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Dickens' London



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Dickens' London:

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Francis Miltoun Dickens' London

*All sublunary things of death partake!
What alteration does a cent'ry make!
Kings and Comedians all are mortal found,
Cæsar and Pinkethman are underground.
What's not destroyed by time's devouring hand?
Where's Troy, and where's the Maypole in the Strand?
Pease, cabbages, and turnips once grew where
Now stands New Bond Street and a newer square;
Such piles of buildings now rise up and down,
London itself seems going out of town.*

James Bramston, The Art of Politicks.

The attempt is herein made to present in an informal manner such facts of historical, topographical, and literary moment as surrounded the localities especially identified with the life and work of Charles Dickens in the city of London, with naturally a not infrequent reference to such scenes and incidents as he was wont to incorporate in the results of his literary labours; believing that there are a considerable number of persons, travellers, lovers of Dickens, enthusiasts *et als.*, who might be glad of a work which should present within a single pair of covers a résumé of the facts concerning the subject matter indicated by the title of this book; to remind them in a way of what already exists to-day of the London Dickens knew, as well as of the changes which have

taken place since the novelist's time.

To all such, then, the present work is offered, not necessarily as the last word or even as an exhaustive résumé, knowing full well the futility for any chronicler to attempt to do such a subject full justice within the confines of a moderate sized volume, where so many correlated facts of history and side lights of contemporary information are thrown upon the screen. The most that can be claimed is that every effort has been made to present a truthful, correct, and not unduly sentimental account of the sights and scenes of London connected with the life of Charles Dickens.

In Praise of London

"The inhabitants of St. James', notwithstanding they live under the same laws and speak the same language, are as a people distinct from those who live in the 'City.'"
Addison.

"If you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of the City you must not be satisfied with its streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts."
Johnson.

"I have often amused myself with thinking how different a place London is to different people."
Boswell.

"I had rather be Countess of Puddle-Dock (in London) than Queen of Sussex."
Shadwell.

"London ... a place where next-door neighbours do not know one another."
Fielding.

"London ... where all people under thirty find so much amusement."
Gray.

"Dull as London is in summer, there is always more company in it than in any other one place."

Walpole.

"London! Opulent, enlarged, and still – increasing London!"

Cowper.

"What is London?"

Burke.

"I began to study a map of London ... the river is of no assistance to a stranger in finding his way."

Southey.

INTRODUCTION

This book is for the lover of Dickens and of London, alike. The former without the memory of the latter would indeed be wanting, and likewise the reverse would be the case.

London, its life and its stones, has ever been immortalized by authors and artists, but more than all else, the city has been a part of the very life and inspiration of those who have limned its virtues, its joys, and its sorrows, – from the days of blithe Dan Chaucer to those of the latest west-end society novelist.

London, as has been truly said, is a "mighty mingling," and no one has breathed more than Dickens the spirit of its constantly shifting and glimmering world of passion and poverty.

The typical Londoner of to-day – as in the early Victorian period of which Dickens mostly wrote – is a species quite apart from the resident of any other urban community throughout the world. Since the spell which is recorded as first having fallen upon the ear of Whittington, the sound of Bow Bells is the only true and harmonious ring which, to the ears of the real cockney, recalls all that is most loved in the gamut of his sentiments.

It is perhaps not possible to arrange the contents of a book of the purport of this volume in true chronological, or even topographical, order. The first, because of the necessitous moving about, hither and then thither, – the second, because of the fact that the very aspect of the features of the city are

constantly under a more or less rapid process of evolution, which is altering all things but the points of the compass and the relative position of St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. Between these two guide-posts is a mighty maze of streets, ever changing as to its life and topography.

Hungerford Market and Hungerford Stairs have disappeared, beside which was the blacking factory, wherein the novelist's first bitter experiences of London life were felt, – amid a wretchedness only too apparent, when one reads of the miserable days which fell upon the lad at this time, – the market itself being replaced by the huge Charing Cross Railway Station, in itself no architectural improvement, it may be inferred, while the "crazy old houses and wharves" which fronted the river have likewise been dissipated by the march of improvement, which left in its wake the glorious, though little used, Victoria Embankment, one of the few really fine modern thoroughfares of a great city.

Eastward again Furnival's Inn, where *Pickwick* was written, has fallen at the hands of the house-breaker.

The office of the old *Monthly Magazine* is no more, its very doorway and letter-box – "wherein was dropped stealthily one night" the precious manuscript of "*Pickwick*" – being now in the possession of an ardent Dickens collector, having been removed from its former site in Johnson's Court in Fleet Street at the time the former edifice was pulled down.

Across the river historic and sordid Marshalsea, where the elder Dickens was incarcerated for debt, has been dissipated in

air; even its walls are not visible to-day, if they even exist, and a modern park – though it is mostly made up of flagstones – stands in its place as a moral, healthful, and politic force of the neighbourhood.

With the scenes and localities identified with the plots and characters of the novels the same cleaning up process has gone on, one or another shrine being from time to time gutted, pulled to pieces, or removed. On the other hand, doubtless much that existed in the fancy, or real thought, of the author still remains, as the door-knocker of No. 8 Craven Street, Strand, the conjectured original of which is described in the "Christmas Carol," which appeared to the luckless Scrooge as "not a knocker but Marley's face;" or the Spaniards Inn on Hampstead Heath described in the XLVI. Chapter of *Pickwick*, which stands to-day but little, if any, changed since that time.

For the literary life of the day which is reflected by the mere memory of the names of such of Dickens' contemporaries in art and letters, as Mark Lemon, W. H. Wills, Wilkie Collins, Cruikshank, "Phiz," Forster, Blanchard Jerrold, Maclise, Fox, Dyce, and Stanfield, one can only resort to a history of mid or early Victorian literature to realize the same to the full. Such is not the scheme of this book, but that London, – the city, – its surroundings, its lights and shadows, its topography, and its history, rather, is to be followed in a sequence of co-related events presented with as great a degree of cohesion and attractive arrangement as will be thought to be commensurate

and pertinent to the subject. Formerly, when London was a "snug city," authors more readily confined their incomings and outgoings to a comparatively small area. To-day "the city" is a term only synonymous with a restricted region which gathers around the financial centre, while the cabalistic letters (meaning little or nothing to the stranger within the gates), E. C., safely comprehend a region which not only includes "*the city*," but extends as far westward as Temple Bar, and thus covers, if we except the lapping over into the streets leading from the Strand, practically the whole of the "Highway of Letters" of Doctor Johnson's time.

A novelist to-day, and even so in Dickens' time, did not – nay could not – give birth to a character which could be truly said to represent the complex London type. The environment of the lower classes – the east end and the Boro' – is ever redolent of him, and he of it. The lower-middle or upper-lower class is best defined by that individual's predilection for the "good old Strand;" while as the scale rises through the petty states of Suburbia to the luxuries of Mayfair or Belgravia, – or to define one locality more precisely, Park Lane, – we have all the ingredients with which the novelist constructs his stories, be they of the nether world, or the "*hupper suckles*." Few have there been who have essayed both. And now the suburbs are breeding their own school of novelists. Possibly it is the residents of those communities who demand a special brand of fiction, as they do of coals, paraffine, and boot-polish.

At any rate the London that Dickens knew clung somewhat to Wordsworth's happy description written but a half century before:

"Silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie,
Open unto the fields and to the sky,"

whereas to-day, as some "New Zealander" from the back blocks has said: "*These Londoners they never seen no sun.*" And thus it is that the scale runs from grave to gay, from poverty to purse full, and ever London, – the London of the past as well as the present, of Grub Street as well as Grosvenor Square. The centre of the world's literary activities, where, if somewhat conventional as to the acceptance of the new idea in many of the marts of trade, it is ever prolific in the launching of some new thing in literary fashions.

At least it is true that London still merits the eulogistic lines penned not many years gone by by a certain minor poet:

"Ah, London! London! Our delight,
Great flower that opens but at night,
Great city of the Midnight Sun,
Whose day begins when day is done."

It is said of the industrious and ingenious American that he demands to be "shown things," and if his cicerone is not

sufficiently painstaking he will play the game after his own fashion, which usually results in his getting into all sorts of unheard-of places, and seeing and learning things which your native has never suspected to previously have existed. All honour then to such an indefatigable species of the *genus homo*.

Nothing has the peculiar charm of old houses for the seeker after knowledge. To see them, and to know them, is to know their environment, – and so it is with London, – and then, and then only, can one say truly – in the words of Johnson – that they have "seen and are astonished."

A great mass of the raw material from which English history is written is contained in parochial record books and registers, and if this were the only source available the fund of information concerning the particular section of mid-London with which Dickens was mostly identified – the parishes of St. Bride's, St. Mary's-le-Strand, St. Dunstan's, St. Clement's-Danes, and St. Giles – would furnish a well-nigh inexhaustible store of old-time lore. For a fact, however, the activities of the nineteenth century alone, to particularize an era, in the "Highway of Letters" and the contiguous streets lying round about, have formed the subject of many a big book quite by itself. When one comes to still further approximate a date the task is none the less formidable; hence it were hardly possible to more than limn herein a sort of fleeting itinerary among the sights and scenes which once existed, and point out where, if possible, are the differences that exist to-day. Doctor Johnson's "walk down Fleet Street" – if taken at the

present day – would at least be productive of many surprises, whether pleasant ones or not the reader may adduce for himself, though doubtless the learned doctor would still chant the praises of the city – in that voice which we infer was none too melodious:

"Oh, in town let me live, then in town let me die,
For in truth I can't relish the country; not I."

Within the last decade certain changes have taken place in this thoroughfare which might be expected to make it unrecognizable to those of a former generation who may have known it well. Improvements for the better, or the worse, have rapidly taken place; until now there is, in truth, somewhat of an approach to a wide thoroughfare leading from Westminster to the city. But during the process something akin to a holocaust has taken place, to consider only the landmarks and shrines which have disappeared, – the last as these lines are being written, being Clifford's Inn, – while Mr. Tulkinghorn's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, redolent of Dickens and Forster, his biographer, is doomed, as also the *Good Words* offices in Wellington Street, where Dickens spent so much of his time in the later years of his life. The famous "Gaiety" is about to be pulled down, and the "old Globe" has already gone from this street of taverns, as well as of letters, or, as one picturesque writer has called it, "the nursing mother of English literature."

THE LONDON DICKENS KNEW

The father of Charles Dickens was for a time previous to the birth of the novelist a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, then in Somerset House, which stands hard by the present Waterloo Bridge, in the very heart of London, where Charles Dickens grew to manhood in later years.

From this snug berth Dickens, senior, was transferred to Portsmouth, where, at No. 387 Commercial Road, in Portsea, on the 7th February, 1812, Charles Dickens was born.

Four years later the family removed to Chatham, near Rochester, and here the boy Charles received his first schooling.

From Chatham the family again removed, this time to London, where the son, now having arrived at the age of eleven, became a part and parcel of that life which he afterward depicted so naturally and successfully in the novels.

Here he met with the early struggles with grim poverty and privation, – brought about by the vicissitudes which befell the family, – which proved so good a school for his future career as a historian of the people. His was the one voice which spoke with authoritativeness, and aroused that interest in the nether world which up to that time had slumbered.

The miseries of his early struggles with bread-winning in Warren's Blacking Factory, – in association with one Fagin, who afterward took on immortalization at the novelist's hands, – for a

weekly wage of but six shillings per week, is an old and realistic fact which all biographers and most makers of guide-books have worn nearly threadbare.

That the family were sore put in order to keep their home together, first in Camden Town and later in Gower Street, North, is only too apparent. The culmination came when the elder Dickens was thrown into Marshalsea Prison for debt, and the family removed thither, to Lant Street, near by, in order to be near the head of the family.

This is a sufficiently harrowing sequence of events to allow it to be left to the biographers to deal with them to the full. Here the author glosses it over as a mere detail; one of those indissoluble links which connects the name of Dickens with the life of London among the lower and middle classes during the Victorian era.

An incident in "David Copperfield," which Dickens has told us was real, so far as he himself was concerned, must have occurred about this period. The reference is to the visit to "Ye Olde Red Lion" at the corner of Derby Street, Parliament Street, near Westminster Bridge, which house has only recently disappeared. He has stated that it was an actual experience of his own childhood, and how, being such a little fellow, the landlord, instead of drawing the ale, called his wife, who gave the boy a motherly kiss.

The incident as recounted in "David Copperfield" called also for a glass of ale, and reads not unlike:

"I remember one hot evening I went into the bar of a public-house, and said to the landlord: 'What is your best – your *very best* ale a glass?' For it was a special occasion. I don't know what. It may have been my birthday. 'Twopence-halfpenny,' says the landlord, 'is the price of the Genuine Stunning Ale.' 'Then,' says I, producing the money, 'just draw me a glass of the Genuine Stunning, if you please, with a good head to it.'"

After a time his father left the Navy Pay Office and entered journalism. The son was clerking, meanwhile, in a solicitor's office, – that of Edward Blackmore, – first in Lincoln's Inn, and subsequently in Gray's Inn. A diary of the author was recently sold by auction, containing as its first entry, "13s 6d for one week's salary." Here Dickens acquired that proficiency in making mental memoranda of his environment, and of the manners and customs of lawyers and their clerks, which afterward found so vivid expression in "Pickwick."

By this time the father's financial worries had ceased, or at least made for the better. He had entered the realms of journalism and became a Parliamentary reporter, which it is to be presumed developed a craving on the part of Charles for a similar occupation; when following in his father's footsteps, he succeeded, after having learned Gurney's system of shorthand, in obtaining an appointment as a reporter in the press gallery of the House of Commons (the plans for the new Parliament buildings were just then taking shape), where he was afterward acknowledged as being one of the most skilful and accomplished

shorthand reporters in the galleries of that unconventional, if deliberate, body, which even in those days, though often counting as members a group of leading statesmen, perhaps ranking above those of the present day, was ever a democratic though "faithful" parliamentary body.

In 1834 the old Houses of Parliament were burned, and with the remains of St. Stephen's Hall the new structure grew up according to the plan presented herein, which is taken from a contemporary print.

At the end of the Parliamentary session of 1836 Dickens closed his engagement in the Reporters' Gallery, a circumstance which he recounts thus in *Copperfield*, which may be presumed to be somewhat of autobiography:

"I had been writing in the newspapers and elsewhere so prosperously that when my new success was achieved I considered myself reasonably entitled to escape from the dreary debates. One joyful night, therefore, I noted down the music of the Parliamentary bagpipes for the last time, and I have never heard it since." (*David Copperfield*, Chap. XLVIII.)

Again, in the same work, the novelist gives us some account of the effort which he put into the production of "*Pickwick*." "I laboured hard" – said he – "at my book, without allowing it to interfere with the punctual discharge of my newspaper duties, and it came out and was very successful. I was not stunned by the praise which sounded in my ears, notwithstanding that I was keenly alive to it. For this reason I retained my modesty in

very self-respect; and the more praise I got the more I tried to deserve." ("David Copperfield," Chap. XLVIII.)

From this point onward in the career of Charles Dickens, he was well into the maelstrom of the life of letters with which he was in the future to be so gloriously identified; and from this point forward, also, the context of these pages is to be more allied with the personality (if one may be permitted to so use the word) of the environment which surrounded the life and works of the novelist, than with the details of that life itself.

In reality, it was in 1833, when Dickens had just attained his majority, that he first made the plunge into the literary whirlpool. He himself has related how one evening at twilight he "had stealthily entered a dim court" (Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, not, as is popularly supposed, named for Doctor Johnson, though inhabited by him in 1766, from whence he removed in the same year to Bolt Court, still keeping to his beloved Fleet Street), and through an oaken doorway, with a yawning letter-box, there fell the MS. of a sketch entitled "A Dinner at Poplar Walk," afterward renamed "Mr. Minns and His Cousin." These were the offices of the old *Monthly Magazine* now defunct. Here the article duly appeared as one of the "Sketches by Boz." In the preface to an edition of "Pickwick," published in 1847, Dickens describes the incident sufficiently graphically for one to realize, to its fullest extent, with what pangs, and hopes, and fears his trembling hand deposited the first of the children of his brain; a foundling upon the doorstep where it is to be feared so many former and later

orphans were, if not actually deserted, abandoned to their fate.

These were parlous times in Grub Street; in the days when the art of letters, though undeniably prolific, was not productive of an income which would assure even a practised hand freedom from care and want. Within a half-mile on either side of this blind alley leading off Fleet Street, from Ludgate Hill on the east – redolent of memories of the Fleet, its Prison, and its "Marriages" – to Somerset House on the west, is that unknown land, that *terra incognita*, whereon so many ships of song are stranded, or what is more, lost to oblivion which is blacker than darkness itself.

In January, 1837, while still turning out "Pickwick" in monthly parts, Dickens was offered the editorship of the already famous *Bentley's Magazine*, which he accepted, and also undertook to write "Oliver Twist" for the same periodical.

In March, of the same year, the three rooms at Furnival's Inn presumably having become crowded beyond comfort, he removed with his wife to his former lodgings at Chalk, where the couple had spent their honeymoon, and where in the following year their son Charles was born.

What memories are conjured up of the past and, it is to be hoped, of future greatness by those who, in taking their walks abroad, find themselves within the confines of the parish of St. Bride's, with its church built by Wren shortly after the great fire, and its queer pointed steeple, like a series of superimposed tabourets overtopped with a needle-like spire?

Here the brazen chimes ring out to all and sundry of the world

of journalism and letters, whose vocations are carried on within its sound, the waking and sleeping hours alike. True! there are no sleeping hours in Fleet Street; night is like unto day, and except for the absence of the omnibuses, and crowds of hurrying throngs of city men and solicitors and barristers, the faces of those you meet at night are in no way unlike the same that are seen during the hours in which the sun is supposed to shine in London, but which – for at least five months of the year – mostly doesn't.

Old St. Bride's, destroyed by the great fire of London in the seventeenth century, sheltered the remains of Sackville, who died in 1608, and the printer, Wynken de Worde, and of Lovelace (1658). To-day in the present structure the visitor may see the tomb of Richardson, the author of "Clarissa Harlow," who lived in Salisbury Square, another near-by centre of literary activity. In the adjacent churchyard formerly stood a house in which Milton for a time resided. In later times it has been mostly called to the minds of lion hunters as being the living of the Reverend E. C. Hawkins, the father of our most successful and famed epigrammatic novelist, – Mr. Anthony Hope Hawkins.

Equally reminiscent, and linked with a literary past in that close binding and indissoluble fashion which is only found in the great world of London, are such place names as Bolt Court, where Johnson spent the last years of his life (1776-1784), Wine Office Court, in which is still situated the ancient hostelry, "The Cheshire Cheese," where all good Americans repair to sit, if possible, in the chair which was once graced (?) by the presence

of the garrulous doctor, or to buy alleged pewter tankards, which it is confidently asserted are a modern "Brummagem" product "made to sell." Gough Square at the top of Wine Office Court is where Johnson conceived and completed his famous dictionary. Bouverie Street (is this, by the way, a corruption or a variant of the Dutch word *Bouerie* which New Yorkers know so well?), across the way, leads toward the river where once the Carmelite friary (White Friars) formerly stood, and to a region which Scott has made famous in "Nigel" as "Alsatia." Fetter Lane, and Great and Little New Streets, leading therefrom, are musty with a literary or at least journalistic atmosphere. Here Izaak Walton, the gentle angler, lived while engaged in the vocation of hosier at the corner of Chancery Lane.

At the corner of Bouverie Street are the *Punch* offices, to which mirthful publication Dickens made but one contribution, — and that was never published. Further adown the street is still the building which gave shelter to the famous dinners of the round-table when all the wits of *Punch* met and dined together, frequently during the London season.

In Mitre Court, until recently, stood the old tavern which had, in its palmier if not balmier days, been frequently the meeting-place of Johnson, Goldsmith, and Boswell; while but a short distance away we are well within the confines of the Temple which not only sheltered and fostered the law, but literature as well.

An incident which shows Dickens' sympathy with the literary

life of the day was in 1854, when the great-grandson of the man who has given so much to all ages of Englishmen, – De Foe, – was made happy with a relief of £2 a month. Dickens was (as might have been expected) amongst the most liberal subscribers to the little fund. If everybody who has derived delight from the perusal of "Robinson Crusoe" had but contributed a single farthing to his descendant, that descendant would become a wealthy man. When De Foe was asked what he knew of his great ancestor's writings, he answered (though doubtless without any intentional comment on his ancestor's reputation) that in his happier days he had several of De Foe's works; but that he never could keep a copy of "Robinson Crusoe;" "there were so many borrowers of the book in Hungerford Market alone." Charles Knight, the publisher and antiquarian, instituted the fund, and the money was raised by him chiefly among literary men.

The most sentimental and picturesque interest attaches itself to the extensive series of buildings on the south side of Fleet Street, familiarly known as the Temple. Here Goldsmith is buried beside the curious and interesting Temple Church. The other of the four great Inns of Court are Lincoln's Inn in Chancery Lane and Gray's Inn in Holborn. Allied with the four great inns were the more or less subsidiary Inns of Chancery, all situated in the immediate neighbourhood, one of which, at least, being intimately associated with Dickens' life in London – Furnival's Inn, which, with Thavie's Inn, was attached to Lincoln's Inn. Here Dickens lived in 1835 at No. 15, and here

also he lived subsequent to his marriage with Catherine Hogarth in the following year. It was at this time that the first number of "Pickwick" was written and published. The building itself was pulled down sometime during the past few years.

Comprising several squares and rows, what is commonly referred to as the Temple, belongs to the members of two societies, the Inner and Middle Temple, consisting of "benchers," barristers, and students. This famous old place, taken in its completeness, was, in 1184, the metropolitan residence of the Knights Templars, who held it until their downfall in 1313; soon afterward it was occupied by students of the law; and in 1608 James I. presented the entire group of structures to the "benchers" of the two societies, who have ever since been the absolute owners. The entrance to Inner Temple, from Fleet Street, is nothing more than a mere gateway; the entrance to Middle Temple is more pretentious, and was designed by Sir Christopher Wren.

Here in the heart of the great world of London exists, as in no other city on the globe, a quiet and leafy suburb, peopled only by those whose vocation is not of the commonalty. Its very environment is inspiring to great thoughts and deeds, and small wonder it is that so many master minds have first received their stimulus amid the shady walks and rather gloomy buildings of the Temple.

True it is that they are gloomy, on the outside at least, – dull brick rows with gravelled or flagged courtyards, but

possessing withal a geniality which many more glaring and modern surroundings utterly lack.

The stranger, for sightseeing, and the general public, to take advantage of a short cut to the river, throng its walks during the busy hours around noontime. All sorts and conditions of men hurry busily along in a never-ending stream, but most to be remarked is the staid and earnest jurist, his managing clerk, or the aspiring bencher, as his duties compel him to traverse this truly hallowed ground.

By nightfall the atmosphere and associations of the entire Temple take on, if possible, a more quiet and somnolescent air than by day. It must, if report be true, be like a long-deserted city in the small hours of the night. A group of chambers, called rather contemptuously Paper Buildings, is near the river and is a good example of revived Elizabethan architecture. A new Inner Temple Hall was formally opened in 1870, by the Princess Louise. In October, 1861, when the Prince of Wales was elected a bencher of the Middle Temple, the new Library was formally opened. The Temple Church, as seen from the river, with its circular termination, like nothing else in the world except Charlemagne's church at Aix la Chapelle, is one of the most interesting churches in London. All the main parts of the structure are as old as the time of the Knights Templars; but restorations of the middle nineteenth century, when the munificent sum of £70,000 was spent, are in no small way responsible for its many visible attributes which previously had

sadly fallen to decay. There are two portions, the Round Church and the Choir, the one nearly 700 years old and the other more than 600. The chief distinguishing features of the interior are the monumental effigies, the original sculptured heads in the Round Church, the triforium, and the fittings of the Choir. The north side of the church has been opened out by the removal of the adjoining buildings where, in the churchyard, is the grave of Oliver Goldsmith, who died in chambers (since pulled down) in Brick Court. The Temple Gardens, fronting the river, are laid out as extensive shrub and tree-bordered lawns, which are generously thrown open to the public in the summer. A more charming sylvan retreat, there is not in any city in the world.

In the good old times, legal education and hospitality went hand in hand, and the halls of the different Inns of Court were, for several centuries, a kind of university for the education of advocates, subject to this arrangement. The benchers and readers, being the superiors of each house, occupied, on public occasions of ceremony, the upper end of the hall, which was raised on a *daïs*, and separated from the rest of the building by a *bar*. The next in degree were the *utter* barristers, who, after they had attained a certain standing, were called from the body of the hall to the bar (that is, to the first place outside the bar), for the purpose of taking a principal part in the mootings or exercises of the house; and hence they probably derived the name of *utter* or outer barristers. The other members of the inn, consisting of students of the law under the degree of *utter* barristers, took

their places nearer to the centre of the hall, and farther from the bar, and, from this manner of distribution, appear to have been called inner barristers. The distinction between *utter* and inner barristers is, at the present day, wholly abolished; the former being called barristers generally, and the latter falling under the denomination of students; but the phrase "called to the bar" still holds and is recognized throughout the English-speaking world.

The general rule, as to qualification, in all the Inns of Court, is, that a person, in order to entitle himself to be called to the bar, must be twenty-one years of age, have kept *twelve terms*, and have been for five, or three years, at least, a member of the society. The keeping of terms includes dining a certain number of times in the hall, and hence the pleasantry of *eating the way to the bar*; the preparatory studies being now private. Of the great business of refection, the engraving herewith shows the most dignified scene – the Benchers' Dinner; the benchers, or "antients," as they were formerly called, being the governors of the inn, at the Temple called the Parliament. The Middle Temple hall surpasses the halls of the other societies in size and splendour. Begun in 1562, and finished about ten years afterward, it is 100 feet long, 40 feet wide, and upwards of 60 feet in height. The roof and panels are finely decorated, and the screen at the lower end is beautifully carved. There are a few good pictures: amongst others, one of Charles I. on horseback, by Vandyke; also portraits of Charles II., Queen Anne, George I., and George II.

Lincoln's Inn was once the property of Henry De Lacy, Earl

of Lincoln. It became an Inn of Court in 1310. The New Hall and Library, a handsome structure after the Tudor style, was opened in 1845. The Chapel was built in 1621-23, by Inigo Jones, who laid out the large garden in Lincoln's Inn Fields, close by, in 1620. Lord William Russell was beheaded here in 1683. In Lincoln's Inn are the Chancery and Equity Courts. Lincoln's Inn vied with the Temple in the masques and revels of the time of James I.

Gray's Inn, nearly opposite the north end of Chancery Lane, once belonged to the Lords Gray of Wilton. Most of its buildings – except its hall, with its black oak roof – are of comparatively modern date. In Gray's Inn lived the great Lord Bacon, a tree planted by whom, in the quaint old garden of the Inn, could, in Dickens' time, yet be seen – propped up by iron stays. To-day a diligent search and inquiry does not indicate its whereabouts, which is another manifestation of the rapidity of the age in which we live.

The nine Inns of Chancery allied with the four Inns of Court, the Inner and Middle Temple, Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn, are Clifford's Inn, Clement's Inn, Lyons' Inn, New Inn, Furnival's Inn, Thavie's Inn, Sergeant's Inn, Staple Inn, and Barnard's Inn, all of which were standing in Dickens' day, but of which only Staple Inn and Sergeant's Inn have endured, Clement's Inn having only recently (1903) succumbed to the house-breaker.

Staple Inn, in Holborn, "the fayrest inne of Chancerie," is one of the quaintest, quietest, and most interesting corners of mediæval London left to us.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, describing his first wanderings in London, said, "I went astray in Holborn through an arched entrance over which was Staple Inn, and here likewise seemed to be offices; but in a court opening inwards from this, there was a surrounding seclusion of quiet dwelling-houses, with beautiful green shrubbery and grass-plots in the court and a great many sunflowers in full bloom. The windows were open, it was a lovely summer afternoon, and I had a sense that bees were humming in the court." Many more years have passed over the old corner since Hawthorne's visit, but still it retains its ancient charm, and still the visitor is struck by the rapid change from the hurrying stream of Holborn's traffic to this haunt of ancient peace about which Mr. Worsfold writes with pardonable enthusiasm.

With a history traceable backward for many centuries, Staple Inn was at first associated in the middle ages with the dealing in the "staple commodity" of wool, to use Lord Chief Justice Coke's words, but about the fifteenth century the wool merchants gave way to the wearers of woollen "stuff," and their old haunt became one of the Inns of Chancery – the Staple Inn of the lawyers – perpetuating its origin in its insignia, a bale of wool. For many years the connection of the Inn with the Law was little beyond a nominal one, and in 1884 the great change came, and the haunt of merchants, the old educational establishment for lawyers, passed from the hands of "The Principal, Ancients and Juniors of the Honourable Society of Staple Inn," to those of a big insurance society, while the fine old hall became the headquarters of the

Institute of Actuaries.

True it is, that perhaps no area of the earth's surface, of say a mile square, has a tithe of the varied literary association of the neighbourhood lying in the immediate vicinity of the Temple, the birthplace of Lamb, the home of Fielding, and the grave of Goldsmith.

Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, is still haunted by the memory of the boy Chatterton, and Will's Coffee House, the resort of wits and literary lights of former days, vies with Royal Palaces as an attraction for those who would worship at the shrines of a bygone age, – a process which has been made the easier of late, now that the paternal Society of Arts has taken upon itself to appropriately mark, by means of a memorial tablet, many of these localities, of which all mention is often omitted from the guide-books. Often the actual houses themselves have disappeared, and it may be questioned if it were not better that in some instances a tablet commemorating a home or haunt of some notability were not omitted. Still if the accompanying inscription is only sufficiently explicit, the act is a worthy one, and truth to tell, a work that is well performed in London.

Suburban London, too, in a way, may well come within the scope of the passion of any lover of material things which have at one time or another been a part and parcel of the lives of great men. And so, coupled with literary associations, we have the more or less imaginary "Bell" at Edmonton to remind us of Cowper, of many houses and scenes identified with

Carlyle, at Chelsea; of the poet Thompson, of Gainsborough, and a round score of celebrities who have been closely identified with Richmond, – and yet others as great, reminiscent of Pepys, Addison, Steele, Thackeray and the whole noble band of chroniclers, essayists, and diarists of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The "houses of entertainment" – as the Georgian novelist was pleased to refer to inns and taverns – had in Dickens' day not departed greatly from their original status. Referring solely to those coaching and posting-houses situated at a greater or lesser distance from the centre of town, – on the main roads running therefrom, and those city establishments comprehended strictly under the head of taverns, – which were more particularly places of refreshment for mankind of the genus male. These two classes were, and are, quite distinct from the later-day *caravanseraï* known as hotels, and as such performed vastly different functions.

To be sure, all life and movement of the early nineteenth century, and for a couple of hundred years before, had a great deal to do with inns and taverns.

From Chaucer's famous "Tabard," where —

"In Southwark at the Tabard as I lay
Ready to wenden on my pilgrimage,"

to "The Bull," at Rochester, whose courtyard is still as

described by Dickens, and the somewhat mythical "Maypole" of "Barnaby Rudge," is a far cry, though it would appear that the kind of cheer and accommodation varies to a much lesser degree than might be supposed. Certainly the demand for brevity and the luxuriousness of the later years of the nineteenth century, and even to some extent during Dickens' time, with the innovation of railway travel, gas-lamps, the telegraph, and what not, was making an entirely new set of conditions and demands.

The old "Tabard" of Chaucer's day is no more, though an antiquary of 1840 has attempted to construct what it may have been out of the "Talbot" of that day, which stood in the ancient High Street of Southwark, just across London Bridge, where, said the annalist Stow, "there were so many fair inns for receipt of travellers," – the rivals of the Boar's Heads and Mermaids of another generation.

Of the actual Dickens' inns, perhaps none is more vividly impressed on the imagination than that of the "Maypole," that fantastic structure of "Barnaby Rudge," the original of which is the "King's Head" at Chigwell on the borders of Epping Forest. It was here that Mr. Willet sat in his accustomed place, "his eyes on the eternal boiler." "Before he had got his ideas into focus, he had stared at the plebeian utensil quite twenty minutes," – all of which indicates the minutiae and precision of Dickens' observations. This actual copper, vouched for by several documents of attestation, with an old chair which formerly stood in the Chester Room of the "Maypole," is to-day in

the possession of Mr. Bransby Williams, of London, an ardent enthusiast of all matters in connection with Dickens and his stories.

Of the *Pickwickian Inns*, the "White Horse" at Ipswich – "the overgrown tavern" to which Mr. Pickwick journeyed by the London Coach – is something of tangible reality, and doubtless little changed to this day; the same being equally true of "The Leather Bottle" at Cobham. The old "White Hart" in the Borough High Street, the scene of the first meeting of Mr. Pickwick and Weller, was demolished in 1889. Not so the "Magpie and Stump," – that referred to in "Pickwick" as being in the vicinity of the Clare Market, and "closely approximating to the back of the 'New Inn.'" This seems to have been of an imaginary character in nomenclature, at least, though it is like enough that some neighbourhood hostelry – or, as it is further referred to, as being what the ordinary person would call a "low public-house" – was in mind.

The old "Fountain Inn" of the Minories, referred to in "Oliver Twist," and the "little inn" ("The Sun") at Canterbury, where the Micawbers lodged, and the "White Hart" at Hook, – or more probably its predecessor of the same name, – visited by the Pickwickians en route to Rochester, – were realities in every sense of the word, and show once again the blending of truth and fiction which was so remarkable in the novels, and which indicates so strongly the tendency of Dickens to make every possible use of accessories, sights, and scenes, with which, at one

time or another, he had been acquainted.

The "Saracen's Head" at Snow Hill, – a real thing in Dickens' day, – where the impetuous Squeers put up during his visits to London, has disappeared. It was pulled down when the Holborn Viaduct was built in 1869, and the existing house of the same name in no way merits the genial regard which is often bestowed upon it, in that it is but an ordinary London "*Pub*" which does not even occupy the same site as its predecessor.

"The Spaniards," where foregathered the No-Popery rioters, on Hampstead Heath, remains much as of yore; certainly it has not changed to any noticeable degree since Mrs. Bardell, *et als.*, repaired hither in the Hampstead stage for their celebrated tea-party, as recounted in "Pickwick."

The very term *Pickwickian Inns* inspires rumination and imagination to a high degree. Remembrance is all very well, but there is a sturdy reality about most of the inns of which Dickens wrote. Thus the enthusiast may, if he so wish, in some cases, become a partaker of the same sort of comfort as did Dickens in his own time, or at least, amid the same surroundings; though it is to be feared that New Zealand mutton and Argentine beef have usurped the place in the larder formerly occupied by the "prime Scotch" and the juiciest "Southdown."

It is said there are twenty-five inns mentioned in "Pickwick" alone; the writer has never been able to count up but twenty-two; still the assertion may be correct; he leaves it to the curious to verify. Certainly such well revered names as the "Golden

Cross," "The Bull," at Rochester, which, above all other localities drawn in "Pickwick," has the liveliest associations, "The Leather Bottle," "The Magpie and Stump," "The Marquis of Granby," "The Blue Boar," "The White Horse Cellars" in Piccadilly, and "The Great White Horse" at Ipswich are for ever branded upon the memory. The following half-dozen will perhaps be best recalled: "The Old White Hart" in the Borough High Street; "The George and Vulture," Mr. Pickwick's own favourite; "The Golden Cross," reminiscent of Dickens' own personality as well; "The White Horse Cellars," the starting-place of the Ipswich Coach; "Osborne's Hotel" in the Adelphi, still occupied as a rather shabby sort of hostelry, though the name has gone; "Jack Straw's Castle," where "Boz" and his friend Forster so often enjoyed that "shoemaker's holiday;" and lastly, "The Spaniards" at Hampstead. A description of one, as it is to-day, must suffice here.

"The Golden Cross," which stands opposite Charing Cross Railway Station, with its floriated gilt crosses usually brightly burnished, and the entire edifice resplendent in new paint.

There is still, however, something of the air of the conservatism of a former day, if only in the manner of building, which in the present case furthers the suggestion that the ways of the modern architect – striving for new and wonderful constructive methods – were unknown when the walls of this old hostelry were put up.

Its courtyard has disappeared, or rather has been incorporated

into a sort of warehouse or stable for a parcels delivery company, and the neighbourhood round about has somewhat changed since the days of "Copperfield" and "Pickwick." The Charing Cross Railway Station has come upon the scene, replacing old Hungerford Market, and palatial hotels have been built where the gardens of Northumberland House once were. St. – Martin's-in-the-Fields is still in its wonted place, but with a change for the worse, in that the platform with its ascending steps has been curtailed during a recent alleged improvement in the roadway in St. Martin's Lane.

The National Gallery remains as of yore, except that it has recently been isolated by pulling down some adjoining structures to the northwest, as a precautionary measure against fire.

The Nelson Monument in Trafalgar Square, then newly arrived, is as it was in the days of Dickens' early life. But there is little suggestion in the hotel or its surroundings of its ever having been a "mouldy sort of an establishment in a close neighbourhood," and it is hard to believe that Copperfield's bedroom "smelt like a hackney-coach and was shut up like a family vault."

DICKENS' LITERARY LIFE

A brief account is here given of Dickens' literary career, which presents chronologically a review of his productions as they appeared.

The first of his literary efforts was the tragedy of "The Sultan of India," written in his precocious school-days at Chatham, when, if we except his Parliamentary journalistic work, nothing else was put forth until "The Dinner at Poplar Walk" was published in the *Monthly Magazine* (1833). The original "Sketches by Boz" – the first of which bore no signature – also followed in the *Monthly Magazine*. Other sketches under the same generic title also appeared in the *Evening Chronicle*, and yet others, under the title of "Scenes and Characters," were published in "Bell's Life in London" and the "Library of Fiction."

In 1836 a number of these fugitive pieces were collected into a volume, the copyright of which was sold to one Macrone for £100, who published them under the first and best known title, "Sketches by Boz." The familiar story of "Pickwick," its early conception and its final publication, is well known. Its first publication (in parts) dated from 1836-37. About this time Dickens had another bad attack of stage-fever, and wrote a farce, "The Strange Gentleman," the libretto of an opera called "The Village Coquettes," and a comedy, "Is She His Wife?" more particularly perhaps for amateur representation, in which he was

very fond of taking part. "Oliver Twist," a courageous attack on the Poor Laws and Bumbledom, followed in 1838, though it was not completed until after "Nicholas Nickleby" began to appear in 1839.

At this time was started *Master Humphrey's Clock*, a sort of miscellany in which it was intended to publish a series of papers written chiefly by Dickens himself after the style of Addison's *Spectator* of a former day. It was not at first successful, and only upon the commencement therein of the "Old Curiosity Shop" did it take on in any sense.

Master Humphrey's Clock ran down with the completion of the novel, though this story, in company with "Barnaby Rudge," a tale of the riots of '80, was not issued in book form until 1848 and 1849.

The authorship of "Pickwick" was unknown by the great mass of the public until very nearly the completion of the work in serial parts. Much conjecture was raised, and a writer in *Bentley's Miscellany* published the following lines under the title of:

IMPROMPTU

*"Who the Dickens 'Boz' could be
Puzzled many a learned elf,
Till time revealed the mystery,
And 'Boz' appeared as Dickens' self."*

The other contributions made by Dickens to this periodical were afterward added to his published works under the title of "Master Humphrey's Clock."

Dickens' first tour to America followed the abandonment of the periodical in 1842. This event called forth the following verses by Tom Hood, entitled:

TO CHARLES DICKENS

On his Proposed Voyage to America, 1842

"Pshaw! away with leaf and berry
And the sober-sided cup!
Bring a Goblet and bright Sherry!
And a bumper fill me up. —
Tho' I had a pledge to shiver,
And the longest ever was, —
Ere his vessel leaves our river,
I will drink a health to 'Boz.'

"Here's success to all his antics,
Since it pleases him to roam,
And to paddle o'er Atlantics,
After such a sale at home

May he shun all rocks whatever,
And the shallow sand that lurks, —
And his passage be as clever
As the best among his works."

With what favour his visit was received in America is too well known to require detailed mention here. His experiences and observations recounted in "American Notes," first published in 1842 upon his return to England, has told these vividly and picturesquely, if not exactly consistently.

As a reader, Dickens stood as preëminently to the fore as when posing as a writer. His phenomenal success on the platform is given in detail in a volume written by George Dolby, who accompanied him and managed his American tour. The mental and physical strain was such that in fifteen years of combined editorial, literary, and reading labours, it left him attenuated and finally curtailed his brilliant work.

What the readings really did accomplish was to increase and firmly assure the permanence of his already wide-spread fame.

"Martin Chuzzlewit" had begun to appear in shilling parts in 1843, and at that time was considered by the novelist to be by far the best work he had yet written. "Dombey and Son" followed, and afterward "David Copperfield," to which Dickens transferred his affections from "Chuzzlewit." This new "child of fancy," as he called it, was so largely autobiographical as to be accepted by many as being a recounting of his own early struggles as a poor boy in London, and his early literary labours.

He himself said: "I seemed to be sending a part of myself into the shadowy world."

While "Chuzzlewit" was appearing in serial form, that masterpiece perhaps of all Dickens' shorter stories, "A Christmas Carol," – the first of the "Christmas Stories," – appeared.

This earned for its author the sobriquet, "The Apostle of Christmas."

Its immediate popularity and success was, perhaps, influenced by the following endorsement from Thackeray:

"It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness."

Others under the same generic title followed: "The Chimes," 1844; "The Cricket on the Hearth," 1845; "The Battle of Life," 1846; and "The Haunted Man," 1848. In January, 1846, Dickens began his short connection with the *Daily News*. Here his "Pictures from Italy" appeared, he having just returned from a journey thither.

"Dombey and Son," which Dickens had begun at Rosemont, Lausanne, took him from 1846 to 1848 to complete.

In 1850 the idea of *Household Words*, the periodical with which Dickens' fame is best remembered, took shape. His idea was for a low-priced periodical, to be partly original, and in part selected. "I want to suppose," he wrote, "a certain shadow which may go into any place by starlight, moonlight, sunlight, or candle-light, and be in all homes and all nooks and corners." The general outlines and plans were settled, but there appears to

have been no end of difficulty in choosing a suitable name. "The Highway of Life," "The Holly Tree," "The Household Voice," "The Household Guest," and many others were thought of, and finally was hit upon "Household Words," the first number of which appeared on March 30, 1850, with the opening chapters of a serial by Mrs. Gaskell, whose work Dickens greatly admired. In number two appeared Dickens' own pathetic story, "The Child's Dream of a Star." In 1859, as originally conceived, *Household Words* was discontinued, from no want of success, but as an expediency brought about through disagreement among the various proprietors. Dickens bought the property in, and started afresh under the title of *All the Year Round*, among whose contributors were Edmund Yates, Percy Fitzgerald, Charles Lever, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, and Lord Lytton. This paper in turn came to its finish, and phoenix-like took shape again as *Household Words*, which in one form or another has endured to the present day, its present editor (1903) being Hall Caine, Jr., a son of the novelist.

Apart from the general circulation, the special Christmas numbers had an enormous sale. In these appeared other of the shorter pieces which have since become famous, – "Mugby Junction," "The Seven Poor Travellers," "The Haunted House," etc.

In the pages of *Household Words* "The Child's History of England," "The Uncommercial Traveller" (1861), and "Hard Times" (1854) first appeared; while *All the Year Round*

first presented "A Tale of Two Cities" (1859) and "Great Expectations."

"Bleak House" was issued in parts in 1852. "Little Dorrit," originally intended to be called "Nobody's Fault," was published in 1857.

"Our Mutual Friend" dates from 1865 in book form. "Edwin Drood" was left unfinished at the author's death in 1870.

In 1868 "The Uncommercial Traveller" was elaborated for the first issue in *All the Year Round*, and subsequently again given to the world in revised book form.

Curiously enough, though most of Dickens' works were uncompleted before they began to appear serially, they have been universally considered to show absolutely no lack of continuity, or the least semblance of being in any way disjointed.

Dickens' second visit to America in 1867 was, like its predecessor, a stupendous success. A New York paper stated at this time that: "Of the millions here who treasure every word he has written, there are tens of thousands who would make a large sacrifice to see and hear a man who has made so many happy hours."

Dickens' fame had deservedly attracted a large circle of acquaintances around him, who, in truth, became firmly converted into fast friends.

His literary life and his daily labours had so identified him with the literary London of the day that all reference to literary events of that time must make due allowance of his movements.

The house at 48 Doughty Street still stands, and at the end of 1839 the novelist removed to the "handsome house with a considerable garden" in Devonshire Terrace, near Regent's Park, the subject of a sketch by Maclise which is here given. His holidays during his early and busy years were spent at Broadstairs, Twickenham, and Petersham on the Thames, just above Richmond. Dickens was always a great traveller, and his journeys often took him far afield.

In 1841 he visited Landor at Bath, and in the same year he made an excursion to Scotland and was granted the freedom of the city of Edinburgh. The first visit to America was undertaken in 1842; his Italian travels in 1844; residence in Switzerland 1846; three months in Paris 1847; Switzerland and Italy revisited in 1853. Three summers were spent at Boulogne in 1853, 1854, 1856; residence in Paris 1855-56; America revisited 1867-68.

Such in brief is a review of the physical activities of the author. He did not go to Australia – as he was variously importuned – but enough is given to show that, in spite of his literary associations with old London and its institutions, Charles Dickens was, for a fact, a very cosmopolitan observer.

As for Dickens' daily round of London life, it is best represented by the period of the magazines, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, *Household Words*, and *All the Year Round*, particularly that of the former. In those days he first met with the severe strain which in after life proved, no doubt, to have shortened his days.

Considering his abilities and his early vogue, Dickens

made some astonishingly bad blunders in connection with his agreements with publishers; of these his biographer Forster tells in detail.

After the publication of "Martin Chuzzlewit," Dickens expressed dissatisfaction with his publishers, Messrs. Chapman and Hall, which resulted in his making an agreement with Messrs. Bradbury and Evans.

To conserve his intellectual resources, he resolved to again visit Italy, to which country he repaired after a farewell dinner given him at Greenwich, where Turner, the artist, and many other notables attended. He accordingly settled in a suburb of Genoa, where he wrote "The Chimes," and came back to London especially to read it to his friends. Writing from Genoa to Forster in November, 1844, he said:

"... But the party for the night following? I know you have consented to the party. Let me see. Don't have any one this particular night for dinner, but let it be a summons for the special purpose, at half-past six. Carlyle indispensable, and I should like his wife of all things; *her* judgment would be invaluable. You will ask Mac, and why not his sister? Stanny and Jerrold I should particularly wish; Edwin Landseer, Blanchard ... and when I meet you, oh! Heaven, what a week we will have!"

Forster further describes the occasion itself as being —

"Rather memorable ... the germ of those readings to larger audiences by which, as much as by his books, the world knew him."

Among those present was Maclise, who, says Forster, "made a note of it" in pencil, which is reproduced herein. "It will tell the reader all he can wish to know, and he will thus see of whom the party consisted."

Of Dickens' entire literary career nothing was more successful than his famous public readings. From that night at Forster's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields (No. 58, still standing, 1903), afterward made use of as Mr. Tulkinghorn's in "Bleak House," and later among other friends, at first in a purely informal and private manner and in a semi-public way for charitable objects, these diversions, so powerful and realistic were they, ultimately grew into an out-and-out recognized business enterprise.

The first series was inaugurated in 1858-59, and absolutely took the country by storm, meeting with the greatest personal affection and respect wherever he went. In Dublin there was almost a riot. People broke the pay-box, and freely offered £5 for a stall. In Belfast he had enormous audiences, being compelled, he said, to turn half the town away. The reading over, the people ran after him to look at him. "Do me the honour," said one, "to shake hands, Misther Dickens, and God bless you, sir; not ounly for the light you've been to me this night, but for the light you've been to me house, sir (and God bless your face!), this many a year." Men cried undisguisedly.

During the second American tour, in 1867, the public went almost mad. In Boston his reception was beyond all expectations; and in New York the speculators assembled the night before the

reading in long lines to wait the opening of the doors at nine the next morning for the issue of the tickets. They continued to come all night, and at five o'clock in the morning there were two lines of eight hundred each, whilst at eight there were five thousand. At nine o'clock, each of the two lines reached more than three-quarters of a mile in length, members of the families were relieving each other, waiters from neighbouring restaurants were serving breakfasts in the open December air, and excited applicants for tickets offering five or ten dollars for the mere permission to exchange places with other persons standing nearer the head of the line. Excitement and enthusiasm increased wherever he travelled, and it has been freely observed by all who knew him well that this excitement and strain finally culminated, after he had returned to England and undertaken there another series of readings, in an illness which hastened his death.

THE HIGHWAY OF LETTERS

In Dickens' time, as in our own, and even at as early a period as that of Drayton, Fleet Street, as it has latterly been known, has been the abode of letters and of literary labours.

The diarists, journalists, political and religious writers of every party and creed have adopted it as their own particular province. Grub Street no longer exists, so that the simile of Doctor Johnson does not still hold true.

The former Grub Street – "inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems" (*vide* Doctor Johnson's Dictionary) – has become Milton Street through the mindful regard of some former sponsor, by reason of the nearness of its location to the former Bunhill residence of the great epic poet. But modern Fleet Street exists to-day as the street of journalists and journalism, from the humble penny-a-liner and his product to the more sedate and verbose political paragrapher whose reputation extends throughout the world.

Nowhere else is there a long mile of such an atmosphere, redolent of printers' ink and the bustle attendant upon the production and distribution of the printed word. And nowhere else is the power of the press more potent.

Its historian has described it as "a line of street, with shops and houses on either side, between Temple Bar and Ludgate Hill, one of the largest thoroughfares in London, and one of the most

famous."

Its name was derived from the ancient streamlet called the Fleet, more commonly "Fleet Ditch," near whose confluence with the Thames, at Ludgate Hill, was the notorious Fleet Prison, with its equally notorious "marriages."

This reeking abode of mismanagement was pulled down in 1844, when the "Marshalsea," "The Fleet," and the "Queen's Bench" (all three reminiscent of Dickens, likewise Newgate, not far away) were consolidated in a new structure erected elsewhere.

The unsavoury reputation of the old prison of the Fleet, its "chaplains," and its "marriages," are too well-known to readers of contemporary literature to be more than mentioned here.

The memory of the famous persons who were at one time or another confined in this "noisome place with a pestilential atmosphere" are recalled by such names as Bishop Hooper, the martyr; Nash, the poet and satirist; Doctor Donne, Killigrew, the Countess of Dorset, Viscount Falkland, William Prynne, Richard Savage, and – of the greatest possible interest to Americans – William Penn, who lived "within the rules" in 1707.

The two churches lying contiguous to this thoroughfare, St. Dunstan's-in-the-West and St. Bride's, are mentioned elsewhere; also the outlying courts and alleys, such as Falcon, Mitre, and Salisbury Courts, Crane Court, Fetter Lane, Chancery Lane, Whitefriars, Bolt Court, Bell Yard, and Shoe Lane, the Middle and Inner Temples, and Sergeant's Inn.

The great fire of London of 1666 stopped at St. Dunstan's-in-

the-West and at the easterly confines of the Temple opposite.

Michael Drayton, the poet, lived at "a baye-windowed house next the east end of St. Dunstan's Church," and Cowley was born "near unto the corner of Chancery Lane."

The "Horn Tavern," near which was Mrs. Salmon's celebrated waxwork exhibition (for which species of entertainment the street had been famous since Elizabeth's time), is now Anderton's Hotel, still a famous house for "pressmen," the name by which the London newspaper writer is known.

A mere mention of the sanctity of letters which surrounded the Fleet Street of a former day, is presumably the excuse for connecting it with the later development of literary affairs, which may be said so far as its modern repute is concerned, to have reached its greatest and most popular height in Dickens' own time.

The chroniclers, the diarists, and the satirists had come and gone. Richardson – the father of the English novel lay buried in St. Bride's, and the innovation of the great dailies had passed the stage of novelty. *The Gentleman's Magazine* and the Reviews had been established three-quarters of a century before. *The Times* had just begun to be printed by steam. Each newspaper bore an imprinted government stamp of a penny per copy, – a great source of revenue in that the public paid it, not the newspaper proprietor. (*The Times* then sold for five pence per copy.) The *Illustrated London News*, the pioneer of illustrated newspapers, had just come into existence, and *Punch* under Blanchard Jerrold

had just arrived at maturity, so to speak. Such, in a brief way, were the beginnings of the journalism of our day; and Dickens' connection therewith, as Parliamentary reporter of *The True Sun* and *The Morning Chronicle*, were the beginnings of his days of assured and adequate income, albeit that it came to him at a comparatively early period of his life. The London journalist of Dickens' day was different in degree only from the present. *The True Sun*, for which Dickens essayed his first reportorial work, and later *The Morning Chronicle*, were both influential journals, and circulated between them perhaps forty thousand copies, each bearing a penny stamp impressed on the margin, as was the law.

The newspapers of London, as well as of most great cities, had a localized habitation, yclept Newspaper Row or Printing-House Square, and other similar appellations. In London the majority of them were, and are, printed east of Temple Bar, in, or south of, Fleet Street, between Waterloo and Blackfriars Bridges. To borrow Johnson's phrase, this is the mart "whose staple is news."

The Times— "The Thunderer" of old — was housed in a collection of buildings which surrounded Printing-House Square, just east of Blackfriars Bridge. In 1840 *The Times* had, or was understood to have, three editors, fifteen reporters, with a more or less uncertain and fluctuating number of correspondents, news collectors, and occasional contributors. These by courtesy were commonly referred to as the intellectual workers. For the rest, compositors, pressmen, mechanics, clerks, *et al.*, were of a class distinct in themselves. The perfecting press had just

come into practical use, and though the process must appear laboriously slow to-day when only 2,500 *perfected* copies of a four-page paper were turned out in an hour, *The Times* was in its day at the head of the list as to organization, equipment, and influence.

The other morning and evening papers, *The Post*, *The Advertiser*, *The Globe*, *The Standard*, *The Morning Chronicle*, and *The Sun*, all had similar establishments though on a smaller scale.

But two exclusively literary papers were issued in 1840 — *The Literary Gazette* and *The Athenæum*, the latter being to-day the almost universal mentor and guide for the old-school lover of literature throughout the world. *The Spectator* was the most vigorous of the weekly political and social papers, now sadly degenerated, and *Bell's Life in London*, which had printed some of Dickens' earlier work, was the only nominal "sporting paper." Church papers, trade papers, society papers, and generally informative journals were born, issued for a time, then died in those days as in the present.

Punch was, and is, the most thoroughly representative British humorous journal, and since its birth in the forties has been domiciled in Bouverie Street, just off the main thoroughfare of Fleet Street.

The literary production in this vast workshop in point of bulk alone is almost beyond comprehension. In 1869, a year before Dickens' death, there were published in London alone

three hundred and seventy-two magazines and serials, seventy-two quarterlies, and two hundred and ninety-eight newspapers etc.

As for the golden days of the "Highway of Letters," they were mostly in the glorious past, but, in a way, they have continued to this day. A brief review of some of the more important names and events connected with this famous street will, perhaps, not be out of place here.

Among the early printers and booksellers were Wynken de Worde, "at ye signe of ye Sonne;" Richard Pynson, the title-pages or colophons of whose works bore the inscription, "emprynted by me Richard Pynson at the temple barre of London (1493);" Rastell, "at the sign of the Star;" Richard Tottel, "within Temple-bar, at the signe of the Hande and Starre," which in Dickens' day had become the shop of a low bookseller by the name of Butterworth, who it was said still held the original leases. Others who printed and published in the vicinity were W. Copeland, "at the signe of the Rose Garland;" Bernard Lintot, "at the Cross Keys;" Edmund Curll, "at the Dial and Bible," and Lawton Gulliver, "at Homer's Head," against St. Dunstan's Church; and Jacob Robinson, on the west side of the gateway "leading down the Inner Temple Lane," an establishment which Dickens must have known as Groom's, the confectioner's. Here Pope and Warburton first met, and cultivated an acquaintanceship which afterward developed into as devoted a friendship as ever existed between man and man. The fruit of this was the publication (in

1739) of a pamphlet which bore the title, "A Vindication of Mr. Pope's 'Essay on Man,' by the Author of 'The Divine Legation of Moses,' printed for J. Robinson."

At Collins' shop, "at the Black Boy in Fleet Street," was published the first "Peerage," while other names equally famous were the publishers, T. White, H. Lowndes, and John Murray.

Another trade which was firmly established here was the bankers, "Child's," at Temple Bar, being the oldest existing banking-house in London to-day. Here Richard Blanchard and Francis Child, "at the Marygold in Fleet Street," – who were goldsmiths with "*running cashes*," – were first established in the reign of Charles II. "In the hands of Mr. Blanchard, goldsmith, next door to Temple Bar," Dryden deposited his £50 received for the discovery of the "bullies" by whom Lord Rochester had been barbarously assaulted in Covent Garden.

Another distinctive feature of Fleet Street was the taverns and coffee-houses. "The Devil," "The King's Head," at the corner of Chancery Lane, "The Bolt-in-Tun," "The Horn Tavern," "The Mitre," "The Cock," and "The Rainbow," with "Dick's," "Nando's," and "Peele's," at the corner of Fetter Lane – its descendant still existing, – completes the list of the most famous of these houses of entertainment.

To go back to a still earlier time, to connect therewith perhaps the most famous name of English literature, bar Shakespeare, it is recorded that Chaucer "once beat a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street," and was fined two shillings for the privilege by the

Honourable Society of the Inner Temple. As the chroniclers have it: "So Speght heard from Master Barkly, who had seen the entry in the records of the Inner Temple."

A rather gruesome anecdote is recounted by Hughson in his "Walks through London" (1817), concerning Flower-de-Luce Court (Fleur-de-Lis Court), just off Fetter Lane in Fleet Street. This concerned the notorious Mrs. Brownrigg, who was executed in 1767 for the murder of Mary Clifford, her apprentice. "The grating from which the cries of the poor child issued" being still existent at the time when Hughson wrote and presumably for some time after. Canning, in imitation of Southey, recounts it thus in verse:

"... Dost thou ask her crime?
She whipp'd two female 'prentices to death,
And hid them in the coal-hole. For this act
Did Brownrigg swing. Harsh laws! But time shall come,
When France shall reign and laws be all repeal'd."

Which gladsome (?) day has fortunately not yet come.

No résumé of the attractions of Fleet Street can well be made without some mention of Whitefriars, that region comprehended between the boundaries of the Temple on one side, and where once was the Fleet Ditch on the other. Its present day association with letters mostly has to do with journalism, Carmelite Street, Whitefriars Street, and other lanes and alleys of the immediate neighbourhood being given over to the production of the great

daily and weekly output of printed sheets. This ancient precinct formerly contained the old church of the White Friars, a community known in full as *Fratres Beatæ Mariæ de Mont Carmeli*.

Founded by Sir Richard Grey in 1241, the church was surrendered at the Reformation, and the Hall was made into the first Whitefriars Theatre, and the precinct newly named Alsatia, celebrated in modern literature by Scott in the "Fortunes of Nigel." "The George Tavern," mentioned in Shadwell's play, "The Squire of Alsatia," became later the printing shop of one Bowyer, and still more recently the printing establishment of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, the publishers and proprietors of *Punch*, which building was still more recently removed for the present commodious structure occupied by this firm. In Dickens' time it was in part at least the old "George Tavern." It is singular perhaps that Dickens' connection with the famous "Round Table" of *Punch* was not more intimate than it was. It is not known that a single article of his was ever printed in its pages, though it is to be presumed he contributed several, and one at least is definitely acknowledged.

Ram Alley and Pye Corner were here in Alsatia, the former a passage between the Temple and Sergeant's Inn, which existed until recently.

Mitre Court is perhaps the most famous and revered of all the purlieus of Fleet Street. "The Mitre Tavern," or rather a reminiscence of it, much frequented by the London journalist of

to-day and of Dickens' time, still occupies the site of a former structure which has long since disappeared, where Johnson used to drink his port, and where he made his famous remark to Ogilvie with regard to the noble prospects of Scotland: "I believe, sir, you have a great many ... but, sir, let me tell you the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees is the highroad that leads him to England."

Of all the old array of taverns of Fleet Street, "The Cock" most recently retained a semblance, at least, of its former characteristics, which recalls one of Tennyson's early poems, "A Monologue of Will Waterproof," which has truly immortalized this house of refreshment:

"Thou plump head-waiter at the Cock
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? Is't nine o'clock?
Then fetch a pint of port."

Salisbury Court, or Salisbury Square as it has now become, is another of those literary suburbs of Fleet Street – if one may so call it – where modern literature was fostered and has prospered. It occupies the courtyard of Salisbury or Dorset House. Betterton, Cave, and Sandford, the actors, lived here; Shadwell, Lady Davenant, the widow of the laureate; Dryden and Richardson also. Indeed Richardson wrote "Pamela" here, and Goldsmith was his "press corrector."

DICKENS' CONTEMPORARIES

When Scott was at the height of his popularity and reputation, cultivated and imaginative prose was but another expression of the older poesy. But within twenty-five years of Scott's concluding fictions, Dickens and Thackeray, and still later, George Eliot and Kingsley, had come into the mart with an entirely new brand of wares, a development unknown to Scott, and of a tendency which was to popularize literature far more than the most sanguine hopes of even Scott's own ambition.

There was more warmth, geniality, and general good feeling expressed in the printed page, and the people – that vast public which must ever make or mar literary reputations, if they are to be financially successful ones, which, after all, is the standard by which most reputations are valued – were ready and willing to support what was popularly supposed to stand for the spread of culture.

Biographers and critics have been wont to attribute this wide love for literature to the influence of Scott. Admirable enough this influence was, to be sure, and the fact is that since his time books have been more pleasingly frank, candid, and generous. But it was not until Dickens appeared, with his almost immediate and phenomenal success, that the real rage for the novel took form.

The first magazine, *The Gentleman's*, and the first review,

The Edinburgh, were contemporary with Scott's productions, and grew up quite independently, of course, but their development was supposed, rightly or wrongly, to be coincident with the influences which were set in motion by the publication of Scott's novels. Certainly they were sent broadcast, and their influence was widespread, likewise Scott's devotees, but his books were "hard reading" for the masses nevertheless, and his most ardent champion could hardly claim for him a tithe of the popularity which came so suddenly to Charles Dickens.

"Pickwick Papers" (1837) appeared only six years later than Scott's last works, and but eight years before Thackeray's "Vanity Fair." It was, however, a thing apart from either, with the defects and merits of its author's own peculiar and energetic style.

Jealousies and bickerings there doubtless were, in those days, as ever, among literary folk, but though there may have been many who were envious, few were impolite or unjust enough not to recognize the new expression which had come among them. One can well infer this by recalling the fact that Thackeray himself, at a Royal Academy banquet, had said that he was fearful of what "Pickwick's" reputation might have been had he succeeded in getting the commission, afterward given to Seymour, to illustrate the articles.

There appears to have been, at one time, some misunderstanding between Dickens and his publishers as to who really was responsible for the birth of "Pickwick," one claim having been made that Dickens was only commissioned to write

up Seymour's drawings. This Dickens disclaimed emphatically in the preface written to a later edition, citing the fact that Seymour only contributed the few drawings to the first serial part, unfortunately dying before any others were even put in hand.

There is apparently some discrepancy between the varying accounts of this incident, but Dickens probably had the right of it, though the idea of some sort of a "Nimrod Club," which afterward took Dickens' form in the "Pickwickians," was thought of between his publishers and Seymour. In fact, among others, besides Dickens, who were considered as being able to do the text, were Theodore Hook, Leigh Hunt, and Tom Hood.

As originally planned, it was undoubtedly a piece of what is contemptuously known as hack work. What it afterward became, under Dickens' masterful power, all the parties concerned, and the world in general, know full well.

The statement that Dickens is "out of date," "not read now," or is "too verbose," is by the mark when his work is compared with that of his contemporaries. In a comparative manner he is probably very much read, and very well read, too, for that matter. Far more so, doubtless, than most of his contemporaries; certainly before George Eliot, Wilkie Collins, Bulwer, or even Carlyle or Thackeray.

The very best evidence of this, if it is needed, is to recall to what great extent familiarity with the works of Dickens has crept into the daily life of "the people," who more than ever form the

great majority of readers.

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