment I joined _The Morning Chronicle_, and that I was liberally paid there and handsomely acknowledged, and wrote the greater part of the short descriptive "Sketches by BOZ" in that paper; that I had been a writer when I was a mere baby, and always an

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actor from the same age; that I married the daughter of a writer to the signet in Edinburgh, who was the great friend and assistant of Scott, and who first made Lockhart known to him.

And that here I am.

Finally, if you want any dates of publication of books, tell Wills and he'll get them for you.

This is the first time I ever set down even these particulars, and, glancing them over, I feel like a wild beast in a caravan describing himself in the keeper's absence.

Ever faithfully.

P.S.--I made a speech last night at the London Tavern, at the end of which all the company sat holding their napkins to their eyes with one hand, and putting the other into their pockets. A hundred people or so contributed nine hundred pounds then and there.

[Sidenote: Mr. Mark Lemon.]

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX, BOULOGNE,
Sunday, June 15th 1856.

MY DEAR OLD BOY,

This place is beautiful--a burst of roses. Your friend Beaucourt (who _will not_ put on his hat), has thinned the trees and greatly improved the garden. Upon my life, I believe there are at least twenty distinct smoking-spots expressly made in it.

And as soon as you can see your day in next month for coming over with Stanny and Webster, will you let them both know? I should not be very much surprised if I were to come over and fetch you, when I know what your day is. Indeed, I don't see how you could get across properly without me.

There is a fête here to-night in honour of the Imperial baptism, and there will be another to-morrow. The Plorn has put on two bits of ribbon (one pink and one blue), which he calls "companys," to celebrate the occasion. The fact that the receipts of the fêtes are to be given to the sufferers by the late floods reminds me that you will find at the passport office a tin-box, condescendingly and considerately labelled in English:

FOR THE OVERFLOWINGS,

which the chief officer clearly believes to mean, for the sufferers from the inundations.

I observe more Mingles in the laundresses' shops, and one inscription, which looks like the name of a duet or chorus in a playbill, "Here they mingle."

Will you congratulate Mrs. Lemon, with our loves, on her gallant victory over the recreant cabman?

Walter has turned up, rather brilliant on the whole; and that (with shoals of remembrances and messages which I don't deliver) is all my present intelligence.

Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. Mark Lemon.]

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H. W. OFFICE, _July 2nd, 1856._

MY DEAR MARK,

I am concerned to hear that you are ill, that you sit down before fires and shiver, and that you have stated times for doing so, like the demons in the melodramas, and that you mean to take a week to get well in.

Make haste about it, like a dear fellow, and keep up your spirits, because I have made a bargain with Stanny and Webster that they shall come to Boulogne to-morrow week, Thursday the 10th, and stay a week. And you know how much pleasure we shall all miss if you are not among us--at least for some part of the time.

If you find any unusually light appearance in the air at Brighton, it is a distant refraction (I have no doubt) of the gorgeous and shining surface of Tavistock House, now transcendently painted. The theatre partition is put up, and is a work of such terrific solidity, that I suppose it will be dug up, ages hence, from the ruins of London, by that Australian of Macaulay's who is to be impressed by its ashes. I have wandered through the spectral halls of the Tavistock mansion two nights, with feelings of the profoundest depression. I have breakfasted there, like a criminal in Pentonville (only not so well). It is more like Westminster Abbey by midnight than the lowest-spirited man--say you at present for example--can well imagine.

There has been a wonderful robbery at Folkestone, by the new manager of the Pavilion, who succeeded Giovannini. He had in keeping £16,000 of a foreigner's, and bolted with it, as he supposed, but in reality with only £1,400 of it. The Frenchman had previously bolted with the whole, which was the property of his mother. With him to England the Frenchman brought a "lady," who was, all the time and at the same time, endeavouring to steal all the money from him and bolt with it herself. The details are amazing, and all the money (a few pounds excepted) has been got back.

They will be full of sympathy and talk about you when I get home, and I shall tell them that I send their loves beforehand. They are all enclosed. The moment you feel hearty, just write me that word by post. I shall be so delighted to receive it.

Ever, my dear Boy, your affectionate Friend.

[Sidenote: Mr. Walter Savage Landor.]

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX, BOULOGNE,
Saturday Evening, July 5th, 1856.

MY DEAR LANDOR,

I write to you so often in my books, and my writing of letters is usually so confined to the numbers that I _must_ write, and in which I have no kind of satisfaction, that I am afraid to think how long it is since we exchanged a direct letter. But talking to your namesake this very day at dinner, it suddenly entered my head that I would come into my room here as soon as dinner should be over, and write, "My dear Landor, how are you?" for the pleasure of having the answer under your own hand. That you _do_ write, and that pretty often, I know beforehand. Else why do I read _The Examiner_?

We were in Paris from October to May (I perpetually flying between that city and London), and there we found out, by a blessed accident, that your godson was horribly deaf. I immediately consulted the principal physician of the Deaf and Dumb Institution there (one of the best aurists in Europe), and he kept the boy for three months, and took unheard-of pains with him. He is now quite recovered, has done extremely well at school, has brought home a prize in triumph, and will be

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eligible to "go up" for his India examination soon after next Easter. Having a direct appointment, he will probably be sent out soon after he has passed, and so will fall into that strange life "up the country," before he well knows he is alive, which indeed seems to be rather an advanced stage of knowledge.

And there in Paris, at the same time, I found Marguerite Power and Little Nelly, living with their mother and a pretty sister, in a very small, neat apartment, and working (as Marguerite told me) hard for a living. All that I saw of them filled me with respect, and revived the tenderest remembrances of Gore House. They are coming to pass two or three weeks here for a country rest, next month. We had many long talks concerning Gore House, and all its bright associations; and I can honestly report that they hold no one in more gentle and affectionate remembrance than you. Marguerite is still handsome, though she had the smallpox two or three years ago, and bears the traces of it here and there, by daylight. Poor little Nelly (the quicker and more observant of the two) shows some little tokens of a broken-off marriage in a face too careworn for her years, but is a very winning and sensible creature.

We are expecting Mary Boyle too, shortly.

I have just been propounding to Forster if it is not a wonderful testimony to the homely force of truth, that one of the most popular books on earth has nothing in it to make anyone laugh or cry? Yet I think, with some confidence, that you never did either over any passage in "Robinson Crusoe." In particular, I took Friday's death as one of the least tender and (in the true sense) least sentimental things ever written. It is a book I read very much; and the wonder of its prodigious effect on me and everyone, and the admiration thereof, grows on me the more I observe this curious fact.

Kate and Georgina send you their kindest loves, and smile approvingly on me from the next room, as I bend over my desk. My dear Landor, you see many I daresay, and hear from many I have no doubt, who love you heartily; but we silent people in the distance never forget you. Do not forget us, and let us exchange affection at least.

Ever your Admirer and Friend.

[Sidenote: The Duke of Devonshire.]

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX, NEAR BOULOGNE,
Saturday Night, July 5th, 1856.

MY DEAR DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE,

From this place where I am writing my way through the summer, in the midst of rosy gardens and sea airs, I cannot forbear writing to tell you with what uncommon pleasure I received your interesting letter, and how sensible I always am of your kindness and generosity. You were always in the mind of my household during your illness; and to have so beautiful, and fresh, and manly an assurance of your recovery from it, under your own hand, is a privilege and delight that I will say no more of.

I am so glad you like Flora. It came into my head one day that we have all had our Floras, and that it was a half-serious, half-ridiculous truth which had never been told. It is a wonderful gratification to me to find that everybody knows her. Indeed, some people seem to think I have done them a personal injury, and that their individual Floras (God knows where they are, or who!) are each and all Little Dorrit's.

We were all grievously disappointed that you were ill when we played Mr. Collins's "Lighthouse" at my house. If you had been well, I should have waited upon you with my humble petition that you would come and see it; and if you had come I think you would have cried, which would have charmed me. I hope to produce another play at home next Christmas, and

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if I can only persuade you to see it from a special arm-chair, and can only make you wretched, my satisfaction will be intense. May I tell you, to beguile a moment, of a little "Tag," or end of a piece, I saw in Paris this last winter, which struck me as the prettiest I had ever met with? The piece was not a new one, but a revival at the Vaudeville--"Les Mémoires du Diable." Admirably constructed, very interesting, and extremely well played. The plot is, that a certain M. Robin has come into possession of the papers of a deceased lawyer, and finds some relating to the wrongful withholding of an estate from a certain baroness, and to certain other frauds (involving even the denial of the marriage to the deceased baron, and the tarnishing of his good name) which are so very wicked that he binds them up in a book and labels them "Mémoires du Diable." Armed with this knowledge he goes down to the desolate old château in the country--part of the wrested-away estate--from which the baroness and her daughter are going to be ejected. He informs the mother that he can right her and restore the property, but must have, as his reward, her daughter's hand in marriage. She replies: "I cannot promise my daughter to a man of whom I know nothing. The gain would be an unspeakable happiness, but I resolutely decline the bargain." The daughter, however, has observed all, and she comes forward and says: "Do what you have promised my mother you can do, and I am yours." Then the piece goes on to its development, in an admirable way, through the unmasking of all the hypocrites. Now, M. Robin, partly through his knowledge of the secret ways of the old château (derived from the lawyer's papers), and partly through his going to a masquerade as the devil--the better to explode what he knows on the hypocrites--is supposed by the servants at the château really to be the devil. At the opening of the last act he suddenly appears there before the young lady, and she screams, but, recovering and laughing, says: "You are not really the ----?" "Oh dear no!" he replies, "have no connection with him. But these people down here are so frightened and absurd! See this little toy on the table; I open it; here's a little bell. They have a notion that whenever this bell rings I shall appear. Very ignorant, is it not?" "Very, indeed," says she. "Well," says M. Robin, "if you should want me very much to appear, try the bell, if only for a jest. Will you promise?" Yes, she promises, and the play goes on. At last he has righted the baroness completely, and has only to hand her the last document, which proves her marriage and restores her good name. Then he says: "Madame, in the progress of these endeavours I have learnt the happiness of doing good for its own sake. I made a necessary bargain with you; I release you from it. I have done what I undertook to do. I wish you and your amiable daughter all happiness. Adieu! I take my leave." Bows himself out. People on the stage astonished. Audience astonished--incensed. The daughter is going to cry, when she looks at the box on the table, remembers the bell, runs to it and rings it, and he rushes back and takes her to his heart; upon which we all cry with pleasure, and then laugh heartily.

This looks dreadfully long, and perhaps you know it already. If so, I will endeavour to make amends with Flora in future numbers.

Mrs. Dickens and her sister beg to present their remembrances to your Grace, and their congratulations on your recovery. I saw Paxton now and then when you were ill, and always received from him most encouraging accounts. I don't know how heavy he is going to be (I mean in the scale), but I begin to think Daniel Lambert must have been in his family.

Ever your Grace's faithful and obliged.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX, BOULOGNE,
Tuesday, July 8th, 1856.

MY DEAREST MACREADY,

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I perfectly agree with you in your appreciation of Katie's poem, and shall be truly delighted to publish it in "Household Words." It shall go into the very next number we make up. We are a little in advance (to enable Wills to get a holiday), but as I remember, the next number made up will be published in three weeks.

We are pained indeed to read your reference to my poor boy. God keep him and his father. I trust he is not conscious of much suffering himself. If that be so, it is, in the midst of the distress, a great comfort.

"Little Dorrit" keeps me pretty busy, as you may suppose. The beginning of No. 10--the first line--now lies upon my desk. It would not be easy to increase upon the pains I take with her anyhow.

We are expecting Stanfield on Thursday, and Peter Cunningham and his wife on Monday. I would we were expecting you! This is as pretty and odd a little French country house as could be found anywhere; and the gardens are most beautiful.

In "Household Words," next week, pray read "The Diary of Anne Rodway" (in two not long parts). It is by Collins, and I think possesses great merit and real pathos.

Being in town the other day, I saw Gye by accident, and told him, when he praised ---- to me, that she was a very bad actress. "Well!" said he, "_you_ may say anything, but if anybody else had told me that I should have stared." Nevertheless, I derived an impression from his manner that she had not been a profitable speculation in respect of money. That very same day Stanfield and I dined alone together at the Garrick, and drank your health. We had had a ride by the river before dinner (of course he _would_ go and look at boats), and had been talking of you. It was this day week, by-the-bye.

I know of nothing of public interest that is new in France, except that I am changing my moustache into a beard. We all send our most tender loves to dearest Miss Macready and all the house. The Hammy boy is particularly anxious to have his love sent to "Misr Creedy."

Ever, my dearest Macready,
Most affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. Wilkie Collins.]

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX, BOULOGNE, _Sunday, July 13th, 1856._

MY DEAR COLLINS,

We are all sorry that you are not coming until the middle of next month, but we hope that you will then be able to remain, so that we may all come back together about the 10th of October. I think (recreation allowed, etc.), that the play will take that time to write. The ladies of the _dram. pers._ are frightfully anxious to get it under way, and to see you locked up in the pavilion; apropos of which noble edifice I have omitted to mention that it is made a more secluded retreat than it used to be, and is greatly improved by the position of the door being changed. It is as snug and as pleasant as possible; and the Genius of Order has made a few little improvements about the house (at the rate of about tenpence apiece), which the Genius of Disorder will, it is hoped, appreciate.

I think I must come over for a small spree, and to fetch you. Suppose I were to come on the 9th or 10th of August to stay three or four days in town, would that do for you? Let me know at the end of this month.

I cannot tell you what a high opinion I have of Anne Rodway. I took "Extracts" out of the title because it conveyed to the many-headed an idea of incompleteness--of something unfinished--and is likely to stall

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some readers off. I read the first part at the office with strong admiration, and read the second on the railway coming back here, being in town just after you had started on your cruise. My behaviour before my fellow-passengers was weak in the extreme, for I cried as much as you could possibly desire. Apart from the genuine force and beauty of the little narrative, and the admirable personation of the girl's identity and point of view, it is done with an amount of honest pains and devotion to the work which few men have better reason to appreciate than I, and which no man can have a more profound respect for. I think it excellent, feel a personal pride and pleasure in it which is a delightful sensation, and know no one else who could have done it.

Of myself I have only to report that I have been hard at it with "Little Dorrit," and am now doing No. 10. This last week I sketched out the notion, characters, and progress of the farce, and sent it off to Mark, who has been ill of an ague. It ought to be very funny. The cat business is too ludicrous to be treated of in so small a sheet of paper, so I must describe it _vivâ voce_ when I come to town. French has been so insufferably conceited since he shot tigerish cat No. 1 (intent on the noble Dick, with green eyes three inches in advance of her head), that I am afraid I shall have to part with him. All the boys likewise (in new clothes and ready for church) are at this instant prone on their stomachs behind bushes, whooshing and crying (after tigerish cat No. 2): "French!" "Here she comes!" "There she goes!" etc. I dare not put my head out of window for fear of being shot (it is as like a _coup d'état_ as possible), and tradesmen coming up the avenue cry plaintively: "_Ne tirez pas, Monsieur Fleench; c'est moi--boulanger. Ne tirez pas, mon ami._"

Likewise I shall have to recount to you the secret history of a robbery at the Pavilion at Folkestone, which you will have to write.

Tell Piggot, when you see him, that we shall all be much pleased if he will come at his own convenience while you are here, and stay a few days with us.

I shall have more than one notion of future work to suggest to you while we are beguiling the dreariness of an arctic winter in these parts. May they prosper!

Kind regards from all to the Dramatic Poet of the establishment, and to the D. P.'s mother and brother.

Ever yours.

P.S.--If the "Flying Dutchman" should be done again, pray do go and see it. Webster expressed his opinion to me that it was "a neat piece." I implore you to go and see a neat piece.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

BOULOGNE, _Thursday, August 7th, 1856._

MY DEAR WILLS,

I do not feel disposed to record those two Chancery cases; firstly, because I would rather have no part in engendering in the mind of any human creature, a hopeful confidence in that den of iniquity.

And secondly, because it seems to me that the real philosophy of the facts is altogether missed in the narrative. The wrong which chanced to be set right in these two cases was done, as all such wrong is, mainly because these wicked courts of equity, with all their means of evasion and postponement, give scoundrels confidence in cheating. If justice were cheap, sure, and speedy, few such things could be. It is because it has become (through the vile dealing of those courts and the vermin they have called into existence) a positive precept of experience that a man

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had better endure a great wrong than go, or suffer himself to be taken, into Chancery, with the dream of setting it right. It is because of this that such nefarious speculations are made.

Therefore I see nothing at all to the credit of Chancery in these cases, but everything to its discredit. And as to owing it to Chancery to bear testimony to its having rendered justice in two such plain matters, I have no debt of the kind upon my conscience.

In haste, ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready.]

BOULOGNE, _Friday, August 8th, 1856._

MY DEAREST MACREADY,

I like the second little poem very much indeed, and think (as you do) that it is a great advance upon the first. Please to note that I make it a rule to pay for everything that is inserted in "Household Words," holding it to be a part of my trust to make my fellow-proprietors understand that they have no right to unrequited labour. Therefore, when Wills (who has been ill and is gone for a holiday) does his invariable spiriting gently, don't make Katey's case different from Adelaide Procter's.

I am afraid there is no possibility of my reading Dorsetshirewards. I have made many conditional promises thus: "I am very much occupied; but if I read at all, I will read for your institution in such an order on my list." Edinburgh, which is No. 1, I have been obliged to put as far off as next Christmas twelvemonth. Bristol stands next. The working men at Preston come next. And so, if I were to go out of the record and read for your people, I should bring such a house about my ears as would shake "Little Dorrit" out of my head.

Being in town last Saturday, I went to see Robson in a burlesque of "Medea." It is an odd but perfectly true testimony to the extraordinary power of his performance (which is of a very remarkable kind indeed), that it points the badness of ----'s acting in a most singular manner, by bringing out what she might do and does not. The scene with Jason is perfectly terrific; and the manner in which the comic rage and jealousy does not pitch itself over the floor at the stalls is in striking contrast to the manner in which the tragic rage and jealousy does. He has a frantic song and dagger dance, about ten minutes long altogether, which has more passion in it than ---- could express in fifty years.

We all unite in kindest love to Miss Macready and all your dear ones; not forgetting my godson, to whom I send his godfather's particular love twice over. The Hammy boy is so brown that you would scarcely know him.

Ever, my dear Macready, affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. H. Wills.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Sunday Morning, Sept. 28th, 1856._

MY DEAR WILLS,

I suddenly remember this morning that in Mr. Curtis's article, "Health and Education," I left a line which must come out. It is in effect that the want of healthy training leaves girls in a fit state to be the subjects of mesmerism. I would not on any condition hurt Elliotson's feelings (as I should deeply) by leaving that depreciatory kind of reference in any page of H. W. He has suffered quite enough without a stab from a friend. So pray, whatever the inconvenience may be in what Bradbury calls "the Friars," take that passage out. By some

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extraordinary accident, after observing it, I forgot to do it.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Miss Dickens.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Saturday, Oct. 4th, 1856._

MY DEAR MAMEY,

The preparations for the play are already beginning, and it is christened (this is a great dramatic secret, which I suppose you know already) "The Frozen Deep."

Tell Katey, with my best love, that if she fail to come back six times as red, hungry, and strong as she was when she went away, I shall give her part to somebody else.

We shall all be very glad to see you both back again; when I say "we" I include the birds (who send their respectful duty) and the Plorn.

Kind regards to all at Brighton.

Ever, my dear Mamey, your affectionate Father.

[Sidenote: The Hon. Mrs. Watson.]

Tavistock House, _Tuesday, Oct. 7th, 1856._

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,

I _did_ write it for you; and I hoped in writing it, that you would think so. All those remembrances are fresh in my mind, as they often are, and gave me an extraordinary interest in recalling the past. I should have been grievously disappointed if you had not been pleased, for I took aim at you with a most determined intention.

Let me congratulate you most heartily on your handsome Eddy having passed his examination with such credit. I am sure there is a spirit shining out of his eyes, which will do well in that manly and generous pursuit. You will naturally feel his departure very much, and so will he; but I have always observed within my experience, that the men who have left home young have, many long years afterwards, had the tenderest love for it, and for all associated with it. That's a pleasant thing to think of, as one of the wise and benevolent adjustments in these lives of ours.

I have been so hard at work (and shall be for the next eight or nine months), that sometimes I fancy I have a digestion, or a head, or nerves, or some odd encumbrance of that kind, to which I am altogether unaccustomed, and am obliged to rush at some other object for relief; at present the house is in a state of tremendous excitement, on account of Mr. Collins having nearly finished the new play we are to act at Christmas, which is very interesting and extremely clever. I hope this time you will come and see it. We purpose producing it on Charley's birthday, Twelfth Night; but we shall probably play four nights altogether--"The Lighthouse" on the last occasion--so that if you could come for the two last nights, you would see both the pieces. I am going to try and do better than ever, and already the school-room is in the hands of carpenters; men from underground habitations in theatres, who look as if they lived entirely upon smoke and gas, meet me at unheard-of hours. Mr. Stanfield is perpetually measuring the boards with a chalked piece of string and an umbrella, and all the elder children are wildly punctual and business-like to attract managerial commendation. If you don't come, I shall do something antagonistic--try to unwrite No. 11, I think. I should particularly like you to see a new and serious piece so

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done. Because I don't think you know, without seeing, how good it is!!!

None of the children suffered, thank God, from the Boulogne risk. The three little boys have gone back to school there, and are all well. Katey came away ill, but it turned out that she had the whooping-cough for the second time. She has been to Brighton, and comes home to-day. I hear great accounts of her, and hope to find her quite well when she arrives presently. I am afraid Mary Boyle has been praising the Boulogne life too highly. Not that I deny, however, our having passed some very pleasant days together, and our having had great pleasure in her visit.

You will object to me dreadfully, I know, with a beard (though not a great one); but if you come and see the play, you will find it necessary there, and will perhaps be more tolerant of the fearful object afterwards. I need not tell you how delighted we should be to see George, if you would come together. Pray tell him so, with my kind regards. I like the notion of Wentworth and his philosophy of all things. I remember a philosophical gravity upon him, a state of suspended opinion as to myself, it struck me, when we last met, in which I thought there was a great deal of oddity and character.

Charley is doing very well at Baring's, and attracting praise and reward to himself. Within this fortnight there turned up from the West Indies, where he is now a chief justice, an old friend of mine, of my own age, who lived with me in lodgings in the Adelphi, when I was just Charley's age. He had a great affection for me at that time, and always supposed I was to do some sort of wonders. It was a very pleasant meeting indeed, and he seemed to think it so odd that I shouldn't be Charley!

This is every atom of no-news that will come out of my head, and I firmly believe it is all I have in it--except that a cobbler at Boulogne, who had the nicest of little dogs, that always sat in his sunny window watching him at work, asked me if I would bring the dog home, as he couldn't afford to pay the tax for him. The cobbler and the dog being both my particular friends, I complied. The cobbler parted with the dog heart-broken. When the dog got home here, my man, like an idiot as he is, tied him up and then untied him. The moment the gate was open, the dog (on the very day after his arrival) ran out. Next day, Georgy and I saw him lying, all covered with mud, dead, outside the neighbouring church. How am I ever to tell the cobbler? He is too poor to come to England, so I feel that I must lie to him for life, and say that the dog is fat and happy. Mr. Plornish, much affected by this tragedy, said: "I s'pose, pa, I shall meet the cobbler's dog" (in heaven).

Georgy and Catherine send their best love, and I send mine. Pray write to me again some day, and I can't be too busy to be happy in the sight of your familiar hand, associated in my mind with so much that I love and honour.

Ever, my dear Mr. Watson, most faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: Mrs. Horne.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, TAVISTOCK SQUARE, _Oct. 20th, 1856._

MY DEAR MRS. HORNE,

I answer your note by return of post, in order that you may know that the Stereoscopic Nottage has not written to me yet. Of course I will not lose a moment in replying to him when he does address me.

We shall be greatly pleased to see you again. You have been very, very often in our thoughts and on our lips, during this long interval.

And "she" is near you, is she? O I remember her well! And I am still of my old opinion! Passionately devoted to her sex as I am (they are the

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weakness of my existence), I still consider her a failure. She had some extraordinary christian-name, which I forget. Lashed into verse by my feelings, I am inclined to write:

My heart disowns
Ophelia Jones;

only I think it was a more sounding name.

Are these the tones--
Volumnia Jones?

No. Again it seems doubtful.

God bless her bones,
Petronia Jones!

I think not.

Carve I on stones
Olympia Jones?

Can _that_ be the name? Fond memory favours it more than any other. My love to her.

Ever, my dear Mrs. Horne, very faithfully yours.

[Sidenote: The Duke of Devonshire.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _December 1st, 1856._

MY DEAR DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE,

The moment the first bill is printed for the first night of the new play I told you of, I send it to you, in the hope that you will grace it with your presence. There is not one of the old actors whom you will fail to inspire as no one else can; and I hope you will see a little result of a friendly union of the arts, that you may think worth seeing, and that you can see nowhere else.

We propose repeating it on Thursday, the 8th; Monday, the 12th; and Wednesday, the 14th of January. I do not encumber this note with so many bills, and merely mention those nights in case any one of them should be more convenient to you than the first.

But I shall hope for the first, unless you dash me (N. B.--I put Flora into the current number on purpose that this might catch you softened towards me, and at a disadvantage). If there is hope of your coming, I will have the play clearly copied, and will send it to you to read beforehand. With the most grateful remembrances, and the sincerest good wishes for your health and happiness,

I am ever, my dear Duke of Devonshire,
Your faithful and obliged.

[Sidenote: Mr. Thomas Mitton.]

Tavistock House, _Wednesday, Dec. 3rd, 1856._

MY DEAR MITTON,

The inspector from the fire office--surveyor, by-the-bye, they called him--duly came. Wills described him as not very pleasant in his manners. I derived the impression that he was so exceedingly dry, that if _he_ ever takes fire, he must burn out, and can never otherwise be extinguished.

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Next day, I received a letter from the secretary, to say that the said surveyor had reported great additional risk from fire, and that the directors, at their meeting next Tuesday, would settle the extra amount of premium to be paid.

Thereupon I thought the matter was becoming complicated, and wrote a common-sense note to the secretary (which I begged might be read to the directors), saying that I was quite prepared to pay any extra premium, but setting forth the plain state of the case. (I did not say that the Lord Chief Justice, the Chief Baron, and half the Bench were coming; though I felt a temptation to make a joke about burning them all.)

Finally, this morning comes up the secretary to me (yesterday having been the great Tuesday), and says that he is requested by the directors to present their compliments, and to say that they could not think of charging for any additional risk at all; feeling convinced that I would place the gas (which they considered to be the only danger) under the charge of one competent man. I then explained to him how carefully and systematically that was all arranged, and we parted with drums beating and colours flying on both sides.

Ever faithfully.

[Sidenote: Mr. W. C. Macready]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Saturday Evening, Dec. 13th_, 1856.

MY DEAREST MACREADY,

We shall be charmed to squeeze Willie's friend in, and it shall be done by some undiscovered power of compression on the second night, Thursday, the 14th. Will you make our compliments to his honour, the Deputy Fiscal, present him with the enclosed bill, and tell him we shall be cordially glad to see him? I hope to entrust him with a special shake of the hand, to be forwarded to our dear boy (if a hoary sage like myself may venture on that expression) by the next mail.

I would have proposed the first night, but that is too full. You may faintly imagine, my venerable friend, the occupation of these also gray hairs, between "Golden Marys," "Little Dorrits," "Household Wordses," four stage-carpenters entirely boarding on the premises, a carpenter's shop erected in the back garden, size always boiling over on all the lower fires, Stanfield perpetually elevated on planks and splashing himself from head to foot, Telbin requiring impossibilities of smart gasmen, and a legion of prowling nondescripts for ever shrinking in and out. Calm amidst the wreck, your aged friend glides away on the "Dorrit" stream, forgetting the uproar for a stretch of hours, refreshes himself with a ten or twelve miles walk, pitches headforemost into foaming rehearsals, placidly emerges for editorial purposes, smokes over buckets of distemper with Mr. Stanfield aforesaid, again calmly floats upon the "Dorrit" waters.

With very best love to Miss Macready and all the rest,
Ever, my dear Macready, most affectionately yours.

[Sidenote: Miss Power.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _December 15th, 1856._

MY DEAR MARGUERITE,

I am not _quite_ clear about the story; not because it is otherwise than exceedingly pretty, but because I am rather in a difficult position as to stories just now. Besides beginning a long one by Collins with the new year (which will last five or six months), I have, as I always have

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at this time, a considerable residue of stories written for the Christmas number, not suitable to it, and yet available for the general purposes of "Household Words." This limits my choice for the moment to stories that have some decided specialties (or a great deal of story) in them.

But I will look over the accumulation before you come, and I hope you will never see your little friend again but in print.

You will find us expecting you on the night of the twenty-fourth, and heartily glad to welcome you. The most terrific preparations are in hand for the play on Twelfth Night. There has been a carpenter's shop in the garden for six weeks; a painter's shop in the school-room; a gasfitter's shop all over the basement; a dressmaker's shop at the top of the house; a tailor's shop in my dressing-room. Stanfield has been incessantly on scaffoldings for two months; and your friend has been writing "Little Dorrit," etc. etc., in corners, like the sultan's groom, who was turned upside-down by the genie.

Kindest love from all, and from me.
Ever affectionately.

[Sidenote: Mr. William Charles Kent.]

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, _Christmas Eve, 1856._

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot leave your letter unanswered, because I am really anxious that you should understand why I cannot comply with your request.

Scarcely a week passes without my receiving requests from various quarters to sit for likenesses, to be taken by all the processes ever invented. Apart from my having an invincible objection to the multiplication of my countenance in the shop-windows, I have not, between my avocations and my needful recreation, the time to comply with these proposals. At this moment there are three cases out of a vast number, in which I have said: "If I sit at all, it shall be to you first, to you second, and to you third." But I assure you, I consider myself almost as unlikely to go through these three conditional achievements as I am to go to China. Judge when I am likely to get to Mr. Watkins!

I highly esteem and thank you for your sympathy with my writings. I doubt if I have a more genial reader in the world.

Very faithfully yours.

FOOTNOTES:

[23] Of Mr. Wilkie Collins.

[24] This note was written after hearing from Mr. Forster of his intended marriage.

PROLOGUE TO "THE LIGHTHOUSE."

(Spoken by CHARLES DICKENS.)

Slow music all the time, unseen speaker, curtain down.

A story of those rocks where doomed ships come
To cast them wreck'd upon the steps of home,

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Where solitary men, the long year through--
The wind their music and the brine their view--
Warn mariners to shun the beacon-light;
A story of those rocks is here to-night.
Eddystone lighthouse

[_Exterior view discovered._

In its ancient form;
Ere he who built it wish'd for the great storm
That shiver'd it to nothing; once again
Behold outgleaming on the angry main!
Within it are three men; to these repair
In our frail bark of Fancy, swift as air!

They are but shadows, as the rower grim
Took none but shadows in his boat with him.
So be _ye_ shades, and, for a little space,
The real world a dream without a trace.
Return is easy. It will have ye back
Too soon to the old beaten dusty track;
For but one hour forget it. Billows rise,
Blow winds, fall rain, be black ye midnight skies;
And you who watch the light, arise! arise!

[_Exterior view rises and discovers the scene._

THE SONG OF THE WRECK.

I.

The wind blew high, the waters raved,
  A ship drove on the land,
A hundred human creatures saved,
  Kneeled down upon the sand.
Threescore were drowned, threescore were thrown
  Upon the black rocks wild,
And thus among them, left alone,
  They found one helpless child.

II.

A seaman rough, to shipwreck bred,
  Stood out from all the rest,
And gently laid the lonely head
  Upon his honest breast.
And travelling o'er the desert wide,
  It was a solemn joy,
To see them, ever side by side,
  The sailor and the boy.

III.

In famine, sickness, hunger, thirst,
  The two were still but one,
Until the strong man drooped the first,
  And felt his labours done.
Then to a trusty friend he spake,
  "Across the desert wide,
O take this poor boy for my sake!"
      And kissed the child and died.

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IV.

Toiling along in weary plight,
  Through heavy jungle, mire,
These two came later every night
  To warm them at the fire.
Until the captain said one day,
  "O seaman good and kind,
To save thyself now come away,
  And leave the boy behind!"

V.

The child was slumb'ring near the blaze,
  "O captain, let him rest
Until it sinks, when God's own ways
  Shall teach us what is best!"
They watched the whitened ashy heap,
  They touched the child in vain;
They did not leave him there asleep,
  He never woke again.

This song was sung to the music of "Little Nell," a ballad composed by the late Mr. George Linley, to the words of Miss Charlotte Young, and dedicated to Charles Dickens. He was very fond of it, and his eldest daughter had been in the habit of singing it to him constantly since she was quite a child.

END OF VOL. I.

CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS, CRYSTAL PALACE
PRESS.

* * * * *

Transcriber's Notes:

Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

Page 63, "levee" changed to "levée" (regular levée every)

Page 66, "levee" changed to "levée" (a regular levée)

Page 114, word "or" inserted into text. (hencoop or any old)

Page 304, 305, 307, 312, "Chateau" changed to "Château"

Page 339, "chistened" changed to "christened" (christened Trotty Veck)