
2. Fields’s—or, more probably, Dickens’s—memories go awry here. In his memoranda for No. xxx of *Dombey*, where Mrs Pipchin is introduced, Dickens wrote: ‘Mrs. Roylance—House at the seaside’. Mentioning her in his autobiographical fragment as the original of Mrs Pipchin, he records that she was ‘a reduced old lady’ living in Camden Town ‘who took children into board, and had once done so in Brighton’. Dickens lodged with her—at the age of twelve, not two—while his father and family were in the Marshalsea Prison. When John Dickens was released, the whole family moved in on her for a while (*Life*, i, ii, 27, 33, 36).


4. Compare his *Uncommercial Traveller* essay ‘Mr Barlow’, in *All the Year Round*, n. s., 1, 156–9 (16 Jan 1869).

5. Dickens contributed an essay ‘On Mr. Fechter’s Acting’ to Fields’s journal *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1869.

6. Dickens had made this the theme of an essay ‘Gaslight Fairies’, *Household Words*, xi, 25–8 (10 Feb 1855).

7. These novels were not written ‘for rival magazines’. *Oliver Twist* was serialised in *Bentley’s Miscellany*, which Dickens was editing; *Nickleby*, published in monthly parts, overlapped it for a year. There seems to be no other record of this alleged dash to Boulogne.

An Informal Call upon Dickens in 1867

G. D. CARROW

Repr. from *University* (Princeton, N. J.), winter 1965–6, in *Dkn*, lxiii (1967) 112–19. The Rev. Dr G. D. Carrow, a Methodist pastor from Philadelphia touring Europe in 1867, particularly wanted to see Dickens. At his London hotel he enquired about the possibilities, ‘but the proprietors, being strict Wesleyans, did not regard Mr. Dickens with favor’. So he wrote to Dickens, who immediately invited him to call at the *All the Year Round* offices: which he did, on 9 August 1867. Dickens’s remarks about *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* may have been the more ‘apologetic’ because he was then carefully laying the ground for his American Readings Tour, for which he sailed in November. About the same time as Carrow met him, he was making placatory remarks in his new Prefaces to these two books.

The offices of *All the Year Round* were exceptionally plain. . . . Nowhere in the building did I see a single article of furniture excepting an oblong table and a pair of large rush bottomed armchairs in the editorial room. It was plain that even the best of
friends was not expected there for the purposes of lounging or gossip. . . . Mr. Dickens had limped to the head of the stairway, and extending both hands as I approached, grasped mine and began vigorously shaking them up and down, meanwhile most heartily bidding me welcome. Then with my hands still locked in his he led me into his room and seated me in a chair immediately in front of his own.

Mr. Dickens was essentially an Englishman in appearance. My impression of his looks was as follows: head large; brow massive and projecting; hair auburn, abundant, soft and inclining to curl; cheek bones high and separated; nose prominent, straight, exceedingly expressive; eyes, the most characteristic of all his features, large, blue, full of tenderness and light, and in power of expression simply wonderful. His general bearing was earnest, frank, gracious and winning. Among his minor characteristics was that nationally English one, his exceedingly poor taste in the matter of dress. He wore a blue cloth dress coat trimmed with black velvet collar and gilt buttons, a flowered purple velvet vest and checkered cashmere pantaloons, while around his neck was the usual high shirt collar turned down in front, and the black silk tie loosely fastened with a gold ring.

As soon as we were seated knee to knee he opened upon me a very torrent of questions as to where I had been, what I had seen, what I thought of the policies of Bismarck and Louis Napoleon and how the political and social conditions of European nations impressed me as compared with those of the United States. Then, pausing a moment and looking at me with a twinkle in his eyes, he asked: ‘How do you like the English? Have you found them civil and obliging? Have the police been ready to give information and to direct you in your walks about the city?’

I replied that on all these points the English had greatly exceeded my expectations; that the people seemed not only reasonably communicative but talkative to a degree that contrasted strangely with their reputation for taciturnity; and as for the police I had found them most obliging and regarded them as a model force.

‘Well sir,’ returned Mr. Dickens, ‘I have given some attention to the municipal government of our metropolis, especially to its department of police, and you do not overrate its character for efficiency. Some members of the force would not be impaired as officers by dispensing with sundry little airs—but you know the effect of a uniform upon wiser men. Then too the fact must not be