DICKENS CHARLES

THE LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS. VOL. 2, 1857-1870

Чарльз Диккенс

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Содержание

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ERRATA

VOL. II

Page 84, line 35. For "South Kensington Museum," *read* "the South Kensington Museum."

" 108, line 26. For "frequent contributor," *read* "a frequent contributor."

" 113, lines 6, 7. For "great remonstrance," *read* "Great Remonstrance."

" 130, line 10. For "after," *read* "afore."

" 160, " 32. For "a head," *read* "ahead."

" 247, " 12. For "Shea," *read* "Shoe."

" 292, " 12. For "Mabel's progress," *read* "Mabel's Progress."

Book II. – Continued

1857

NARRATIVE

This was a very full year in many ways. In February, Charles Dickens obtained possession of Gad's Hill, and was able to turn workmen into it. In April he stayed, with his wife and sister-in-law, for a week or two at Wate's Hotel, Gravesend, to be at hand to superintend the beginning of his alterations of the house, and from thence we give a letter to Lord Carlisle. He removed his family, for a summer residence in the house, in June; and he finished "Little Dorrit" there early in the summer. One of his first visitors at Gad's Hill was the famous writer, Hans Christian Andersen. In January "The Frozen Deep" had been played at the Tavistock House theatre with such great success, that it was necessary to repeat it several times, and the theatre was finally demolished at the end of that month. In June Charles Dickens heard, with great grief, of the death of his dear friend Douglas Jerrold; and as a testimony of admiration for his genius and affectionate regard for himself, it was decided to organise, under

the management of Charles Dickens, a series of entertainments, "in memory of the late Douglas Jerrold," the fund produced by them (a considerable sum) to be presented to Mr. Jerrold's family. The amateur company, including many of Mr. Jerrold's colleagues on "Punch," gave subscription performances of "The Frozen Deep;" the Gallery of Illustration, in Regent Street, being engaged for the purpose. Charles Dickens gave two readings at St. Martin's Hall of "The Christmas Carol" (to such immense audiences and with such success, that the idea of giving public readings for his *own* benefit first occurred to him at this time). The professional actors, among them the famous veteran actor, Mr. T. P. Cooke, gave a performance of Mr. Jerrold's plays of "The Rent Day" and "Black-eyed Susan," in which Mr. T. P. Cooke sustained the character in which he had originally made such great success when the play was written. A lecture was given by Mr. Thackeray, and another by Mr. W. H. Russell. Finally, the Queen having expressed a desire to see the play, which had been much talked of during that season, there was another performance before her Majesty and the Prince Consort at the Gallery of Illustration in July, and at the end of that month Charles Dickens read his "Carol" in the Free Trade Hall, at Manchester. And to wind up the "Memorial Fund" entertainments, "The Frozen Deep" was played again at Manchester, also in the great Free Trade Hall, at the end of August. For the business of these entertainments he secured the assistance of Mr. Arthur Smith, of whom he writes to Mr.

Forster, at this time: "I have got hold of Arthur Smith, as the best man of business I know, and go to work with him to-morrow morning." And when he began his own public readings, both in town and country, he felt himself most fortunate in having the co-operation of this invaluable man of business, and also of his zealous friendship and pleasant companionship.

In July, his second son, Walter Landor, went to India as a cadet in the "Company's service," from which he was afterwards transferred to the 42nd Royal Highlanders. His father and his elder brother went to see him off, to Southampton. From this place Charles Dickens writes to Mr. Edmund Yates, a young man in whom he had been interested from his boyhood, both for the sake of his parents and for his own sake, and for whom he had always an affectionate regard.

In September he made a short tour in the North of England, with Mr. Wilkie Collins, out of which arose the "Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices," written by them jointly, and published in "Household Words." Some letters to his sister-in-law during this expedition are given here, parts of which (as is the case with many letters to his eldest daughter and his sister-in-law) have been published in Mr. Forster's book.

The letters which follow are almost all on the various subjects mentioned in our notes, and need little explanation.

His letter to Mr. Procter makes allusion to a legacy lately left to that friend.

The letters to Mr. Dilke, the original and much-respected

editor of "The Athenæum," and to Mr. Forster, on the subject of the "Literary Fund," refer, as the letters indicate, to a battle which they were carrying on together with that institution.

A letter to Mr. Frank Stone is an instance of his kind, patient, and judicious criticism of a young writer, and the letter which follows it shows how thoroughly it was understood and how perfectly appreciated by the authoress of the "Notes" referred to. Another instance of the same kind criticism is given in a second letter this year to Mr. Edmund Yates.

Mr. B. W. Procter

Tavistock House, January 2nd, 1857.

My dear Procter,

I have to thank you for a delightful book, which has given me unusual pleasure. My delight in it has been a little dashed by certain farewell verses, but I have made up my mind (and you have no idea of the obstinacy of my character) not to believe them.

Perhaps it is not taking a liberty – perhaps it is – to congratulate you on Kenyon's remembrance. Either way I can't help doing it with all my heart, for I know no man in the world (myself excepted) to whom I would rather the money went.

Affectionately yours ever.

Sir James Emerson Tennent

Tavistock House, January 9th, 1857.

My dear Tennent,

I must thank you for your earnest and affectionate letter. It has given me the greatest pleasure, mixing the play in my mind confusedly and delightfully with Pisa, the Valetta, Naples, Herculanæum – God knows what not.

As to the play itself; when it is made as good as my care can make it, I derive a strange feeling out of it, like writing a book in company; a satisfaction of a most singular kind, which has no exact parallel in my life; a something that I suppose to belong to the life of a labourer in art alone, and which has to me a conviction of its being actual truth without its pain, that I never could adequately state if I were to try never so hard.

You touch so kindly and feelingly on the pleasure such little pains give, that I feel quite sorry you have never seen this drama in progress during the last ten weeks here. Every Monday and Friday evening during that time we have been at work upon it. I assure you it has been a remarkable lesson to my young people in patience, perseverance, punctuality, and order; and, best of all, in that kind of humility which is got from the earned knowledge that whatever the right hand finds to do must be done with the heart in it, and in a desperate earnest.

When I changed my dress last night (though I did it very quickly), I was vexed to find you gone. I wanted to have secured you for our green-room supper, which was very pleasant. If by any accident you should be free next Wednesday night (our last), pray come to that green-room supper. It would give me cordial pleasure to have you there.

Ever, my dear Tennent, very heartily yours.

M. de Cerjat

Tavistock House, Monday Night, Jan. 17th, 1857.

My dear Cerjat,

So wonderfully do good (epistolary) intentions become confounded with bad execution, that I assure you I laboured under a perfect and most comfortable conviction that I had answered your Christmas Eve letter of 1855. More than that, in spite of your assertions to the contrary, I still strenuously believe that I did so! I have more than half a mind ("Little Dorrit" and my other occupations notwithstanding) to charge you with having forgotten my reply!! I have even a wild idea that Townshend reproached me, when the last old year was new, with writing to you instead of to him!!! We will argue it out, as well as we can argue anything without poor dear Haldimand, when I come back to Elysée. In any case, however, don't discontinue your annual letter, because it has become an expected and a delightful part

of the season to me.

With one of the prettiest houses in London, and every conceivable (and inconceivable) luxury in it, Townshend is voluntarily undergoing his own sentence of transportation in Nervi, a beastly little place near Genoa, where you would as soon find a herd of wild elephants in any villa as comfort. He has a notion that he *must* be out of England in the winter, but I believe him to be altogether wrong (as I have just told him in a letter), unless he could just take his society with him.

Workmen are now battering and smashing down my theatre here, where we have just been acting a new play of great merit, done in what I may call (modestly speaking of the getting-up, and not of the acting) an unprecedented way. I believe that anything so complete has never been seen. We had an act at the North Pole, where the slightest and greatest thing the eye beheld were equally taken from the books of the Polar voyagers. Out of thirty people, there were certainly not two who might not have gone straight to the North Pole itself, completely furnished for the winter! It has been the talk of all London for these three weeks. And now it is a mere chaos of scaffolding, ladders, beams, canvases, paint-pots, sawdust, artificial snow, gas-pipes, and ghastliness. I have taken such pains with it for these ten weeks in all my leisure hours, that I feel now shipwrecked – as if I had never been without a play on my hands before. A third topic comes up as this ceases.

Down at Gad's Hill, near Rochester, in Kent – Shakespeare's

Gad's Hill, where Falstaff engaged in the robbery – is a quaint little country-house of Queen Anne's time. I happened to be walking past, a year and a half or so ago, with my sub-editor of "Household Words," when I said to him: "You see that house? It has always a curious interest for me, because when I was a small boy down in these parts I thought it the most beautiful house (I suppose because of its famous old cedar-trees) ever seen. And my poor father used to bring me to look at it, and used to say that if I ever grew up to be a clever man perhaps I might own that house, or such another house. In remembrance of which, I have always in passing looked to see if it was to be sold or let, and it has never been to me like any other house, and it has never changed at all." We came back to town, and my friend went out to dinner. Next morning he came to me in great excitement, and said: "It is written that you were to have that house at Gad's Hill. The lady I had allotted to me to take down to dinner yesterday began to speak of that neighbourhood. 'You know it?' I said; 'I have been there to-day.' 'O yes,' said she, 'I know it very well. I was a child there, in the house they call Gad's Hill Place. My father was the rector, and lived there many years. He has just died, has left it to me, and I want to sell it.' 'So,' says the sub-editor, 'you must buy it. Now or never!'" I did, and hope to pass next summer there, though I may, perhaps, let it afterwards, furnished, from time to time.

All about myself I find, and the little sheet nearly full! But I know, my dear Cerjat, the subject will have its interest for you,

so I give it its swing. Mrs. Watson was to have been at the play, but most unfortunately had three children sick of gastric fever, and could not leave them. She was here some three weeks before, looking extremely well in the face, but rather thin. I have not heard of your friend Mr. Percival Skelton, but I much misdoubt an amateur artist's success in this vast place. I hope you detected a remembrance of our happy visit to the Great St. Bernard in a certain number of "Little Dorrit"? Tell Mrs. Cerjat, with my love, that the opinions I have expressed to her on the subject of cows have become matured in my mind by experience and venerable age; and that I denounce the race as humbugs, who have been getting into poetry and all sorts of places without the smallest reason. Haldimand's housekeeper is an awful woman to consider. Pray give him our kindest regards and remembrances, if you ever find him in a mood to take it. "Our" means Mrs. Dickens's, Georgie's, and mine. We often, often talk of our old days at Lausanne, and send loving regard to Mrs. Cerjat and all your house.

Adieu, my dear fellow; ever cordially yours.

Mr. W. C. Macready

Tavistock House, January 28th, 1857.

My dearest Macready,

Your friend and servant is as calm as Pecksniff, saving for

his knitted brows now turning into cordage over Little Dorrit. The theatre has disappeared, the house is restored to its usual conditions of order, the family are tranquil and domestic, dove-eyed peace is enthroned in this study, fire-eyed radicalism in its master's breast.

I am glad to hear that our poetess is at work again, and shall be very much pleased to have some more contributions from her.

Love from all to your dear sister, and to Katie, and to all the house.

We dined yesterday at Frederick Pollock's. I begged an amazing photograph of you, and brought it away. It strikes me as one of the most ludicrous things I ever saw in my life. I think of taking a public-house, and having it copied larger, for the size. You may remember it? Very square and big – the Saracen's Head with its hair cut, and in modern gear? Staring very hard? As your particular friend, I would not part with it on any consideration. I will never get such a wooden head again.

Ever affectionately.

Miss Mary Boyle

Tavistock House, February 7th, 1857.

My dear Mary,

Half-a-dozen words on this, my birthday, to thank you for your kind and welcome remembrance, and to assure you that

your Joseph is proud of it.

For about ten minutes after his death, on each occasion of that event occurring, Richard Wardour was in a floored condition. And one night, to the great terror of Devonshire, the Arctic Regions, and Newfoundland (all of which localities were afraid to speak to him, as his ghost sat by the kitchen fire in its rags), he very nearly did what he never did, went and fainted off, dead, again. But he always plucked up, on the turn of ten minutes, and became facetious.

Likewise he chipped great pieces out of all his limbs (solely, as I imagine, from moral earnestness and concussion of passion, for I never know him to hit himself in any way) and terrified Aldersley[1] to that degree, by lunging at him to carry him into the cave, that the said Aldersley always shook like a mould of jelly, and muttered, "By G – , this is an awful thing!"

Ever affectionately.

P.S. – I shall never cease to regret Mrs. Watson's not having been there.

Rev. James White

Tavistock House, Sunday, Feb. 8th, 1857.

My dear White,

[1] The part played in "The Frozen Deep" by its author, Mr. Wilkie Collins.

I send these lines by Mary and Katey, to report my love to all.

Your note about the *Golden Mary* gave me great pleasure; though I don't believe in one part of it; for I honestly believe that your story, as really belonging to the rest of the narrative, had been generally separated from the other stories, and greatly liked. I had not that particular shipwreck that you mention in my mind (indeed I doubt if I know it), and John Steadiman merely came into my head as a staunch sort of name that suited the character. The number has done "Household Words" great service, and has decidedly told upon its circulation.

You should have come to the play. I much doubt if anything so complete will ever be seen again. An incredible amount of pains and ingenuity was expended on it, and the result was most remarkable even to me.

When are you going to send something more to H. W.? Are you lazy?? Low-spirited??? Pining for Paris????

Ever affectionately.

Mr. C. W. Dilke

Office of "Household Words," Thursday, March 19th, 1857.

My dear Mr. Dilke,

Forster has another notion about the Literary Fund. Will you name a day next week – that day being neither Thursday nor Saturday – when we shall hold solemn council there at half-past

four?

For myself, I beg to report that I have my war-paint on, that I have buried the pipe of peace, and am whooping for committee scalps.

Ever faithfully yours.

The Earl of Carlisle

Gravesend, Kent, Wednesday, April 15th, 1857.

My dear Lord Carlisle,

I am writing by the river-side for a few days, and at the end of last week – appeared here with your note of introduction. I was not in the way; but as – had come express from London with it, Mrs. Dickens opened it, and gave her (in the limited sense which was of no use to her) an audience. She did not quite seem to know what she wanted of me. But she said she had understood at Stafford House that I had a theatre in which she could read; with a good deal of modesty and diffidence she at last got so far. Now, my little theatre turns my house out of window, costs fifty pounds to put up, and is only two months taken down; therefore, is quite out of the question. This Mrs. Dickens explained, and also my profound inability to do anything for – readings which they could not do for themselves. She appeared fully to understand the explanation, and indeed to have anticipated for herself how powerless I must be in such a case.

She described herself as being consumptive, and as being subject to an effusion of blood from the lungs; about the last condition, one would think, poor woman, for the exercise of public elocution as an art.

Between ourselves, I think the whole idea a mistake, and have thought so from its first announcement. It has a fatal appearance of trading upon Uncle Tom, and am I not a man and a brother? which you may be by all means, and still not have the smallest claim to my attention as a public reader. The town is over-read from all the white squares on the draught-board; it has been considerably harried from all the black squares – now with the aid of old banjoes, and now with the aid of Exeter Hall; and I have a very strong impression that it is by no means to be laid hold of from this point of address. I myself, for example, am the meekest of men, and in abhorrence of slavery yield to no human creature, and yet I don't admit the sequence that I want Uncle Tom (or Aunt Tomasina) to expound "King Lear" to me. And I believe my case to be the case of thousands.

I trouble you with this much about it, because I am naturally desirous you should understand that if I could possibly have been of any service, or have suggested anything to this poor lady, I would not have lost the opportunity. But I cannot help her, and I assure you that I cannot honestly encourage her to hope. I fear her enterprise has no hope in it.

In your absence I have always followed you through the papers, and felt a personal interest and pleasure in the public

affection in which you are held over there.[2] At the same time I must confess that I should prefer to have you here, where good public men seem to me to be dismally wanted. I have no sympathy with demagogues, but am a grievous Radical, and think the political signs of the times to be just about as bad as the spirit of the people will admit of their being. In all other respects I am as healthy, sound, and happy as your kindness can wish. So you will set down my political despondency as my only disease.

On the tip-top of Gad's Hill, between this and Rochester, on the very spot where Falstaff ran away, I have a pretty little old-fashioned house, which I shall live in the hope of showing to you one day. Also I have a little story respecting the manner in which it became mine, which I hope (on the same occasion in the clouds) to tell you. Until then and always, I am, dear Lord Carlisle,

Yours very faithfully and obliged.

Mr. John Forster

Tavistock House, May 13th, 1857.

My dear Forster,

I have gone over Dilke's memoranda, and I think it quite right and necessary that those points should be stated. Nor do I see the

[2] The Earl of Carlisle was at this time Viceroy of Ireland.

least difficulty in the way of their introduction into the pamphlet. But I do not deem it possible to get the pamphlet written and published before the dinner. I have so many matters pressing on my attention, that I cannot turn to it immediately on my release from my book just finished. It shall be done and distributed early next month.

As to anything being lost by its not being in the hands of the people who dine (as you seem to think), I have not the least misgiving on that score. They would say, if it were issued, just what they will say without it.

Lord Granville is committed to taking the chair, and will make the best speech he can in it. The pious – will cram him with as many distortions of the truth as his stomach may be strong enough to receive. – , with Bardolphian eloquence, will cool his nose in the modest merits of the institution. – will make a neat and appropriate speech on both sides, round the corner and over the way. And all this would be done exactly to the same purpose and in just the same strain, if twenty thousand copies of the pamphlet had been circulated.

Ever affectionately.

Rev. James White

Tavistock House, Friday, May 22nd, 1857.

My dear White,

My emancipation having been effected on Saturday, the ninth of this month, I take some shame to myself for not having sooner answered your note. But the host of things to be done as soon as I was free, and the tremendous number of ingenuities to be wrought out at Gad's Hill, have kept me in a whirl of their own ever since.

We purpose going to Gad's Hill for the summer on the 1st of June; as, apart from the master's eye being a necessary ornament to the spot, I clearly see that the workmen yet lingering in the yard must be squeezed out by bodily pressure, or they will never go. How will this suit you and yours? If you will come down, we can take you all in, on your way north; that is to say, we shall have that ample verge and room enough, until about the eighth; when Hans Christian Andersen (who has been "coming" for about three years) will come for a fortnight's stay in England. I shall like you to see the little old-fashioned place. It strikes me as being comfortable.

So let me know your little game. And with love to Mrs. White, Lotty, and Clara,

Believe me, ever affectionately yours.

Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A

Office of "Household Words," Monday, June 1st, 1857.

My dear Stone,

I know that what I am going to say will not be agreeable; but I rely on the authoress's good sense; and say it, knowing it to be the truth.

These "Notes" are destroyed by too much smartness. It gives the appearance of perpetual effort, stabs to the heart the nature that is in them, and wearies by the manner and not by the matter. It is the commonest fault in the world (as I have constant occasion to observe here), but it is a very great one. Just as you couldn't bear to have an épergne or a candlestick on your table, supported by a light figure always on tiptoe and evidently in an impossible attitude for the sustainment of its weight, so all readers would be more or less oppressed and worried by this presentation of everything in one smart point of view, when they know it must have other, and weightier, and more solid properties. Airiness and good spirits are always delightful, and are inseparable from notes of a cheerful trip; but they should sympathise with many things as well as see them in a lively way. It is but a word or a touch that expresses this humanity, but without that little embellishment of good nature there is no such thing as humour. In this little MS. everything is too much patronised and condescended to, whereas the slightest touch of feeling for the rustic who is of the earth earthy, or of sisterhood with the homely servant who has made her face shine in her desire to please, would make a difference that the writer can scarcely imagine without trying it. The only relief in the twenty-one slips is the little bit about the chimes. It *is* a relief, simply because it

is an indication of some kind of sentiment. You don't want any sentiment laboriously made out in such a thing. You don't want any maudlin show of it. But you do want a pervading suggestion that it is there. It makes all the difference between being playful and being cruel. Again I must say, above all things – especially to young people writing: For the love of God don't condescend! Don't assume the attitude of saying, "See how clever I am, and what fun everybody else is!" Take any shape but that.

I observe an excellent quality of observation throughout, and think the boy at the shop, and all about him, particularly good. I have no doubt whatever that the rest of the journal will be much better if the writer chooses to make it so. If she considers for a moment within herself, she will know that she derived pleasure from everything she saw, because she saw it with innumerable lights and shades upon it, and bound to humanity by innumerable fine links; she cannot possibly communicate anything of that pleasure to another by showing it from one little limited point only, and that point, observe, the one from which it is impossible to detach the exponent as the patroness of a whole universe of inferior souls. This is what everybody would mean in objecting to these notes (supposing them to be published), that they are too smart and too flippant.

As I understand this matter to be altogether between us three, and as I think your confidence, and hers, imposes a duty of friendship on me, I discharge it to the best of my ability. Perhaps I make more of it than you may have meant or expected; if so, it is

because I am interested and wish to express it. If there had been anything in my objection not perfectly easy of removal, I might, after all, have hesitated to state it; but that is not the case. A very little indeed would make all this gaiety as sound and wholesome and good-natured in the reader's mind as it is in the writer's.

Affectionately always.

Anonymous

Gad's Hill Place, Higham, Thursday, June 4th, 1857.

My dear —

Coming home here last night, from a day's business in London, I found your most excellent note awaiting me, in which I have had a pleasure to be derived from none but good and natural things. I can now honestly assure you that I believe you will write *well*, and that I have a lively hope that I may be the means of showing you yourself in print one day. Your powers of graceful and light-hearted observation need nothing but the little touches on which we are both agreed. And I am perfectly sure that they will be as pleasant to you as to anyone, for nobody can see so well as you do, without feeling kindly too.

To confess the truth to you, I was half sorry, yesterday, that I had been so unreserved; but not half as sorry, yesterday, as I am glad to-day. You must not mind my adding that there is a noble candour and modesty in your note, which I shall never be able to

separate from you henceforth.

Affectionately yours always.

Mr. Henry Austin

Gad's Hill, Saturday, June 6th, 1857.

My dear Henry,

Here is a very serious business on the great estate respecting the water supply. Last night, they had pumped the well dry merely in raising the family supply for the day; and this morning (very little water having been got into the cisterns) it is dry again! It is pretty clear to me that we must look the thing in the face, and at once bore deeper, dig, or do some beastly thing or other, to secure this necessary in abundance. Meanwhile I am in a most plaintive and forlorn condition without your presence and counsel. I raise my voice in the wilderness and implore the same!!!

Wild legends are in circulation among the servants how that Captain Goldsmith on the knoll above – the skipper in that crow's-nest of a house – has millions of gallons of water always flowing for him. Can he have damaged my well? Can we imitate him, and have our millions of gallons? Goldsmith or I must fall, so I conceive.

If you get this, send me a telegraph message informing me when I may expect comfort. I am held by four of the family while

I write this, in case I should do myself a mischief – it certainly won't be taking to drinking water.

Ever affectionately (most despairingly).

Mr. W. C. Macready

Tavistock House, Monday, July 13th, 1857.

My dearest Macready,

Many thanks for your Indian information. I shall act upon it in the most exact manner. Walter sails next Monday. Charley and I go down with him to Southampton next Sunday. We are all delighted with the prospect of seeing you at Gad's Hill. These are my Jerrold engagements: On Friday, the 24th, I have to repeat my reading at St. Martin's Hall; on Saturday, the 25th, to repeat "The Frozen Deep" at the Gallery of Illustration for the last time. On Thursday, the 30th, or Friday, the 31st, I shall probably read at Manchester. Deane, the general manager of the Exhibition, is going down to-night, and will arrange all the preliminaries for me. If you and I went down to Manchester together, and were there on a Sunday, he would give us the whole Exhibition to ourselves. It is probable, I think (as he estimates the receipts of a night at about seven hundred pounds), that we may, in about a fortnight or so after the reading, play "The Frozen Deep" at Manchester. But of this contingent engagement I at present know no more than you do.

Now, will you, upon this exposition of affairs, choose your own time for coming to us, and, when you have made your choice, write to me at Gad's Hill? I am going down this afternoon for rest (which means violent cricket with the boys) after last Saturday night; which was a teaser, but triumphant. The St. Martin's Hall audience was, I must confess, a very extraordinary thing. The two thousand and odd people were like one, and their enthusiasm was something awful.

Yet I have seen that before, too. Your young remembrance cannot recall the man; but he flourished in my day – a great actor, sir – a noble actor – thorough artist! I have seen him do wonders in that way. He retired from the stage early in life (having a monomaniacal delusion that he was old), and is said to be still living in your county.

All join in kindest love to your dear sister and all the rest.

Ever, my dearest Macready,
Most affectionately yours.

Mr. Edmund Yates

Tavistock House, Sunday, July 19th, 1857.

My dear Yates,

Although I date this ashore, I really write it from Southampton (don't notice this fact in your reply, for I shall be in town on Wednesday). I have come here on an errand which will grow

familiar to you before you know that Time has flapped his wings over your head. Like me, you will find those babies grow to be young men before you are quite sure they are born. Like me, you will have great teeth drawn with a wrench, and will only then know that you ever cut them. I am here to send Walter away over what they call, in Green Bush melodramas, "the Big Drink," and I don't at all know this day how he comes to be mine, or I his.

I don't write to say this – or to say how seeing Charley, and he going aboard the ship before me just now, I suddenly came into possession of a photograph of my own back at sixteen and twenty, and also into a suspicion that I had doubled the last age. I merely write to mention that Telbin and his wife are going down to Gad's Hill with us, about mid-day next Sunday, and that if you and Mrs. Yates will come too, we shall be delighted to have you. We can give you a bed, and you can be in town (if you have such a savage necessity) by twenty minutes before ten on Monday morning.

I was very much pleased (as I had reason to be) with your account of the reading in *The Daily News*. I thank you heartily.

Mr. T. P. Cooke

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LATE MR. DOUGLAS JERROLD

Committee's Office, Gallery of Illustration,
Regent Street, Thursday, July 30th, 1857.

My dear Mr. Cooke,

I cannot rest satisfied this morning without writing to congratulate you on your admirable performance of last night. It was so fresh and vigorous, so manly and gallant, that I felt as if it splashed against my theatre-heated face along with the spray of the breezy sea. What I felt everybody felt; I should feel it quite an impertinence to take myself out of the crowd, therefore, if I could by any means help doing so. But I can't; so I hope you will feel that you bring me on yourself, and have only yourself to blame.

Always faithfully yours.

Mrs. Compton

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester,
Sunday Night, Aug 2nd, 1857.

My dear Mrs. Compton,

We are going to play "The Frozen Deep" (pursuant to requisition from town magnates, etc.) at Manchester, at the New Free Trade Hall, on the nights of Friday and Saturday, the 21st and 22nd August.

The place is out of the question for my girls. Their action could not be seen, and their voices could not be heard. You and I have played, there and elsewhere, so sociably and happily, that I am emboldened to ask you whether you would play my sister-in-law Georgina's part (Compton and babies permitting).

We shall go down in the old pleasant way, and shall have the Art Treasures Exhibition to ourselves on the Sunday; when even "he" (as Rogers always called every pretty woman's husband) might come and join us.

What do you say? What does he say? and what does baby say? When I use the term "baby," I use it in two tenses – present and future.

Answer me at this address, like the Juliet I saw at Drury Lane – when was it? – yesterday. And whatever your answer is, if you will say that you and Compton will meet us at the North Kent

Station, London Bridge, next Sunday at a quarter before one, and will come down here for a breath of sweet air and stay all night, you will give your old friends great pleasure. Not least among them,

Yours faithfully.

Mr. W. C. Macready

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester,
Monday, Aug. 3rd, 1857.

My dearest Macready,

I write to you in reference to your last note, as soon as I positively know our final movements in the Jerrold matter.

We are going to wind up by acting at Manchester (on solemn requisition) on the evenings of Friday and Saturday, the 21st and 22nd (actresses substituted for the girls, of course). We shall have to leave here on the morning of the 20th. You thought of coming on the 16th; can't you make it a day or two earlier, so as to be with us a whole week? Decide and pronounce. Again, cannot you bring Katey with you? Decide and pronounce thereupon, also.

I read at Manchester last Friday. As many thousand people were there as you like to name. The collection of pictures in the Exhibition is wonderful. And the power with which the modern English school asserts itself is a very gratifying and delightful thing to behold. The care for the common people, in the provision

made for their comfort and refreshment, is also admirable and worthy of all commendation. But they want more amusement, and particularly (as it strikes me) *something in motion*, though it were only a twisting fountain. The thing is too still after their lives of machinery, and art flies over their heads in consequence.

I hope you have seen my tussle with the "Edinburgh." I saw the chance last Friday week, as I was going down to read the "Carol" in St. Martin's Hall. Instantly turned to, then and there, and wrote half the article. Flew out of bed early next morning, and finished it by noon. Went down to Gallery of Illustration (we acted that night), did the day's business, corrected the proofs in Polar costume in dressing-room, broke up two numbers of "Household Words" to get it out directly, played in "Frozen Deep" and "Uncle John," presided at supper of company, made no end of speeches, went home and gave in completely for four hours, then got sound asleep, and next day was as fresh as you used to be in the far-off days of your lusty youth.

All here send kindest love to your dear good sister and all the house.

Ever and ever affectionately.

Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A

Tavistock House, Sunday Afternoon, Aug. 9th, 1857.

My dear Stone,

Now here, without any preface, is a good, confounding, stunning question for you – would you like to play "Uncle John" on the two nights at Manchester?

It is not a long part. You could have a full rehearsal on the Friday, and I could sit in the wing at night and pull you through all the business. Perhaps you might not object to being in the thing in your own native place, and the relief to me would be enormous.

This is what has come into my head lying in bed to-day (I have been in bed all day), and this is just my plain reason for writing to you.

It's a capital part, and you are a capital old man. You know the play as we play it, and the Manchester people don't. Say the word, and I'll send you my own book by return of post.

The agitation and exertion of Richard Wardour are so great to me, that I cannot rally my spirits in the short space of time I get. The strain is so great to make a show of doing it, that I want to be helped out of "Uncle John" if I can. Think of yourself far more than me; but if you half think you are up to the joke, and half doubt your being so, then give me the benefit of the doubt and play the part.

Answer me at Gad's Hill.

Ever affectionately.

P.S. – If you play, I shall immediately announce it to all concerned. If you don't, I shall go on as if nothing had happened, and shall say nothing to anyone.

Mr. Henry Austin

Gad's Hill Place, Saturday, Aug. 15th, 1857.

My dear Henry,

At last, I am happy to inform you, we have got at a famous spring!! It rushed in this morning, ten foot deep. And our friends talk of its supplying "a ton a minute for yourself and your family, sir, for nevermore."

They ask leave to bore ten feet lower, to prevent the possibility of what they call "a choking with sullage." Likewise, they are going to insert "a rose-headed pipe;" at the mention of which implement, I am (secretly) well-nigh distracted, having no idea of what it means. But I have said "Yes," besides instantly standing a bottle of gin. Can you come back, and can you get down on Monday morning, to advise and endeavour to decide on the mechanical force we shall use for raising the water? I would return with you, as I shall have to be in town until Thursday, and then to go to Manchester until the following Tuesday.

I send this by hand to John, to bring to you.

Ever affectionately.

Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A

Gad's Hill Place, Monday, Aug. 17th, 1857.

My dear Stone,

I received your kind note this morning, and write this reply here to take to London with me and post in town, being bound for that village and three days' drill of the professional ladies who are to succeed the Tavistock girls.

My book I enclose. There is a slight alteration (which does not affect you) at the end of the first act, in order that the piece may be played through without having the drop curtain down. You will not find the situations or business difficult, with me on the spot to put you right.

Now, as to the dress. You will want a pair of pumps, and a pair of white silk socks; these you can get at Manchester. The extravagantly and anciently-frilled shirts that I have had got up for the part, I will bring you down; large white waistcoat, I will bring you down; large white hat, I will bring you down; dressing-gown, I will bring you down; white gloves and ditto choker you can get at Manchester. There then remain only a pair of common nankeen tights, to button below the calf, and blue wedding-coat. The nankeen tights you had best get made at once; my "Uncle John" coat I will send you down in a parcel by to-morrow's train, to have altered in Manchester to your shape and figure. You

will then be quite independent of Christian chance and Jewish Nathan, which latter potentate is now at Canterbury with the cricket amateurs, and might fail.

A Thursday's rehearsal is (unfortunately) now impracticable, the passes for the railway being all made out, and the company's sailing orders issued. But, as I have already suggested, with a careful rehearsal on Friday morning, and with me at the wing at night to put you right, you will find yourself sliding through it easily. There is nothing in the least complicated in the business. As to the dance, you have only to knock yourself up for a twelvemonth and it will go nobly.

After all, too, if you *should*, through any unlucky breakdown, come to be afraid of it, I am no worse off than I was before, if I have to do it at last. Keep your pecker up with that.

I am heartily obliged to you, my dear old boy, for your affectionate and considerate note, and I wouldn't have you do it, really and sincerely – immense as the relief will be to me – unless you are quite comfortable in it, and able to enjoy it.

Ever affectionately.

Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A

Office of "Household Words," Tuesday, Aug. 18th, 1857.

My dear Stone,

I sent you a telegraph message last night, in total contradiction

of the letter you received from me this morning.

The reason was simply this: Arthur Smith and the other business men, both in Manchester and here, urged upon me, in the strongest manner, that they were afraid of the change; that it was well known in Manchester that I had done the part in London; that there was a danger of its being considered disrespectful in me to give it up; also that there was a danger that it might be thought that I did so at the last minute, after an immense let, whereas I might have done it at first, etc. etc. etc. Having no desire but for the success of our object, and a becoming recognition on my part of the kind Manchester public's cordiality, I gave way, and thought it best to go on.

I do so against the grain, and against every inclination, and against the strongest feeling of gratitude to you. My people at home will be miserable too when they hear I am going to do it. If I could have heard from you sooner, and got the bill out sooner, I should have been firmer in considering my own necessity of relief. As it is, I sneak under; and I hope you will feel the reasons, and approve.

Ever affectionately.

Mr. Henry Austin

Gad's Hill Place, Wednesday, Sept. 2nd, 1857.

My dear Henry,

The second conspirator has been here this morning to ask whether you wish the windlass to be left in the yard, and whether you will want him and his mate any more, and, if so, when? Of course he says (rolling something in the form of a fillet in at one broken tooth all the while, and rolling it out at another) that they could wish fur to have the windlass if it warn't any ways a hill conwenience fur to fetch her away. I have told him that if he will come back on Friday he shall have your reply. Will you, therefore, send it me by return of post? He says he'll "look up" (as if he was an astronomer) "a Friday arterdinner."

On Monday I am going away with Collins for ten days or a fortnight, on a "tour in search of an article" for "Household Words." We have not the least idea where we are going; but *he* says, "Let's look at the Norfolk coast," and *I* say, "Let's look at the back of the Atlantic." I don't quite know what I mean by that; but have a general impression that I mean something knowing.

I am horribly used up after the Jerrold business. Low spirits, low pulse, low voice, intense reaction. If I were not like Mr. Micawber, "falling back for a spring" on Monday, I think I should slink into a corner and cry.

Ever affectionately.

Miss Hogarth

Allonby, Cumberland, Wednesday Night, Sept. 9th, 1857.

My dear Georgy,

* * * * * *

Think of Collins's usual luck with me! We went up a Cumberland mountain yesterday – a huge black hill, fifteen hundred feet high. We took for a guide a capital innkeeper hard by. It rained in torrents – as it only does rain in a hill country – the whole time. At the top, there were black mists and the darkness of night. It then came out that the innkeeper had not been up for twenty years, and he lost his head and himself altogether; and we couldn't get down again! What wonders the Inimitable performed with his compass until it broke with the heat and wet of his pocket no matter; it did break, and then we wandered about, until it was clear to the Inimitable that the night must be passed there, and the enterprising travellers probably die of cold. We took our own way about coming down, struck, and declared that the guide might wander where he would, but we would follow a watercourse we lighted upon, and which must come at last to the river. This necessitated amazing gymnastics; in the course of which performances, Collins fell into the said watercourse with his ankle sprained, and the great ligament of the foot and leg swollen I don't know how big.

How I enacted Wardour over again in carrying him down, and what a business it was to get him down; I may say in Gibbs's words: "Vi lascio a giudicare!" But he was got down somehow,

and we got off the mountain somehow; and now I carry him to bed, and into and out of carriages, exactly like Wardour in private life. I don't believe he will stand for a month to come. He has had a doctor, and can wear neither shoe nor stocking, and has his foot wrapped up in a flannel waistcoat, and has a breakfast saucer of liniment, and a horrible dabbling of lotion incessantly in progress. We laugh at it all, but I doubt very much whether he can go on to Doncaster. It will be a miserable blow to our H. W. scheme, and I say nothing about it as yet; but he is really so crippled that I doubt the getting him there. We have resolved to fall to work to-morrow morning and begin our writing; and there, for the present, that point rests.

This is a little place with fifty houses, five bathing-machines, five girls in straw hats, five men in straw hats, and no other company. The little houses are all in half-mourning – yellow stone on white stone, and black; and it reminds me of what Broadstairs might have been if it had not inherited a cliff, and had been an Irishman. But this is a capital little homely inn, looking out upon the sea; and we are really very comfortably lodged. I can just stand upright in my bedroom. Otherwise, it is a good deal like one of Ballard's top-rooms. We have a very obliging and comfortable landlady; and it is a clean nice place in a rough wild country. We came here haphazard, but could not have done better.

We lay last night at a place called Wigton – also in half-mourning – with the wonderful peculiarity that it had

no population, no business, no streets to speak of; but five linendrapers within range of our small windows, one linendraper's next door, and five more linendrapers round the corner. I ordered a night-light in my bedroom. A queer little old woman brought me one of the common Child's night-lights, and seeming to think that I looked at it with interest, said: "It's joost a vara keeyourious thing, sir, and joost new coom oop. It'll burn awt hoors a' end, an no gootther, nor no waste, nor ony sike a thing, if you can creedit what I say, seein' the airticle."

Of course *I* shall go to Doncaster, whether or no (please God), and my postage directions to you remain unchanged. Love to Mamey, Katey, Charley, Harry, and the darling Plorn.

Ever affectionately.

Miss Hogarth

Lancaster, Saturday Night, Sept. 12th, 1857.

My dear Georgy,

I received your letter at Allonby yesterday, and was delighted to get it. We came back to Carlisle last night (to a capital inn, kept by Breach's brother), and came on here to-day. We are on our way to Doncaster; but Sabbath observance throws all the trains out; and although it is not a hundred miles from here, we shall have, as well as I can make out the complicated lists of trains, to sleep at Leeds – which I particularly detest as an odious place

– to-morrow night.

Accustomed as you are to the homage which men delight to render to the Inimitable, you would be scarcely prepared for the proportions it assumes in this northern country. Station-masters assist him to alight from carriages, deputations await him in hotel entries, innkeepers bow down before him and put him into regal rooms, the town goes down to the platform to see him off, and Collins's ankle goes into the newspapers!!!

It is a great deal better than it was, and he can get into new hotels and up the stairs with two thick sticks, like an admiral in a farce. His spirits have improved in a corresponding degree, and he contemplates cheerfully the keeping house at Doncaster. I thought (as I told you) he would never have gone there, but he seems quite up to the mark now. Of course he can never walk out, or see anything of any place. We have done our first paper for H. W., and sent it up to the printer's.

The landlady of the little inn at Allonby lived at Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire, when I went down there before "Nickleby," and was smuggled into the room to see me, when I was secretly found out. She is an immensely fat woman now. "But I could tuck my arm round her waist then, Mr. Dickens," the landlord said when she told me the story as I was going to bed the night before last. "And can't you do it now," I said, "you insensible dog? Look at me! Here's a picture!" Accordingly, I got round as much of her as I could; and this gallant action was the most successful I have ever performed, on the whole. I think it was the dullest little place

I ever entered; and what with the monotony of an idle sea, and what with the monotony of another sea in the room (occasioned by Collins's perpetually holding his ankle over a pail of salt water, and laving it with a milk jug), I struck yesterday, and came away.

We are in a very remarkable old house here, with genuine old rooms and an uncommonly quaint staircase. I have a state bedroom, with two enormous red four-posters in it, each as big as Charley's room at Gad's Hill. Bellew is to preach here to-morrow. "And we know he is a friend of yours, sir," said the landlord, when he presided over the serving of the dinner (two little salmon trout; a sirloin steak; a brace of partridges; seven dishes of sweets; five dishes of dessert, led off by a bowl of peaches; and in the centre an enormous bride-cake – "We always have it here, sir," said the landlord, "custom of the house.") (Collins turned pale, and estimated the dinner at half a guinea each.)

This is the stupidest of letters, but all description is gone, or going, into "The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices."

Kiss the darling Plorn, who is often in my thoughts. Best love to Charley, Mamey, and Katie. I will write to you again from Doncaster, where I shall be rejoiced to find another letter from you.

Ever affectionately, my dearest Georgy.

Miss Hogarth

Angel Hotel, Doncaster, Tuesday, Sept. 15th, 1857.

My dear Georgy,

I found your letter here on my arrival yesterday. I had hoped that the wall would have been almost finished by this time, and the additions to the house almost finished too – but patience, patience!

We have very good, clean, and quiet apartments here, on the second floor, looking down into the main street, which is full of horse jockeys, bettors, drunkards, and other blackguards, from morning to night – and all night. The races begin to-day and last till Friday, which is the Cup Day. I am not going to the course this morning, but have engaged a carriage (open, and pair) for to-morrow and Friday.

"The Frozen Deep's" author gets on as well as could be expected. He can hobble up and down stairs when absolutely necessary, and limps to his bedroom on the same floor. He talks of going to the theatre to-night in a cab, which will be the first occasion of his going out, except to travel, since the accident. He sends his kind regards and thanks for enquiries and condolence. I am perpetually tidying the rooms after him, and carrying all sorts of untidy things which belong to him into his bedroom, which is a picture of disorder. You will please to imagine mine, airy

and clean, little dressing-room attached, eight water-jugs (I never saw such a supply), capital sponge-bath, perfect arrangement, and exquisite neatness. We breakfast at half-past eight, and fall to work for H. W. afterwards. Then I go out, and – hem! look for subjects.

The mayor called this morning to do the honours of the town, whom it pleased the Inimitable to receive with great courtesy and affability. He propounded invitation to public *déjeûner*, which it did *not* please the Inimitable to receive, and which he graciously rejected.

That's all the news. Everything I can describe by hook or by crook, I describe for H. W. So there is nothing of that sort left for letters.

Best love to dear Mamey and Katey, and to Charley, and to Harry. Any number of kisses to the noble Plorn.

Ever affectionately.

Mr. Arthur Ryland

Gad's Hill Place, Saturday Evening, Oct. 3rd, 1857.

My dear Sir,

I have had the honour and pleasure of receiving your letter of the 28th of last month, informing me of the distinction that has been conferred upon me by the Council of the Birmingham and Midland Institute.

Allow me to assure you with much sincerity, that I am highly gratified by having been elected one of the first honorary members of that establishment. Nothing could have enhanced my interest in so important an undertaking; but the compliment is all the more welcome to me on that account.

I accept it with a due sense of its worth, with many acknowledgments and with all good wishes.

I am ever, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours.

Mr. Edmund Yates

Tavistock House, Monday Night, Nov. 16th, 1857.

My dear Yates,

I retain the story with pleasure; and I need not tell you that you are not mistaken in the last lines of your note.

Excuse me, on that ground, if I say a word or two as to what I think (I mention it with a view to the future) might be better in the paper. The opening is excellent. But it passes too completely into the Irishman's narrative, does not light it up with the life about it, or the circumstances under which it is delivered, and does not carry through it, as I think it should with a certain indefinable subtleness, the thread with which you begin your weaving. I will tell Wills to send me the proof, and will try to show you what I mean when I shall have gone over it carefully.

Faithfully yours always.

Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A

Tavistock House, Wednesday, Dec. 13th, 1857.

My dear Stone,

I find on enquiry that the "General Theatrical Fund" has relieved non-members in one or two instances; but that it is exceedingly unwilling to do so, and would certainly not do so again, saving on some very strong and exceptional case. As its trustee, I could not represent to it that I think it ought to sail into those open waters, for I very much doubt the justice of such cruising, with a reference to the interests of the patient people who support it out of their small earnings.

Affectionately ever.

Book III

1858 TO 1870

1858

NARRATIVE

All through this year, Charles Dickens was constantly moving about from place to place. After much and careful consideration, he had come to the determination of, for the future, giving readings for his own benefit. And although in the spring of this year he gave one reading of his "Christmas Carol" for a charity, all the other readings, beginning from the 29th April, and ever after, were for himself. In the autumn of this year he made reading tours in England, Scotland, and Ireland, always accompanied by his friend and secretary, Mr. Arthur Smith. At Newcastle, Charles Dickens was joined by his daughters, who accompanied him in his Scotch tour. The letters to his sister-in-law, and to his eldest daughter, are all given here, and will be given in all future reading tours, as they form a complete diary of his life and movements at these times. To avoid the constant repetition of the two names, the beginning of the letters will be dispensed with in all cases where they follow each other in unbroken succession. The Mr. Frederick Lehmann mentioned in the letter written from Sheffield, had married a daughter of Mr. Robert Chambers, and niece of Mrs. Wills. Coming to settle in London a short time after this date, Mr. and Mrs. Lehmann

became intimately known to Charles Dickens and his family – more especially to his eldest daughter, to whom they have been, and are, the kindest and truest of friends. The "pretty little boy" mentioned as being under Mrs. Wills's care, was their eldest son.

We give the letter to Mr. Thackeray, not because it is one of very great interest, but because, being the only one we have, we are glad to have the two names associated together in this work.

The "little speech" alluded to in this first letter to Mr. Macready was one made by Charles Dickens at a public dinner, which was given in aid of the Hospital for Sick Children, in Great Ormond Street. He afterwards (early in April) gave a reading from his "Christmas Carol" for this same charity.

The Christmas number of "Household Words," mentioned in a letter to Mr. Wilkie Collins, was called "A House to Let," and contained stories written by Charles Dickens, Mr. Wilkie Collins, and other contributors to "Household Words."

Mr. W. Wilkie Collins

Tavistock House, Sunday, Jan. 17th, 1858.

My dear Wilkie,

I am very sorry to receive so bad an account of the foot. But I hope it is all in the past tense now.

I met with an incident the other day, which I think is a good deal in your way, for introduction either into a long or short story.

Dr. Sutherland and Dr. Monro went over St. Luke's with me (only last Friday), to show me some distinctly and remarkably developed types of insanity. Among other patients, we passed a deaf and dumb man, now afflicted with incurable madness too, of whom they said that it was only when his madness began to develop itself in strongly-marked mad actions, that it began to be suspected. "Though it had been there, no doubt, some time." This led me to consider, suspiciously, what employment he had been in, and so to ask the question. "Aye," says Dr. Sutherland, "that is the most remarkable thing of all, Mr. Dickens. He was employed in the transmission of electric-telegraph messages; and it is impossible to conceive what delirious despatches that man may have been sending about all over the world!"

Rejoiced to hear such good report of the play.

Ever faithfully.

Mr. Edmund Yates

Tavistock House, Tuesday, Feb. 2nd, 1858.

My dear Yates,

Your quotation is, as I supposed, all wrong. The text is *not* "which his 'owls was organs." When Mr. Harris went into an empty dog-kennel, to spare his sensitive nature the anguish of overhearing Mrs. Harris's exclamations on the occasion of the birth of her first child (the Princess Royal of the Harris family),

"he never took his hands away from his ears, or came out once, till he was showed the baby." On encountering that spectacle, he was (being of a weakly constitution) "took with fits." For this distressing complaint he was medically treated; the doctor "collared him, and laid him on his back upon the airy stones" – please to observe what follows – "and she was told, to ease her mind, his 'owls was organs."

That is to say, Mrs. Harris, lying exhausted on her bed, in the first sweet relief of freedom from pain, merely covered with the counterpane, and not yet "put comfortable," hears a noise apparently proceeding from the back-yard, and says, in a flushed and hysterical manner: "What 'owls are those? Who is a-'owling? Not my ugebond?" Upon which the doctor, looking round one of the bottom posts of the bed, and taking Mrs. Harris's pulse in a reassuring manner, says, with much admirable presence of mind: "Howls, my dear madam? – no, no, no! What are we thinking of? Howls, my dear Mrs. Harris? Ha, ha, ha! Organs, ma'am, organs. Organs in the streets, Mrs. Harris; no howls."

Yours faithfully.

Mr. W. M. Thackeray

Tavistock House, Tuesday, Feb. 2nd, 1858.

My dear Thackeray,

The wisdom of Parliament, in that expensive act of its

greatness which constitutes the Guild, prohibits that corporation *from doing anything* until it shall have existed in a perfectly useless condition for seven years. This clause (introduced by some private-bill magnate of official might) seemed so ridiculous, that nobody could believe it to have this meaning; but as I felt clear about it when we were on the very verge of granting an excellent literary annuity, I referred the point to counsel, and my construction was confirmed without a doubt.

It is therefore needless to enquire whether an association in the nature of a provident society could address itself to such a case as you confide to me. The prohibition has still two or three years of life in it.

But, assuming the gentleman's title to be considered as an "author" as established, there is no question that it comes within the scope of the Literary Fund. They would habitually "lend" money if they did what I consider to be their duty; as it is they only give money, but they give it in such instances.

I have forwarded the envelope to the Society of Arts, with a request that they will present it to Prince Albert, approaching H.R.H. in the Siamese manner.

Ever faithfully.

Mr. John Forster

Tavistock House, Wednesday Night, Feb. 3rd, 1858.

My dear Forster,

I beg to report two phenomena:

1. An excellent little play in one act, by Marston, at the Lyceum; title, "A Hard Struggle;" as good as "La Joie fait Peur," though not at all like it.

2. Capital acting in the same play, by Mr. Dillon. Real good acting, in imitation of nobody, and honestly made out by himself!!

I went (at Marston's request) last night, and cried till I sobbed again. I have not seen a word about it from Oxenford. But it is as wholesome and manly a thing altogether as I have seen for many a day. (I would have given a hundred pounds to have played Mr. Dillon's part).

Love to Mrs. Forster.

Ever affectionately.

Dr. Westland Marston

Tavistock House, Wednesday, Feb. 3rd, 1858.

My dear Marston,

I most heartily and honestly congratulate you on your charming little piece. It moved me more than I could easily tell you, if I were to try. Except "La Joie fait Peur," I have seen nothing nearly so good, and there is a subtlety in the comfortable presentation of the child who is to become a devoted woman

for Reuben's sake, which goes a long way beyond Madame de Girardin. I am at a loss to let you know how much I admired it last night, or how heartily I cried over it. A touching idea, most delicately conceived and wrought out by a true artist and poet, in a spirit of noble, manly generosity, that no one should be able to study without great emotion.

It is extremely well acted by all concerned; but Mr. Dillon's performance is really admirable, and deserving of the highest commendation. It is good in these days to see an actor taking such pains, and expressing such natural and vigorous sentiment. There is only one thing I should have liked him to change. I am much mistaken if any man – least of all any such man – would crush a letter written by the hand of the woman he loved. Hold it to his heart unconsciously and look about for it the while, he might; or he might do any other thing with it that expressed a habit of tenderness and affection in association with the idea of her; but he would never crush it under any circumstances. He would as soon crush her heart.

You will see how closely I went with him, by my minding so slight an incident in so fine a performance. There is no one who could approach him in it; and I am bound to add that he surprised me as much as he pleased me.

I think it might be worth while to try the people at the Français with the piece. They are very good in one-act plays; such plays take well there, and this seems to me well suited to them. If you would like Samson or Regnier to read the play (in English), I

know them well, and would be very glad indeed to tell them that I sent it with your sanction because I had been so much struck by it.

Faithfully yours always.

Monsieur Regnier

Tavistock House, London, W.C., Thursday, Feb. 11th, 1858.

My dear Regnier,

I want you to read the enclosed little play. You will see that it is in one act – about the length of "La Joie fait Pour." It is now acting at the Lyceum Theatre here, with very great success. The author is Mr. Westland Marston, a dramatic writer of reputation, who wrote a very well-known tragedy called "The Patrician's Daughter," in which Macready and Miss Faucit acted (under Macready's management at Drury Lane) some years ago.

This little piece is so very powerful on the stage, its interest is so simple and natural, and the part of Reuben is such a very fine one, that I cannot help thinking you might make one grand *coup* with it, if with your skilful hand you arranged it for the Français. I have communicated this idea of mine to the author, "*et là-dessus je vous écris*." I am anxious to know your opinion, and shall expect with much interest to receive a little letter from you at your convenience.

Mrs. Dickens, Miss Hogarth, and all the house send a

thousand kind loves and regards to Madame Regnier and the dear little boys. You will bring them to London when you come, with all the force of the Français – will you not?

Ever, my dear Regnier, faithfully your Friend.

Monsieur Regnier

Tavistock House, Saturday, Feb. 20th, 1858.

My dear Regnier,

Let me thank you with all my heart for your most patient and kind letter. I made its contents known to Mr. Marston, and I enclose you his reply. You will see that he cheerfully leaves the matter in your hands, and abides by your opinion and discretion.

You need not return his letter, my friend. There is great excitement here this morning, in consequence of the failure of the Ministry last night to carry the bill they brought in to please your Emperor and his troops. *I*, for one, am extremely glad of their defeat.

"Le vieux P – ," I have no doubt, will go staggering down the Rue de la Paix to-day, with his stick in his hand and his hat on one side, predicting the downfall of everything, in consequence of this event. His handwriting shakes more and more every quarter, and I think he mixes a great deal of cognac with his ink. He always gives me some astonishing piece of news (which is never true), or some suspicious public prophecy (which is never

verified), and he always tells me he is dying (which he never is).

Adieu, my dear Regnier, accept a thousand thanks from me, and believe me, now and always,

Your affectionate and faithful Friend.

Mr. W. C. Macready

Tavistock House, March 15th, 1858.

My dearest Macready,

I have safely received your cheque this morning, and will hand it over forthwith to the honorary secretary of the hospital. I hope you have read the little speech in the hospital's publication of it. They had it taken by their own shorthand-writer, and it is done verbatim.

You may be sure that it is a good and kind charity. It is amazing to me that it is not at this day ten times as large and rich as it is. But I hope and trust that I have happily been able to give it a good thrust onward into a great course. We all send our most affectionate love to all the house. I am devising all sorts of things in my mind, and am in a state of energetic restlessness incomprehensible to the calm philosophers of Dorsetshire. What a dream it is, this work and strife, and how little we do in the dream after all! Only last night, in my sleep, I was bent upon getting over a perspective of barriers, with my hands and feet bound. Pretty much what we are all about, waking, I think?

But, Lord! (as I said before) you smile pityingly, not bitterly, at this hubbub, and moralise upon it, in the calm evenings when there is no school at Sherborne.

Ever affectionately and truly.

Mrs Hogge.[3]

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Wednesday, April 14th, 1858.

My dear Mrs. Hogge,

After the profoundest cogitation, I come reluctantly to the conclusion that I do not know that orphan. If you were the lady in want of him, I should certainly offer *myself*. But as you are not, I will not hear of the situation.

It is wonderful to think how many charming little people there must be, to whom this proposal would be like a revelation from Heaven. Why don't I know one, and come to Kensington, boy in hand, as if I had walked (I wish to God I had) out of a fairy tale! But no, I do *not* know that orphan. He is crying somewhere, by himself, at this moment. I can't dry his eyes. He is being neglected by some ogress of a nurse. I can't rescue him.

I will make a point of going to the Athenæum on Monday night; and if I had five hundred votes to give, Mr. Macdonald should have them all, for your sake.

[3] Niece to the Rev. W. Harness.

I grieve to hear that you have been ill, but I hope that the spring, when it comes, will find you blooming with the rest of the flowers.

Very faithfully yours.

Mr. Edmund Yates

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Wednesday, April 28th, 1858.

My dear Yates,

For a good many years I have suffered a great deal from charities, but never anything like what I suffer now. The amount of correspondence they inflict upon me is really incredible. But this is nothing. Benevolent men get behind the piers of the gates, lying in wait for my going out; and when I peep shrinkingly from my study-windows, I see their pot-bellied shadows projected on the gravel. Benevolent bullies drive up in hansom cabs (with engraved portraits of their benevolent institutions hanging over the aprons, like banners on their outward walls), and stay long at the door. Benevolent area-sneaks get lost in the kitchens and are found to impede the circulation of the knife-cleaning machine. My man has been heard to say (at The Burton Arms) "that if it was a wicious place, well and good —*that* an't door work; but that wen all the Christian wirtues is always a-shoulderin' and a-helberin' on you in the 'all, a-tryin' to git past you and cut upstairs

into master's room, why no wages as you couldn't name wouldn't make it up to you."

Persecuted ever.

Mrs Yates

(THE CHARMING ACTRESS, THE MOTHER OF MR. EDMUND YATES.)

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, W.C.,
Saturday Evening, May 15th, 1858.

My dear Mrs. Yates,

Pray believe that I was sorry with all my heart to miss you last Thursday, and to learn the occasion of your absence; also that, whenever you can come, your presence will give me a new interest in that evening. No one alive can have more delightful associations with the lightest sound of your voice than I have; and to give you a minute's interest and pleasure, in acknowledgment of the uncountable hours of happiness you gave me when you were a mysterious angel to me, would honestly gratify my heart.

Very faithfully and gratefully yours.

M. de Cerjat

Gad's Hill, Wednesday, July 7th, 1858.

My dear Cerjat,

I should vainly try to tell you – so I *won't* try – how affected I have been by your warm-hearted letter, or how thoroughly well convinced I always am of the truth and earnestness of your friendship. I thank you, my dear, dear fellow, with my whole soul. I fervently return that friendship and I highly cherish it.

You want to know all about me? I am still reading in London every Thursday, and the audiences are very great, and the success immense. On the 2nd of August I am going away on a tour of some four months in England, Ireland, and Scotland. I shall read, during that time, not fewer than four or five times a week. It will be sharp work; but probably a certain musical clinking will come of it, which will mitigate the hardship.

At this present moment I am on my little Kentish freehold (*not* in top-boots, and not particularly prejudiced that I know of), looking on as pretty a view out of my study window as you will find in a long day's English ride. My little place is a grave red brick house (time of George the First, I suppose), which I have added to and stuck bits upon in all manner of ways, so that it is as pleasantly irregular, and as violently opposed to all architectural ideas, as the most hopeful man could possibly desire. It is on the

summit of Gad's Hill. The robbery was committed before the door, on the man with the treasure, and Falstaff ran away from the identical spot of ground now covered by the room in which I write. A little rustic alehouse, called The Sir John Falstaff, is over the way – has been over the way, ever since, in honour of the event. Cobham Woods and Park are behind the house; the distant Thames in front; the Medway, with Rochester, and its old castle and cathedral, on one side. The whole stupendous property is on the old Dover Road, so when you come, come by the North Kent Railway (not the South-Eastern) to Strood or Higham, and I'll drive over to fetch you.

The blessed woods and fields have done me a world of good, and I am quite myself again. The children are all as happy as children can be. My eldest daughter, Mary, keeps house, with a state and gravity becoming that high position; wherein she is assisted by her sister Katie, and by her aunt Georgina, who is, and always has been, like another sister. Two big dogs, a bloodhound and a St. Bernard, direct from a convent of that name, where I think you once were, are their principal attendants in the green lanes. These latter instantly untie the neckerchiefs of all tramps and prowlers who approach their presence, so that they wander about without any escort, and drive big horses in basket-phaetons through murderous bye-ways, and never come to grief. They are very curious about your daughters, and send all kinds of loves to them and to Mrs. Cerjat, in which I heartily join.

You will have read in the papers that the Thames in London

is most horrible. I have to cross Waterloo or London Bridge to get to the railroad when I come down here, and I can certify that the offensive smells, even in that short whiff, have been of a most head-and-stomach-distending nature. Nobody knows what is to be done; at least everybody knows a plan, and everybody else knows it won't do; in the meantime cartloads of chloride of lime are shot into the filthy stream, and do something I hope. You will know, before you get this, that the American telegraph line has parted again, at which most men are sorry, but very few surprised. This is all the news, except that there is an Italian Opera at Drury Lane, price eighteenpence to the pit, where Viardot, by far the greatest artist of them all, sings, and which is full when the dear opera can't let a box; and except that the weather has been exceptionally hot, but is now quite cool. On the top of this hill it has been cold, actually cold at night, for more than a week past.

I am going over to Rochester to post this letter, and must write another to Townshend before I go. My dear Cerjat, I have written lightly enough, because I want you to know that I am becoming cheerful and hearty. God bless you! I love you, and I know that you love me.

Ever your attached and affectionate.

Miss Hogarth

West Hoe, Plymouth, Thursday, Aug. 5th, 1858.

My dearest Georgy,

I received your letter this morning with the greatest pleasure, and read it with the utmost interest in all its domestic details.

We had a most wonderful night at Exeter. It is to be regretted that we cannot take the place again on our way back. It was a prodigious cram, and we turned away no end of people. But not only that, I think they were the finest audience I have ever read to. I don't think I ever read, in some respects, so well; and I never beheld anything like the personal affection which they poured out upon me at the end. It was really a very remarkable sight, and I shall always look back upon it with pleasure.

Last night here was not so bright. There are quarrels of the strangest kind between the Plymouth people and the Stonehouse people. The room is at Stonehouse (Tracy says the wrong room; there being a Plymouth room in this hotel, and he being a Plymouthite). We had a fair house, but not at all a great one. All the notabilities come this morning to "Little Dombey," for which we have let one hundred and thirty stalls, which local admiration of local greatness considers very large. For "Mrs. Gamp and the Boots," to-night, we have also a very promising let. But the races are on, and there are two public balls to-night, and the yacht

squadron are all at Cherbourg to boot. Arthur is of opinion that "Two Sixties" will do very well for us. I doubt the "Two Sixties" myself. *Mais nous verrons.*

The room is a very handsome one, but it is on the top of a windy and muddy hill, leading (literally) to nowhere; and it looks (except that it is new and *mortary*) as if the subsidence of the waters after the Deluge might have left it where it is. I have to go right through the company to get to the platform. Big doors slam and resound when anybody comes in; and all the company seem afraid of one another. Nevertheless they were a sensible audience last night, and much impressed and pleased.

Tracy is in the room (wandering about, and never finishing a sentence), and sends all manner of sea-loves to you and the dear girls. I send all manner of land-loves to you from myself, out of my heart of hearts, and also to my dear Plorn and the boys.

Arthur sends his kindest love. He knows only two characters. He is either always corresponding, like a Secretary of State, or he is transformed into a rout-furniture dealer of Rathbone Place, and drags forms about with the greatest violence, without his coat.

I have no time to add another word.

Ever, dearest Georgy, your most affectionate.

Miss Dickens

London, Saturday, Aug. 7th, 1858.

My dearest Mamey,

The closing night at Plymouth was a very great scene, and the morning there was exceedingly good too. You will be glad to hear that at Clifton last night, a torrent of five hundred shillings bore Arthur away, pounded him against the wall, flowed on to the seats over his body, scratched him, and damaged his best dress suit. All to his unspeakable joy.

This is a very short letter, but I am going to the Burlington Arcade, desperately resolved to have all those wonderful instruments put into operation on my head, with a view to refreshing it.

Kindest love to Georgy and to all.

Ever your affectionate.

Miss Dickens

Shrewsbury, Thursday, Aug. 12th, 1858.

A wonderful audience last night at Wolverhampton. If such a thing can be, they were even quicker and more intelligent than the audience I had in Edinburgh. They were so wonderfully good

and were so much on the alert this morning by nine o'clock for another reading, that we are going back there at about our Bradford time. I never saw such people. And the local agent would take no money, and charge no expenses of his own.

This place looks what Plorn would call "ortily" dull. Local agent predicts, however, "great satisfaction to Mr. Dickens, and excellent attendance." I have just been to look at the hall, where everything was wrong, and where I have left Arthur making a platform for me out of dining-tables.

If he comes back in time, I am not quite sure but that he is himself going to write to Gad's Hill. We talk of coming up from Chester *in the night to-morrow, after the reading;* and of showing our precious selves at an apparently impossibly early hour in the Gad's Hill breakfast-room on Saturday morning.

I have not felt the fatigue to any extent worth mentioning; though I get, every night, into the most violent heats. We are going to dine at three o'clock (it wants a quarter now) and have not been here two hours, so I have seen nothing of Clement.

Tell Georgy with my love, that I read in the same room in which we acted, but at the end opposite to that where our stage was. We are not at the inn where the amateur company put up, but at The Lion, where the fair Miss Mitchell was lodged alone. We have the strangest little rooms (sitting-room and two bed-rooms all together), the ceilings of which I can touch with my hand. The windows bulge out over the street, as if they were little stern-windows in a ship. And a door opens out of the sitting-

room on to a little open gallery with plants in it, where one leans over a queer old rail, and looks all downhill and slant-wise at the crookedest black and yellow old houses, all manner of shapes except straight shapes. To get into this room we come through a china closet; and the man in laying the cloth has actually knocked down, in that repository, two geraniums and Napoleon Bonaparte.

I think that's all I have to say, except that at the Wolverhampton theatre they played "Oliver Twist" last night (Mr. Toole the Artful Dodger), "in consequence of the illustrious author honouring the town with his presence." We heard that the device succeeded very well, and that they got a good many people.

John's spirits have been equable and good since we rejoined him. Berry has always got something the matter with his digestion – seems to me the male gender of Maria Jolly, and ought to take nothing but Revalenta Arabica. Bottled ale is not to be got in these parts, and Arthur is thrown upon draught.

My dearest love to Georgy and to Katey, also to Marguerite. Also to all the boys and the noble Plorn.

Ever your affectionate Father.

Miss Hogarth

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Wednesday Morning, Aug. 18th, 1858.

I write this hurried line before starting, to report that my cold is decidedly better, thank God (though still bad), and that I hope to be able to stagger through to-night. After dinner yesterday I began to recover my voice, and I think I sang half the Irish Melodies to myself, as I walked about to test it. I got home at half-past ten, and mustard-poulticed and barley-watered myself tremendously.

Love to the dear girls, and to all.

Ever affectionately.

The same

Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, Friday Night, Aug. 20th, 1858.

I received your welcome and interesting letter to-day, and I write you a very hurried and bad reply; but it is *after the reading*, and you will take the will for the deed under these trying circumstances, I know.

We have had a tremendous night; the largest house I have ever had since I first began – two thousand three hundred people. To-

morrow afternoon, at three, I read again.

My cold has been oppressive, and is not yet gone. I have been very hard to sleep too, and last night I was all but sleepless. This morning I was very dull and seedy; but I got a good walk, and picked up again. It has been blowing all day, and I fear we shall have a sick passage over to Dublin to-morrow night.

Tell Mamie (with my dear love to her and Katie) that I will write to her from Dublin – probably on Sunday. Tell her too that the stories she told me in her letter were not only capital stories in themselves, but *excellently told* too.

What Arthur's state has been to-night – he, John, Berry, and Boylett, all taking money and going mad together – you *cannot* imagine. They turned away hundreds, sold all the books, rolled on the ground of my room knee-deep in checks, and made a perfect pantomime of the whole thing. He has kept quite well, I am happy to say, and sends a hundred loves.

In great haste and fatigue.

Ever affectionately.

Miss Dickens

Morrison's Hotel, Dublin, Monday, Aug. 23rd, 1858.

We had a nasty crossing here. We left Holyhead at one in the morning, and got here at six. Arthur was incessantly sick the whole way. I was not sick at all, but was in as healthy a condition

otherwise as humanity need be. We are in a beautiful hotel. Our sitting-room is exactly like the drawing-room at the Peschiere in all its dimensions. I never saw two rooms so exactly resembling one another in their proportions. Our bedrooms too are excellent, and there are baths and all sorts of comforts.

The Lord Lieutenant is away, and the place looks to me as if its professional life were away too. Nevertheless, there are numbers of people in the streets. Somehow, I hardly seem to think we are going to do enormously here; but I have scarcely any reason for supposing so (except that a good many houses are shut up); and I *know* nothing about it, for Arthur is now gone to the agent and to the room. The men came by boat direct from Liverpool. They had a rough passage, were all ill, and did not get here till noon yesterday. Donnybrook Fair, or what remains of it, is going on, within two or three miles of Dublin. They went out there yesterday in a jaunting-car, and John described it to us at dinner-time (with his eyebrows lifted up, and his legs well asunder), as "Johnny Brooks's Fair;" at which Arthur, who was drinking bitter ale, nearly laughed himself to death. Berry is always unfortunate, and when I asked what had happened to Berry on board the steamboat, it appeared that "an Irish gentleman which was drunk, and fancied himself the captain, wanted to knock Berry down."

I am surprised by finding this place very much larger than I had supposed it to be. Its bye-parts are bad enough, but cleaner, too, than I had supposed them to be, and certainly very much cleaner than the old town of Edinburgh. The man who drove our

jaunting-car yesterday hadn't a piece in his coat as big as a penny roll, and had had his hat on (apparently without brushing it) ever since he was grown up. But he was remarkably intelligent and agreeable, with something to say about everything. For instance, when I asked him what a certain building was, he didn't say "courts of law" and nothing else, but: "Av you plase, sir, it's the foor coorts o' looyers, where Misther O'Connell stood his trial wunst, ye'll remimber, sir, afore I tell ye of it." When we got into the Phœnix Park, he looked round him as if it were his own, and said: "That's a park, sir, av yer plase." I complimented it, and he said: "Gintlemen tills me as they'r bin, sir, over Europe, and never see a park aqualling ov it. 'Tis eight mile roond, sir, ten mile and a half long, and in the month of May the hawthorn trees are as beautiful as brides with their white jewels on. Yonder's the vice-regal lodge, sir; in them two corners lives the two sicretirries, wishing I was them, sir. There's air here, sir, av yer plase! There's scenery here, sir! There's mountains – thim, sir! Yer coonsider it a park, sir? It is that, sir!"

You should have heard John in my bedroom this morning endeavouring to imitate a bath-man, who had resented his interference, and had said as to the shower-bath: "Yer'll not be touching *that*, young man. Divil a touch yer'll touch o' that insthrument, young man!" It was more ridiculously unlike the reality than I can express to you, yet he was so delighted with his powers that he went off in the absurdest little gingerbeery giggle, backing into my portmanteau all the time.

My dear love to Katie and to Georgy, also to the noble Plorn and all the boys. I shall write to Katie next, and then to Aunty. My cold, I am happy to report, is very much better. I lay in the wet all night on deck, on board the boat, but am not as yet any the worse for it. Arthur was quite insensible when we got to Dublin, and stared at our luggage without in the least offering to claim it. He left his kindest love for all before he went out. I will keep the envelope open until he comes in.

Ever, my dearest Mamie,
Your most affectionate Father.

Miss Hogarth

Morrison's Hotel, Dublin, Wednesday, Aug. 25th, 1858.

I begin my letter to you to-day, though I don't know when I may send it off. We had a very good house last night, after all, that is to say, a great rush of shillings and good half-crowns, though the stalls were comparatively few. For "Little Dombey," this morning, we have an immense stall let – already more than two hundred – and people are now fighting in the agent's shop to take more. Through some mistake of our printer's, the evening reading for this present Wednesday was dropped, in a great part of the announcements, and the agent opened no plan for it. I have therefore resolved not to have it at all. Arthur Smith has waylaid me in all manner of ways, but I remain obdurate. I am

frightfully tired, and really relieved by the prospect of an evening – overjoyed.

They were a highly excitable audience last night, but they certainly did not comprehend – internally and intellectually comprehend – "The Chimes" as a London audience do. I am quite sure of it. I very much doubt the Irish capacity of receiving the pathetic; but of their quickness as to the humorous there can be no doubt. I shall see how they go along with Little Paul, in his death, presently.

While I was at breakfast this morning, a general officer was announced with great state – having a staff at the door – and came in, booted and plumed, and covered with Crimean decorations. It was Cunninghame, whom we knew in Genoa – then a captain. He was very hearty indeed, and came to ask me to dinner. Of course I couldn't go. Olliffe has a brother at Cork, who has just now (noon) written to me, proposing dinners and excursions in that neighbourhood which would fill about a week; I being there a day and a half, and reading three times. The work will be very severe here, and I begin to feel depressed by it. (By "here," I mean Ireland generally, please to observe.)

We meant, as I said in a letter to Katie, to go to Queenstown yesterday and bask on the seashore. But there is always so much to do that we couldn't manage it after all. We expect a tremendous house to-morrow night as well as to-day; and Arthur is at the present instant up to his eyes in business (and seats), and, between his regret at losing to-night, and his desire to make

the room hold twice as many as it *will* hold, is half distracted. I have become a wonderful Irishman – must play an Irish part some day – and his only relaxation is when I enact "John and the Boots," which I consequently do enact all day long. The papers are full of remarks upon my white tie, and describe it as being of enormous size, which is a wonderful delusion, because, as you very well know, it is a small tie. Generally, I am happy to report, the Emerald press is in favour of my appearance, and likes my eyes. But one gentleman comes out with a letter at Cork, wherein he says that although only forty-six I look like an old man. *He* is a rum customer, I think.

The Rutherfords are living here, and wanted me to dine with them, which, I needn't say, could not be done; all manner of people have called, but I have seen only two. John has given it up altogether as to rivalry with the Boots, and did not come into my room this morning at all. Boots appeared triumphant and alone. He was waiting for me at the hotel-door last night. "Whaa't sart of a hoose, sur?" he asked me. "Capital." "The Lard be praised fur the 'onor o' Dooblin!"

Arthur buys bad apples in the streets and brings them home and doesn't eat them, and then I am obliged to put them in the balcony because they make the room smell faint. Also he meets countrymen with honeycomb on their heads, and leads them (by the buttonhole when they have one) to this gorgeous establishment and requests the bar to buy honeycomb for his breakfast; then it stands upon the sideboard uncovered and the

flies fall into it. He buys owls, too, and castles, and other horrible objects, made in bog-oak (that material which is not appreciated at Gad's Hill); and he is perpetually snipping pieces out of newspapers and sending them all over the world. While I am reading he conducts the correspondence, and his great delight is to show me seventeen or eighteen letters when I come, exhausted, into the retiring-place. Berry has not got into any particular trouble for forty-eight hours, except that he is all over boils. I have prescribed the yeast, but ineffectually. It is indeed a sight to see him and John sitting in pay-boxes, and surveying Ireland out of pigeon-holes.

Same Evening before Bed-time.

Everybody was at "Little Dombey" to-day, and although I had some little difficulty to work them up in consequence of the excessive crowding of the place, and the difficulty of shaking the people into their seats, the effect was unmistakable and profound. The crying was universal, and they were extraordinarily affected. There is no doubt we could stay here a week with that one reading, and fill the place every night. Hundreds of people have been there to-night, under the impression that it would come off again. It was a most decided and complete success.

Arthur has been imploring me to stop here on the Friday after Limerick, and read "Little Dombey" again. But I have positively said "No." The work is too hard. It is not like doing it in one easy room, and always the same room. With a different place every night, and a different audience with its own peculiarity every

night, it is a tremendous strain. I was sick of it to-day before I began, then got myself into wonderful train.

Here follows a dialogue (but it requires imitation), which I had yesterday morning with a little boy of the house – landlord's son, I suppose – about Plorn's age. I am sitting on the sofa writing, and find him sitting beside me.

Inimitable. Holloa, old chap.

Young Ireland. Hal-loo!

Inimitable (*in his delightful way*). What a nice old fellow you are. I am very fond of little boys.

Young Ireland. Air yer? Ye'r right.

Inimitable. What do you learn, old fellow?

Young Ireland (*very intent on Inimitable, and always childish, except in his brogue*). I lairn wureds of three sillibils, and wureds of two sillibils, and wureds of one sillibil.

Inimitable (*gaily*). Get out, you humbug! You learn only words of one syllable.

Young Ireland (*laughs heartily*). You may say that it is mostly wureds of one sillibil.

Inimitable. Can you write?

Young Ireland. Not yet. Things comes by deegrays.

Inimitable. Can you cipher?

Young Ireland (*very quickly*). Wha'at's that?

Inimitable. Can you make figures?

Young Ireland. I can make a nought, which is not asy, being roond.

Inimitable. I say, old boy, wasn't it you I saw on Sunday

morning in the hall, in a soldier's cap? You know – in a soldier's cap?

Young Ireland (*cogitating deeply*). Was it a very good cap?

Inimitable. Yes.

Young Ireland. Did it fit unkommon?

Inimitable. Yes.

Young Ireland. Dat was me!

There are two stupid old louts at the room, to show people into their places, whom John calls "them two old Paddies," and of whom he says, that he "never see nothing like them (snigger) hold idiots" (snigger). They bow and walk backwards before the grandees, and our men hustle them while they are doing it.

We walked out last night, with the intention of going to the theatre; but the Piccolomini establishment (they were doing the "Lucia") looked so horribly like a very bad jail, and the Queen's looked so blackguardly, that we came back again, and went to bed. I seem to be always either in a railway carriage, or reading, or going to bed. I get so knocked up, whenever I have a minute to remember it, that then I go to bed as a matter of course.

I send my love to the noble Plorn, and to all the boys. To dear Mamie and Katie, and to yourself of course, in the first degree. I am looking forward to the last Irish reading on Thursday, with great impatience. But when we shall have turned this week, once knocked off Belfast, I shall see land, and shall (like poor Timber in the days of old) "keep up a good heart." I get so wonderfully hot every night in my dress clothes, that they positively won't dry

in the short interval they get, and I have been obliged to write to Doudney's to make me another suit, that I may have a constant change.

Ever, my dearest Georgy, most affectionately.

Miss Dickens

Belfast, Saturday, Aug. 28th, 1858.

When I went down to the Rotunda at Dublin on Thursday night, I said to Arthur, who came rushing at me: "You needn't tell me. I know all about it." The moment I had come out of the door of the hotel (a mile off), I had come against the stream of people turned away. I had struggled against it to the room. There, the crowd in all the lobbies and passages was so great, that I had a difficulty in getting in. They had broken all the glass in the pay-boxes. They had offered frantic prices for stalls. Eleven bank-notes were thrust into that pay-box (Arthur saw them) at one time, for eleven stalls. Our men were flattened against walls, and squeezed against beams. Ladies stood all night with their chins against my platform. Other ladies sat all night upon my steps. You never saw such a sight. And the reading went tremendously! It is much to be regretted that we troubled ourselves to go anywhere else in Ireland. We turned away people enough to make immense houses for a week.

We arrived here yesterday at two. The room will not hold more

than from eighty to ninety pounds. The same scene was repeated with the additional feature, that the people are much rougher here than in Dublin, and that there was a very great uproar at the opening of the doors, which, the police in attendance being quite inefficient and only looking on, it was impossible to check. Arthur was in the deepest misery because shillings got into stalls, and half-crowns got into shillings, and stalls got nowhere, and there was immense confusion. It ceased, however, the moment I showed myself; and all went most brilliantly, in spite of a great piece of the cornice of the ceiling falling with a great crash within four or five inches of the head of a young lady on my platform (I was obliged to have people there), and in spite of my gas suddenly going out at the time of the game of forfeits at Scrooge's nephew's, through some Belfastian gentleman accidentally treading on the flexible pipe, and needing to be relighted.

We shall not get to Cork before mid-day on Monday; it being difficult to get from here on a Sunday. We hope to be able to start away to-morrow morning to see the Giant's Causeway (some sixteen miles off), and in that case we shall sleep at Dublin to-morrow night, leaving here by the train at half-past three in the afternoon. Dublin, you must understand, is on the way to Cork. This is a fine place, surrounded by lofty hills. The streets are very wide, and the place is very prosperous. The whole ride from Dublin here is through a very picturesque and various country; and the amazing thing is, that it is all particularly neat and

orderly, and that the houses (outside at all events) are all brightly whitewashed and remarkably clean. I want to climb one of the neighbouring hills before this morning's "Dombey." I am now waiting for Arthur, who has gone to the bank to remit his last accumulation of treasure to London.

Our men are rather indignant with the Irish crowds, because in the struggle they don't sell books, and because, in the pressure, they can't force a way into the room afterwards to sell them. They are deeply interested in the success, however, and are as zealous and ardent as possible. I shall write to Katie next. Give her my best love, and kiss the darling Plorn for me, and give my love to all the boys.

Ever, my dearest Mamie,
Your most affectionate Father.

Miss Hogarth

Morrison's Hotel, Dublin, Sunday Night, Aug. 29th, 1858.

I am so delighted to find your letter here to-night (eleven o'clock), and so afraid that, in the wear and tear of this strange life, I have written to Gad's Hill in the wrong order, and have not written to you, as I should, that I resolve to write this before going to bed. You will find it a wretchedly stupid letter; but you may imagine, my dearest girl, that I am tired.

The success at Belfast has been equal to the success here.

Enormous! We turned away half the town. I think them a better audience, on the whole, than Dublin; and the personal affection there was something overwhelming. I wish you and the dear girls could have seen the people look at me in the street; or heard them ask me, as I hurried to the hotel after reading last night, to "do me the honour to shake hands, Misther Dickens, and God bless you, sir; not ounly for the light you've been to me this night, but for the light you've been in mee house, sir (and God love your face), this many a year." Every night, by-the-bye, since I have been in Ireland, the ladies have beguiled John out of the bouquet from my coat. And yesterday morning, as I had showered the leaves from my geranium in reading "Little Dombey," they mounted the platform, after I was gone, and picked them all up as keepsakes!

I have never seen *men* go in to cry so undisguisedly as they did at that reading yesterday afternoon. They made no attempt whatever to hide it, and certainly cried more than the women. As to the "Boots" at night, and "Mrs. Gamp" too, it was just one roar with me and them; for they made me laugh so that sometimes I *could not* compose my face to go on.

You must not let the new idea of poor dear Landor efface the former image of the fine old man. I wouldn't blot him out, in his tender gallantry, as he sat upon that bed at Forster's that night, for a million of wild mistakes at eighty years of age.

I hope to be at Tavistock House before five o'clock next Saturday morning, and to lie in bed half the day, and come home by the 10.50 on Sunday.

Tell the girls that Arthur and I have each ordered at Belfast a trim, sparkling, slap-up *Irish jaunting-car!!!* I flatter myself we shall astonish the Kentish people. It is the oddest carriage in the world, and you are always falling off. But it is gay and bright in the highest degree. Wonderfully Neapolitan.

What with a sixteen mile ride before we left Belfast, and a sea-beach walk, and a two o'clock dinner, and a seven hours' railway ride since, I am – as we say here – "a thrifle weary." But I really am in wonderful force, considering the work. For which I am, as I ought to be, very thankful.

Arthur was exceedingly unwell last night – could not cheer up at all. He was so very unwell that he left the hall(!) and became invisible after my five minutes' rest. I found him at the hotel in a jacket and slippers, and with a hot bath just ready. He was in the last stage of prostration. The local agent was with me, and proposed that he (the wretched Arthur) should go to his office and balance the accounts then and there. He went, in the jacket and slippers, and came back in twenty minutes, *perfectly well*, in consequence of the admirable balance. He is now sitting opposite to me on the bag of silver, forty pounds (it must be dreadfully hard), writing to Boulogne.

I suppose it is clear that the next letter I write is Katie's. Either from Cork or from Limerick, it shall report further. At Limerick I read in the theatre, there being no other place.

Best love to Mamie and Katie, and dear Plorn, and all the boys left when this comes to Gad's Hill; also to my dear good Anne,

and her little woman.

Ever affectionately.

Mr. W. Wilkie Collins

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Monday, Sept. 6th, 1858.

My dear Wilkie,

First, let me report myself here for something less than eight-and-forty hours. I come last (and direct – a pretty hard journey) from Limerick. The success in Ireland has been immense.

The work is very hard, sometimes overpowering; but I am none the worse for it, and arrived here quite fresh.

Secondly, will you let me recommend the enclosed letter from Wigan, as the groundwork of a capital article, in your way, for H. W.? There is not the least objection to a plain reference to him, or to Phelps, to whom the same thing happened a year or two ago, near Islington, in the case of a clever and capital little daughter of his. I think it a capital opportunity for a discourse on gentility, with a glance at those other schools which advertise that the "sons of gentlemen only" are admitted, and a just recognition of the greater liberality of our public schools. There are tradesmen's sons at Eton, and Charles Kean was at Eton, and Macready (also an actor's son) was at Rugby. Some such title as "Scholastic Flunkeydom," or anything infinitely contemptuous, would help

out the meaning. Surely such a schoolmaster must swallow all the silver forks that the pupils are expected to take when they come, and are not expected to take away with them when they go. And of course he could not exist, unless he had flunkey customers by the dozen.

Secondly – no, this is thirdly now – about the Christmas number. I have arranged so to stop my readings, as to be available for it on *the 15th of November*, which will leave me time to write a good article, if I clear my way to one. Do you see your way to our making a Christmas number of this idea that I am going very briefly to hint? Some disappointed person, man or woman, prematurely disgusted with the world, for some reason or no reason (the person should be young, I think) retires to an old lonely house, or an old lonely mill, or anything you like, with one attendant, resolved to shut out the world, and hold no communion with it. The one attendant sees the absurdity of the idea, pretends to humour it, but really thus to slaughter it. Everything that happens, everybody that comes near, every breath of human interest that floats into the old place from the village, or the heath, or the four cross-roads near which it stands, and from which belated travellers stray into it, shows beyond mistake that you can't shut out the world; that you are in it, to be of it; that you get into a false position the moment you try to sever yourself from it; and that you must mingle with it, and make the best of it, and make the best of yourself into the bargain.

If we could plot out a way of doing this together, I would not

be afraid to take my part. If we could not, could we plot out a way of doing it, and taking in stories by other hands? If we could not do either (but I think we could), shall we fall back upon a round of stories again? That I would rather not do, if possible. Will you think about it?

And can you come and dine at Tavistock House *on Monday, the 20th September, at half-past five?* I purpose being at home there with the girls that day.

Answer this, according to my printed list for the week. I am off to Huddersfield on Wednesday morning.

I think I will now leave off; merely adding that I have got a splendid brogue (it really is exactly like the people), and that I think of coming out as the only legitimate successor of poor Power.

Ever, my dear Wilkie, affectionately yours.

Miss Mary Boyle

Station Hotel, York, Friday, Sept. 10th, 1858.

Dearest Meery,

First let me tell you that all the magicians and spirits in your employ have fulfilled the instructions of their wondrous mistress to admiration. Flowers have fallen in my path wherever I have trod; and when they rained upon me at Cork I was more amazed than you ever saw me.

Secondly, receive my hearty and loving thanks for that same. (Excuse a little Irish in the turn of that sentence, but I can't help it).

Thirdly, I have written direct to Mr. Boddington, explaining that I am bound to be in Edinburgh on the day when he courteously proposes to do me honour.

I really cannot tell you how truly and tenderly I feel your letter, and how gratified I am by its contents. Your truth and attachment are always so precious to me that I can*not* get my heart out on my sleeve to show it you. It is like a child, and, at the sound of some familiar voices, "goes and hides."

You know what an affection I have for Mrs. Watson, and how happy it made me to see her again – younger, much, than when I first knew her in Switzerland.

God bless you always!

Ever affectionately yours.

Miss Hogarth

Royal Hotel, Scarborough, Sunday, Sept. 11th, 1858.

My dearest Georgy,

We had a very fine house indeed at York. All kinds of applications have been made for another reading there, and no doubt it would be exceedingly productive; but it cannot be done. At Harrogate yesterday; the queerest place, with the strangest

people in it, leading the oddest lives of dancing, newspaper reading, and tables d'hôte. The piety of York obliging us to leave that place for this at six this morning, and there being no night train from Harrogate, we had to engage a special engine. We got to bed at one, and were up again before five; which, after yesterday's fatigues, leaves me a little worn out at this present.

I have no accounts of this place as yet, nor have I received any letter here. But the post of this morning is not yet delivered, I believe. We have a charming room, overlooking the sea. Leech is here (living within a few doors), with the partner of his bosom, and his young family. I write at ten in the morning, having been here two hours; and you will readily suppose that I have not seen him.

Of news, I have not the faintest breath. I seem to have been doing nothing all my life but riding in railway-carriages and reading. The railway of the morning brought us through Castle Howard, and under the woods of Easthorpe, and then just below Malton Abbey, where I went to poor Smithson's funeral. It was a most lovely morning, and, tired as I was, I couldn't sleep for looking out of window.

Yesterday, at Harrogate, two circumstances occurred which gave Arthur great delight. Firstly, he chafed his legs sore with his black bag of silver. Secondly, the landlord asked him as a favour, "If he could oblige him with a little silver." He obliged him directly with some forty pounds' worth; and I suspect the landlord to have repented of having approached the subject. After the

reading last night we walked over the moor to the railway, three miles, leaving our men to follow with the luggage in a light cart. They passed us just short of the railway, and John was making the night hideous and terrifying the sleeping country, by *playing the horn* in prodigiously horrible and unmusical blasts.

My dearest love, of course, to the dear girls, and to the noble Plorn. Apropos of children, there was one gentleman at the "Little Dombey" yesterday morning, who exhibited, or rather concealed, the profoundest grief. After crying a good deal without hiding it, he covered his face with both his hands, and laid it down on the back of the seat before him, and really shook with emotion. He was not in mourning, but I supposed him to have lost some child in old time. There was a remarkably good fellow of thirty or so, too, who found something so very ludicrous in "Toots," that he *could not* compose himself at all, but laughed until he sat wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. And whenever he felt "Toots" coming again he began to laugh and wipe his eyes afresh, and when he came he gave a kind of cry, as if it were too much for him. It was uncommonly droll, and made me laugh heartily.

Ever, dear Georgy, your most affectionate.

Miss Dickens

Scarborough Arms, Leeds, Wednesday, Sept. 15th, 1858.

My dearest Mamie,

I have added a pound to the cheque. I would recommend your seeing the poor railway man again and giving him ten shillings, and telling him to let you see him again in about a week. If he be then still unable to lift weights and handle heavy things, I would then give him another ten shillings, and so on.

Since I wrote to Georgy from Scarborough, we have had, thank God, nothing but success. The Hull people (not generally considered excitable, even on their own showing) were so enthusiastic, that we were obliged to promise to go back there for two readings. I have positively resolved not to lengthen out the time of my tour, so we are now arranging to drop some small places, and substitute Hull again and York again. But you will perhaps have heard this in the main from Arthur. I know he wrote to you after the reading last night. This place I have always doubted, knowing that we should come here when it was recovering from the double excitement of the festival and the Queen. But there is a very large hall let indeed, and the prospect of to-night consequently looks bright.

Arthur told you, I suppose, that he had his shirt-front and waistcoat torn off last night? He was perfectly enraptured in consequence. Our men got so knocked about that he gave them five shillings apiece on the spot. John passed several minutes upside down against a wall, with his head amongst the people's boots. He came out of the difficulty in an exceedingly touzled condition, and with his face much flushed. For all this, and their

being packed as you may conceive they would be packed, they settled down the instant I went in, and never wavered in the closest attention for an instant. It was a very high room, and required a great effort.

Oddly enough, I slept in this house three days last year with Wilkie. Arthur has the bedroom I occupied then, and I have one two doors from it, and Gordon has the one between. Not only is he still with us, but he *has* talked of going on to Manchester, going on to London, and coming back with us to Darlington next Tuesday!!!

These streets look like a great circus with the season just finished. All sorts of garish triumphal arches were put up for the Queen, and they have got smoky, and have been looked out of countenance by the sun, and are blistered and patchy, and half up and half down, and are hideous to behold. Spiritless men (evidently drunk for some time in the royal honour) are slowly removing them, and on the whole it is more like the clearing away of "The Frozen Deep" at Tavistock House than anything within your knowledge – with the exception that we are not in the least sorry, as we were then. Vague ideas are in Arthur's head that when we come back to Hull, we are to come here, and are to have the Town Hall (a beautiful building), and read to the million. I can't say yet. That depends. I remember that when I was here before (I came from Rockingham to make a speech), I thought them a dull and slow audience. I hope I may have been mistaken. I never saw better audiences than the Yorkshire

audiences generally.

I am so perpetually at work or asleep, that I have not a scrap of news. I saw the Leech family at Scarboro', both in my own house (that is to say, hotel) and in theirs. They were not at either reading. Scarboro' is gay and pretty, and I think Gordon had an idea that we were always at some such place.

Kiss the darling Plorn for me, and give him my love; dear Katie too, giving her the same. I feel sorry that I cannot get down to Gad's Hill this next time, but I shall look forward to our being there with Georgy, after Scotland. Tell the servants that I remember them, and hope they will live with us many years.

Ever, my dearest Mamie,
Your most affectionate Father.

Miss Hogarth

King's Head, Sheffield, Friday, Sept. 17th, 1858.

I write you a few lines to Tavistock House, thinking you may not be sorry to find a note from me there on your arrival from Gad's Hill.

Halifax was too small for us. I never saw such an audience though. They were really worth reading to for nothing, though I didn't do exactly that. It is as horrible a place as I ever saw, I think.

The run upon the tickets here is so immense that Arthur is

obliged to get great bills out, signifying that no more can be sold. It will be by no means easy to get into the place the numbers who have already paid. It is the hall we acted in. Crammed to the roof and the passages. We must come back here towards the end of October, and are again altering the list and striking out small places.

The trains are so strange and unintelligible in this part of the country that we were obliged to leave Halifax at eight this morning, and breakfast on the road – at Huddersfield again, where we had an hour's wait. Wills was in attendance on the platform, and took me (here at Sheffield, I mean) out to Frederick Lehmann's house to see Mrs. Wills. She looked pretty much the same as ever, I thought, and was taking care of a very pretty little boy. The house and grounds are as nice as anything *can* be in this smoke. A heavy thunderstorm is passing over the town, and it is raining hard too.

This is a stupid letter, my dearest Georgy, but I write in a hurry, and in the thunder and lightning, and with the crowd of to-night before me.

Ever most affectionately.

Miss Hogarth

Station Hotel, Newcastle-on-Tyne,
Sunday, Sept. 26th, 1858.

EXTRACT

The girls (as I have no doubt they have already told you for themselves) arrived here in good time yesterday, and in very fresh condition. They persisted in going to the room last night, though I had arranged for their remaining quiet.

We have done a vast deal here. I suppose you know that we are going to Berwick, and that we mean to sleep there and go on to Edinburgh on Monday morning, arriving there before noon? If it be as fine to-morrow as it is to-day, the girls will see the coast piece of railway between Berwick and Edinburgh to great advantage. I was anxious that they should, because that kind of pleasure is really almost the only one they are likely to have in their present trip.

Stanfield and Roberts are in Edinburgh, and the Scottish Royal Academy gave them a dinner on Wednesday, to which I was very pressingly invited. But, of course, my going was impossible. I read twice that day.

Remembering what you do of Sunderland, you will be surprised that our profit there was very considerable. I read in a beautiful new theatre, and (I thought to myself) quite wonderfully. Such an audience I never beheld for rapidity and enthusiasm. The room in which we acted (converted into a theatre afterwards) was burnt to the ground a year or two ago. We found the hotel, so bad in our time, really good. I walked

from Durham to Sunderland, and from Sunderland to Newcastle.

Don't you think, as we shall be at home at eleven in the forenoon this day fortnight, that it will be best for you and Plornish to come to Tavistock House for that Sunday, and for us all to go down to Gad's Hill next day? My best love to the noble Plornish. If he is quite reconciled to the postponement of his trousers, I should like to behold his first appearance in them. But, if not, as he is such a good fellow, I think it would be a pity to disappoint and try him.

And now, my dearest Georgy, I think I have said all I have to say before I go out for a little air. I had a very hard day yesterday, and am tired.

Ever your most affectionate.

Mr. John Forster

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London,
Sunday, Oct. 10th, 1858.

My dear Forster,

As to the truth of the readings, I cannot tell you what the demonstrations of personal regard and respect are. How the densest and most uncomfortably-packed crowd will be hushed in an instant when I show my face. How the youth of colleges, and the old men of business in the town, seem equally unable to get near enough to me when they cheer me away at night. How

common people and gentlefolks will stop me in the streets and say: "Mr. Dickens, will you let me touch the hand that has filled my home with so many friends?" And if you saw the mothers, and fathers, and sisters, and brothers in mourning, who invariably come to "Little Dombey," and if you studied the wonderful expression of comfort and reliance with which they hang about me, as if I had been with them, all kindness and delicacy, at their own little death-bed, you would think it one of the strangest things in the world.

As to the mere effect, of course I don't go on doing the thing so often without carefully observing myself and the people too in every little thing, and without (in consequence) greatly improving in it.

At Aberdeen, we were crammed to the street twice in one day. At Perth (where I thought when I arrived there literally could be nobody to come), the nobility came posting in from thirty miles round, and the whole town came and filled an immense hall. As to the effect, if you had seen them after Lilian died, in "The Chimes," or when Scrooge woke and talked to the boy outside the window, I doubt if you would ever have forgotten it. And at the end of "Dombey" yesterday afternoon, in the cold light of day, they all got up, after a short pause, gentle and simple, and thundered and waved their hats with that astonishing heartiness and fondness for me, that for the first time in all my public career they took me completely off my legs, and I saw the whole eighteen hundred of them reel on one side as if a shock from

without had shaken the hall.

The dear girls have enjoyed themselves immensely, and their trip has been a great success. I hope I told you (but I forget whether I did or no) how splendidly Newcastle[4] came out. I am reminded of Newcastle at the moment because they joined me there.

I am anxious to get to the end of my readings, and to be at home again, and able to sit down and think in my own study. But the fatigue, though sometimes very great indeed, hardly tells upon me at all. And although all our people, from Smith downwards, have given in, more or less, at times, I have never been in the least unequal to the work, though sometimes sufficiently disinclined for it. My kindest and best love to Mrs. Forster.

Ever affectionately.

Miss Dickens

Royal Hotel, Derby, Friday, Oct. 22nd, 1858.

My dearest Mamie,

I am writing in a very poor condition; I have a bad cold all over me, pains in my back and limbs, and a very sensitive and uncomfortable throat. There was a great draught up some stone

[4] The birthplace of Mr. Forster.

steps near me last night, and I daresay that caused it.

The weather on my first two nights at Birmingham was so intolerably bad – it blew hard, and never left off raining for one single moment – that the houses were not what they otherwise would have been. On the last night the weather cleared, and we had a grand house.

Last night at Nottingham was almost, if not quite, the most amazing we have had. It is not a very large place, and the room is by no means a very large one, but three hundred and twenty stalls were let, and all the other tickets were sold.

Here we have two hundred and twenty stalls let for to-night, and the other tickets are gone in proportion. It is a pretty room, but not large.

I have just been saying to Arthur that if there is not a large let for York, I would rather give it up, and get Monday at Gad's Hill. We have telegraphed to know. If the answer comes (as I suppose it will) before post time, I will tell you in a postscript what we decide to do. Coming to London in the night of to-morrow (Saturday), and having to see Mr. Ouvry on Sunday, and having to start for York early on Monday, I fear I should not be able to get to Gad's Hill at all. You won't expect me till you see me.

Arthur and I have considered Plornish's joke in all the immense number of aspects in which it presents itself to reflective minds. We have come to the conclusion that it is the best joke ever made. Give the dear boy my love, and the same

to Georgy, and the same to Katey, and take the same yourself. Arthur (excessively low and inarticulate) mutters that he "unites."

[We knocked up Boylett, Berry, and John so frightfully yesterday, by tearing the room to pieces and altogether reversing it, as late as four o'clock, that we gave them a supper last night. They shine all over to-day, as if it had been entirely composed of grease.]

Ever, my dearest Mamie,
Your most affectionate Father.

Miss Hogarth

Wolverhampton, Wednesday, Nov. 3rd, 1858.

Little Leamington came out in the most amazing manner yesterday – turned away hundreds upon hundreds of people. They are represented as the dullest and worst of audiences. I found them very good indeed, even in the morning.

There awaited me at the hotel, a letter from the Rev. Mr. Young, Wentworth Watson's tutor, saying that Mrs. Watson wished her boy to shake hands with me, and that he would bring him in the evening. I expected him at the hotel before the readings. But he did not come. He spoke to John about it in the room at night. The crowd and confusion, however, were very great, and I saw nothing of him. In his letter he said that Mrs. Watson was at Paris on her way home, and would be at Brighton

at the end of this week. I suppose I shall see her there at the end of next week.

We find a let of two hundred stalls here, which is very large for this place. The evening being fine too, and blue being to be seen in the sky beyond the smoke, we expect to have a very full hall. Tell Mamey and Katey that if they had been with us on the railway to-day between Leamington and this place, they would have seen (though it is only an hour and ten minutes by the express) fires and smoke indeed. We came through a part of the Black Country that you know, and it looked at its blackest. All the furnaces seemed in full blast, and all the coal-pits to be working.

It is market-day here, and the ironmasters are standing out in the street (where they always hold high change), making such an iron hum and buzz, that they confuse me horribly. In addition, there is a bellman announcing something – not the readings, I beg to say – and there is an excavation being made in the centre of the open place, for a statue, or a pump, or a lamp-post, or something or other, round which all the Wolverhampton boys are yelling and struggling.

And here is Arthur, begging to have dinner at half-past three instead of four, because he foresees "a wiry evening" in store for him. Under which complication of distractions, to which a waitress with a tray at this moment adds herself, I sink, and leave off.

My best love to the dear girls, and to the noble Plorn, and to

you. Marguerite and Ellen Stone not forgotten. All yesterday and to-day I have been doing everything to the tune of:

And the day is dark and dreary

Ever, dearest Georgy,
Your most affectionate and faithful.

P.S. – I hope the brazier is intolerably hot, and half stifles all the family. Then, and not otherwise, I shall think it in satisfactory work.

Rev. James White

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W. C.,
Friday, Nov. 5th, 1858.

My dear White,

May I entreat you to thank Mr. Carter very earnestly and kindly in my name, for his proffered hospitality; and, further, to explain to him that since my readings began, I have known them to be incompatible with all social enjoyments, and have neither set foot in a friend's house nor sat down to a friend's table in any one of all the many places I have been to, but have rigidly kept myself to my hotels. To this resolution I must hold until the last. There is not the least virtue in it. It is a matter of stern necessity, and I submit with the worst grace possible.

Will you let me know, either at Southampton or Portsmouth, whether any of you, and how many of you, if any, are coming over, so that Arthur Smith may reserve good seats? Tell Lotty I hope she does not contemplate coming to the morning reading; I always hate it so myself.

Mary and Katey are down at Gad's Hill with Georgy and Plornish, and they have Marguerite Power and Ellen Stone staying there. I am sorry to say that even my benevolence descries no prospect of their being able to come to my native place.

On Saturday week, the 13th, my tour, please God, ends.

My best love to Mrs. White, and to Lotty, and to Clara.

Ever, my dear White, affectionately yours.

Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Monday, Dec. 13th, 1858.

My dear Stone,

Many thanks for these discourses. They are very good, I think, as expressing what many men have felt and thought; otherwise not specially remarkable. They have one fatal mistake, which is a canker at the foot of their ever being widely useful. Half the misery and hypocrisy of the Christian world arises (as I take it) from a stubborn determination to refuse the New Testament as a sufficient guide in itself, and to force the Old Testament into

alliance with it – whereof comes all manner of camel-swallowing and of gnat-straining. But so to resent this miserable error, or to (by any implication) depreciate the divine goodness and beauty of the New Testament, is to commit even a worse error. And to class Jesus Christ with Mahomet is simply audacity and folly. I might as well hoist myself on to a high platform, to inform my disciples that the lives of King George the Fourth and of King Alfred the Great belonged to one and the same category.

Ever affectionately.

Mr. B. W. Procter

Tavistock House, Sunday, Dec. 18th, 1858.

My dear Procter,

A thousand thanks for the little song. I am charmed with it, and shall be delighted to brighten "Household Words" with such a wise and genial light. I no more believe that your poetical faculty has gone by, than I believe that you have yourself passed to the better land. You and it will travel thither in company, rely upon it. So I still hope to hear more of the trade-songs, and to learn that the blacksmith has hammered out no end of iron into good fashion of verse, like a cunning workman, as I know him of old to be.

Very faithfully yours, my dear Procter.

1859

NARRATIVE

During the winter, Charles Dickens was living at Tavistock House, removing to Gad's Hill for the summer early in June, and returning to London in November. At this time a change was made in his weekly journal. "Household Words" became absolutely his own – Mr. Wills being his partner and editor, as before – and was "incorporated with 'All the Year Round,'" under which title it was known thenceforth. The office was still in Wellington Street, but in a different house. The first number with the new name appeared on the 30th April, and it contained the opening of "A Tale of Two Cities."

The first letter which follows shows that a proposal for a series of readings in America had already been made to him. It was carefully considered and abandoned for the time. But the proposal was constantly renewed, and the idea never wholly relinquished for many years before he actually decided on making so distant a "reading tour."

Mr. Procter contributed to the early numbers of "All the Year Round" some very spirited "Songs of the Trades." We give notes from Charles Dickens to the veteran poet, both in the last year, and in this year, expressing his strong approval of them.

The letter and two notes to Mr. (afterwards Sir Antonio) Panizzi, for which we are indebted to Mr. Louis Fagan, one of Sir A. Panizzi's executors, show the warm sympathy and interest which he always felt for the cause of Italian liberty, and for the sufferings of the State prisoners who at this time took refuge in England.

We give a little note to the dear friend and companion of Charles Dickens's daughters, "Lotty" White, because it is a pretty specimen of his writing, and because the young girl, who is playfully "commanded" to get well and strong, died early in July of this year. She was, at the time this note was written, first attacked with the illness which was fatal to all her sisters. Mamie and Kate Dickens went from Gad's Hill to Bonchurch to pay a last visit to their friend, and he writes to his eldest daughter there. Also we give notes of loving sympathy and condolence to the bereaved father and mother.

In the course of this summer Charles Dickens was not well, and went for a week to his old favourite, Broadstairs – where Mr. Wilkie Collins and his brother, Mr. Charles Allston Collins, were staying – for sea-air and change, preparatory to another reading tour, in England only. His letter from Peterborough to Mr. Frank Stone, giving him an account of a reading at Manchester (Mr. Stone's native town), was one of the last ever addressed to that affectionate friend, who died very suddenly, to the great grief of Charles Dickens, in November. The letter to Mr. Thomas Longman, which closes this year, was one of introduction to that

gentleman of young Marcus Stone, then just beginning his career as an artist, and to whom the premature death of his father made it doubly desirable that he should have powerful helping hands.

Charles Dickens refers, in a letter to Mrs. Watson, to his portrait by Mr. Frith, which was finished at the end of 1858. It was painted for Mr. Forster, and is now in the "Forster Collection" at South Kensington Museum.

The Christmas number of this year, again written by several hands as well as his own, was "The Haunted House." In November, his story of "A Tale of Two Cities" was finished in "All the Year Round," and in December was published, complete, with dedication to Lord John Russell.

Mr. Arthur Smith

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Wednesday, Jan. 26th, 1859.

My dear Arthur,

Will you first read the enclosed letters, having previously welcomed, with all possible cordiality, the bearer, Mr. Thomas C. Evans, from New York?

You having read them, let me explain that Mr. Fields is a highly respectable and influential man, one of the heads of the most classical and most respected publishing house in America; that Mr. Richard Grant White is a man of high reputation; and

that Felton is the Greek Professor in their Cambridge University, perhaps the most distinguished scholar in the States.

The address to myself, referred to in one of the letters, being on its way, it is quite clear that I must give some decided and definite answer to the American proposal. Now, will you carefully discuss it with Mr. Evans before I enter on it at all? Then, will you dine here with him on Sunday – which I will propose to him – and arrange to meet at half-past four for an hour's discussion?

The points are these:

First. I have a very grave question within myself whether I could go to America at all.

Secondly. If I did go, I could not possibly go before the autumn.

Thirdly. If I did go, how long must I stay?

Fourthly. If the stay were a short one, could *you* go?

Fifthly. What is his project? What could I make? What occurs to you upon his proposal?

I have told him that the business arrangements of the readings have been from the first so entirely in your hands, that I enter upon nothing connected with them without previous reference to you.

Ever faithfully.

M. de Cerjat

Tavistock House, Tuesday, Feb. 1st, 1859.

My dear Cerjat,

I received your always welcome annual with even more interest than usual this year, being (in common with my two girls and their aunt) much excited and pleased by your account of your daughter's engagement. Apart from the high sense I have of the affectionate confidence with which you tell me what lies so tenderly on your own heart, I have followed the little history with a lively sympathy and regard for her. I hope, with you, that it is full of promise, and that you will all be happy in it. The separation, even in the present condition of travel (and no man can say how much the discovery of a day may advance it), is nothing. And so God bless her and all of you, and may the rosy summer bring her all the fulness of joy that we all wish her.

To pass from the altar to Townshend (which is a long way), let me report him severely treated by Bully, who rules him with a paw of iron; and complaining, moreover, of indigestion. He drives here every Sunday, but at all other times is mostly shut up in his beautiful house, where I occasionally go and dine with him *tête-à-tête*, and where we always talk of you and drink to you. That is a rule with us from which we never depart. He is "seeing a volume of poems through the press;" rather an

expensive amusement. He has not been out at night (except to this house) save last Friday, when he went to hear me read "The Poor Traveller," "Mrs. Gamp," and "The Trial" from "Pickwick." He came into my room at St. Martin's Hall, and I fortified him with weak brandy-and-water. You will be glad to hear that the said readings are a greater *furore* than they ever have been, and that every night on which they now take place – once a week – hundreds go away, unable to get in, though the hall holds thirteen hundred people. I dine with – to-day, by-the-bye, along with his agent; concerning whom I observe him to be always divided between an unbounded confidence and a little latent suspicion. He always tells me that he is a gem of the first water; oh yes, the best of business men! and then says that he did not quite like his conduct respecting that farm-tenant and those hay-ricks.

There is a general impression here, among the best-informed, that war in Italy, to begin with, is inevitable, and will break out before April. I know a gentleman at Genoa (Swiss by birth), deeply in with the authorities at Turin, who is already sending children home.

In England we are quiet enough. There is a world of talk, as you know, about Reform bills; but I don't believe there is any general strong feeling on the subject. According to my perceptions, it is undeniable that the public has fallen into a state of indifference about public affairs, mainly referable, as I think, to the people who administer them – and there I mean the people of all parties – which is a very bad sign of the times. The general

mind seems weary of debates and honourable members, and to have taken *laissez-aller* for its motto.

My affairs domestic (which I know are not without their interest for you) flow peacefully. My eldest daughter is a capital housekeeper, heads the table gracefully, delegates certain appropriate duties to her sister and her aunt, and they are all three devotedly attached. Charley, my eldest boy, remains in Barings' house. Your present correspondent is more popular than he ever has been. I rather think that the readings in the country have opened up a new public who were outside before; but however that may be, his books have a wider range than they ever had, and his public welcomes are prodigious. Said correspondent is at present overwhelmed with proposals to go and read in America. Will never go, unless a small fortune be first paid down in money on this side of the Atlantic. Stated the figure of such payment, between ourselves, only yesterday. Expects to hear no more of it, and assuredly will never go for less. You don't say, my dear Cerjat, when you are coming to England! Somehow I feel that this marriage ought to bring you over, though I don't know why. You shall have a bed here and a bed at Gad's Hill, and we will go and see strange sights together. When I was in Ireland, I ordered the brightest jaunting-car that ever was seen. It has just this minute arrived per steamer from Belfast. Say you are coming, and you shall be the first man turned over by it; somebody must be (for my daughter Mary drives anything that can be harnessed, and I know of no English horse that would understand a jaunting-

car coming down a Kentish hill), and you shall be that somebody if you will. They turned the basket-phaeton over, last summer, in a bye-road – Mary and the other two – and had to get it up again; which they did, and came home as if nothing had happened. They send their loves to Mrs. Cerjat, and to you, and to all, and particularly to the dear *fiancée*. So do I, with all my heart, and am ever your attached and affectionate friend.

Mr. Antonio Panizzi

Tavistock House, Monday Night, March 14th, 1859.

My dear Panizzi,

If you should feel no delicacy in mentioning, or should see no objection to mentioning, to Signor Poerio, or any of the wronged Neapolitan gentlemen to whom it is your happiness and honour to be a friend on their arrival in this country, an idea that has occurred to me, I should regard it as a great kindness in you if you would be my exponent. I think you will have no difficulty in believing that I would not, on any consideration, obtrude my name or projects upon any one of those noble souls, if there were any reason of the slightest kind against it. And if you see any such reason, I pray you instantly to banish my letter from your thoughts.

It seems to me probable that some narrative of their ten years' suffering will, somehow or other, sooner or later, be by some

of them laid before the English people. The just interest and indignation alive here, will (I suppose) elicit it. False narratives and garbled stories will, in any case, of a certainty get about. If the true history of the matter is to be told, I have that sympathy with them and respect for them which would, all other considerations apart, render it unspeakably gratifying to me to be the means of its diffusion. What I desire to lay before them is simply this. If for my new successor to "Household Words" a narrative of their ten years' trial could be written, I would take any conceivable pains to have it rendered into English, and presented in the sincerest and best way to a very large and comprehensive audience. It should be published exactly as you might think best for them, and remunerated in any way that you might think generous and right. They want no mouthpiece and no introducer, but perhaps they might have no objection to be associated with an English writer, who is possibly not unknown to them by some general reputation, and who certainly would be animated by a strong public and private respect for their honour, spirit, and unmerited misfortunes. This is the whole matter; assuming that such a thing is to be done, I long for the privilege of helping to do it. These gentlemen might consider it an independent means of making money, and I should be delighted to pay the money.

In my absence from town, my friend and sub-editor, Mr. Wills (to whom I had expressed my feeling on the subject), has seen, I think, three of the gentlemen together. But as I hear, returning

home to-night, that they are in your good hands, and as nobody can be a better judge than you of anything that concerns them, I at once decide to write to you and to take no other step whatever. Forgive me for the trouble I have occasioned you in the reading of this letter, and never think of it again if you think that by pursuing it you would cause them an instant's uneasiness.

Believe me, very faithfully yours.

Mr. Antonio Panizzi

Tavistock House, Tuesday, March 15th, 1859.

My dear Panizzi,

Let me thank you heartily for your kind and prompt letter. I am really and truly sensible of your friendliness.

I have not heard from Higgins, but of course I am ready to serve on the Committee.

Always faithfully yours.

Mr. B. W. Procter

Tavistock House, Saturday, March 19th, 1859.

My dear Procter,

I think the songs are simply ADMIRABLE! and I have no

doubt of this being a popular feature in "All the Year Round." I would not omit the sexton, and I would not omit the spinners and weavers; and I would omit the hack-writers, and (I think) the alderman; but I am not so clear about the chorister. The pastoral I a little doubt finding audience for; but I am not at all sure yet that my doubt is well founded.

Had I not better send them all to the printer, and let you have proofs kept by you for publishing? I shall not have to make up the first number of "All the Year Round" until early in April. I don't like to send the manuscript back, and I never do like to do so when I get anything that I know to be thoroughly, soundly, and unquestionably good. I am hard at work upon my story, and expect a magnificent start. With hearty thanks,

Ever yours affectionately.

Mr. Edmund Yates

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Tuesday, March 29th, 1859.

My dear Edmund,

1. I think that no one seeing the place can well doubt that my house at Gad's Hill is the place for the letter-box. The wall is accessible by all sorts and conditions of men, on the bold high road, and the house altogether is the great landmark of the whole neighbourhood. Captain Goldsmith's *house* is up a lane

considerably off the high road; but he has a garden *wall* abutting on the road itself.

2. "The Pic-Nic Papers" were originally sold to Colburn, for the benefit of the widow of Mr. Macrone, of St. James's Square, publisher, deceased. Two volumes were contributed – of course gratuitously – by writers who had had transactions with Macrone. Mr. Colburn, wanting three volumes in all for trade purposes, added a third, consisting of an American reprint. Of that volume I didn't know, and don't know, anything. The other two I edited, gratuitously as aforesaid, and wrote the Lamplighter's story in. It was all done many years ago. There was a preface originally, delicately setting forth how the book came to be.

3. I suppose – to be, as Mr. Samuel Weller expresses it somewhere in "Pickwick," "ravin' mad with the consciousness o' willany." Under their advertisement in *The Times* to-day, you will see, without a word of comment, the shorthand writer's verbatim report of the judgment.

Ever faithfully.

Mr. Antonio Panizzi

"All the Year Round" Office, Thursday, April 7th, 1859.

My dear Panizzi,

If you don't know, I think you should know that a number of letters are passing through the post-office, purporting to be

addressed to the charitable by "Italian Exiles in London," asking for aid to raise a fund for a tribute to "London's Lord Mayor," in grateful recognition of the reception of the Neapolitan exiles. I know this to be the case, and have no doubt in my own mind that the whole thing is an imposture and a "do." The letters are signed "Gratitudine Italiana."

Ever faithfully yours.

Miss White

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Monday, April 18th, 1859.

My dear Lotty,

This is merely a notice to you that I must positively insist on your getting well, strong, and into good spirits, with the least possible delay. Also, that I look forward to seeing you at Gad's Hill sometime in the summer, staying with the girls, and heartlessly putting down the Plorn. You know that there is no appeal from the Plorn's inimitable father. What *he* says must be done. Therefore I send you my love (which please take care of), and my commands (which please obey).

Ever your affectionate.

The Hon. Mrs. Watson

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Tuesday, May 31st, 1859.

My dear Mrs. Watson,

You surprise me by supposing that there is ever latent a defiant and roused expression in the undersigned lamb! Apart from this singular delusion of yours, and wholly unaccountable departure from your usual accuracy in all things, your satisfaction with the portrait is a great pleasure to me. It has received every conceivable pains at Frith's hands, and ought on his account to be good. It is a little too much (to my thinking) as if my next-door neighbour were my deadly foe, uninsured, and I had just received tidings of his house being afire; otherwise very good.

I cannot tell you how delighted we shall be if you would come to Gad's Hill. You should see some charming woods and a rare old castle, and you should have such a snug room looking over a Kentish prospect, with every facility in it for pondering on the beauties of its master's beard! *Do* come, but you positively *must not* come and go on the same day.

We retreat there on Monday, and shall be there all the summer.

My small boy is perfectly happy at Southsea, and likes the school very much. I had the finest letter two or three days ago,

from another of my boys – Frank Jeffrey – at Hamburg. In this wonderful epistle he says: "Dear papa, I write to tell you that I have given up all thoughts of being a doctor. My conviction that I shall never get over my stammering is the cause; all professions are barred against me. The only thing I should like to be is a gentleman farmer, either at the Cape, in Canada, or Australia. With my passage paid, fifteen pounds, a horse, and a rifle, I could go two or three hundred miles up country, sow grain, buy cattle, and in time be very comfortable."

Considering the consequences of executing the little commission by the next steamer, I perceived that the first consequence of the fifteen pounds would be that he would be robbed of it – of the horse, that it would throw him – and of the rifle, that it would blow his head off; which probabilities I took the liberty of mentioning, as being against the scheme. With best love from all,

Ever believe me, my dear Mrs. Watson,
Your faithful and affectionate.

Mrs. White

Tavistock House, Sunday, June 5th, 1859.

My dear Mrs. White,

I do not write to you this morning because I have anything to say – I well know where your consolation is set, and to what

beneficent figure your thoughts are raised – but simply because you are so much in my mind that it is a relief to send you and dear White my love. You are always in our hearts and on our lips. May the great God comfort you! You know that Mary and Katie are coming on Thursday. They will bring dear Lotty what she little needs with you by her side – love; and I hope their company will interest and please her. There is nothing that they, or any of us, would not do for her. She is a part of us all, and has belonged to us, as well as to you, these many years.

Ever your affectionate and faithful.

Miss Dickens

Gad's Hill, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Monday, June 11th, 1859.

My dearest Mamie,

On Saturday night I found, very much to my surprise and pleasure, the photograph on my table at Tavistock House. It is not a very pleasant or cheerful presentation of my daughters; but it is wonderfully like for all that, and in some details remarkably good. When I came home here yesterday I tried it in the large Townshend stereoscope, in which it shows to great advantage. It is in the little stereoscope at present on the drawing-room table. One of the balustrades of the destroyed old Rochester bridge has been (very nicely) presented to me by the contractor for

the works, and has been duly stonemasoned and set up on the lawn behind the house. I have ordered a sun-dial for the top of it, and it will be a very good object indeed. The Plorn is highly excited to-day by reason of an institution which he tells me (after questioning George) is called the "Cobb, or Bodderin," holding a festival at The Falstaff. He is possessed of some vague information that they go to Higham Church, in pursuance of some old usage, and attend service there, and afterwards march round the village. It so far looks probable that they certainly started off at eleven very spare in numbers, and came back considerably recruited, which looks to me like the difference between going to church and coming to dinner. They bore no end of bright banners and broad sashes, and had a band with a terrific drum, and are now (at half-past two) dining at The Falstaff, partly in the side room on the ground-floor, and partly in a tent improvised this morning. The drum is hung up to a tree in The Falstaff garden, and looks like a tropical sort of gourd. I have presented the band with five shillings, which munificence has been highly appreciated. Ices don't seem to be provided for the ladies in the gallery – I mean the garden; they are prowling about there, endeavouring to peep in at the beef and mutton through the holes in the tent, on the whole, in a debased and degraded manner.

Turk somehow cut his foot in Cobham Lanes yesterday, and Linda hers. They are both lame, and looking at each other. Fancy Mr. Townshend not intending to go for another three weeks,

and designing to come down here for a few days – with Henri and Bully – on Wednesday! I wish you could have seen him alone with me on Saturday; he was so extraordinarily earnest and affectionate on my belongings and affairs in general, and not least of all on you and Katie, that he cried in a most pathetic manner, and was so affected that I was obliged to leave him among the flowerpots in the long passage at the end of the dining-room. It was a very good piece of truthfulness and sincerity, especially in one of his years, able to take life so easily.

Mr. and Mrs. Wills are here now (but I daresay you know it from your aunt), and return to town with me to-morrow morning. We are now going on to the castle. Mrs. Wills was very droll last night, and told me some good stories. My dear, I wish particularly to impress upon you and dear Katie (to whom I send my other best love) that I hope your stay will not be very long. I don't think it very good for either of you, though of course I know that Lotty will be, and must be, and should be the first consideration with you both. I am very anxious to know how you found her and how you are yourself.

Best love to dear Lotty and Mrs. White. The same to Mr. White and Clara. We are always talking about you all.

Ever, dearest Mamie, your affectionate Father.

Rev. James White

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Thursday, July 7th, 1859.

My dear White,

I send my heartiest and most affectionate love to Mrs. White and you, and to Clara. You know all that I could add; you have felt it all; let it be unspoken and unwritten – it is expressed within us.

Do you not think that you could all three come here, and stay with us? You and Mrs. White should have your own large room and your own ways, and should be among us when you felt disposed, and never otherwise. I do hope you would find peace here. Can it not be done?

We have talked very much about it among ourselves, and the girls are strong upon it. Think of it – do!

Ever your affectionate.

Mr. John Forster

Gad's Hill, Thursday Night, Aug. 25th, 1859.

My dear Forster,

Heartily glad to get your letter this morning

I cannot easily tell you how much interested I am by what you tell me of our brave and excellent friend the Chief Baron, in connection with that ruffian. I followed the case with so much interest, and have followed the miserable knaves and asses who have perverted it since, with so much indignation, that I have often had more than half a mind to write and thank the upright judge who tried him. I declare to God that I believe such a service one of the greatest that a man of intellect and courage can render to society. Of course I saw the beast of a prisoner (with my mind's eye) delivering his cut-and-dried speech, and read in every word of it that no one but the murderer could have delivered or conceived it. Of course I have been driving the girls out of their wits here, by incessantly proclaiming that there needed no medical evidence either way, and that the case was plain without it. Lastly, of course (though a merciful man – because a merciful man I mean), I would hang any Home Secretary (Whig, Tory, Radical, or otherwise) who should step in between that black scoundrel and the gallows. I can*not* believe – and my belief in all wrong as to public matters is enormous – that such a thing will be done.

I am reminded of Tennyson, by thinking that King Arthur would have made short work of the amiable – , whom the newspapers strangely delight to make a sort of gentleman of.

How fine the "Idylls" are! Lord! what a blessed thing it is to read a man who can write! I thought nothing could be grander than the first poem till I came to the third; but when I had read the last, it seemed to be absolutely unapproached and unapproachable.

To come to myself. I have written and begged the "All the Year Round" publisher to send you directly four weeks' proofs beyond the current number, that are in type. I hope you will like them. Nothing but the interest of the subject, and the pleasure of striving with the difficulty of the forms of treatment, nothing in the mere way of money, I mean, could also repay the time and trouble of the incessant condensation. But I set myself the little task of making a *picturesque* story, rising in every chapter with characters true to nature, but whom the story itself should express, more than they should express themselves, by dialogue. I mean, in other words, that I fancied a story of incident might be written, in place of the bestiality that *is* written under that pretence, pounding the characters out in its own mortar, and beating their own interests out of them. If you could have read the story all at once, I hope you wouldn't have stopped halfway.

As to coming to your retreat, my dear Forster, think how helpless I am. I am not well yet. I have an instinctive feeling that nothing but the sea will restore me, and I am planning to go and work at Ballard's, at Broadstairs, from next Wednesday to Monday. I generally go to town on Monday afternoon. All Tuesday I am at the office, on Wednesday I come back here, and go to work again. I don't leave off till Monday comes round once

more. I am fighting to get my story done by the first week in October. On the 10th of October I am going away to read for a fortnight at Ipswich, Norwich, Oxford, Cambridge, and a few other places. Judge what my spare time is just now!

I am very much surprised and very sorry to find from the enclosed that Elliotson has been ill. I never heard a word of it.

Georgy sends best love to you and to Mrs. Forster, so do I, so does Plorn, so does Frank. The girls are, for five days, with the Whites at Ramsgate. It is raining, intensely hot, and stormy. Eighteen creatures, like little tortoises, have dashed in at the window and fallen on the paper since I began this paragraph ● (that was one!). I am a wretched sort of creature in my way, but it is a way that gets on somehow. And all ways have the same fingerpost at the head of them, and at every turning in them.

Ever affectionately.

Miss Dickens and Miss Katie Dickens

Albion, Broadstairs, Friday, Sept. 2nd, 1859.

My dearest Mamie and Katie,

I have been "moved" here, and am now (Ballard having added to the hotel a house we lived in three years) in our old dining-room and sitting-room, and our old drawing-room as a bedroom. My cold is so bad, both in my throat and in my chest, that I can't bathe in the sea; Tom Collin dissuaded me – thought it "bad" –

but I get a heavy shower-bath at Mrs. Crampton's every morning. The baths are still hers and her husband's, but they have retired and live in "Nuckells" – are going to give a stained-glass window, value three hundred pounds, to St. Peter's Church. Tom Collin is of opinion that the Miss Dickenses has growed two fine young women – leastwise, asking pardon, ladies. An evangelical family of most disagreeable girls prowl about here and trip people up with tracts, which they put in the paths with stones upon them to keep them from blowing away. Charles Collins and I having seen a bill yesterday – about a mesmeric young lady who did feats, one of which was set forth in the bill, in a line by itself, as

the rigid legs,

– were overpowered with curiosity, and resolved to go. It came off in the Assembly Room, now more exquisitely desolate than words can describe. Eighteen shillings was the "take." Behind a screen among the company, we heard mysterious gurglings of water before the entertainment began, and then a slippery sound which occasioned me to whisper C. C. (who laughed in the most ridiculous manner), "Soap." It proved to be the young lady washing herself. She must have been wonderfully dirty, for she took a world of trouble, and didn't come out clean after all – in a wretched dirty muslin frock, with blue ribbons. She was the alleged mesmeriser, and a boy who distributed bills the alleged mesmerised. It was a most preposterous imposition, but more

ludicrous than any poor sight I ever saw. The boy is clearly out of pantomime, and when he pretended to be in the mesmeric state, made the company back by going in among them head over heels, backwards, half-a-dozen times, in a most insupportable way. The pianist had struck; and the manner in which the lecturer implored "some lady" to play a "polker," and the manner in which no lady would; and in which the few ladies who were there sat with their hats on, and the elastic under their chins, as if it were going to blow, is never to be forgotten. I have been writing all the morning, and am going for a walk to Ramsgate. This is a beast of a letter, but I am not well, and have been addling my head.

Ever, dear Girls, your affectionate Father.

Mr. W. Wilkie Collins

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Friday Night, Sept. 16th, 1859.

My dear Wilkie,

Just a word to say that I have received yours, and that I look forward to the reunion on Thursday, when I hope to have the satisfaction of recounting to you the plot of a play that has been laid before me for commending advice.

Ditto to what you say respecting the *Great Eastern*. I went right up to London Bridge by the boat that day, on purpose that I might pass her. I thought her the ugliest and most unshiplike

thing these eyes ever beheld. I wouldn't go to sea in her, shiver my ould timbers and rouse me up with a monkey's tail (man-of-war metaphor), not to chuck a biscuit into Davy Jones's weather eye, and see double with my own old toplights.

Turk has been so good as to produce from his mouth, for the wholesome consternation of the family, eighteen feet of worm. When he had brought it up, he seemed to think it might be turned to account in the housekeeping and was proud. Pony has kicked a shaft off the cart, and is to be sold. Why don't you buy her? she'd never kick with you.

Barber's opinion is, that them fruit-trees, one and all, is touchwood, and not fit for burning at any gentleman's fire; also that the stocking of this here garden is worth less than nothing, because you wouldn't have to grub up nothing, and something takes a man to do it at three-and-sixpence a day. Was "left desponding" by your reporter.

I have had immense difficulty to find a man for the stable-yard here. Barber having at last engaged one this morning, I enquired if he had a decent hat for driving in, to which Barber returned this answer:

"Why, sir, not to deceive you, that man flatly say that he never have wore that article since man he was!"

I am consequently fortified into my room, and am afraid to go out to look at him. Love from all.

Ever affectionately.

Monsieur Regnier

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Saturday, Oct. 15th, 1859.

My dear Regnier,

You will receive by railway parcel the proof-sheets of a story of mine, that has been for some time in progress in my weekly journal, and that will be published in a complete volume about the middle of November. Nobody but Forster has yet seen the latter portions of it, or will see them until they are published. I want you to read it for two reasons. Firstly, because I hope it is the best story I have written. Secondly, because it treats of a very remarkable time in France; and I should very much like to know what you think of its being dramatised for a French theatre. If you should think it likely to be done, I should be glad to take some steps towards having it well done. The story is an extraordinary success here, and I think the end of it is certain to make a still greater sensation.

Don't trouble yourself to write to me, *mon ami*, until you shall have had time to read the proofs. Remember, they are *proofs*, and *private;* the latter chapters will not be before the public for five or six weeks to come.

With kind regards to Madame Regnier, in which my daughters and their aunt unite,

Believe me, ever faithfully yours.

P.S. – The story (I daresay you have not seen any of it yet) is called "A Tale of Two Cities."

Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A

Peterborough, Wednesday Evening, Oct. 19th, 1859.

My dear Stone,

We had a splendid rush last night – exactly as we supposed, with the pressure on the two shillings, of whom we turned a crowd away. They were a far finer audience than on the previous night; I think the finest I have ever read to. They took every word of the "Dombey" in quite an amazing manner, and after the child's death, paused a little, and then set up a shout that it did one good to hear. Mrs. Gamp then set in with a roar, which lasted until I had done. I think everybody for the time forgot everything but the matter in hand. It was as fine an instance of thorough absorption in a fiction as any of us are likely to see ever again.

– (in an exquisite red mantle), accompanied by her sister (in another exquisite red mantle) and by the deaf lady, (who leaned a black head-dress, exactly like an old-fashioned tea-urn without the top, against the wall), was charming. HE couldn't get at her on account of the pressure. HE tried to peep at her from the side door, but she (ha, ha, ha!) was unconscious of his presence. I read to her, and goaded him to madness. He is just sane enough

to send his kindest regards.

This is a place which – except the cathedral, with the loveliest front I ever saw – is like the back door to some other place. It is, I should hope, the deadest and most utterly inert little town in the British dominions. The magnates have taken places, and the bookseller is of opinion that "such is the determination to do honour to Mr. Dickens, that the doors *must* be opened half an hour before the appointed time." You will picture to yourself Arthur's quiet indignation at this, and the manner in which he remarked to me at dinner, "that he turned away twice Peterborough last night."

A very pretty room – though a Corn Exchange – and a room we should have been glad of at Cambridge, as it is large, bright, and cheerful, and wonderfully well lighted.

The difficulty of getting to Bradford from here to-morrow, at any time convenient to us, turned out to be so great, that we are all going in for Leeds (only three-quarters of an hour from Bradford) to-night after the reading, at a quarter-past eleven. We are due at Leeds a quarter before three.

So no more at present from,

Yours affectionately.

Mr. W. R. Sculthorpe

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Thursday, Nov. 10th, 1859.

Dear Sir,

Judgment must go by default. I have not a word to plead against Dodson and Fogg. I am without any defence to the action; and therefore, as law goes, ought to win it.

Seriously, the date of your hospitable note disturbs my soul. But I have been incessantly writing in Kent and reading in all sorts of places, and have done nothing in my own personal character these many months; and now I come to town and our friend[5] is away! Let me take that defaulting miscreant into council when he comes back.

Faithfully yours.

Monsieur Regnier

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Wednesday, Nov. 16th, 1859.

My dear Regnier,

I send you ten thousand thanks for your kind and explicit

[5] Mr. Edmund Yates.

letter. What I particularly wished to ascertain from you was, whether it is likely the Censor would allow such a piece to be played in Paris. In the case of its being likely, then I wished to have the piece as well done as possible, and would even have proposed to come to Paris to see it rehearsed. But I very much doubted whether the general subject would not be objectionable to the Government, and what you write with so much sagacity and with such care convinces me at once that its representation would be prohibited. Therefore I altogether abandon and relinquish the idea. But I am just as heartily and cordially obliged to you for your interest and friendship, as if the book had been turned into a play five hundred times. I again thank you ten thousand times, and am quite sure that you are right. I only hope you will forgive my causing you so much trouble, after your hard work.

My girls and Georgina send their kindest regards to Madame Regnier and to you. My Gad's Hill house (I think I omitted to tell you, in reply to your enquiry) is on the very scene of Falstaff's robbery. There is a little *cabaret* at the roadside, still called The Sir John Falstaff. And the country, in all its general features, is, at this time, what it was in Shakespeare's. I hope you will see the house before long. It is really a pretty place, and a good residence for an English writer, is it not?

Macready, we are all happy to hear from himself, is going to leave the dreary tomb in which he lives, at Sherborne, and to remove to Cheltenham, a large and handsome place, about four

or five hours' railway journey from London, where his poor girls will at least see and hear some life. Madame Céleste was with me yesterday, wishing to dramatise "A Tale of Two Cities" for the Lyceum, after bringing out the Christmas pantomime. I gave her my permission and the book; but I fear that her company (troupe) is a very poor one.

This is all the news I have, except (which is no news at all) that I feel as if I had not seen you for fifty years, and that

I am ever your attached and faithful Friend.

Mr. T. Longman

Tavistock House, Monday, Nov. 28th, 1859.

My dear Longman,

I am very anxious to present to you, with the earnest hope that you will hold him in your remembrance, young Mr. Marcus Stone, son of poor Frank Stone, who died suddenly but a little week ago. You know, I daresay, what a start this young man made in the last exhibition, and what a favourable notice his picture attracted. He wishes to make an additional opening for himself in the illustration of books. He is an admirable draughtsman, has a most dexterous hand, a charming sense of grace and beauty, and a capital power of observation. These qualities in him I know well of my own knowledge. He is in all things modest, punctual, and right; and I would answer for him, if it were needful, with

my head.

If you will put anything in his way, you will do it a second time, I am certain.

Faithfully yours always.

1860

NARRATIVE

This winter was the last spent at Tavistock House. Charles Dickens had for some time been inclining to the idea of making his home altogether at Gad's Hill, giving up his London house, and taking a furnished house for the sake of his daughters for a few months of the London season. And, as his daughter Kate was to be married this summer to Mr. Charles Collins, this intention was confirmed and carried out. He made arrangements for the sale of Tavistock House to Mr. Davis, a Jewish gentleman, and he gave up possession of it in September. Up to this time Gad's Hill had been furnished merely as a temporary summer residence – pictures, library, and all best furniture being left in the London house. He now set about beautifying and making Gad's Hill thoroughly comfortable and homelike. And there was not a year afterwards, up to the year of his death, that he did not make some addition or improvement to it. He also furnished, as a private residence, a sitting-room and some bedrooms at his office in Wellington Street, to be used, when there was no house in London, as occasional town quarters by himself, his daughter, and sister-in-law.

He began in this summer his occasional papers for "All the

Year Round," which he called "The Uncommercial Traveller," and which were continued at intervals in his journal until 1869.

In the autumn of this year he began another story, to be published weekly in "All the Year Round." The letter to Mr. Forster, which we give, tells him of this beginning and gives him the name of the book. The first number of "Great Expectations" appeared on the 1st December. The Christmas number, this time, was written jointly by himself and Mr. Wilkie Collins. The scene was laid at Clovelly, and they made a journey together into Devonshire and Cornwall, for the purpose of this story, in November.

The letter to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton is, unfortunately, the only one we have as yet been able to procure. The present Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India, has kindly endeavoured to help us even during his absence from England. But it was found to be impossible without his own assistance to make the necessary search among his father's papers. And he has promised us that, on his return, he will find and lend to us, many letters from Charles Dickens, which are certainly in existence, to his distinguished fellow-writer and great friend. We hope, therefore, it may be possible for us at some future time to be able to publish these letters, as well as those addressed to the present Lord Lytton (when he was Mr. Robert Lytton, otherwise "Owen Meredith," and frequent contributor to "Household Words" and "All the Year Round"). We have the same hope with regard to letters addressed to Sir Henry Layard, at present Ambassador at

Constantinople, which, of course, for the same reason, cannot be lent to us at the present time.

We give a letter to Mr. Forster on one of his books on the Commonwealth, the "Impeachment of the Five Members;" which, as with other letters which we are glad to publish on the subject of Mr. Forster's own works, was not used by himself for obvious reasons.

A letter to his daughter Mamie (who, after her sister's marriage, paid a visit with her dear friends the White family to Scotland, where she had a serious illness) introduces a recent addition to the family, who became an important member of it, and one to whom Charles Dickens was very tenderly attached – her little white Pomeranian dog "Mrs. Bouncer" (so called after the celebrated lady of that name in "Box and Cox"). It is quite necessary to make this formal introduction of the little pet animal (who lived to be a very old dog and died in 1874), because future letters to his daughter contain constant references and messages to "Mrs. Bouncer," which would be quite unintelligible without this explanation. "Boy," also referred to in this letter, was his daughter's horse. The little dog and the horse were gifts to Mamie Dickens from her friends Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Smith, and the sister of the latter, Miss Craufurd.

Mr. W. C. Macready

Tavistock House, Monday, Jan. 2nd, 1860.

My dearest Macready,

A happy New Year to you, and many happy years! I cannot tell you how delighted I was to receive your Christmas letter, or with what pleasure I have received Forster's emphatic accounts of your health and spirits. But when was I ever wrong? And when did I not tell you that you were an impostor in pretending to grow older as the rest of us do, and that you had a secret of your own for reversing the usual process! It happened that I read at Cheltenham a couple of months ago, and that I have rarely seen a place that so attracted my fancy. I had never seen it before. Also I believe the character of its people to have greatly changed for the better. All sorts of long-visaged prophets had told me that they were dull, stolid, slow, and I don't know what more that is disagreeable. I found them exactly the reverse in all respects; and I saw an amount of beauty there – well – that is not to be more specifically mentioned to you young fellows.

Katie dined with us yesterday, looking wonderfully well, and singing "Excelsior" with a certain dramatic fire in her, whereof I seem to remember having seen sparks afore now. Etc. etc. etc.

With kindest love from all at home to all with you,
Ever, my dear Macready, your most affectionate.

Mr. W. Wilkie Collins

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Saturday Night, Jan. 7th, 1860.

My dear Wilkie,

I have read this book with great care and attention. There cannot be a doubt that it is a very great advance on all your former writing, and most especially in respect of tenderness. In character it is excellent. Mr. Fairlie as good as the lawyer, and the lawyer as good as he. Mr. Vesey and Miss Halcombe, in their different ways, equally meritorious. Sir Percival, also, is most skilfully shown, though I doubt (you see what small points I come to) whether any man ever showed uneasiness by hand or foot without being forced by nature to show it in his face too. The story is very interesting, and the writing of it admirable.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.