ASPECTS OF REFORM IN CERTAIN NOVELS
OF CHARLES DICKENS

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ASPECTS OF REFORM IN CERTAIN NOVELS
OF CHARLES DICKENS

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CHAPTER I

SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE ENGLAND OF
CHARLES DICKENS

It is almost incredible to the present day student of history that only one hundred years ago England should have been a nation of domineering employers and ignorant and starved wage earners -- that the majority of the people were in such miserable condition that Charles Dickens, one of the most prominent of the Victorian Writers, spent most of his adult life, and all of his time between 1837 and 1850, in satirizing the charity, education, religion, social morality, society, legal procedure, politics, and attempts at government reform, as he observed them in the England of his day.

The suffering which Dickens witnessed throughout his life was caused by a national upheaval more important, possibly, than the French or American revolutions -- the Industrial Revolution, a movement which began in the eighteenth century, culminated in radical social maladjustment in the nineteenth century, and continues even today to make its influence felt. It was in every sense of the word a revolution, for it brought complete change in the manner
of English living and even of thinking. The period, important politically, was even more important socially; it was important that Parliament should obtain its permanent form, but it was still more important that the common man should eventually wrest from society an acceptable standard of living.

Early in the century England was seized with violent growing pains. The nation was now supreme at sea; she had vessels which could go almost undisturbed to the ends of the earth, carrying the goods which had been manufactured in the factories of England, and the grain for which there was an increasing demand in the face of curtailment of continental supplies. Naturally there followed higher rents for English farms, and an increasing tendency to enclose land which had formerly been open for general use. The country which should have been enjoying the peace which normally follows war was preparing for another war, a civil war which was to last for many decades. While the wealthier classes of England were thriving on the political and social agitation of the period, there was much unrest among the suppressed lower classes, and these more ignorant groups were less able to organize for group betterment. England as a whole emerged wealthier than it had been, but the social changes were hard upon the laborers, who had to bear the brunt of the expenses, and moreover, adapted themselves slowly to changed conditions.
Politically the British Isles were at last unified, Ireland, Scotland and England having been united under one government, but there was no peace, for the laboring classes were bitter and contentious, a fact which caused the government to employ force in dissolving mass meetings, prosecuting radical writers and punishing citizens for rioting. Troubles in England in the first half of the nineteenth century were natural troubles, resulting from the long strain of war, and changed industrial conditions. That England should eventually emerge victorious was to be expected; and that she should be troubled for decades with social and industrial maladjustments, aggravated by loss of continental markets, was also to be anticipated. During the first quarter of the century there were many riots, all caused by discontent over industrial conditions. On August 16, 1819, under a Tory administration, there occurred "Peterloo," a violent riot at St. Peter's Field, in which many were killed -- a fact which resulted in passing of "six acts," all emergency legislation, virtually suspending the constitution.

Social organization had its beginnings in the early part of the century. Friendly Societies, Cooperative Societies, Trade Unions and other organizations formed as demanded to combat a particular abuse were organized for economic betterment of the laboring class. In 1825 a law holding union members in the status of strikers was passed.
Standing almost alone, Robert Owen, owner of the New Lanark Mills, worked for social betterment of his employees by reducing working hours, paying wages in times of depression, providing a sick fund, and maintaining a store which sold commodities at wholesale prices, a school, and a recreation hall. Owen found that business flourished and drunkenness decreased. Outlawed because of his radical ideas, he became the father of socialism, admired by the poor, who placed a premium on gentleness. He was a model employer and a leader in educational reform. He helped organize cooperatives, labor exchanges, and trade unions, became increasingly visionary as he grew older, and eventually before his death turned to spiritualism.

As cruel as actual negative legislation during the first half of the century in England was the doctrine of laissez-faire -- a state of mind whereby it was deemed nobody's business that the submerged fourth might be suffering. It seemed to be the prevailing idea that "young men brought up in a cottage have no feeling of the inconveniences arising from it and consequently do not desire an enlarged one."

Another obstacle to reform was the fact that the writers of the period who treated economic questions could see no relief. Adam Smith in his Wealth of Nations suggested that

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1 C. R. Fay, Life and Labour in the Nineteenth Century, p. 44.
free competition was essential to attainment of wealth, and Ricardo, in Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, stated that workmen who attempted to increase their wages did so at the expense of other laborers, as only a stated amount was available for wages in the national economy.

Malthus believed that only poverty, starvation, plagues, and wars could keep down the population to a number which could survive.

All these intellectual tendencies and reasonings of the later eighteenth century, therefore, combined to discredit the minute regulation of economic society, which had been the traditional policy of the immediately preceding centuries. The movement of thought was definitely opposed to the continuance or extension of the supervision of the government over matters of labor, wages, hours, industry, commerce, agriculture, or other phenomena of production, distribution, exchange, or consumption. This set of opinions is known as the laissez-faire theory of the functions of government, the view that the duties of government should be reduced to the smallest possible number, and that it should keep out of the economic sphere altogether. Adam Smith would have restricted the functions of government to three: to protect the nation from the attacks of other nations, to protect each person in the nation from the injustice or violence of other individuals, and to carry on certain educational or similar institutions which were of general utility, but not to any one's private interest. Many of his successors would have cut off the last duty altogether. ²

The old regulations died out with the spreading of this new doctrine. Parliament refused to enforce old laws. New commercial companies were growing up without government regulation, and everywhere the hand of government was light.

In the new factories, little attention was paid by employers to qualifications of workers. When older weavers attempted to enforce old laws, Parliament consented to investigation, but did nothing afterward except repeal the old laws to allow greater freedom. This was especially disastrous in the case of such a law as the statute of apprentices. The leading characteristic of legislation on such questions as industry, commerce and manufacturing was freedom from government control. England had built up in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a structure of regulation of industry; this was now being torn down. Use of governmental powers to make men carry on their life in a specified way -- to buy and sell, labor and hire, export and import, only as the nation as a whole thought best, was abandoned. The prevailing mode of governmental action seemed now to be laissez-faire.

The moneyed aristocracy dreamed of a world in which the rich should guide the poor, who would work for a very modest wage. The industrial revolution created a Great Britain no longer agricultural, but a country with a great middle class and a larger poor element. The manufacturers were the men of wealth on whom rested the burden of paying the country's enormous war debt. Out of all of the discussion for suffrage, the ballot, parliamentary reform, and freedom of the press, rang the voice of Bentham, spokesman
of the middle class, proclaiming that the end of all government must be utility, or good of the governed. All laws, he stated, must be open to free inquiry, their sole test of worth being the principle of utility. Dazzled by prospects of an economically powerful England, Bentham and his fellow-idealists proclaimed the making of wealth and full use of labor to be the first duty of every citizen, a view which resulted on every hand in lengthening of man's working day and cheapening of his labor, the employer being beyond reach of the law and the worker being subject to punishment for the smallest infraction of his bargain. The government would as a matter of course interfere very little, if at all, with the employer-employee relationship.

But what, people asked, would take the place of governmental regulation? The answer was self-interest. The theory was that there was a natural force tending to produce best results. If a man wishes to earn money, and to be paid for his services, he must please the man who wants his work done -- then both will receive satisfaction from the transaction. Men must be free to serve whom they choose, to do the best work -- free to ask for what wages they desire, and to accept or reject the employer's offer. By the law of free competition, that man who gives best service will be hired, effort will be stimulated, self-reliance will be encouraged. Universal freedom of competition is the result.

The times encouraged such freedom. Men were free from
external control. Enclosure allowed a men to plant and raise what he chose, when and how he chose to do so. In the factories, men were free to work or not as they chose. Manufacturers could make what they chose, and hire labor as they pleased.

On the surface England was in flourishing condition. Yet somehow England was internally far from healthy. Manufactured goods from home and foreign factories were sold at low prices. Undoubtedly England was wealthy, holding trade supremacy in commerce, industry and agriculture. Yet the masses of people were miserably poor, for they lacked capital and initiative. The number of paupers was increasingly dependent upon the government. As the population of England increased, her living standard steadily lowered. The handloom industry had practically disappeared, but for sanitary considerations the homes had been better than the factories, and there was little improvement in the general misery.

A number of factors contributed to the plights of the laborers during the long period of readjustment which accompanied the Industrial Revolution. One of these was continued use of machines of various types, which made it possible for wool and cotton to be made into thread by machinery. Another was application of steam power to machinery. A third was the discovery that iron could be smelted by coke as well as charcoal. England had been losing her vast supply of wood as her forests were cut down, but she had large
coal fields near iron deposits. Within a few years England became urban rather than rural. Men set up factories and sent out calls for men, women and children to run them. They had no intention of giving undue profits to their laborers and to assure heavy profits for themselves, employed whole families, who among them all could make only enough for a bare subsistence. Country people were not much better off, for with discovery of improved methods of farming and cattle breeding, the farms also were put on a radically different basis; farming of land in common went out of practice, individuals tending to get possession of land to the detriment of poorer farmers, who then left the farms and drifted to the crowded cities.

The coming of factories increased mining activities, for the factories required huge quantities of coal. The first steam engine was built to pump water from mines, the first railroad was built to carry coal, and the first canal dug to transport coal. People multiplied, crowding the streets of their growing cities -- and they lit their streets with coal, used coal in their business buildings, and heated their homes with it -- the nation exporting the surplus. Coal mine proprietors owned cottages housing laborers, and when the miners struck evicted the people.

For years, working conditions in the mines were atrocious. At a suit growing out of a mining accident, a woman
declared in evidence: "I have a belt round my waist, and a chain passing between my legs, and I go on my hands and feet -- the pit is very wet where I work, and the water comes over our clog-tops always, and I have seen it up to my thighs -- I have drawn till I have had the skin off me; the belt and chain is worse when we are in the family way."\(^3\)

Coal and iron were produced at increasing rates, improvement in the method of handling one resulting in increased production of the other, and production of both increasing with spread of the factories. There were improvements in puddling, rolling and other processes of manufacturing of iron, and coal production increased at a greater rate. Smelting of iron and use of the steam-engine made such heavy demand for coal that large amounts of capital were required, and ten million tons had been mined before the close of the century. Improvements in roads and canals were made, greatly stimulating transportation throughout all parts of the country, and encouraging mass shipment of coal and iron.

Meanwhile the rural domestic manufacturers, finding their old textile trade gone, were devoting themselves to two inferior forms of industry. As handicraftsmen, they competed with machine products which were better and more cheaply produced; as farmers they either gave up their land and drifted to the factory centers, or devoted all their time to

\(^3\)Fay, op. cit., p. 188.
farming, eventually losing their holdings and becoming farm laborers. Either course brought poverty and near starvation.

Problems of social readjustment became acute as the population shifted. While enclosure of public land accompanied improvement in agriculture, it eliminated the "poor whites" who had worked the land from a share in the earnings of the farms. Three farm classes, landlords, tenant farmers, and farm laborers, developed -- the last composed of the dregs of society which could not find employment regularly.

Enclosures were not questioned until the middle of the nineteenth century. The determining voices were naturally those of the great proprietors, who made and administered the laws, and who were alone able to bear the costs of court procedure. There was at the best no compensation which could be made to agricultural workers for severing them from the soil and forcing them to a lower status, from standpoint of land ownership, than ever attained by farmers in any country in Europe. Tillers of the soil were degraded practically to serfdom. When it was realized that with rising prices a wage of five shillings or so would not sustain life, a custom developed of giving allowances of food to eke out the pay, these pauperizing doles eventually becoming a part of the industrial system. To secure advantages of these government "hand-outs," agricultural laborers became tied to the place where they were born, and dependent upon the
generosity of village church wardens and overseers, who abused their authority to line their own pockets. In consideration of all of these facts, the peasant was always hungry, and always afraid.

By the middle of the century England had become primarily a nation of city dwellers. Farmers were then in the minority. Because there were no longer enough of them to supply the nation with food, agitation developed for importation of food, tariff free, which did not help to better the lot of those farmers who remained. The contempt in which they were held is shown by the fact that while voting privileges were extended to others, it was not until 1884, which was fourteen years after Dickens' death, that the franchise was extended to agricultural laborers.

Disregard for human rights and human happiness characterized the period, and punishments for breaking of a minor law were severe. Because a man could be hanged for any one of two hundred offenses, executions were so common that from 1830 to 1845 more than fourteen hundred were executed, all for crimes which were not of serious nature. Men were hanged for stealing five shillings or burning a rick of hay, and the bodies were left for hours in the market places as a warning to others. Ficking of a pocket of one handkerchief carried a sentence of seven years' transportation, no defense being allowed the accused. To discourage poaching, landowners used spring guns and mantraps, thus admitting that they
rated man's life lower than a hare's; also a man could be sentenced to seven years' transportation for stealing a pheasant.

Treatment of convicts was atrocious, revealing a callousness on the part of society which is not easy today to understand. When public opinion became aroused to the point of demanding investigation, appointment of a committee to study the condition of deported convicts in 1837 resulted in one of the most shocking reports ever submitted to the House of Commons. In this it was revealed, e.g., that at Norfolk Island discipline was maintained by the lash, men working in chains from daybreak to dark. Gaolers who took charge of these degraded human beings became themselves so degraded that they were little better than savages. When the convicts had served out their time they could, according to law, secure work among the settlers, but because of their convict status they were not accepted as anything higher than a slave; by complaint of master or mistress, magistrates could give a man fifty lashes for any breach of discipline, real or imaginary. When a few humane colonists in the empire complained, they in turn were criticized as causing unnecessary worry to the mother country.

Prisons had long been in filthy condition. Prisoners, often shackled together regardless of sex, were served by a few lazy chaplains. The outcome eventually of a spirit of
temporary reform was the passing of the Gaol Acts of 1823 and 1824, following Bower's investigations, giving more labor to convicts, and an act of 1835, providing for segregation of the sexes. Later capital punishment for many offenses was abolished, and by 1868 the public executions, which had been witnessed by huge crowds, for many generations, had been declared illegal.

The workhouse, which receives as much attention from Dickens as any other social evil of his day, had long been an established evil. It was a general practice to drive paupers if possible to a neighboring parish. The little parish of Holborn may be cited as a typical case: this locality had a workhouse accommodating four hundred and sixty inmates! Children under fifteen, instead of being admitted, were farmed out to a contractor. Within the workhouse, old men and women were kept on one side of a partition, and on the other side the younger female paupers -- women with illegitimate children, poor men's wives who had no means of providing for childbirth at home, prostitutes, imbeciles, and sick. Disorderly inmates were farmed out to special contractors who often sent them out to beg or steal for a living. It was often said that an inmate never again could become an honest citizen after several years in the workhouse. After much legislation, and improvement in the financial status of the workers, the workhouse eventually passed out of the picture.
Government red tape caused much inconvenience and suffering. During the Crimean War, when government prestige reached a new low, the Commissariat failed to put through an order -- and a shipload of cabbage, the precious fresh vegetables which the soldiers needed to maintain health, arrived in port, and rotted there, no one taking responsibility of giving a receipt, as men died of scurvy.\(^4\)

A reform effected during Dickens' lifetime was abolition of the law of impressment for the navy. In existence since the days of the early Plantagenet kings, the law authorized seizure of men wherever they might be found and impressment of these unfortunates into compulsory service in the navy. The writer of the period found in this fact many themes for stories. The press gang had been abolished by the middle of the century, and soon afterward flogging was also made illegal.

(Probably no single group suffered as did the children, who were exploited on every side. Parish poorhouses and workhouses were overcrowded with children, whom the authorities were glad to put to work at the earliest opportunity, which was usually long before they were grown. Manufacturers early discovered this source of supply and the system of securing apprentices from the poorhouse children early developed. They signed contracts with the overseers to give

board and keep in return for several years' bondage. Children from seven up were sent to the cotton factories, where they were boarded in "apprentice houses" with matrons in charge. The masters had complete mastery over the young people. Hours were long, food poor, and the beds were never allowed to cool, one shift leaving for work as another went off duty. Often time was not allowed for meals, the children being required to eat as they could while tending machinery. Eventually the outside world noticed, and the outcome of the publicity which followed the exposing of such conditions was a series of factory acts. Arguments were advanced favoring consideration of the physical health of the children, and these eventually won out over the arguments of the factory owners that it was only by employing cheap labor that England could hope to compete in the open markets of the world.

Grueling at this time was the work of the chimney sweeps, employed because their bodies were small and supple, pliant enough to enter the filthy black chimneys of coal smoked cities. The children had to climb up to the top of the chimney by working their elbows and knees against the blackened sides of the structure. Their arms, hands and knees were always lacerated and they were often severely injured. Sometimes the child stuck fast in the chimney, and sometimes he was burned -- these conditions often causing his death. The poor creatures wore a short gown of sacking, covered with the soot of many weeks' work. Philanthropists who became
interested in their lot brought out evidence to show that children were sometimes "smoked" out by irate masters, that girls were sometimes employed, and that in all cases the health of the children was affected. The entire system was abolished by legislation in 1840, and not many years afterward machines for cleaning of the chimneys came into general use. By the time of the death of Dickens in 1870 the lot of children had radically improved in every way, and the average child had some educational opportunities and a much happier childhood.

Beginning with the Reform Act of 1830, and continuing on through the decade, many changes, some for the better and some for the worse, were made in English voting privileges, with the Whigs in control of the government. Establishment of the House of Commons as the ruling house paved the way for a series of reforms: efforts to establish religious freedom; better protection to citizens by law; granting of the right of the accused to employ counsel; abolishing of the pillory and public floggings; improvements in courts of law; establishing of states' obligation for public education; factory legislation regulating working hours of all; forbidding the employment of children under nine; and limiting to twelve hours the work of all young people under eighteen; and many other changes of similar nature. Following this, the year 1834 may be taken as the starting point of a different age. The Poor Law of 1834, designed to benefit the
poor, only aggravated and deepened their sufferings, for outdoor relief was ended, and doles of corn were paid in aid of low pay. Workhouses under the jurisdiction of Boards of Guardians, more interested in poor rates than in the poor themselves, multiplied. The laborers met the situation with revolt and bitter hatred toward the ruling class, and expressed that antipathy often in acts of sabotage, such as burning of ricks of hay. The Municipal Reform Act of 1835 was more beneficial, for it vested civic authority in burgesses whose concern was the common interests of all of the inhabitants, a situation which made the town officials now the servants of the people.

The period known as the "hungry forties" has never been surpassed in human misery. Ireland lost a fourth of her population in the Potato Famine of 1845-1847, causing cessation of trade between Ireland and England, and increase in cost of poor relief between 1843-1848. All general literature of the period testified to low wages, high prices, irregular employment, crowded living quarters, disease, filth, and suffering. Wages of women in field work were from fifteen to twenty cents per day, in the mills two dollars per week. Farm laborers earned $2.00 to $2.50 a week, unskilled town laborers up to $3.50 or $3.75 per week. Prices of commodities to be bought were sometimes higher than at present. Common people seldom had meat, and lived mostly on starches
such as bread, potatoes, and turnips. Charity was extensive, no one earning more than a bare subsistence, which made little provision for unemployment or illness. Lack of drainage was responsible for very unsanitary conditions in the crowded tenements, many families living even in undrained and un-ventilated cellars; in large cities cess-pools were often located in the basements, which was partly responsible for the prevalence of disease. A step was made in the right direction in 1840 with passage of compulsory inoculation for smallpox, showing that the government was beginning to take interest in the health of the nation, but it was many years before the slums were recognized as the disease breeders which they undoubtedly were. There was no provision for education, no income sufficient to provide material comforts, no opportunity to share in the affairs of government, and no facilities for clean and wholesome amusements. The working man drank hard when he could find money for drink, and sang filthy songs; the man in the street begged by exhibiting fraudulent sores. Their "betters" remained aloof, decried the evils of industrialism and suggested that such conditions could be remedied only by limiting the population by law! In the factory districts during this decade, living conditions were so bad that the rude huts in which the workmen lived were furnished with boxes for tables, and straw pallets for mattresses, and the inmates ate oatmeal and water for food. In view of the fact that England was industrially
supreme over all of Europe, is it any wonder that the reformer such as Dickens, who was genuinely interested in his fellow man, should lift up his voice in violent protest?

With the vesting of authority in the burgesses, a way was offered for the common man to help himself, but it was a long time before he utilized his new power. It was many years before attention was paid by authorities to such public questions as ventilation, drainage, and housing in the quarters peopled by the poor.

The modern reader who studies nineteenth century sanitation finds conditions appalling. Underlying the city of London was a sewer system which had been constructed under the Tudors for the purpose of receiving storm water, and no cesspools could lawfully be connected with this drainage system. Over a period of years, however, the custom developed of connecting cesspools with these sewers, a condition which naturally produced disease.

There was need that some great movement should awaken people to the need of sanitary reform. The stimulus was provided in repeated visits of plague, which had first attracted the attention of Europeans in consequence of its ravages in India, and which continually spread northward and westward, reaching England in the autumn of 1631 and London in January, 1632, claiming approximately fifty thousand lives. The only preventive action known to have been taken was
the offering of prayer in the churches. Later Edwin Chadwick carried on an active campaign against cholera and all sorts of filth and disease; he had served on the commission which led to the drafting of the first Factory Act, and was also secretary of the Poor Law Commission. He had observed that pauperism was often caused by preventable diseases, which created widows and orphans, kept men from work, and cost more money than laboring men could afford. He spent much time between 1830 and 1840 studying diseases, and was undoubtedly responsible for the pauper legislation which was passed during that decade. In 1842, after he had realized that sanitary conditions were as bad elsewhere as in London, he began research work through questionnaires on water supply, refuse removal, drainage, and condition of lodgings, a project which resulted in publication in 1842 of his Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Classes of Great Britain, which he distributed widely. The report stated that Bradford, a typical city, had no regulations for draining the city, that refuse was thrown from the houses, that there were no sewers, that only a few scavengers were on duty, and that water was being bought from carts at the price of a penny for three gallons.

The second visitation of cholera in 1847 resulted in passing of the Public Health Act of 1848; another epidemic in 1853-1854, which brought death to many thousands, should have strengthened Chadwick's position, but he was retired
from office in 1834, along with the Board, through political animosity. Another board, no stronger, was created in 1869.

Education of the masses was practically non-existent in the early part of the century. Since the days of Henry VIII education had been in the hands of the Church, and a class monopoly had been created, excluding the majority of the people from its benefits. What little education the poor received was doled out at privately-endowed charity schools, which in the first half of the century were at their height. It is explained ironically that the monitorial system flattered the donor and benefitted the child. For the position of the schoolmaster, some man was selected for his natural common sense and given a month’s intensive training in the art and science of education. Then this master alone taught from nine hundred to a thousand children, using the monitorial method: thirty of the most intelligent children arrived half an hour early in the morning, and learned the lesson for the day, then taught it to the others!

The national government began to take note of the growing demand for state education, but little was done until 1833, when 20,000 pounds was placed in the estimates for schools, the amount granted to localities to be matched by voluntary contributions. Attempts to establish normal schools for teachers were blocked by the church bodies, which had their own training schools. In 1845 the report of the
Education Committee gave a severe blow to the monitorial system by announcing that only one in six trained in monitory schools could read the Bible with any ease; further grants of money were made to pay more teachers to remedy this condition. The question of levying a local school tax was raised in 1853 but Parliament voted down a bill submitted on public school taxation. Instruction long remained inadequate, especially among the poor; it was found that discharged servants, out-door paupers, consumptives, cripples, and aged were among the teachers who taught poor children for a wretched fee. In 1861, when a bill was passed paying amounts to schools based on the actual accomplishment of the children, as ascertained from examination, the cause of public education received a set-back, for the teachers became harried and worried, which influenced the children. Pupils were compelled to go to school, were forced to learn their lessons, even when suffering with disease, and were taught only the three R's, in which tests were to be given. This law, the result of the commercialism which was a characteristic of the period, was eventually repealed.

In 1867 the second Reform Act was passed, enfranchising a large number of working men, and paving the way for the Forster Education Act of 1870. While education was not yet free or compulsory, yet the management of the educational system became much more efficient, and a truce was effected with the Church. As Dickens died in 1870, it was not until
well after his death that a workable and fair plan for education of all was in actual operation. With gradual extension of the ballot in a series of government acts culminating in the Ballot Act of 1872, which abolished bribery and intimidation by introducing the secret voting, the cause of education, as well as of sanitation, housing, working conditions in factories, and general improvement in living standards of the masses, received assurance of support from the majority of Englishmen.

Power and money were of more importance than education. England developed an intense desire for expansion, which led the nation during the 1800's to develop a vast colonial empire; this caused graft in the administration of colonial affairs, promiscuous disposition of colonial land, abuse of colonial patronage, and mistreatment of subject peoples. It is thought that an imperialistic and domineering governmental policy precipitated three great constitutional crises, Catholic Emancipation, the Reform Bill, and Repeal of the Corn Laws.

To feed the growing fires of nationalism came the railroads, which by 1842 were all over England. "Navvies," the men who formerly dug canals, were now building railroads and living in nearby huts, in which sanitary conditions were extremely poor. For a century or more, short railroads were laid to the mines, to make it easier for horses to haul loads from mines to towns or ports. In 1825 one road put six
locomotives into operation for freight cars only. The Liverpool-Manchester road marked another step, and thereafter many new charters for lines were granted by Parliament. Wild speculation had followed their growth, the year 1845 witnessing a veritable mania in speculation. A nomadic body of unskilled laborers gathered, recruited from the unemployed rural workers, to follow the railroads. Of all the laborers they suffered most from poor housing and squalid living conditions.

No account of Dickens' England would be complete without mention of the religious views of his contemporaries, for the clergy were as callous, and as indifferent concerning the welfare of the people as were the employers who exploited them. Multitudes had followed Wesley, but there remained behind with the established church a large number of clergy who were little affected by the Evangelical movement. The clergy who preached dry moral sermons, devoid of enthusiasm, were still very numerous. The vast majority of the vicars in the established church made no effort to cope with the evils of an industrial era; for the first time in the history of England a large number of people were growing up almost lacking in religious instruction. With some, however, the effect was different. These seemed to enjoy attendance in humble chapels, and to listen to the sermons of pastors who had suffered like tribulations, and who brought comfort
CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

It was only a century ago that Dickens wrote his bitter attacks upon the schools of his day. It is incredible to the modern reader that only one hundred years ago the rod ruled supreme: parents whipped their children, teachers whipped their pupils, men beat their horses, circus trainers abused their animals, husbands whipped their wives, officials whipped the idiots and insane!

There is little in the history of the educational system of England to which the present-day Englishman may "point with pride." It was not until near the turn of the nineteenth century that England had in operation an educational system which could by any stretch of the imagination be called adequate. Scotland, under John Knox, had in every parish an elementary school, in every market town a grammar school, and in every city a university, a system which assured an education for future generations. In England unfortunately the master motive was secular greed for Church endowments, for the churches were in charge of education; this meant neglect of the schools through indifference of the clergy, who were
interested only in keeping as much money as possible for their own private use. A small privileged class received the benefit of schooling while the great mass of people sank into ignorance.

Several types of schools existed side by side during Dickens' day, most of these eventually being absorbed into what is today a state-supported system similar to the public school system of the United States. Dickens was familiar with four main types of schools. The Sunday Schools, operated by the Church, provided a meager education for children of the masses, but these reached their maximum efficiency during the eighteenth century, and were on the decline by 1850; the monitorial schools, in which most of the instruction was carried out through student monitors, were maintained for children of the lower middle classes and the poor, and these schools provided the nucleus from which state-supported schools developed; private schools, for the poor and middle classes, operated by schoolmasters and their families, these being private boarding schools maintaining themselves for the profit of the owners rather than the welfare of the students; and the so-called "public schools," heavily endowed institutions such as Eton, which catered only to the rich. Of these four types of schools, Dickens chose to depict the third, the private schools; when he wrote of cramming, physical and mental cruelty, insufficient food, crowded and dirty sleeping quarters, and an unpleasant teacher-
pupil relationship, he was describing the average private school of his day, such as the one which he attended as a youth shortly after his father's release from debtor's prison.

The evils which Dickens attacked in the schools were legion: cramming, isolating of young children from the home, imparting of dull instruction, orphan asylums, poor homes, businesslike methods carried to extreme, corporal punishment! It is to be noted that Dickens characteristically wrote less about the good than the bad; of his five most famous schools, Squeers', Dr. Blimber's, Creakle's, Gradgrind's, and Dr. Strong's, only the last is good.

Some of the educational evils which Dickens attacked were within the realm of the home. Cramming was an evil which most parents encouraged. Little Paul Dombey was removed from school only when he was physically so exhausted that he was unable any more to learn facts -- the all-important facts which would supposedly enable him to step into his father's shoes as head of "Dombey and Son." This cramming of facts is especially stressed in Dr. Blimber's school.

Through citing of such cases as that of Little Paul, Dickens hoped to startle parents out of their lethargy. It is true that here, as in most of Dickens' novels, there is some exaggeration. He considered the subject of education so important that he described twenty-eight schools. In these, as well as in other institutions for children and in unpleasant homes he reveals almost every form of bad training
caused by ignorance, selfishness, over-anxiety, indifference, incorrect philosophy, and un-Christian practices.

George Gissing, in his *Charles Dickens*, gives typical comments on the situation as follows:

Dotheboys was of course, even in these bad times, an exceptional method for the rearing of youth. It is not cold-blooded cruelty, but blockheaded ignorance, against which Dickens has to fight over the whole ground of education. We have noticed his attitude towards the system of classical training; the genteel private schools of his day invited satire, and supplied him with some of his most entertaining chapters. Dr. Blewser's establishment is a favourable specimen of the kind of thing that satisfied well-to-do parents; genial ridicule suffices for its condemnation. But Dickens went deeper and laid stress upon the initial stages of the absurd system.

Always profoundly interested in these little people, Dickens, without reaching any very clear conception of reform, well understood the evil consequence of such gross neglect or mistaken zeal as were common in households of every class.

There is evidence to show that Dickens, who after his father's dismissal from prison as a result of liquidating his debts with money which he inherited, was placed in school, was himself a victim of the evils which he later described, as the following testimony from a classmate shows:

My impression is that I was a schoolfellow of Dickens for nearly two years: he left before me, I think at about 15 years of age. Mr. Jones's school, called the Wellington-academy, was in the Hampstead-road, at the north-east corner of Granby-street. The schoolhouse was afterwards removed for the London and North-western railway. It was considered at the time a very superior sort of school, one of the best indeed in that part of London; but it was most shamefully mis-managed, and the boys made little progress. The proprietor, Mr. Jones, was a Welshman; a most

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1 P. 146.
ignorant fellow, and a mere tyrant; whose chief employment was to scourge the boys. 2

Dickens' extensive writing on the subject of children's education is an indication of wide reading, as well as of genuine interest. He seemed to be especially interested in Froebel's description of the kindergarten and in 1855 expressed his interest in and approval of the movement in an article on the subject published in Household Words. Through such articles he fought a battle against the enemies of the children and helped to win one of the greatest victories of civilized times.

Dickens believed that the failure of education in his day had its roots in faulty family relationships, and that only by improving conditions in the home could any fundamental change be made in the schools. Back of Paul Dombey's failure to adapt himself at school, try as he will, is the ambitious father, who had dealt "in hidea, but never in hearts," 3 and who, when the mother fails to rally after bringing Paul into the world and dies in her daughter's arms, promises every food available to the wetnurse who can keep "Dombey and Son" from tottering. Fitful after the child's death is the loneliness of Florence -- neglected, under the care of a spitfire who is "a disciple of that school of trainers of the young idea which holds that childhood, like money, must be shaken and rattled and jostled about a good

2 John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens, I, 61.

3 Dombey and Son, I, 3.
deal to keep it bright," and having so much affection that seemed to interest no one and such an affectionate nature that brought down upon itself so much needless suffering. Cursed with an unfeeling parent; whose indifference turns to hatred after her brother's death, she eventually gives up the attempt to learn the way to his heart, and flees to Captain Cuttle; she does so only after her father has struck her and she knows the case is hopeless.

David Copperfield, too, is a study in abused childhood. With the arrival of Murdstone, David's happy childhood is gone and he is sent away to school; there the numerous whippings to which he had become inured under Murdstone's domination are continued under a cruel schoolmaster. Circumstances are such that a gulf is created between him and his beloved mother, and with the death of her and her baby, David's last contact with a happy past is broken.

Another neglected child is Little Nell, who, in care of a weak-willed grandfather, wanders around over the countryside and eventually dies. In speaking of Nell, the kind schoolmaster, who had known her well, says, "When Death strikes down the innocent and young, for every fragile form from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shapes of mercy, charity and love, to walk the

4Ibid., pp. 33-34.
world and bless it."

Two mother-and-daughter pairs in Dickens' novels deserve special mention: Alice Marwood, formerly a neglected child, then a kept woman — and her mother, who has sunk so low that she steals even from children; and the proud, selfish, and willful Edith Dombey — and her scheming and unpleasant mother, "Cleopatra." A third pair, representing the poorly adjusted mother and son are Mrs. Steerforth, whose child can do no wrong — and the independent, selfish, and arrogant son whose overindulgent mother has made him the failure he is. These are only a few examples cited by Dickens of incorrect parental influence.

In many ways Dickens stresses necessity of happiness in the home. It is possible that he does so because his own home life during his childhood was unhappy; he had had little sympathy, and his parents had exhibited little interest in his welfare. Friends testified that Dickens loved children and that he was mild with his own in comparison with other parents of his day; they stated too that he also loved dumb animals, which explains their presence in many of his books. The novelist does not consider wealth a necessary attribute of happy home life; in citing the happy Toodles, who are prolific and poor, he mentions only one misfit: Bilber, who, much against his will, has been removed from this environment.

5The Old Curiosity Shop, II, 347.
and sent to school.  

There are several outstanding schools in Dickens' novels; among the most famous are the four bad schools, Blimber's, Dotheboys Hall, Salem House, and Gradgrind's, and one good one, Dr. Strong's. Dickens' educational theories are expressed in descriptions of these five.

The Blimber School in Dombey and Son is presided over by Mrs. Pipchin, said to be so systematic at all times that she can tame the wildest in a few months.

She was generally spoken of as a "great manager" of children; and the secret of her management was, to give them everything that they didn't like, and nothing that they did -- which was found to sweeten their dispositions very much. She was such a bitter old lady that one was tempted to believe there had been some mistake in the application of the Peruvian machinery, and that all her waters of gladness and milk of human kindness, had been pumped out dry, instead of the mines.  

Patrons, observing Mrs. Pipchin's firmness and impartiality, are very favorably impressed with her efficiency.

Mrs. Pipchin's scale of charges being high, however, to all who could afford to pay, and Mrs. Pipchin very seldom sweetening the equable acidity of her nature in favor of anybody, she was held to be an old lady of remarkable firmness, who was quite scientific in her knowledge of the childish character. On this reputation, and on the broken heart of Mr. Pipchin, she had contrived, taking one year with another, to eke out a tolerably sufficient living since her husband's demise.  

Little Paul's education provides some anxiety to the

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6Dombey and Son, I, 122.
7Ibid., p. 123.
faculty, for he is already six, and he has not yet started Greek! A vigorous course of education is then instituted by the faculty: Miss Blimber, who works like a ghoul digging up dead languages; Mrs. Blimber, a lady of no education but of vast pretensions; Dr. Blimber, who looks Paul over as though he were an inanimate thing or an animal he is about to kill; and Mr. Feeder, B. A., who gives the children "no rest from the pursuit of stony-hearted verbs, savage noun-substantives, inflexible syntactic passages, and ghosts of exercises that appeared to them in their dreams." Mrs. Blimber explains to the child that he is like a bee plunging into a garden of choice flowers, sipping for the first time the sweets of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Terence, Plautus, and Cicero! Little Paul, intelligent but not physically strong, studies all day and much of the night, but finally must enlist the aid of his faithful sister Florence. Urged on relentlessly by the Blimbers who in turn are pushed by the fanatically ambitious Mr. Dombey, the child undergoes a physical breakdown which causes the sympathetic Susan to state that she would like to see the Blimbers building a road, with Miss Blimber leading the group with a pickaxe. The natural consequence of the physical and mental crowding of the child is his death, a tragedy which shatters the hopes of Dombey.

The school continues, notwithstanding, after Paul's

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8Ibid., p. 175.
death, as Florence and Mr. Toots find later when they visit the institution. They observe that Briggs is still grinding in the mill of knowledge, along with Tozer, Johnson, and other friends of Paul, and that all are engaged in the important task of forgetting. Florence observes that the pupils are still pale and listless, as they had been when the frail Paul had been one of their number.

Wackford Squeers, an outstanding example of how a school teacher should not be, probably accounts for the fame of Dotheboys Hall, best known of the twenty-eight schools cited by Dickens. Dickens had heard rumors of cruelty in the schools of Yorkshire, and after investigating in person he used these schools as a model for Dotheboys Hall, described in Nicholas Nickleby. Later proved to be an exaggeration, if not an outright falsehood, because of the untruthfulness of one of the informants, the case nevertheless served to bring to light the evils which existed in most schools of the day. Dickens speaks of schoolmasters as traders "in avarice, indifference, or imbecility of parents, and the helplessness of children; ignorant, sordid, brutal men, to whom few considerate persons would have entrusted the board and lodging of a horse or a dog."9

Ralph Nickleby, a wealthy uncle of Nicholas, reads the following advertisement of the school to the youth, and

9Nicholas Nickleby, I, preface, pp. xviii, xix.
expresses approval of it:

"Education. -- At Mr. Wackford Squeers's Academy, Dotheboys Hall, at the delightful village of Dotheboys, near Greta Bridge in Yorkshire, Youth are boarded, clothed, booked, furnished with pocket-money, provided with all necessaries, instructed in all languages living and dead, mathematics, orthography, geometry, astronomy, trigonometry, the use of the globes, algebra, single stick (if required), writing, arithmetic, fortification, and every other branch of classical literature. Terms, twenty guineas per annum. No extras, no vacations, and diet unparalleled. Mr. Squeers is in town, and attends daily, from one till four, at the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill. N. B. An able assistant wanted, Annual salary 5 pounds. A Master of Arts would be preferred."10

The reader first meets Squeers interviewing a father, who, because of his second marriage, wishes to send his son to Dotheboys to get him out of the way. To advertise the advantages offered to Dotheboys pupils, Squeers tells the father about a boy who had died at the school with the institution's best dictionary under his head. Having impressed him as desired, Squeers proceeds to the coffee room where he buys two pennyworth of milk and a little bread, and provides breakfast with this for the three boys in his care; starting, and stopping soon afterward, at a signal, the breakfast is soon over, allowing ample time for Squeers himself to eat a substantial meal.

The school building is a long, cold structure, surrounded by straggling outbuildings with a barn and stable adjoining. Squeers is reported to buy dead cattle to provide

10 Ibid., p. 32.
meat for the boys; other food is a thin gruel, and cheap vegetables such as turnips which the boys gather. The pupils sleep several in a bed. Squeers tells Nicholas Nickleby, the new schoolmaster, that he does not know yet whose towel to put him on, and speaks vaguely of the "school spoon."

The boys are described thus:

Pallid and haggard faces, lank and bony figures, children with the countenances of old men, deformities with irons upon their limbs, boys of stunted growth, and others whose long meagre legs would hardly bear their stooping bodies, all crowded on the view together; there were the bleared eye, the hare-lip, the crooked foot, and every ugliness of distortion that told of unnatural aversion conceived by parents for their offspring, or of young lives which, from the earliest dawn of infancy, had been one horrible endurance of cruelty and neglect. There were little faces which should have been handsome, darkened with the scowl of sullen dogged suffering; there was childhood with the light of its eye quenched, its beauty gone, and its helplessness alone remaining; there were vicious-faced boys, brooding, with leaden eyes, like malefactors in a jail; and there were young creatures on whom the sins of their frail parents had descended, weeping even for the mercenary nurses they had known, and lonesome even in their loneliness. With every kindly sympathy and affection blasted in its birth, with every young and healthy feeling flogged and starved down, with every revengeful passion that can fester in swollen hearts, eating its evil way to their core in silence, what an incipient Hell was breeding here!\(^\text{11}\)

Everywhere they turn the boys are cruelly treated. They never laugh, and they have no spirit at all, in contrast with the schoolmaster himself, who is the only playful one. His teaching comprises a series of activities; when a youth can

\(^{11}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 107.\)
write and spell "clean winder," for example, he is assigned the task of cleaning windows; through employment of this practical method Squeers can get the work on the place done free. The schoolroom is so cold that the boys get their lessons bundled in wraps and write with fingers blue with cold. Floggings are numerous and brutal. Suppers, consisting of bread and cheese, are scant, and are eaten in the cold and dark, after which they go to their cheerless sleeping quarters and tumble exhausted into their crowded beds.

An example of the evil effect of such treatment is cited in Smike, who at nineteen is so defeated by years of abuse that he seems mentally deficient. When Squeers beats him for running away, Nicholas beats Squeers in return, which causes Fanny Squeers, his daughter, to notify Ralph, "Pa is one mask of bruises." ¹²

Squeers cites instances of his kindness to the boys: e. g., when a pupil was afflicted with a painful abscess, Mrs. Squeers obligingly opened it with a penknife! In extreme cases, he states; when a doctor must be called, he has the physician treat members of the Squeers family; after Mr. Squeers had been beaten by Nickleby, he had scarlet fever spread among five of the boys so that a doctor could be called and the expense of his visit be paid by the parents, while Squeers was treated free -- a method which he used, that time with whooping cough, when little Wackford was born. ¹²

¹²Ibid., p. 212.
boys, he states, are given not only medical care, but the opportunity sometimes to graze for turnips in a field.

With Squeers at last in prison, the boys are almost delirious with joy over their new-found freedom. Their first act is beating the remaining members of the Squeers family, their next is tearing up the school property, after which a cheer arose as the walls of Dotheboys Hall had never echoed before, and were destined never to respond to again. When the sound had died away, the school was empty; and of the busy noisy crowd which had peopled it but five minutes before, not one remained. 13

In course of time Dotheboys Hall comes to be gradually forgotten by the boys, as one of the phases of an unpleasant past.

Salem House, in David Copperfield, is another famous Dickens school. Here David mentions a strange smell which he notices, the odor suggesting mildewed corduroys, apples needing air, and rotten books. There is so much ink about the place that it looks as though the skies have rained, hailed, snowed, and blown ink through the passing years. In this environment the boys are mercilessly abused. Mental punishment is severe; David is required to wear a placard on his back warning others to watch out because he bites. Creakle is mercilessly cruel, surveying his pupils as a giant might his captives, inflicting punishments at random, but especially aiming his blows at chubby boys. There is no more

13Ibid., II, 491.
repulsive picture anywhere in Dickens than that of Creakle, pausing, with whip poised over a trembling boy, to crack jokes with the other boys, who must laugh, though their faces are white and their hearts pounding against their ribs. David Copperfield describes part of his school life thus:

The rest of the half-year is a jumble in my recollection of the daily strife and struggle of our lives; of the waning summer and the changing season; of the frosty mornings when we were rung out of bed, and the cold, cold smell of the dark nights when we were rung into bed; of the evening schoolroom dimly lighted and indifferently warmed, and the morning schoolroom which was nothing but a great shivering-machine; of the alternation of broiled beef with roast beef, and boiled mutton with roast mutton; of clods of bread and butter, dog's-eared lesson-books, cracked slates, tear-blotted copy-books, canings, rulerings, hair-cuttings, rainy Sundays, suet-puddings, and a dirty atmosphere of ink surrounding all.14

(Later Creakle becomes head of a prison and works out a model system of discipline, stressing solitary confinement as the only effective punishment which will make lasting converts and penitents. Copperfield surveys the prison system, in which the buildings are modern and new, and wonders what people would have said if half that amount had been spent for an industrial school for young people or a home for the aged.)

Curriculum is stressed in the Gradgrind school, described in Hard Times, as is shown by the following lecture by Gradgrind:

14 David Copperfield, I, 126.
"Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!"\textsuperscript{15}

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.\textsuperscript{16}

In this school indeed only facts received attention.

Mr. Gradgrind, in a lecture to the students on taste, states that in real life there are no horses on the wall or flowers on the floor; hence horses and flowers should not appear in wallpaper or rugs. He himself is so unimaginative that he has never learned to see a face in the moon, and the cow he describes would never jump over the moon; naturally he is disappointed in his own children, and fears, when they are not interested in material he has provided for them to play with, that some story book must have gotten into their hands.

A young girl in the school startles them all by confessing that she used to read to her father about Fairies, the Dwarf, the Genies, and the Hunchback. Louisa Gradgrind once horrified her father by starting out a sentence with "I wonder." One never wondered, one always knew!

\textsuperscript{15}Hard Times, p. 1. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 2.
Mr. M'Choakumchild, manager of the Gradgrind School, chides Sissy for not being interested in the globe, and is still further shocked when he asks her if there would be national prosperity if the nation received fifty million pounds and she replies by saying it depended upon who got the fifty million.

The effect of living solely in a world of facts and figures is shown in Louisa. Forced by her father to marry the wealthy Mr. Bounderby, age fifty, who has watched her grow up and who feels that she is worthy of him and his position, she falls in love with Harthouse in an effort to escape from the drab world of facts and figures; and then turns against her father, whom she tells that she would have been better off with no education at all than with the kind she had received. Bounderby, on the other hand, has another explanation of her failure; he states that her education has been too soft, and that everything about education should go except the blows!

In David Copperfield the Dr. Strong school is cited as a model institution:

Dr. Strong's was an excellent school; as different from Mr. Creakle's as good is from evil. It was very gravely and decorously ordered, and on a sound system; with an appeal, in everything, to the honour and good faith of the boys, and an avowed intention to rely on their possession of those qualities unless they proved themselves unworthy of it, which worked wonders. We all felt that we had a part in the management of the place, and in sustaining its character and dignity.
Hence, we soon became warmly attached to it -- I am sure I did for one, and I never knew, in all my time, of any other boy being otherwise -- and learnt with a good will, desiring to do it credit.\textsuperscript{17}

David is glad to attend this school and is sorry when he must leave it. Agnes Wickfield, a teacher who says the labor is pleasant, and the kind schoolmaster with whom Nell and her grandfather become acquainted during their wanderings, are examples of the type of teacher of whom Dickens approved.

In addition to these five famous schools, mention should be made of the Grinder's School, to which Biler was sent. In his description of this school, Dickens stresses the cruelty of putting uniforms on boys which make them ridiculous in the eyes of others; he also stresses lack of preparation for life, for they were never taught honour at the Grinder's School, where the system that prevailed was particularly strong in the engendering of hypocrisy. Inasmuch that many of the friends and masters of the past Grinders said, if this were what came of education for the common people, let us have none. Some more rational said, let us have a better one. But the governing powers of the Grinder's Company were always ready for them, by picking out a few boys who had turned out well, in spite of the system, and roundly asserting that they could have only have turned out well because of it. Which settled the business of those objectors out of hand, and established the glory of the Grinder's Institution.\textsuperscript{18}

While there were few girls' schools in Dickens' day, and the subject of women's education receives little attention

\textsuperscript{17}I, 283-284.

\textsuperscript{18}Dombey and Son, II, 128-129.
from Dickens, he touches on the subject in such references as the following, an advertisement which stresses the superficiality of instruction offered in girls' schools:

Ladies' Seminary -- curriculum English Grammar, composition, geography, and the use of dumb bells, by Miss Melissa Wackles; writing, arithmetic, dancing, music and general fascination, by Miss Sophy Wackles; the art of needle-work, marking, and samplery, by Miss Jane Wackles; corporal punishment, fasting, and other tortures and terrors, by Mrs. Wackles.19

Those who give special study to Dickens' schools are impressed by the fact that he concentrates on evils in private schools; he might have pointed out also such evils as those which existed in the monitorial system. That he did not do so may have been because he knew less about them from first-hand experience.

Restraint causes perversion of natural instincts; this is his general message concerning proper training of youth. His novels teach that children should be given a normal childhood, surrounded by the affection and sympathy which alone will provide the environment necessary for their proper and natural growth. There is no way of measuring the extent to which he succeeded in bringing this about, but he undoubtedly played no small part in improving the lot of nineteenth century English school children.

Dickens' satire must have hit its mark, for several schoolmasters brought suit against Dickens for depicting

19The Old Curiosity Shop, I, 80-81.
them as Squeers, though all cases were dropped. The author of an article published in Blackwood's Magazine, when mentioning Do-The-Boys, states that "we think few fathers or mothers could summon sufficient fortitude to intrust their boys knowingly to any representative of the redoubtable Squeers."\(^{20}\)

The writer, in commenting on Dickens, states that he is a man of liberal sentiments, "an assailer of constituted wrongs and authorities,"\(^{21}\) a class writer full of middle class respectability. He does not dispute with Dickens on the question of need of educational reform, but he does attack Dickens' educational theories, propounded in his social novels: that teaching of universal knowledge of facts makes villains of sons and poor wives of daughters, and that the opposite system of no education at all, allowing sentiments and affections full development, produces angels. The writer warns that Dickens is the most popular writer on library shelves, and that with the kindest audience a man ever had it would become their favorite to use his public well.\(^{22}\)

\(^{20}\)This spelling of the word "Dotheboys" shows the origin of the name which Dickens used for this famous school.

\(^{21}\)Blackwood's Magazine, LXXVII, 457.

\(^{22}\)Ibid., p. 451.
CHAPTER IV

ENGLISH LAW

Law and red tape were related in Dickens' mind with prisons, for he considered that the law was partly responsible for the existence of the prisons. Because he felt that an unjust system of legislation had resulted in a prison sentence for his father, he was interested in law reform, and mentioned it often in his novels.

In *Pickwick Papers* he pictures Bontanswill, full of loathsome corruption and dirty bribery, divided into the two opposing parties of Blues and Buffs; these parties, probably meant to represent the Whigs and Tories, carry their differences even into their religious life, for there are a Blue Aisle and a Buff Aisle in the church! This novel presents a series of hilarious scenes: drunken voters locked up at election time; a middle-aged woman of rural England who has not read the parliamentary debates, hence does not know civilized life; the magistrate addressed as "your wash-up"; Sam Weller's father buying a wedding license because it is forced on him, then searching for a woman who will marry him and enable him to use the license; the town of Muggleton with
its four hundred and twenty petitions against continuance of Negro slavery abroad, the same number against interference with the factory system at home, sixty-eight in favor of sale of livings in church, and eighty-six for abolishing Sunday trading in the streets; Sam Weller's father upsetting a load of voters "accidentally"; law offices where machines are "put in motion for torture of His Majesty's liege subjects and the comfort and emolument of the practitioners of law." 1

Ridiculous also is the famous breach of promise suit, Bardell vs. Pickwick -- in this some of the most damaging testimony offered is two letters written by Mr. Pickwick to his landlady, Mrs. Bardell, one of which reads, "Dear Mrs. B. --- Chops and Tomato Sauce. Yours, Pickwick" 2; the other tells Mrs. B. not to trouble herself about the warming pan. In the face of such evidence he loses the case, is sent to prison, and is fined seven hundred and fifty pounds, while the faithful Mr. Weller ejaculates, "Vy won't there a alleybi!" 3 Another breach of promise suit is that of Miss Ruggs against a baker, as related in Little Dorrit; according to Dickens' story, Miss Ruggs, the daughter of Mr. Pancks' landlord, was "a lady of a little property, which she had acquired, together with much distinction in the neighborhood,

1Pickwick Papers, p. 16.  2Ibid., p. 82.  3Ibid., p. 90.
by having her heart severely lacerated and her feelings mangled by a middle-aged baker, resident in the vicinity, against whom she had, by the agency of Mr. Rugg, found it necessary to proceed at law to recover damages for a breach of promise of marriage."\(^4\) The outcome of it all is that the baker is ridiculed by children and adults wherever he goes, and Miss Rugg is much respected by all.

For his famous chancery descriptions Dickens drew heavily on his own experience as court reporter. He told his friends that he lost respect for the law during this period in his life, spent in recording proceedings of Parliament. As David Copperfield describes it:

I am in high repute for my accomplishment in all pertaining to the art, and am joined with eleven others in reporting the debates in Parliament for a Morning Newspaper. Night after night, I record predictions that never come to pass, professions that are never fulfilled, explanations that are only meant to mystify. I wallow in words. Britannia, that unfortunate female, is always before me, like a trussed fowl; skewered through and through with office-pens, and bound hand and foot with red tape. I am sufficiently behind the scenes to know the worth of political life. I am quite an Infidel about it, and shall never be converted.\(^5\)

In the following passage of vivid description, Dickens presents Chancery to his readers:

This is the Court of Chancery; which has its decay- ing houses and its blighted lands in every shore; which has its worn-out lunatic in every madhouse; and its dead in every churchyard; which has its

\(^4\)I, 366.

\(^5\)David Copperfield, II, 229-230.
ruined suitor, with his slipshod heels and threadbare dress, borrowing and begging through the round of every man's acquaintance; which gives to monied might, the means abundantly of wearily out the right; which so exhausts finances, patience, courage, hope; so overthrows the brain and breaks the heart; that there is not an honourable man among its practitioners who would not give -- who does not often give -- the warning, "Suffer any wrong that can be done you, rather than come here!"\(^6\)

Dickens was bitter concerning the heartaches which had been caused by Chancery.

To see everything going on so smoothly, and to think of the roughness of the suitors' lives and deaths; to see all that full dress and ceremony, and to think of the waste, and want, and beggared misery it represented; to consider that, while the sickness of hope deferred was raging in so many hearts, this polite show went calmly on from day to day, and year to year, in such good order and composure; to behold the Lord Chancellor, and the whole array of practitioners under him, looking at one another and at the spectators, as if nobody had ever heard that all over England the name in which they were assembled was a bitter jest; was held in universal horror, contempt, and indignation: was known for something so flagrant and bad, that little short of a miracle could bring any good out of it to any one: this was so curious and self-contradictory to me, who had no experience of it, that it was at first incredible and I could not comprehend it.\(^7\)

Dickens presents his criticism of the courts of his day in the case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce in which the chief characters of *Bleak House* were involved:

This scarecrow of a suit has, in course of time, become so complicated, that no man alive knows what it means. The parties to it understand it least; but it has been observed that no two Chancery lawyers can talk about it for five minutes, without coming to a

\(^6\) *Bleak House*, I, 3.  
total disagreement as to all the premises. Innumerable children have been born into the cause; innumerable young people have married into it; innumerable old people have died out of it. Scores of persons have deliriously found themselves made parties in Jarndyce and Jarndyce, without knowing how or why; whole families have inherited legendary hatreds with the suit. The little plaintiff or defendant, who was promised a new rocking-horse when Jarndyce and Jarndyce should be settled, has grown up, possessed himself of a real horse, and trotted away into the other world. Fair wares of court have faded into mothers and grandmothers; a long procession of Chancellors has come in and gone out; the legion of bills in the suit have been transformed into mere bills of mortality; there are not three Jarndyces left upon the earth perhaps, since old Tom Jarndyce in despair blew his brains out at a coffee-house in Chancery Lane; but Jarndyce and Jarndyce still drags its dreary length before the Court, perennially hopeless. . . .

Jarndyce and Jarndyce has passed into a joke. That is the only good that has ever come of it. It has been death to many, but it is a joke in the profession. Every master in Chancery has had a reference out of it. Every Chancellor was "in it" for somebody or other, when he was counsel at the bar. Good things have been said about it by blue-nosed, bulbous-shoed old benchers, in select port-wine committee after dinner in hall. Articles clerks have been in the habit of blessing their legal wit upon it.8

Mr. Jarndyce tells Esther that their case is so complicated that no one knows its meaning, that children have been born into the case, married in it and died out of it. The young people of Bleak House who enter the case meet Miss Flite, who has lost her mind from long dealing with the law; she states that she will get a judgment on the Day of Judgment, and meanwhile continues to take in every session of court which deals with the suit. She never regains her

8Ibid., p. 5.
sanity -- a fact which would seem to be a blessing in view of her many troubles: her father's loss of his home and his death in a debtor's prison, her brother's drunkenness, her sister's fall, and her own illness, all caused by Chancery! Her mental state is shown by her remark that she has added the Jarndyce wards to her collection of birds, named Hope, Joy, Youth, Peace, Rest, Life, Dust, Ashes, Waste, Want, Ruin, Despair, Madness, Death, Cunning, Folly, Words, Wigs, Rags, Sheepskin, Plunder, Precedent, Jargon, Gammon, and Spinach!

That English law existed to make business for itself was a fact that Dickens deplored. In Bleak House he makes mention of shepherds playing on Chancery pipes that have no stop, keeping their sheep in the fold in one way or another until they have been completely shorn.

The famous case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce ends at last, to the surprise of all, especially of the young litigants; it ends because the prosecutors have wrung every available dollar from their victims. To dispose of the case, and to prepare the way for others presumably as long, immense bundles of paper must be removed from court, sufficient in bulk to cause bearers to stagger under their weight.

There is no more famous picture of official red tape in literature than the Circumlocution Office, described in Little Dorrit. The Circumlocution Office, which is described
in detail, and which affects the lives and fortunes of most of the main characters of the story, is a picture of English law, slow to move, harmful to the citizens it should be designed to aid, cumbersome in operation, and administered by lawyers whose sole aim is so to confuse the issue by talking around the point that they can squeeze out every dollar involved in the suit. Dickens speaks of various troublesome convicts who are under sentence to be broken alive by the office, as is anyone who must unfortunately come in contact with it. At the opening of Chapter X, Vol. I, Dickens describes the Office at length:

The Circumlocution Office was (as everybody knows without being told) the most important Department under the government. No public business of any kind could be possibly done at any time, without the acquiescence of the Circumlocution Office. Its finger was in the largest public pie, and in the smallest public tart. It was equally impossible to do the plainest right and to undo the plainest wrong, without the express authority of the Circumlocution Office. If another Gunpowder Plot had been discovered half an hour before the lighting of the watch, nobody would have been justified in saving the parliament until there had been half a score of boards, half a bushel of minutes, several sacks of official memoranda, and a family-vault full of ungrammatical correspondence, on the part of the Circumlocution Office.

This glorious establishment had been early in the field, when the one sublime principle involving the difficult art of governing a country, was first distinctly revealed to statesmen. It had been foremost to study that bright revelation, and to carry its shining influence through the whole of the proceedings. Whatever was required to be done, the Circumlocution Office was beforehand with all the public departments in the art of perceiving -- HOW NOT TO DO IT.
Only those public servants who know how not to do it are in favor with the Office, which leads to its having something to do with everything. In dealing with the Office countless people are lost in the process of being referred from one department to another, never again to see the light of day. They are sat upon by boards, interviewed by secretaries, and registered by clerks, a process which never stops in their lifetime. If ignorant people occasionally demand an investigation, the Office makes a field day out of it; and its honorable gentlemen tell the investigator that the Office is always right, but never so right as in this particular matter -- a statement which is always backed by a very nice majority. Spokesmen for the Office on such occasions are always given promotions as a result of their efforts on its behalf.

There seems to be no attempt on the part of the Office to aid the public, for, as Mr. Barnacle says, the Office is accessible to the public if the public approaches it according to the official forms; if the public does not approach it according to the official forms, the public has itself to blame. It is good business for the Office to beat about the bush, and push the client from one department to another. No one ever seems interested in the client himself. Officials loaf all day, according to Glennam, who states that he found three gentlemen: number one doing nothing in
particular, number two doing nothing in particular, and number three doing nothing in particular. Poor Mr. Flornish, in a like situation, vaguely protests by stating that if nothing can be done for a man it is wrong to take pay for doing it.

Men of great dignity and importance occupy the Circumlocution seats of the mighty. Of these, most important are the Barnacles; a description of one branch of the family serves to show their importance:

Pursuing his inquiries, Glennam found that the Gowan family were a very distant ramification of the Barnacles; and that the paternal Gowan, originally attached to a legation abroad, had been pensioned off as a Commissioner of nothing particular somewhere or other, and had died at his post with his drawn salary in his hand, nobly defending it to the last extremity. In consideration of this eminent public service, the Barnacle then in power had recommended the Crown to bestow a pension of two or three hundred a year on his widow; to which the next Barnacle in power had added certain shady and sedate apartments in the Palace at Hampton Court, where the old lady still lived, deploring the degeneracy of the times, in company with several other old ladies of both sexes. Her son, Mr. Henry Gowan, inheriting from his father, the Commissioner, that very questionable help in life, a very small independence, had been difficult to settle; the rather, as public appointments chanced to be scarce, and his genius, during his earlier manhood, was of that exclusively agricultural character which applies itself to the cultivation of wild oats. 8

These Barnacles are in every British occupation under the sun, for they accompany any venturesome navigator anywhere, to claim a share in the spoils if there should be discoveries

8 Ibid., pp. 253-254.
of interest and profit. The clan is astonishingly large. At its head is Lord Decimus Tite Parnacle himself, with a decided odor of dispatch boxes upon him. He has risen to dizzy heights on the wings of one idea, that the freedom of the people must not be interfered with, an idea which he consistently carried out by prospering on the efforts of the ship's crew, while he as pilot does nothing to help keep the ship above water. If any objection is ever made, he arises in all of his grandeur and tells his listeners that he cannot in this free country set the bounds of charity, fetter free enterprise, cramp the progress, and dampen the self-reliance of its people!

Lord Lancaster Stiltstalking, a human refrigerator, is described by Dickens as so frigid that he has iced several European courts, striking such cold to the stomachs of foreigners with whom he has dealt that he is remembered for twenty-five years. Mr. Mercury is another influential member, of such importance that all of the British merchants since the days of Whittington cannot equal him. The only person in existence he cannot control is his wife, a lady of only one mood, the Imperative. Eventually he goes to such lengths with forgery and robbery that he commits suicide. Such characters satirize the "stuffed shirt" variety of moneyed men who make a great show with money dishonestly gained.

The workings of the House are shown in the case of Mr.
Dorrit, who inherits money to pay off his debts, but spends six months signing and countersigning, checking and counter-checking, before the deal can be closed; and of Mr. Doyce, one of the rebuffed of the law, a man who is interested in patents but who cannot break through the red tape and secure the attention of the proper officials.

In David Copperfield Dickens makes definite contrast between the lot of the fortunate and the unfortunate when he has David point out to Mr. Spenlow such injustices as these:

That, perhaps, it was a little unjust, that all the great offices in this great office, should be magnificent sinecures, while the unfortunate working-clerks in the cold dark room up-stairs were the worst rewarded, and the least considered men, doing important services, in London. That perhaps it was a little indecent that the principal registrar of all, whose duty it was to find the public, constantly resorting to this place, all needful accommodation, should be an enormous sinecurist in virtue of that post (and might be, besides, a clergyman, a pluralist, the holder of the stall in a cathedral, and what not), while the public was put to the inconvenience of which we had a specimen every afternoon when the office was busy, and which we knew to be quite monstrous.10

Through personal observation Dickens, as court reporter in his early manhood, learned of the deficiencies in law. This accounts for the accuracy and naturalness of the above picture from David Copperfield, which is largely an autobiographical novel. More superficial are his descriptions of the Parnacles and Stiltstalkings, whom he did not meet

10David Copperfield, II, 52.
until success came to him as a writer, and with whom he never learned to feel completely at ease.

The opinions which Dickens expressed concerning the law seem to have been received with approval, judging from the evidence of periodicals, newspapers and books of his time. A typical opinion is that expressed in the Edinburgh Review which calls Dickens' humanity "plain, practical and manly,"\(^{11}\) and states that Pickwick Papers is "one of the most acute and pointed satires upon the state and administration of English law that ever appeared in the light and lively dress of fiction."\(^{12}\) In treating of the effect of that law upon the innocent victim, the author expresses hope that "the imprisonment of Pickwick affords an opportunity of depicting the interior of a debtor's prison, and the manifold evils of that system, toward the abolition of which much, we trust, will have been effected by a statute of the past session."\(^{13}\)

Dickens' satire was aimed against the English system of law, which during his day allowed long delays, provided little defense for the accused, and was so constituted that an enormous amount of money went into the pockets of unscrupulous lawyers. There was so little real consideration for the common man before the law that it would seem that the country had taken a step backward. As far back as the reign of

\(^{11}\)Edinburgh Review, LXVIII, 77. \(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 80. \(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 82.
Edward I in the thirteenth century, there was a fairer system of law administration than was in force during Dickens' day. Dickens' law courts are drawn from actual court scenes of his day.

(Corruption, dirty politics, expensive delays -- these faults Dickens carefully points out in Pickwick Papers, David Copperfield, Bleak House, Little Dorrit, and to a lesser degree in his other social novels. Though his picture of English law is not a pleasant one, the English reading public must have liked it: today two Suffolk towns vie for the honor of being the original Katenswill!)
CHAPTER VI

MISCELLANEOUS SOCIAL CRITICISMS

Dickens' attacks upon society cannot easily be separated into isolated categories. Most of the evils which he attacked were interrelated -- e.g., there could have been no Squeers without greed for money, general public apathy, and parental failure; there could have been no Oliver Twist without workhouse, prison, official bumbledom, callousness of society, organized crime, circumlocution! Because Dickens had known what it was to be the son of a prisoner, he stressed prison reform; because he had known the innermost workings of the school system from personal experience, he described twenty-eight of these schools in his novels; because he, as a neglected child, came into close contact with the life of the industrial worker, he wrote vividly of crime, child labor, poverty, overcrowding, and sweat-shop conditions -- not as isolated subjects but as parts of a whole, each a necessary adjunct of the completed picture.

And to complete the picture he pointed the finger of scorn at a host of minor evils; at high society, gluttony, religion, medicine, excessive pride, gambling, literary
theft, humbug, greed!

"We must have humbug, we all like humbug, we couldn't get on without humbug," wrote Charles Dickens, delineator of outstanding humbugs of the world of literature.

He had been bitterly poor in his early childhood, a fact which accounts for his sweeping indictment of the world of wealth and society which had turned a cold shoulder to him in his early years. When wealth and fame came to him eventually he softened his attacks on society, but his pictures of high society, though numerous, have never been too convincing.

The Dorrites, in their phenomenal rise in the world, employ Mrs. General to teach them the niceties of society, after a "perfect fury for making acquaintances on whom to impress their riches and importance had seized the House of Dorrit." Under her tutelage the Dorrits made radical changes in their family life. "The wholesale amount of Prunes and Prisms which Mrs. General infused into the family life, combined with the perpetual plunges made by Fanny into society, left but a very small residue of any natural deposit at the bottom of the mixture." Dickens refers often to this social phenomenon as "The Bosom."

Another society dictator is Mrs. Merdle, who from her pinnacle talks didactically to Mrs. Gowan: "As to marriage

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1 Little Dorrit, II, 101.  
2 Ibid., p. 92.  
3 Ibid., p. 484.
on the part of a man, my dear, Society requires that he should retrieve his fortunes by marriage. Society requires that he should found a handsome establishment by marriage. Society does not see, otherwise, what he has to do with marriage." She tells Little Dorrit that Society is hollow, conventional, and worldly, but that it must be consulted because "Society suppresses us and dominates us." Mr. Merdle has been under a doctor's care, but "there was no shadow of Mr. Merdle's complaint on the bosom now displaying precious stones in rivalry with many similar superb jewel-stands; there was no shadow of Mr. Merdle's complaint on young Sparkler, hovering about the rooms, monomaniacally seeking any sufficiently ineligible young lady with no nonsense about her; there was no shadow of Mr. Merdle's complaint on the Barchestons and Stiltstalkings of whom whole companies were present, or any of the company." When discussion comes up of the money Arthur would get from a proposed marriage with Pet, Mrs. Merdle expresses regret that it looks like the old people might live forever. "Mrs. Merdle, who really knew her friend Society pretty well, and who knew what Society's mothers were and what Society's matrimonial market was, and how prices ruled it, and what scheming and counter-scheming took place for the high buyers and what bargaining and huckstering went on, thought in the depths of her

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4 Ibid.  
5 Ibid., p. 295.  
6 Ibid., p. 312.
capacious bosom that this was a sufficiently good catch." 7

In the background is the Pocketbook, Mr. Merdle, very rich, very influential in parliamentary and civic affairs. He has done his part in providing his wife's bosom, "which required so much room to be unfeeling enough in," 8 with jewels, for the bosom is a better place to put one's jewels than one's cares. His marriage has been supremely outstanding; "like all his other speculations, it is sound and successful." 9 Mr. Merdle himself does not shine in Society, "but he is always cultivating it nevertheless, and always moving in it, and always laying out money on it with the greatest liberality." 10 The entertainment is elaborate, with "magnates from the court and magnates from the bench and magnates from the bar, Bishop magnates, Treasury magnates, Horse Guards magnates, Admiralty magnates -- all the magnates that keep us going, and sometimes trip us up." 11 When word is bruited about that Mr. Merdle has made more money, the Bishop says he is glad "to think this wealth flowed into the coffers of a gentleman who was always disposed to maintain the best interests of Society." 12 All of the most important men in the nation confer with Mr. Merdle and flatter him and one talks to him of buying a huge estate, which he says it was his duty to society to own. An evening

7 Ibid., p. 487. 8 Ibid., p. 303. 9 Ibid., p. 303.
10 Ibid., p. 304. 11 Ibid., p. 305. 12 Ibid., p. 306.
with the Merdles is quite an event. There is powder everywhere. "Fulverous particles got into the dishes, and Society's meat had a seasoning of first-rate footmen."¹³ Mr. Merdle seems to understand the situation, for he says, "If you were not an ornament in Society, if I was not a benefactor to Society, you and I would never have come together."¹⁴ He seems to know what his place in the scheme of things is when he says, "You supply manner, and I supply money."¹⁵ He never seems to be at home. "Let Mrs. Merdle announce with all her might, that she was at Home ever so many nights in a season, she could not announce more widely and unmistakably than Mr. Merdle did that he was never at home."¹⁶

Pride was one of Dickens' favorite targets. One type is the official bombast encountered by Mr. Meagles on his release from quarantine, of which he says, "If there is anything that is not to be tolerated on any terms, anything that is a type of Jack-in-the-office insolence and absurdity, anything that represents in coats and waist coats, and big sticks, our English holding-on-by-nonsense, after anyone has found it out, it is a beadle."¹⁷ Similar examples of humbug are Mrs. Skewton, Edith's mother, with her mind cluttered up with frivolous ideas, talking of medieval days "with their

dear old dungeons, and their delightful places of torture and their romantic vengeance, and their picturesque assaults and sieges, and everything that makes life truly charming";18 After her paralytic stroke she is so conscious of her appearance that she asks for rose-colored curtains so that the doctors cannot see her look so haggard;19 Mrs. Blimber of Dombey and Son, with her pretensions to education and her numerous references to Cicero, whom she would so like to have known; and Blandois of Little Dorrit, crook, arch deceiver, and murderer, with his high sounding generalities, such as "To slight a lady would be to be deficient in chivalry toward the sex; and chivalry toward the sex is part of my character."20 Contrast between the sham and the real is nowhere in Dickens more evident than in the scene where Mr. Peggotty pleads with Mrs. Steerforth to allow her son to marry Emily, whom he has seduced; Mrs. Steerforth's pride never allows her to yield, but the simple Mr. Peggotty with his determination to "bide the time when all of us shall be alike in Equality before our God"21 easily dominates the situation, though he fails miserably in his supplication to her.

Little Dorrit and Dombey and Son provide the outstanding examples of snobbishness and humbug, and chief of all the

18Dombey and Son, I, 469-470. 19Ibid., II, 113.
20Little Dorrit, I, 436.
21David Copperfield, II, 38.
Dickens humbugs is Mr. Dorrit. He has been shielded from every unpleasantness while he holds court in the prison, this state of affairs continuing so long that he actually seems to think that he is an important personage, entitled to homage and respect. He remarks, "The poor fellow is a dismal wreck," when Mr. Flornish's father comes from the workhouse to visit them, and he places him at a separate table; Little Dorrit has meanwhile been scolded for walking along the street with a pauper, a workhouse inmate, and her father laments, "I have seen my child, my own daughter, coming into this College out of the public streets -- smiling! smiling! -- arm in arm with -- oh my God, a livery!" When the family inherits money and eventually leaves the prison, royalty itself could not have departed with more of an air.

Of the entire family, the only one who keeps her feet on the ground after that is Amy. Possibly it is as Fanny has said, that she had been in prison so long that she "had its tone and character." The family fear, because there is a sick woman at the inn, that Amy has been lapsing into her old habits and nursing her; as Fanny puts it: "Here are our two women and Pa's valet, and a footman, and a courier, and all sorts of dependents, and yet in the midst of these, we are to have one of ourselves rushing about with tumblers

\[22^\text{Little Dorrit, I, 465.}\] \[23^\text{Ibid., p. 460.}\] \[24^\text{Ibid., p. 322.}\]
of cold water like a menial." Mr. Dorrit mentions that she has "a great position to support." He himself is "handsomely clothed in his fur and broadcloths, rich, free, numerous served and attended, his eyes roving far away among the glories of the landscape, no miserable screen before them to darken his sight and cast its shadow on him." Traveling on the continent in state, the family occupy a palace in Venice six times the size of the Marshalsea Prison. With them is the Governess, Mrs. General, "a prodigy of piety, learning, virtue and gentility," answering Mr. Dorrit's quest for a lady who was "well bred, accomplished, well connected, well accustomed to good society." She is faultlessly groomed, always precise, with "an atmosphere of varnish around Mrs. General's figure." Ironically just when Fanny begins to shine in society beside her husband Sparkler, an impending Blessed Event forces her to remain at home! Of the entire family only one, Little Dorrit, is happy when the fortune is eventually lost.

Dombey and Son remains one of Dickens' best studies in pride. Two prouder people than Dombey and Edith could not be found. As the Major says of them, "Edith Granger and Dombey are well matched; let 'em fight it out! Ragstock backs the winner."

25 Ibid., II, 30. 26 Ibid., p. 31. 27 Ibid., p. 34. 28 Ibid., p. 22. 29 Ibid., p. 23. 30 Ibid., p. 26. 31 Dombey and Son, I, 415.
Edith always has understood Dombey. When under her mother's administration she finally accepts Dombey, she says, "He sees me at the auction and he thinks it well to buy me. Let him! When he came to view me -- perhaps to bid -- he required to see the roll of my accomplishments. I gave it to him".\textsuperscript{32} When Dombey has his house remodeled, she considers it only a part of the purchase price, a fact which Dombey fully appreciates, expressing his satisfaction thus: "The dignity of Dombey and Son would be heightened and maintained, indeed, in such hands."\textsuperscript{33} They are indeed an odd pair -- "he, self-sufficient, unbending, formal, austere. She, lovely -- graceful in an uncommon degree, but totally regardless of herself and him and everything around, and spurning her own attractions with her haughty brow and lip."\textsuperscript{34}

When Dombey marries Edith, there is an inevitable clashing of wills. Pride had always dominated the life of Dombey, in spite of such reverses as loss of his son. Carker expresses the hatred of Dombey's associates when he says, "There's not one among them but if he had at once the power, and the wit and daring to use it, would scatter Dombey's pride and lay it low, as ruthlessly as I rake out these ashes."\textsuperscript{35} The pair are united, he with the attitude that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32}Ibid., p. 479.
\item \textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 518.
\item \textsuperscript{34}Ibid., pp. 470-471.
\item \textsuperscript{35}Ibid., II, 57.
\end{itemize}
Dombey "is going to confer a great distinction on a lady," she so rebellious that she spends a wild wedding night weeping stormily on Florence's pillow before she can emerge, "composed, erect, inscrutable of will." Dombey begins to notice the unfolding beauty of his daughter Florence, but "in his pride, a heap of inconsistency, and misery, and self-inflicted torment, he hated her." Dombey meets his match in Edith. Preceding an anniversary dinner for ten people, which he has arranged, they quarrel before Florence, and Edith delivers an ultimatum, "I will be exhibited to no one, as the refractory slave you purchased, such a time." He refuses to grant a separation as being injurious to the House. Married life becomes a clashing of wills, for both are proud. "Proud he desired that she should be, but she must be proud for, not against him." Eventually, when she unbinds enough to beg him for a separate establishment for herself and Florence, he grants it, with the stipulation that Carker be there to tame her. Estrangement is complete with his accident, when Edith says of her pride, "I have dreamed that it is wounded, hunted, set upon by dogs, but that it stands at bay, and will not yield; no, that it cannot if it would but that it is urged on to hate him." Carker tells Edith of Dombey, "You did not know how

exacting and how proud he is, or how he is, if I may say so, the slave of his own greatness, and goes yoked to his own triumphal car like a beast of burden."\(^{42}\) Dombey is deserted by his daughter Florence, who leaves to marry when he strikes her, and by his wife, who flees with Carker, leaving all her jewels, her elaborate clothes, and an explanatory letter. Characteristically the first thing Dombey thinks of is what the world will say! To save his pride, Dombey hunts for her, and because Carker has served the purpose of hurting Dombey's pride, she leaves him. Bankruptcy comes to Dombey and Son because of "the infatuation of its head, who would not contract its enterprises by a hair's breadth, and would not listen to a word of warning that the ship he strained so hard against the storm, was weak, and could not bear it."\(^{43}\) When the crash comes, Dombey insists on paying everything. As Morfin tells Harriet Carker, "Vices are sometimes only virtues carried to excess! His pride shows well in this."\(^{44}\) Complete breaking down of his pride comes only when Florence returns with her children to beg his forgiveness, and he is able to place his pride at last in her and her family. So, as Miss Tox observes, Dombey and Son was really a daughter.\(^{45}\)

A series of well-drawn pictures, some only a sentence long, parades through the pages of Dickens as witness to the

\(^{42}\)Ibid., p. 232. \(^{43}\)Ibid., p. 453. 
\(^{44}\)Ibid., p. 460. \(^{45}\)Ibid., p. 493.
foolish and ridiculousness of mankind: soldiers in full dress, strutting before admiring civilians, and eliciting the remark from the poetically inclined Snodgrass that it is a "noble and brilliant sight to see the gallant defenders of their country drawn up in a brilliant array before its peaceful citizens"; Mr. Pickwick finding a stone and being wined and dined by his club as a world-famous celebrity with his photograph made for the permanent embellishment of the club room; a prince, disappointed in love, and wishing to live "in peace forever" at Bath, and getting his wish, for he sank into a pool of hot tears, which still flow as balm to the spirits of the lovelorn; Mme. Mantalini's crew of dress-makers looking Kate, the new employee, over, with as much good breeding as could have been displayed by the very best of society in a crowded ballroom; Dickens' caustic remark, "May not the complaint that common people are above their station often take its rise in the fact of uncommon people being below theirs?"; the picture of Mr. Bumble surreptitiously counting the silver and weighing the sugar tongs after a love scene with Mrs. Fl ornish; the picture of the great Sir Barnet Skettles arranging introductions whether he knows the

46 Pickwick Papers, I, 56.  
48 Ibid., II, 126-127.  
49 Nicholas Nickleby, I, 253.  
50 Ibid., p. 258.  
parties or not\textsuperscript{52}; the beadle's story of the pauper who was so ungrateful that when offered clothing after he had asked for food, remarked that he would die, and did! ("There's an obstinate pauper for you!")\textsuperscript{53}

Dickens introduces the matrimonial schemers in several forms: Miss Tox who sets her cap for Dombey by paying very special attention to his beloved son Paul; Mrs. Nickleby, who though her daughter Kate is not treated respectfully by titled gents, yet visualizes how the wedding announcements would read; the Squeers' daughter who vainly attempts to interest Nicholas; and many others.

Ridiculous also are Mr. Badger of Bleak House, who brags continually of his wife's three former husbands; Mr. Skimpole, who lives an unreal life in a child's world, wanting the universe to be strewn with roses, and his life free -- "even the butterflies have that"\textsuperscript{54} -- and receiving the undivided loyalty of the family in carrying out his child's dreams; the Smallwood family of Bleak House, discarding amusements, frowning on fairy tales, producing a young-old girl like Judy, who has never owned a doll, never heard of Cinderella, never played games, almost never played with other children -- and a boy like her twin brother who cannot wind a top or play leap frog, and who has never heard of Jack the

\textsuperscript{52} Nicholas Nickleby, II, 415. \textsuperscript{53} Oliver Twist, p. 205. \textsuperscript{54} Bleak House, I, 88.
Giant Killer; of the self-made Bounderby who makes a fetish of his family's neglect and especially of the mythical drunkenness of his grandmother.

In pointing to the foibles of the world, Dickens uses sarcasm with telling effect in such passages as these: "There are books of which the backs and covers are by far the best parts"\textsuperscript{55}; "We won't make an author of you while there is an honest trade to be learnt, or brick-making to turn to"\textsuperscript{56}; "Painters always make ladies out prettier than they are, or they wouldn't get any custom, child"\textsuperscript{57}; "He should have tried mustachios and a pair of military trowsers."\textsuperscript{58} The last remark is designed to secure the attention of women who could not be attracted in any other way.

It is not to be wondered at that doctors were not admired by Dickens, for not too much headway had been made in his day against ignorance and superstition.\textsuperscript{59} By the standards of the present day, medicine had a long way to go.

Separation of the doctors from the barbers, in the preceding century, and discovery of anaesthesia in 1844, marked advances, but it is not to be wondered at that Dickens so often ridiculed doctors. "The pill was curing people of every known disease to the tune of many pages a month,"\textsuperscript{60} with the slogan that the more you took the more you improved. Medical students

\textsuperscript{55}Oliver Twist, p. 118. \hfill \textsuperscript{56}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., p. 98. \hfill \textsuperscript{58}Ibid., p. 171.
\textsuperscript{59}For complete account of medicine in preceding century, see Rosamond Bayne-Fowell, Eighteenth Century London Life.
\textsuperscript{60}Bernard Darwin, The Dickens Advertiser, p. 179.
in *Pickwick Papers*, talking at the dining table about dissecting, state, "There is nothing like dissecting to give one an appetite," and go on with a tale about removing of a tumor from the head of a gentleman. On the ice, when Mr. Pickwick goes under, one of the medical students present wants to bleed the whole company. Bob Sawyer tells of an advertising scheme whereby his doctor sends out the wrong bottles of medicine to half the houses in Bristol, to get the name known. An apothecary apprentice picks his teeth ten minutes while a patient in the workhouse is dying, then leaves. After Oliver Twist's mother has died at the workhouse, the doctor tells the nurse not to send for him if her new-born baby cries -- it would be troublesome probably, but a little gruel would help. Assisting with filling out a questionnaire at the workhouse, the doctor reports that he usually opens the body and finds "nothing inside (which was very probable indeed)." The doctor waiting on Oliver Twist at the Brownlow home tells them, "Don't keep him too warm, ma'am; but be careful that you don't let him be too cold," and leaves, "his boots creaking in a very important and wealthy manner." Old Mr. Grimwig may have been right

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61 *Pickwick Papers*, II, 4.  
63 *Oliver Twist*, p. 213.  
in kicking about the orange peel which he says was placed on the sidewalk on purpose by the surgeon's boy at the corner.\textsuperscript{68} Attending Mrs. Dorrit in childbirth is a jailbird, who hastens to return "to his associate and chum in coarseness, puffiness, red-facedness, all-fours, tobacco, dirt and brandy."\textsuperscript{69}

The love of good food had come down to Dickens' England from a preceding century. It is difficult to generalize on eating and drinking habits of the period, because of extremes of poverty and wealth. It is a well known fact that the wealthy consumed quantities of rich food. A recipe written by a Mrs. Glass recommends six pounds of butter in the crust of a gooseberry pie.\textsuperscript{70} England, long a beef-eating nation, consumed quantities of meat during the eighteenth century, as is illustrated by the ninety-six pounds of money per month which Pitt spent for meat alone while at Downing Street.\textsuperscript{71} In addition, quantities of beer and wine were consumed. That the men of Dickens' day, as well as of an earlier period, were very fat is a matter of record,\textsuperscript{72} and it is certain that large waistlines shortened the lives of many men, especially of those who dined sumptuously both at home and in coffee houses and cafes. Fare in poor homes was in contrast extremely scanty and poorly prepared. Dickens,

\textsuperscript{68}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 121-122. \textsuperscript{69}\textit{Little Dorrit}, I, 76. \\
\textsuperscript{70}Bayne-Powell, op. cit., p. 329. \\
\textsuperscript{71}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 333. \textsuperscript{72}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 81.
being affluent from the time of his early manhood, must have seen much of the people who overindulged their appetites.

While Dickens seems to have been a light drinker and smoker, exercising temperance also in partaking of food, he gives so many descriptions of pleasures of the table that Englishmen have sometimes criticized him as being coarse and earthly. Suggestions concerning the joys of the cup are numerous in *Pickwick Papers*, and delirium tremens is mentioned in the "Stroller's Tale." He describes the drinking of the militia as "animal and ardent spirits." A temperance committee meets, and cites many instances of people abstaining from liquor — one of the most ridiculous being of a man who found that gin rotted his wooden leg. It is thought that Dickens must have partaken of some liquor in his youth, because of his insatiable desire to know about life, and because of childhood inhibitions. Never a teetotaler, Dickens frowned upon temperance societies or any other movement stressing total abstinence, and seemed to subscribe to the belief that some drinking was conducive to better living and that excessive drinking must be associated necessarily with low life and ignorance.

He often pictures an undesirable character as a glutton; such a person is the sly Blandois — "his avaricious manner

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73See, e.g., pp. 26, 29, 42, 63, 66, 78, 110, 112, 114, etc.

74*Pickwick Papers*, I, 17.

75Ibid., II, 66.
of collecting all the estables about him, and of devouring some with his eyes, while devouring others with his jaws, was the same manner. "76 To complete the picture, he sucks his fingers when he is through eating. Mr. Flintwinch, another glutton, continues to clean his office, after he has eaten all the beef he can hold, "sucked up all the gravy in the baking dish with the flat of his knife,"77 and drunk a liberal supply of beer. Another similar description reads: "The major, like some other noble animals, exhibited himself to great advantage at feeding-time."78 A farmer is mentioned as "refreshing himself with a slight lunch of two or three rounds of cold beef and a pot or two of porter."79 The famous fat boy arouses himself from a deep sleep only when food is mentioned. The gentleman described as "prematurely broad"80 must evidently have eaten too well. Sam Weller tells the story of a man who has eaten four crumpets every night for fifteen years, and is now telling the doctor about it.81 Claypole, at the undertakers' establishment, has drunk so much liquor with so many oysters that he laments, "What a pity it is, a number of 'em should ever make you feel uncomfortable."82

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76 Little Dorrit, I, 437. 77 Ibid., p. 66. 78 Dombey and Son, I, 456. 79 Pickwick Papers, II, 148. 80 Ibid., p. 222. 81 Ibid., p. 253. 82 Oliver Twist, p. 245.
Dickens, as well as most men of his day, was a light smoker, for smoking was an "occupation for the harness-room or the kitchen rather than the dining room," a fact which probably caused tobacco to be treated as a minor evil in his books.

Gambling is a vice which Dickens condemns in such books as The Old Curiosity Shop, where the grandfather loses all he has and stoops to any further deceit to be allowed to participate in the card games. The effect which the vice has on Little Nell is probably overdrawn, but the lesson is plain. Little Nell eventually persuades her grandfather to leave before he has committed the robbery in the Jarley Waxworks.

In several novels Dickens deals with matrimonial problems. It is to be expected that Dickens might have a bitter memory of his own experience with matrimony, for his marriage with Kate Hogarth, which lasted until after the birth of their tenth child, was an unhappy one; the couple eventually separated, the wife taking only the oldest son, Charles, with her, and the husband keeping the other children, his wife's sister, Georgina Hogarth, serving as housekeeper and nurse -- an arrangement which caused no small sensation in England. No less sensational was Dickens' dilemma after publication of a letter in which he justified his act on the

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63 Darwin, op. cit., p. 120.
grounds that Mrs. Dickens was a poor mother; the letter, he said, had not been written for publication -- a fact which caused him to be suspicious thereafter of those who sought publicity material from him.

Many of his women characters, such as Agnes, David Copperfield's second wife, are pure and good. In isolated instances, however, he refers to matrimony sarcastically, as with the observation, "Most of the people I know would do better to leave marriage alone."84 Arthur Clennam's parents are mentioned as often disagreeing, the servant Jeremiah remarking that he had stood between them many years and had been crushed between them. Mrs. Clennam had arranged a marriage between Flintwich and Affery, her servants, to keep them with her; but Affery suggests it was a "smothering instead of a wedding."85 Mrs. Clennam's son Arthur senses that all is not well with his parents, for he says to his mother, "Your stronger spirit has been infused into all my father's dealings, for more than two score years."86 Mr. and Mrs. Chick, always bickering with each other, are described thus unflatteringly: "In their matrimonial bickerings they were upon the whole a well-matched, fairly-balanced, give-and-take couple."87 Dickens visits retribution upon the wicked Feadle Rumble by marrying him, with dire results, to Mrs. Cornish; Sam Weller's father tells his son that if he

84Bleak House, II, 169.
85Little Dorrit, I, 48.
86Ibid., p. 59.
87Dombey and Son, I, 16.
ever feels like marrying when he reaches forty or fifty years of age, to shut himself up in his room until the inspiration passes -- and adds that he questions if it is worth while going through so much to learn so little. In one of Sam Weller's tales appears the incident of the husband who was thought to have disappeared in his own sausage mill. Sam's father, upon losing his wife, grieves over her loss, because on her deathbed she shows genuine grief over leaving him; then he is very stern with a widow whom he suspects of attempting to inveigle him into another matrimonial adventure. Amy strikes a more serious note, when, thinking of Mr. Gowan's light treatment of his wife, she wonders whether it was with people as with ships, that they drifted in shallow and rocky waters, where their anchor would not hold.

Dickens believed in an international copyright law, which would protect a writer from literary theft, lack of such a law having lost him much revenue which he felt to be rightfully his. Unfortunately on his first visit to America, he immediately began to talk on this subject, mentioning it so often that he antagonized his American friends, who had arranged an elaborate reception for him such as no other

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98 *Pickwick Papers*, I, 377.  
92 *Little Dorrit*, II, 81.
visiting writer had ever been accorded. For some unknown reason, this subject of copyright, which was so dear to his heart, found only minor expression in his books. At one time he said, "Creations of the pocket, being man's might belong to one man, or one family; but the creations of the brain, being God's, ought, as a matter of course, to belong to the people at large." While in America, he also expressed deep disapproval of over-heated railways, tobacco spit everywhere, and the institution of slavery, England having already freed her slaves and persuaded France, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands to do likewise. He expressed sharp disapproval of American dirt, American bores, and American drawl and slang, but approved of her insane asylums and prisons as models for England to copy.

Dickens slyly attacks the literary criticism of his day when he describes Mr. Potts, of the Eatanswill Gazette, who has been running a popular series of literary articles, on Chinese metaphysics; he has secured his information, he explains, from the Encyclopedia Britannica, by looking under "M" for metaphysics, and "C" for China, then combining this material.

Dickens commends organized and well-planned charity, such as that conducted by the twin Cheeryble Brothers in

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93 *Nicholas Nickleby*, I, 240.
Nicholas Nickleby. After he had announced that these brothers were taken from real life, he was overwhelmed with charitable requests!

Dickens pointed out often that excessive love of money could cause dishonesty, an idea which Henry Gowan expresses thus: "Give almost any man I know, ten pounds, and he will impose upon you to a corresponding extent; a thousand pounds -- to a corresponding extent; ten thousand pounds -- to a corresponding extent." Mr. Dombey tells Little Paul, "Money, Paul, can do anything," causing the family to be "honored, feared, respected, courted, and admired, and made ... powerful and gracious in the eyes of all men." It is a matter of record, however, that while Dickens seemed to condemn money, he was not averse to making it for himself, and operated successful periodicals, dramatized his stories in England and America, and in many other ways proved that he could earn it. Partly because of innate honesty and partly because of the prestige which he loved he was careful always to avoid the appearance of dishonesty. It was natural that he should love money for what it could buy. When he purchased and remodeled Gad's Hill, which must have looked like a castle to him in his youth, he entertained lavishly,

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95 *Little Dorrit*, I, 384.
96 *Dombey and Son*, I, 114.
conducting an extensive correspondence from there on stationery printed with a Gad's Hill letterhead. It cannot, however, be said that money was a fetish with him, though because of heavy expenses which he chose to incur, he gave public readings for pay, much against the advice of his doctors, up almost to the day of his death.

Dickens saw much to criticize in the religious observances of his day. He himself was intensely religious but did not subscribe to any one religious sect. Often in mentioning what he considered wrong observance, Dickens reverted to his strongest weapon, ridicule. Sam Weller's mother is "methodistical," a state brought on by something called being born again, according to his father's explanation. Mr. Weller gives a very vivid description of a tea which his wife arranges, tickets for which will be half a crown, the preacher to give the kiss of peace to all the women -- and proceeds to go to the church. Is it any wonder that Mr. Weller leads in a fight, after the preacher has asked where the sinner is and all have looked at Weller? The "deputy shepherd," Mr. Stiggins, the preacher at Mrs. Weller's house, objects because Mr. Weller does not subscribe to the "noble society for providing the infant negroes in the West Indies with flannel waist coats and moral pocket handkerchiefs." Mr.

100 Ibid., p. 308.  
101 Pickwick Papers, I, 354.  
102 Ibid., p. 356.  
103 Ibid., p. 439.  
104 Ibid., I, 441.
Weller objects to the women spending time "in making clothes for copper-colored people as don't want 'em, and taking no notice of flesh-colored Christians as do." The clergyman who arrives late to bury a pauper and compresses the service into four minutes; the board member who asks poor neglected Oliver Twist at the parish workhouse if he ever prayed for his benefactors; the song which Mr. Brass hums, the "certain vocal snatches which appeared to have reference to the union between Church and State inasmuch as they were compounded of the Evening Hymn and God Save the King; Mr. Chillip's remark that "what such people call their religion is a vent for their bad humours and arrogance; preparations at the church for the wedding of Dombey and Edith in the early morning, when "the mice, who have been busier with their prayer books than their proper owners, and with hassocks, more worn by their little teeth than by human knees, hide their bright eyes in their holes." These are examples of Dickens' scathing observations concerning religion as he found it.

Probably the best example of the narrow type of religion of which Dickens most disapproved is Mrs. Clennam, in Little Dorrit. A student of the Bible, she prays that her enemies

105 Ibid., p. 442.  
106 Oliver Twist, p. 46.  
108 Old Curiosity Shop, I, 184.  
109 David Copperfield, I, 48.  
110 Dombey and Son, II, 2.
"might be put to the edge of the sword, consumed by fire, smitten by plagues and leprosy, that their bones might be ground to dust, and that they might be utterly exterminated."\textsuperscript{111} She also prays, "Smite Thou my debtors, Lord, wither them, crush them: do Thou as I would do, and Thou shalt have my worship."\textsuperscript{112} As thousands of church members do every day, Mrs. Clennam is always bargaining with the Lord, and claiming her due, thus:

If I forgot that this scene, the Earth is expressly meant to be a scene of gloom, and hardship, and dark trial, for the creatures who are made out of its dust, I might have some tenderness for its vanities. But I have no such tenderness. If I did not know that we are, every one, the subject (most justly the subject) of a wrath that must be satisfied, and against which mere actions are nothing, I might repine at the difference between me, imprisoned here, and the people who pass that gateway yonder. But I take it as a grace and favour to be elected to make the satisfaction I am making here, to know what I know for certain here, and to work out what I have worked out here. My affliction might otherwise have had no meaning to me.\textsuperscript{113}

Arthur Clennam says of his parents, "Their very religion was a gloomy sacrifice of tastes and sympathies that were never their own."\textsuperscript{114} His personal religion was "far straunter and narrower than the broad high road paved with vain professions and vain repetitions, notes from other men's eyes, and liberal delivery of others to the judgment ..."\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{111}\textit{Little Dorrit}, I, 43-44. \textsuperscript{112}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 57. \textsuperscript{113}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 443-444. \textsuperscript{114}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 25. \textsuperscript{115}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 396.
Arthur Clennam had been dominated by the religious tyranny of his mother, but Copperfield broke away. Dickens hated the long-faced type of religion, as typified in Mrs. Clennam, in whom we have one of his best character studies. He shows similar hatred of the Dissenters in his description of the Little Bethel congregation and devotees in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and the Rev. Melchisedech Howler and Mrs. MacStinger in *Dombey and Son*. He especially disapproved of Sunday observances as practiced by Dissenters, and tells of the servant suggesting to Clennam that if his mother knew he had arrived on Sunday at the house she would not approve. In 1836, when a bill had been introduced into Commons, prohibiting all Sunday work and recreation, Dickens caused its defeat by publication of a pamphlet, *Sunday Under Three Heads: As It Is; As Sabbath Bells Would Make It; As It Might Be*.\(^{116}\)

Yet his lessons on religion were not all negative. He seemed to approve of the Christian virtue of forgiveness, such as practiced by Florence Dombey in her forgiveness of her father. Evidently he read often in the New Testament, and when in June, 1870, he drew up his will, he admonished his children to follow the New Testament and to put no faith in any man's narrow construction of it; in September, 1868, when his youngest son Edward left for Australia, Dickens, feeling the parting keenly, told him he had put a New Testament

with his things, and advised him never to abandon the habit
of saying his prayers. "I have never abandoned it myself
and I know the comfort of it," he said.\footnote{Ibid., p. 332.}
He was not approving of cant, though he "loved the New Testament, and had,
after some fashion of his own, paraphrased the Gospel narra-
tive for the use of his children."\footnote{Adolphus William Ward, \textit{Dickens}, p. 181.}
The appeal of a church
to a religious child, destined soon for death, is described
as "another world, where sin and sorrow never came, and where
nothing evil entered."\footnote{Old Curiosity Shop, II, 159.}
Another of the patient, long-
suffering children, Little Dorrit, tells of the "patient
\textit{Master who shed tears of compassion for our infirmities},"\footnote{Little Dorrit, II, 455.}
and describes the stars as "signs of the blessed later cove-
nant of peace and hope that changed the crown of thorns into
a glory."\footnote{Ibid., p. 456.}
When Mary Hogarth, for whom Dickens mourned his
entire life, was buried, he had this inscription placed on
her tombstone: "Young, beautiful, and good, God numbered
her among his angels at the early age of seventeen."\footnote{Iabell S. C. Smith, \textit{Studies in Dickens}, p. 70.}
Evidently Dickens worked out his own religion, and made of
it a deeply personal thing.

It is study of these minor subjects --/society, pride,
humbug, medicine, food and drink, gambling, copyright, greed, religion, etc. -- which helps to give the Dickens reader a conception of the scope of the reforming zeal of Charles Dickens.