harmless creature), for a week together. I have sustained my own idea of Roderick Random for a month at a stretch, I verily believe. I had a greedy relish for a few volumes of voyages and travels—I forget what now—that were on these shelves; and for days and days I can remember to have gone about my region of our house, armed with the centre-piece out of an old set of boot-trees, the perfect realization of Captain Somebody of the Royal British navy, in danger of being beset by savages, and resolved to sell his life at a great price." And then follows something still more suggestive, as showing his tendency to connect these ideal creations with the world of sense around him. "Every barn in the neighbourhood, every stone in the church, and every foot of the churchyard had some association of its own in my mind, connected with these books, and stood for some locality made famous in them. I have seen Tom Piper go climbing up the church steeple; I have watched Strap, with the knapsack on his back, stopping to rest himself upon the wicket gate; and I *know* that Commodore Trunnion held that club with Mr Pickle in the parlour of our little village alehouse." Even thus early, too, he tried to imitate what he read, wrote a tragedy founded on one of the *Tales of the Genii*, and acquired great fame in his own circle as a teller of stories.

A boy with this preliminary training was excellently prepared for a course of strange and painful experiences. The bitter contrast between the ideal world in which he had lived, and the miserable poverty in which he spent the first three years of his life in London, making himself useful at home, running errands, carrying things to the pawnbrokers, visiting his father in the Marshalsea, into which the poor man and his family soon drifted, tying up pots of blacking at the warehouse, prowling about cook-shops, *à-la-mode* beef-shops, and coffee-shops, a shabbily clad and insufficiently fed little boy, seeking to invest his livelihood of a shilling a day to the best advantage, helped to fix these experiences and the many odd scenes and characters with which they brought him in contact more indelibly on his memory. According to his own account, intensely as he felt the misery and shame of this kind of life, he was not without a perception of its humorous side. He used to say that, incredible as it might appear, he looked upon things then very much as he did afterwards. He even began to make attempts to sketch what he saw. Colman's *Broad Grins* was lent him by some kind people—another wise provision on the part of the great schoolmaster Accident; and with this before him as a stimulus, he actually sketched the barber who came to shave his bachelor uncle, the old charwoman who helped his mother, and laid the foundation of subsequent sketches,—Mrs Pipchin, the little Marchioness, Bob Sawyer's lodgings, and many other characters and scenes to which we have not the same direct traces. He was pursuing his education, in fact, as thoroughly as if he had been a pupil in a painter's studio. He was serving his apprenticeship. He could not have been better employed if he had been the holder of an endowment for research.

Dickens himself by no means looked upon it in that light. It was with difficulty, twenty-five years afterwards, that he could bring himself to speak of this period of his life. In his eyes it was a miserable servitude, from which he was happily relieved by a quarrel between his father and one of the partners in the warehouse when he was rather more than twelve years old, and sent to a school in Mornington Place, where he consorted with more respectable boys, and had some chance of book learning. If his father's fortunes had been equal to it, he might now have passed through a regular course of grammar-school and university training, and thereby perhaps been incapacitated for the work to which he was called. But fortunately he was soon again thrown chiefly on his own resources. At the age of fifteen he was engaged as an office-boy by an attorney in Gray's Inn at a salary of 13s. 6d., and afterwards 15s. a week. Here again he had a good field for observation, and did not fail to use it, for his employer afterwards recognized in *Pickwick* and *Nickleby* several incidents that took place in his office, and professed also to identify some of the characters. With Mr Blackmore he remained for eighteen months. During that time his father became a newspaper parliamentary reporter, and the office-boy, who had lost none of his thirst for distinction, and spent all his spare time reading hard in the British Museum, resolved to qualify himself for a similar occupation. He mastered the difficulties of short-hand, and in November 1828 obtained employment as a reporter in Doctors' Commons. He spent two years reporting law cases, practising in Doctors' Commons and the other law courts. It would be difficult to conceive a more perfect way of completing the education of the future novelist, giving him an insight into the strange by-paths of that higher stratum of society of which he had before had little experience. At the age of nineteen he entered the parliamentary gallery to enlarge his knowledge still further. He was a reporter of political speeches in and out of Parliament for five years from 1831 to 1836. First he reported for the *True Sun*, then for the *Mirror of Parliament*, finally for the *Morning Chronicle*. In his excursions into the country, and back with his "copy," he saw the last of the old coaching days and of the old inns that were a part of them; but it will be long, as Mr Forster remarks, "before the readers of his living page see the last of the life of either."

His first published piece of original writing appeared in the *Old Monthly Magazine* for January 1834. The title was "A Dinner at Poplar" ("Mr Minns"), one of the pieces afterwards published as *Sketches by Boz*, the *nom de plume* which he adopted from the nickname of one of his brothers. He wrote nine of these sketches for the *Monthly Magazine*, and then he was engaged to write some for an evening offshoot to the *Morning Chronicle*. The first series of *Sketches by Boz* was collected and published in two volumes in the February of 1836, with illustrations by George Cruickshank. The first edition was exhausted in a few months; a second was called for in August. The *Sketches* had at once attracted attention. No wonder, for in them we find already in full swing the unflagging delight in pursuing the humorous side of a character, and the inexhaustible fertility in inventing ludicrous incidents, which had only to be displayed on a large scale to place him at once on a pinnacle of fame. There are many of them, such as the Parish, the Boarding House, Mr Minns and his Cousin, and the misplaced attachment of Mr John Dounce, which show Dickens's humour at its very richest. He had formed, too, by this time his characteristic likes and dislikes, and plays them off upon his butts and favourites with the utmost frankness. The delight in homely sociability and cheerfulness, in the innocent efforts of simple people to make merry, the kindly satire of their little vanities and ambitions, the hearty ridicule of dry fogies who shut themselves up in selfish cares and reserves, and of sour mischief-makers who take pleasure in conspiring against the enjoyment of their neighbours,—these tendencies, which remained with Dickens to the last, are strongly marked in the *Sketches*, though lighter-hearted in their expression than in his later works. The mark and indispensable condition of all great work is there, that which Mr Carlyle calls veracity—the description of what the writer has himself seen, heard, and felt, the fearless utterance of his own sentiments in his own way.

The first number of *The Posthumous Papers of the*

Pickwick Club was issued in April 1836. The story of its origin was first authentically told in the preface to the edition of 1847. Some of the details were afterwards slightly modified. The first thought of the work did not originate with Dickens, although the whole character of it was determined by him. The publishers, Messrs Chapman & Hall, and Mr Seymour the artist, had agreed to issue a monthly serial to be illustrated by Mr Seymour, and they went to Dickens, whose *Sketches* had attracted their attention, to propose that he should write the letterpress of this "monthly something." Their idea was that the author should describe the adventures of a "Nimrod Club," the members of which should go out shooting, fishing, and so forth, and getting themselves into difficulties through their want of dexterity. Dickens undertook the monthly something, but obtained the required diverting incidents by a different machinery, namely, the Pickwick Club. The first four numbers went off slowly; the demand first became "brisk" after the fifth number, in which Sam Weller made his appearance. But by the discerning few the value of the work was recognized; and one of them, Mr Bentley the publisher, only a few weeks before fame came to the author with its capricious and overwhelming suddenness, engaged him to undertake the editing of a monthly magazine to be started the following January, and to write a serial story for it, and further made an agreement with him for the writing of two other tales at a specified early date. Of the vexation arising out of this agreement, when the huge success of the *Pickwick Papers* showed its terms to be inadequate, and Dickens was disposed to resent it as a selling of himself into slavery, and of the manner in which the bargain was re-adjusted, an account is given by Mr Forster from the author's point of view. Nine monthly numbers of the *Pickwick Papers* were published in 1836; eleven more in 1837; by November of the latter year the sale had reached 40,000 copies; Pickwick had become a popular hero and godfather to innumerable articles of merchandise, and Sam Weller's sayings were catchwords in the street and the household wherever the English language was spoken.

In the first excitement of success, the young author's appetite for work was unbounded. In 1837 he wrote his monthly instalments of the *Pickwick Papers* and *Oliver Twist* side by side, not even by a week in advance of the printer with either. They kept him fully occupied, and held in abeyance for that year a taste which from his youth to the end of his career was strong in him, and had no inconsiderable influence upon his style as a painter of manners. In his childhood at Chatham he got his first experience of fame as the author of a tragedy; at the school in Mornington Place he and his companions mounted small theatres and acted small plays; when in the attorney's office in Lincoln's Inn Fields he frequented minor theatres, the nature of which he has caricatured in the *Sketches*, and not unfrequently engaged in parts; one of his first published sketches, "Mrs Joseph Porter Over the Way," is a description of private theatricals in a stage-struck family. In 1836, before his serial engagements multiplied, he wrote a farce called the *Strange Gentleman*, and a short comedy with songs called the *Village Coquettes*. It is strange that with this passion for the stage, which he always retained, he should not have written more plays. He probably felt that in this kind of composition he had but the use of his left hand, and did not care to risk his reputation where he had no field for those powers of description and narrative over which he had proved his mastery. But though he did not write plays, and finally sought no outlet for his theatrical longings except in amateur acting and in reading from his own novels, the habit of realizing incidents as they would appear on the stage is unmistakably apparent in his work. He constantly seems to be working up scenes to the pitch of stage effect, elaborating the actions of his characters as if he were inventing "business" for a player, suggesting, in fact, an exuberance of business far beyond the capabilities of any human performer.

We doubt whether the fact that Dickens did not write plays is explained by saying that his genius was descriptive and narrative, but not dramatic. There is plenty of the raw material of dramatic action in his dialogues. He probably could have written a good acting play if he had tried. His characters are essentially theatrical, though their story is told according to the laws of the novel, and not according to the laws of the drama. The explanation of his not having tried to write plays we take to be simply that he discovered full employment for his powers in another direction before he had applied himself to the art of constructing plays. Dickens was eminently a practical man, and, when publishers were fighting for his novels, he directed his whole energy to meeting the demand without seeking to experiment on other modes of composition. As some compensation to Mr Bentley for releasing him from the strict terms of the agreement we have mentioned, he edited a life of Grimaldi, which was published in 1838; but after that he put his whole strength into the art of writing sketches and serial tales. As soon as *Pickwick* was off his hands, and before *Oliver Twist* was yet completed, he made an agreement with Chapman & Hall "to write a new work, the title whereof should be determined by him, of a similar character and of the same extent as the *Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*;" and between April 1838 and October 1839 he produced the *Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*.

Before the end of the serial publication of *Nickleby*, he had conceived a new project, partly with a view to relief from the strain of writing a continuous story in instalments with the printer at his heels, and partly with a view to getting more profit for himself out of his labours. This was a weekly publication, to be edited by himself, and to contain sketches, essays, tales, adventures, and letters from imaginary correspondents. He was to receive a certain sum every week for what was written, and was besides to share half the profits with the publishers. When the scheme was agreed to by the publishers, he proceeded to release himself from other engagements by resigning the editorship of *Bentley's Miscellany*, and getting clear of his obligation to write *Barnaby Rudge* for Mr Bentley in consideration of his buying the copyright and stock of *Oliver Twist* for £2250. He thus started clear with *Master Humphrey's Clock*, the title upon which he fixed for his new publication. The first number of *Master Humphrey* was issued on April 4, 1840. The sale of the first number was 70,000 copies, but the orders fell off when it was found that there was to be no continuous story. A story in weekly instalments it was thereupon necessary for him to write. A tale which he had begun in his magazine, and put into the mouth of Old Humphrey, was seen to be capable of expansion, and he expanded it into the *Old Curiosity Shop*, finding himself thus driven to his old employment of keeping ahead of the printers with a serial story, the only difference being that the instalments were weekly, and that he had the stimulus of larger profits from his success.

It is necessary in any account of Dickens, if we care to understand his method as a novelist, to give prominence to the conditions under which he worked. All that has been said about the want of plot in his novels finds its true explanation in those conditions. We need not search for deeper causes. His stories being published in instalments, it was indispensable to success that each separate part should have an independent interest; and as each instalment was published before the next was written, it was necessary that he should have a plot leaving him with the

atmost possible freedom of action. Of course, when we say that this explains his method, we do not mean that it accounts for his success; we do not mean to detract from the marvellous genius that enabled him to write with success under such conditions. We are only concerned to show how the kind of plot that he adopted, and the numerous branches, offshoots, and meanderings which he permitted himself were imposed upon him by circumstances of publication and composition,—were, in fact, necessary to success under those circumstances. A great deal too much has been made of the want of plot in Dickens's novels, as if it were a weakness, as if he had been incapable of constructing a plot,—the truth being that his method was deliberately adopted as that best suited to the position in which he found himself. It is evident that he was very much exercised over this question of plot, as indeed he was on all points touching his art. The *Pickwick Papers* may be put on one side in studying his method; he tumbled as it were into writing them; "no ingenuity of plot," as he himself explained, "was attempted;" they were simply "designed for the introduction of diverting characters and incidents." In his subsequent novels, if the *Pickwick Papers* can be called a novel, he could lay his plans beforehand, and consider how far it was possible to reconcile the introduction of interesting characters and incidents with greater regularity of structure, and he never seems to have solved the problem to his own satisfaction. In *Oliver Twist* he adopted the method of Defoe, and wrote what may be called a biographical novel, the hero of which is involved in a series of complications, arising one after another without being foreseen and calculated for from the beginning. In this way he avoided committing himself too far in advance to engagements which might afterwards prove embarrassing; the toils are laid for Oliver and cleared away more than once in the course of the story. In *Nicholas Nickleby* he reserved similar freedom of action by making Ralph conspire to ruin his brother's children without committing himself at the outset to any particular scheme as the villain's one resource; he thus also makes provision for a series of plots, one after another, and secures a certain unity for the whole by making them all proceed from one malevolent agency, whose motive was formed before the story began. In *Nicholas Nickleby*, however, he departs from certain restraints under which he had laid himself in the construction of *Oliver Twist*; he asserts greater freedom from the bit and bridle of plot in his introduction of diverting incidents which have no proper connection with the main story. Miss La Creevy and the Kenwigses are brought in on the slightest of pretexts, slighter even than that which serves for the introduction of the Mantalinis and the Crummles family. But no one can quarrel with a breadth of canvas which the author is able to fill with such figures; the critic can only say that he would have made a mistake if he had limited himself from the scope thereby given for his powers. As in *Nickleby* the moving principle of the story is the malevolent humour of Ralph, so in the *Old Curiosity Shop* the moving principle is the malevolent humour of Daniel Quilp. It is characteristic of Dickens that the uncalculating impulses should have so much influence in the direction of his stories. Fagin has some amount of selfish object in his designs against Oliver Twist; but Ralph and Quilp have nothing to gain by their conspiracies except the gratification of pure malice. The counter-agencies to these simple incarnations of the devil are equally disinterested. Oliver's good angel Nancy, Kate Nickleby's Newman Noggs, Little Nell's Kit, and Kit's Dick Swiveller are swayed by impulses of pure generosity. Observe, too, the analogous positions of Mr Brownlow the protector of Oliver, the Cheeryble brothers the protectors of Nicholas, and Mr Garland the protector of Kit. It is a game between the elementary passions, in which the good triumphs.

Master Humphrey's Clock was allowed to run out in November 1841, with the conclusion of the tale of *Barnaby Rudge*, which followed the *Old Curiosity Shop*. The construction of *Barnaby Rudge* is less simple than that of any of its predecessors; Dickens here attempted a more closely knit form of plot. There are no incidental diversions in this novel, all the characters have some finger in the main story, and every scene tends towards the development of some relation which afterwards has a potent influence on the course of the main events. It is true the Lord George Gordon riots fill so much space as to eclipse for a time the private interests of the novel; but the lives of all the personages whose fortunes we are following are interwoven with the public history with the most elaborate care and consummate skill, and when our fears for the commonwealth in the general storm are allayed, the keenest interest is left for the fates of the individuals that have been involved in the commotion.

Barnaby Rudge cost the author much labour, and after finishing it, and with it *Master Humphrey's Clock*, he felt the need of some change of strain. He had begun to chafe under the weekly form of publication, and fret as to what he might have done with Barnaby if he could only have produced it in monthly instalments. This determined him to make an agreement with his publishers for the issue of his next story in the old monthly form. When he projected the *Clock*, one of his schemes was that he should visit Ireland or America, and write from there a series of descriptive papers for it. The *Clock* was discontinued, but the desire to seek fresh fields remained. He accordingly set out for America in January 1842, returning in June, after a reception which might well have turned his head, to write the *American Notes*. He had been run after and stared at by crowds, and cheered with greater enthusiasm than if he had been a crowned potentate; and the people of the United States complained that in these *Notes*, as well as in his fierce endeavours to enlighten them on the subject of copyright, he had made but a poor return for their welcome. He was superfluously aggressive, there is no doubt; but they freely forgave him when he returned some years afterwards.

From whatever cause, the sale of the first number of *Martin Chuzzlewit* (January 1843), in which he returned to the broad and free method of *Nickleby*, only seeking a new motive for his plot in the design of a severe but benevolent old uncle for his nephew's reformation, and the schemes of a pious hypocrite, fell considerably below what he had been led to expect by the sale of his former monthlies. Only 20,000 were sold; his publishers, with whom he had made a very advantageous bargain, irritated him by grumbling; and though the novel obtained still higher praise than any of its predecessors, he was disappointed and discontented, and began to revolve other plans for making a living by his pen. He conceived the idea of writing a Christmas tale, the *Christmas Carol*; but he made much less profit by the enterprise than he made by similar tales afterwards, when he charged less for them and appealed to a wider audience. Although he sacrificed nothing of his individuality in the substance of the tale, and it was no failure in point of reputation, the pecuniary side of the work was for the moment uppermost in his mind, for, large as his income had been, he had exceeded it, and the most popular author of his time was suffering horrors, as he himself said, of "intolerable anxiety and disappointment." This disappointment determined him to live abroad for a time, partly to reduce his expenses, and partly to store his mind with fresh material. He settled at Genoa, and there finished *Chuzzlewit*, and wrote the *Chimes*, his Christmas

tale for 1844, making a brief visit to England to read it to a party of friends and arrange for its publication. He visited the principal towns of Italy in the first months of 1845, returning to England by way of Switzerland in June.

His first work on returning to London was to project a new weekly, to be called the *Cricket*, "price three halfpence, if possible—partly original, partly select, notices of books, notices of theatres, notices of all good things, notices of all bad ones; *carol* philosophy, cheerful views, sharp anatomization of humbug, jolly good temper, papers always in season, pat to the time of year; and a vein of glowing, hearty, generous, mirthful, beaming reference in everything to home and friends." The scheme for the time fell through. About the same time he "opened communications with a leading member of the Government to ascertain what chances there might be for his appointment, upon due qualification, to the paid magistracy of London; but the reply did not give him encouragement to entertain the notion farther." Soon after he was asked to undertake the editorship of a new daily paper, the *Daily News*, and consented. But a fortnight's experience (from January 21 to February 9, 1846) satisfied him that he was out of his element. He then resolved to go abroad again, and write another novel in shilling monthly numbers. The fruit of this resolution was *Dombey and Son*, the first number of which was issued in October 1846, and the last in April 1848. On resigning the editorship of the *Daily News*, he did not wholly part connection with it; he continued in it from January to March 1846 a series of descriptive letters, which he afterwards published under the title of *Pictures from Italy*. The sale of *Dombey*, which reached 32,000, reassured him in the pursuit of his special calling. He followed it up in 1849 and 1850 with *David Copperfield*.

There is not much room for variety of incident in the life of a novelist securely established in popular favour, working hard, and happy in the exercise of his art. When we have mentioned that *Bleak House* appeared in monthly numbers, from March 1852 to September 1853, *Little Dorrit* from December 1855 to June 1857, *Our Mutual Friend* from May 1864 to November 1865, we have given the chief incidents in the later half of the literary life of Dickens. He was much too restless a man, however, to settle down into a steady routine of work. He was not content to appear before the public only in monthly numbers. He stuck steadily enough to work in which he had proved his mastery, but yet he had always a craving for new experiences, and was always planning new enterprises. While *David Copperfield* was still upon his hands, he returned to his old notion of a weekly periodical. At first he thought of calling it *The Shadow*, making it contain, as it were, the observations of "a kind of semi-omniscient, omnipresent, intangible creature," "which should go into any place, by sunlight, moonlight, starlight, firelight, candlelight, and be in all houses, and all nooks and corners, and be supposed to be cognizant of everything, and go everywhere, without the least difficulty; which might be in the theatre, the palace, the House of Commons, the prisons, the unions, the churches, on the railroad, on the sea, abroad, and at home." But on consideration he abandoned this idea, and chose the title *Household Words*. The first number appeared in March 30, 1850. In *Household Words*, besides contributing short stories to the annual Christmas number, Dickens wrote *Hard Times* between April 1 and August 12, 1854. In 1859, in consequence of a quarrel between the editor and the publishers, *Household Words* was discontinued, and *All the Year Round*, practically the same periodical under a new title, took its place. In *All the Year Round*, besides Christmas contributions, Dickens wrote *A Tale of Two Cities* between April 30 and November 26, 1859; the *Uncommercial Traveller*, between January 28 and October 13, 1860; and *Great Expectations* between December 1, 1860, and August 3, 1861. It is often made a question whether there was any falling off of power in the later works of Dickens *David Copperfield* would generally be named as the novel in which his power was at its zenith. The question is not one that can be answered by an unqualified yes or no. There is certainly no falling off in descriptive power. The idiom of his dialogue is finer; the wit is perhaps keener and more swift. His characters are more sharply defined; the force with which they are drawn is more delicate. In no point of the novelist's art, whether in the general construction or in the execution of details, is there any sign of failing power; on the contrary the power seems to have become firmer and more sure from practice. Does the fault then lie with the reader? Is it that we have grown tired of his manner? This is probably part of the reason, but yet it is not to be denied that we miss something in the later works. We laugh less over the pages. There are longer "intervallums" of seriousness. Humorous characters are still there in abundance; Joe Gargery, Old Boffin, Silas Wegg, Rumty Wilfer, Septimus Crisparkle, Durdles, Mr Sapsea, are as irresistible as any of their predecessors. But on the whole there is less exuberance of animal spirits. The fun is not so unflagging. It is even less hearty, for there is mixed with our laughter something of contempt or pity for the object of it. Not that it is all laughter and undesigning diversion in any of the earlier works. Dickens belonged to a serious and moralizing generation; he came in with the Reform Bill, and partook largely of the moral spirit of its framers. Even in the joyous *Pickwick Papers* there is a serious blow at prison abuses. *Oliver Twist* is almost as didactic as one of Harriet Martineau's tales. Before writing *Nicholas Nickleby* he went down to Yorkshire like a Government commissioner to inquire into the abuses of the Yorkshire schools. Through all the fresh and boisterous fun of his earlier works, there was an almost declared doctrine that it is our duty to laugh, a sort of protest in favour of laughter, and a denunciation of the dismal as a crime. The same genial doctrine runs also through his later works, but it is urged with a trace of bitterness, and with a greater sensitiveness to the evil principles that oppose it. Dickens was not written out, but he was growing old, and the animal spirits which fed the flame of his marvellous humour began to show symptoms of exhaustion. The quality of his humour was unimpaired, but the quantity had suffered diminution.

Dickens established his first weekly periodical from a desire to draw closer the relations between himself and his readers. He drew those relations still closer in 1858, by beginning a series of public readings of his own works. He had long hungered for this way of giving body and substance to his feeling of success. He had always been eager for the immediate and palpable triumphs of the stage. The idea of taking a hall or theatre and reading from his own books was first mentioned by him in 1844, after he had read the *Chimes* to a small company in Mr Forster's rooms, and he often returned to it, but was obliged to hold it in abeyance for fourteen years, his friends urging that it would be beneath his dignity. In 1858 his resolution was taken in spite of all discouragements, partly, he said, to escape from uneasiness at home, though it may well be believed that his own temper—restless, irritable, and exacting in the midst of his work—was largely to blame for the discomfort from which he suffered. He gave four series of readings, in 1858–59, 1861–63, 1866–67, and 1868–70, appearing in nearly every town of any size in the United Kingdom; and in 1867–68 renewing in this way his acquaintance with the Americans. The success of

these readings was enormous from every point of view. Mr Forster mentions that he remitted from America £10,000 odd as the result of 34 readings.

That Dickens should so long have abstained from appearing as a public reader of his own works, and standing face to face with his audience to enjoy the delight of their effect, notwithstanding his strong desire to do so, is a significant fact. It gives a sort of measure of two things,—the force of his craving for sympathy and applause, and the extent of his patience under conventional prejudices. It was from deference to these prejudices that he abstained; and it required an almost fierce effort on his part to dismiss those prejudices as "humbug," and "the proprieties of old women." His attitude towards society, in the narrow sense of the word, was always peculiar. To understand it, we must bear in mind the circumstances of his youth. He seems never to have quite lost a lurking fear that those circumstances exposed him to contempt. He was much too proud and great-hearted a man to give in to such a fear; but it clung to him, and was always demanding a certain struggle to keep it down. Slight as the struggle was, the traces of it are perceptible in his work. We have an evidence of it in the common saying that he never succeeded in painting "a gentleman." That is not to be got over by calling for a definition of the word; it is a popular expression of a fact, the fact that nearly all the personages in his novels occupying a position in life to which that word would have been applied in his own time are painted in unfavourable colours. Perhaps the course of his stories did not call upon him to paint more favourable specimens of that class; still the fact remains that in Dickens's attitude towards society there was something of the defensive, even of the aggressive. He faced towards society with a certain air of defiance, with the consciousness of a vast popular multitude behind him, to which he could appeal if they refused him what was his due. He never claimed more than his due, and it was never refused to him. It is perhaps for this reason that the traces of his spirit of revolt against society are so slight as to be more matter of inference than of observation. It is more correct to say that he never tried to paint "a gentleman," than that he did not succeed. The question can hardly be raised without giving it undue importance, an importance which Dickens himself would have been the first to make light of; for, though he had his full share of the little vanities inseparable from humanity, he was a great man in temper as well as in genius, and littlenesses were of the accidents and not of the essence of his nature.

Dickens's want of perfect sympathy with the cultured society of his time incapacitated him for that kind of novel which answers to comedy in dramatic composition, although it left him free for work of a greater and more enduring kind. What may be called the comedy novel, the novel of Thackeray in Dickens's generation, is much less sure of enduring fame, because the sentiments on which it rests, being the product of a particular knot of circumstances, are more fugitive, and pass sooner into the province of the historian. The novels of Dickens will live longer because they take hold of the permanent and universal sentiments of the race,—sentiments which pervade all classes, and which no culture can ever eradicate. His fun may be too boisterous for the refined tastes of his own time, or, for the matter of that, of posterity; his pathos may appear maudlin; but they carried everything before them when they first burst upon our literature, because, however much exaggerated, they were exaggerations of what our race feels in its inner heart; and unless culture in the future works a miracle, and carries its changes beneath the surface, we may be certain that Dickens will keep his hold.

If Dickens had been asked why his novels were likely to live, he would probably have answered that it was because he put more work into them than any of his contemporaries. He was fond of insisting that genius meant attention. The definition may be accepted with a qualification. No man can become a genius by resolving to attend; but if he attends very much in some one direction by natural impulse, then he may be said to have a genius, whatever may be his field of work. No genius is of much avail for great literary productions without attention. Dickens could never have gathered together his amazing variety of characters and abundance of incidents without attention. M. Taine, in his criticism of Dickens, dwells much upon the boundless wealth of his imagination; Dickens himself would have expressed the same fact by speaking of the persistence and closeness of his attention. It comes to the same thing in the end, whichever way we express it; but there is no doubt that Dickens's own expression is more descriptive of his actual method of work. M. Taine rather gives us the notion that Dickens sat down and trusted to the inexhaustible fertility of his imagination; whereas, ready and active as his imagination ever was, he accumulated materials for it with the industry of a pre-Raphaelite painter. The charm, the inimitable secret, lay, of course, in the transmuting process through which dry facts passed in his imagination; but he laboured earnestly, exercised the most painstaking attention, not merely in bringing his facts together, but in setting them, with all their superadded value, for his special purposes. Dickens would have been a humorist though he had never written a line; he could never have helped attending to the humorous side of whatever met his eye; but without the attention on which he prided himself as the secret of his power, he could never have established himself securely as one of the greatest humorists in literature.

Our Mutual Friend was published in 1864 and 1865. After an interval of five years, during which he contributed to three Christmas numbers of *All the Year Round*, and wrote *A Holiday Romance* and *George Silverman's Explanation* for an American publisher, the first number of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* was issued in April 1870. He did not live to complete the novel. For some years severe pains in the left hand and foot had given warning that he was overtaxing his system, but the warning was not fully understood till too late. He was suddenly overcome by a stupor, caused by effusion on the brain, on the evening of the 8th of June, and ceased to breathe on the following day. In his will he had desired that he should be buried in "an inexpensive, unostentatious, and strictly private manner, without any public announcement of the time or place of his burial." These conditions were observed; but his executors did not consider them inconsistent with his receiving the honour of interment in Westminster Abbey, where he was buried on the 14th of June 1870.

His death took place at Gadshill Place, a house near the main road between Rochester and Gravesend, which he had bought in 1856, and which had been his home since 1859. Here he worked, and walked, and saw his friends, and was loved and almost worshipped by his poorer neighbours for miles around. His previous residences in London had been Furnival's Inn, where fame found him a young man writing sketches for the *Chronicle*; 48 Doughty Street, after his marriage and first flood of success; Devonshire Terrace, from 1839 to 1851; Tavistock House, from 1851 to 1859. These residences were varied by his numerous excursions to provincial towns, to the Continent, to America. But "perhaps there was never a man who changed places so much and habits so little. He was always methodical and regular, and passed his life from day to day, divided for the most part between working and walking, the same wherever he was." It is a notable feature in his regularity that it was never a complacent routine; it was persisted in in spite of restless longings which he never conquered to the last.

The authorized life of Dickens is that by John Forster, 3 vols. 8vo, 1871-2-4. There are two books on his public readings—*Charles Dickens as a Reader*, by Mr C. Kent, and *Pen Photographs of his Readings in America*, by Miss Kate Field. Mr G. A. Sala has published a valuable essay on his "Genius and Character." (W. M.)

DICOTYLEDONS. See BOTANY, vol. iv. p. 92, &c., and VEGETABLE KINGDOM.

DICTATOR, the highest extraordinary magistrate of the ancient Roman republic. The original name of this office was *magister populi*, by which appellation he was called in the sacred books down to the latest times of the commonwealth.

When the republican form of government was established at Rome, and the supreme executive vested in the two consuls, emergencies sometimes occurred in which it seemed that the safety of the state might advantageously be intrusted for the time to some one man, whose past life had gained for him the esteem and respect of the whole body of the citizens. The idea of this office was borrowed by the Romans from the constitution of some of the Latin towns which they had subdued. It lay with the senate to decide when the services of a dictator were necessary. The power of nominating a man to the office was by that body made over to one of the consuls. It is not exactly determined to which of these officers the nomination of a dictator properly appertained.

The insignia of the dictator's office were—first, the lictors, twenty-four in number, who bore the fasces and secures; second, the curule chair; and third, the toga prætexta.

The first dictator was appointed at Rome 501 B.C., nine years after the expulsion of the Tarquins. Who the first dictator was is differently stated by different historians, but it is most probable that it was T. Lartius.

Dictators were generally appointed to conduct a foreign war, but it often happened that in matters of less importance they were appointed with nominal authority. The dictator was generally selected in the absence of the consuls to perform some small ceremonies, which in strict propriety could only be gone through by one of the consuls. Thus he was sometimes chosen to hold the comitia to appoint holidays, to affix the *clavus annalis* in the temple of Jupiter, and to preside at trials. As soon as the dictator was appointed, he was required to select a master of the horse (*magister equitum*), whose term of office was the same as his own.

The power of the dictator was absolute; and so long as he remained in office no appeal was open against his mandates to any other authority in the state. He was nearly altogether independent of the senate. He could inflict much severer punishments than the consuls without being liable, as these officers were, to have his sentence reversed by the assembly of the people. His power was as irresponsible as it was absolute. In token of the absolute power of the dictators over the lives of their fellow-citizens, their lictors bore the axe in the midst of the fasces, even in their walks through the city—a mark of distinction which the consuls had formerly enjoyed, but which had been abolished in their case by the Valerian law.

Though the power of the dictator was thus great, it was nevertheless limited by certain indirect restrictions. The most important of these was, that he had no control whatever over the public money, and had to content himself with such sums as were allowed him by the senate. He was not allowed to leave Italy; and could not appear on horseback in the city without the express permission of the people. The surest safeguard, however, against any treacherous designs on the part of the dictator was the shortness of the period during which he remained in office. This was never permitted to exceed six months.

When a dictator was appointed, all the ordinary magistrates ceased to be directly responsible to the governing authorities of the state, and took their orders directly from him. The only magistrates exempt from this necessity were the tribunes of the commons. The inferior officers, however, did not, as has been supposed, retire from office altogether. They merely obeyed the dictator so long as he continued in power, and on his resignation entered once more upon the untrammelled exercise of their authority.

It remains to be added that dictators were only appointed at Rome so long as Italy remained unsubdued. The last dictator appointed at Rome held office in 202 B.C.; from that time the constitutional dictatorship disappears from Roman history.

See Mommsen's *Römische Staatsrecht*, ii. 1.

DICTIONARY

ALTHOUGH dictionaries are so numerous, so well known, and so much used, they vary so greatly in the nature and treatment of their subjects that any definition must be very much modified in order to include some works so entitled and usually so called. In its proper and most usual meaning, a dictionary is a book containing a collection of the words of a language, dialect, or subject, arranged alphabetically or in some other definite order, and with explanations in the same or some other language. What is essential is, that the words given should be all or most of those belonging to the subject of the dictionary, or at least be very many in number, and that they should be arranged in definite order, and accompanied with interpretations. Many other characters may rightly and advantageously belong to a dictionary, but these are the essentials When the words are few in number, being only a small part of those belonging to the subject, or when they are given without explanation, or some only are explained, or the explanations are partial, the work is called a vocabulary. An alphabetical arrangement of the words of some book or author with references to the places where they occur is called an index. When under each word the phrases containing it are added to the references, the work is called a concordance. Sometimes, however, these names are given to true dictionaries; thus the great Italian dictionary of the Academy of La Crusca, in six volumes folio, is called *Vocabolario*, and Ernesti's dictionary to Cicero is called *Index*. When the words are arranged according to a definite system of classification under heads and subdivisions, according to their nature or their meaning, the book is usually called a classed vocabulary; but when sufficient explanations are given, it is often accepted as a dictionary, like the *Onomasticon* of Julius Pollux, or the native dictionaries of Sanskrit, Manchu, and many other languages. Dictionaries were originally books of reference explaining the words of a language or of some part of it. As the names of things, as well as those of persons and places, are words, and often require explanation even more than other classes of words, they were necessarily included in dictionaries, and often to a very great extent. In time, books were devoted to them alone, and were limited to special