ILLUSTRATIONS IN DICKENS

H. K. BROWNE'S ILLUSTRATIONS IN CHARLES DICKENS' MIDDLE NOVELS: MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT, DOMBEY AND SON, AND BLEAK HOUSE

by

WILLIAM DAVID BLACKLOCK, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

August 1976

MASTER OF ARTS (1976) *McMASTER UNIVERSITY*
(English) *Hamilton, Ontario*

TITLE: *H. K. Browne's Illustrations in Charles Dickens' Middle Novels: Martin Chuzzlewit, Dombey and Son, and Bleak House*

AUTHOR: *William David Blacklock, B.A. (Bedford College, University of London)*

SUPERVISOR: *Professor Graham Petrie*

NUMBER OF PAGES: *viii, 115.*

ABSTRACT

The scope of this dissertation takes in three of the major middle novels of Charles Dickens, Martin Chuzzlewit, Dombey and Son, and Bleak House, and examines the illustrations completed for each of them by Hablot K. Browne. Special emphasis is placed on evidence which shows Browne's original and perceptive contributions to the story. There is a brief discussion of the techniques of etching and reference is made to Browne's predecessors, notably Hogarth, and to the earlier traditions of English graphic art from which he must have worked. The basic tenet of the thesis is that Browne should be considered on his own merits as Dickens' principal illustrator and that the consideration should take place with the illustrations before us.

Throughout the argument use is made of critical opinion, from both the past and present day, in order to demonstrate the current standing of Browne's work. A great deal of critical work has been completed on the illustrations in Dickens but not all of it has been fruitful. It is to be hoped that this brief review will serve as a useful introduction to the subject.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would be useful to state here which editions of the novels were used in this thesis as it is very important when one comes to examine the illustrations. The study of the plates in Martin Chuzzlewit *and* Bleak House *was carried out with the help of the Gadshill editions, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1897;) these used the original steel plates when reproducing the illustrations. The original steels were also used for the Library Edition, again published by Chapman and Hall, and the study of the* Little Dorrit *plates was undertaken using this. For the study of* Dombey and Son *the excellent Clarendon Edition was employed, (London: Oxford University Press, 1974.) It must be stressed that any serious examination of the plates cannot take place unless good reproductions are studied. The Gadshill and Library editions are among the best. The National Library in Ottawa provided me with facilities for studying the original monthly parts of* Bleak House *and these were best of all when it came to the quality of illustrations -- but, of course, one seldom comes across the original monthly parts.*

Unfortunately, the illustrations do not reproduce well, either by photographic or photostat methods, and many have been omitted from the small collection at the back of

this work. The "dark plates" are almost impossible to reproduce successfully, even with the best photographic equipment; the reader can only be directed to the editions mentioned above.

My thanks are due to the following people; to Professor Graham Petrie for his constant care and attention in the supervision of this work; to Professor James King for his advice in reading my preliminary material; to Professor Kathleen Tillotson for giving me every encouragement in the field of Dickens' scholarship and to Professor Michael Steig for his knowledgeable guidance.

This thesis would not be complete without a dedication to four people; to my parents; and to Erik Kjellberg and Seth Benjamin, "till vår vänskap".

TABLE OF CONTENTS

			Page
CHAPTER I	--	INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II	--	MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT. THE MORAL OF SELFISHNESS	13
CHAPTER III	--	DOMBEY AND SON. THE PROGRESS OF PRIDE	34
CHAPTER IV	--	BLEAK HOUSE. THE "IDIOM OF MYSTERY"	56
CHAPTER V	--	CONCLUSION	79
APPENDIX			87
NOTES			89
BIBLIOGRAPHY			98
ILLUSTRATIONS			101

L I S T O F I L L U S T R A T I O N S

(appended after bibliography)

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT

1. *Monthly wrapper and Frontispiece*
2. *Frontispiece and Title-page*
3. *Plate 1.* *Meekness of Mr. Pecksniff and his charming daughters*
4. *Plates 13 and 14.*

   Mr. Jefferson Brick proposes an appropriate sentiment

   Mr. Tapley succeeds in finding a jolly subject for contemplation
5. *Plates 17 and 18.*

   The thriving City of Eden as it appeared on paper

   The thriving City of Eden as it appeared in fact
6. *Plates 3 and 37.*

   Pleasant little family party at Mr. Pecksniff's

   Warm reception of Mr. Pecksniff by his venerable friend

DOMBEY AND SON

7. *Monthly wrapper to Dombey and Son*

   Monthly wrapper to Little Dorrit

8. *Plates 1 and 2.*

Miss Tox introduces the Party

The Dombey Family

9. *Plates 3 and 4.*

The Christening Party

Polly rescues the Charitable Grinder

10. *Plates 23 and 24.*

Mrs. Dombey at Home

Miss Tox pays a visit to the Toodle family

11. *Plates 38 and 20.*

Another Wedding

Coming home from Church

12. *Plates 35.* *On the Dark Road*

BLEAK HOUSE

13. *Monthly wrapper*

14. *Plates 10 and 40.*

Consecrated ground

Title-page

15. *Plates 25 and 28.*

Attorney and Client, fortitude and impatience

Tom-All-Alone's

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It seems useful here to introduce this discussion of Hablot K. Browne's illustrations to three of Charles Dickens' major novels with a brief explanation of the actual techniques of engraving and etching. If one is aware of the skill and patience required in the execution of such illustrations as Browne produced for Martin Chuzzlewit, Dombey and Son, and Bleak House, one can only admire the end results of his efforts, and, moreover, can learn something about the traditions behind the art of "Phiz".

The difference between engraving and etching lies in the method of how the lines on the plate, from which the print would be obtained, were made. Engraving can be described very roughly as the process of cutting into a metal plate with specially designed tools such as the burin, or indeed anything with enough strength and a sharp enough point to bite a line into the plate. The plate itself would be of copper or, perhaps, steel, and of course wood engravings became very famous with the art of Thomas Bewick in his History of British Birds. Engraving had previously been connected very much with goldsmiths and armourers who were not interested in making reproductions as such but concen-

trated on creating designs for dishes, cups and weapons. The first extant print from an engraving is dated in 1446 and represents a goldsmith's workshop. The process in Dickens' day though was to take the incised plate and fill the engraved lines with black ink or a kind of enamel called "niello" and then to pass it through a roller-press so that the impression could be left on the paper to produce the illustration.

Browne, however, etched his work as a rule and here the plate is first covered with an acid resisting material, or ground; the artist draws with his point on the ground, removing it without scratching the metal beneath; and then submerges the plate into a bath of acid, which eats away the metal only where the artist has removed the ground. The acid "fixes the lines, their depth depending solely upon the length of time they are exposed to the action of the mordant. The ground is then cleaned off and the face of the plate covered with printing-ink, which is so wiped away that, though the surface is polished, the ink is retained in the bitten lines".[1] Then the impression is transferred to the paper by using a press, as in engraving.

This, as one can imagine, was quite laborious and time-consuming work and the acid process had to be carefully supervised. Apart from being demanding work for the artist, etching was, in a way, inconvenient for the publisher, because

so much care had to be taken with the etchings. John Harvey in his book Victorian Novels and their Illustrators quotes a contemporary report from The London and Westminster Review of 1838 which gives the following description.

> "The copper or steel-plate is placed above a charcoal fire, and warmed before the ink is rubbed into the hollowed lines by a woollen ball. When enough of ink is thus put into the lines, the surface of the plate is wiped with a rag, and cleaned and polished with the palm of the hand lightly touched with whiting. The paper is then laid on the plate, and the engraving is obtained by pressing the paper into the inked lines." It was a slow process, and involved a good deal of wear (of which the human hand was the most serious cause). . . .[2]

Harvey contends that Browne did not actually draw his sketch directly onto the ground but "a tracing . . . would be laid pencil side down on the etching ground which covered the steel plate. With a sheet of damp paper on top, it would be passed through the press so that the pencil marks were transferred to the ground".[3] Then, apparently, the artist would have drawn, with his needle, on the ground following this pencil design. Other critics, from Dickens' day to the present, oppose this view, and maintain that Browne drew directly onto the ground. Despite this argument though, there is no doubt of the success of Browne's work and of "the lines being put down with vigour and spontaneity: two of the most important qualities that a really fine plate should possess".[4]

In the case of Dickens' novels one etching would

have measured approximately five by eight inches, but as there were usually two illustrations printed together, the steel plate would have been about twice that size. These original steel plates were split into two with the publication of the Nonesuch edition of the Dickens' novels and one illustration was distributed with each complete set. The time taken to produce the etchings can be gauged from Browne's diaries where it seems he allowed five days to etch a single design, usually twice, and had to keep himself to a deadline. At least though, through such hard work and the results they achieved the illustrators of Victorian novels could begin to have some claim on the artistic merit of the work they were illustrating. The historical predecessors of Dickens' novels had been works in which the letterpress was subordinate to the engravings or etchings, as was the case in the original idea for The Pickwick Papers. Dickens reversed this tradition and yet there grew up a relationship between the author and the illustrator which was admirable in both its professional and artistic aspects.

We must take into consideration here the validity of the illustrations in the Victorian novel, as there appears to have been some argument as to whether they added anything of value to the text. Obviously the novel can be read without the illustrations and, in some cases, editors have taken it upon themselves to omit them

completely. This is the case in the Penguin edition of Our Mutual Friend which has none of Marcus Stone's original contribution; usually, however, the Penguin English Library is exceptional in being one of the few modern paperback issues to reproduce the complete sets of illustrations. Other editions, both paperback and hardback, often exclude the etchings and in doing so they exclude something which the author specifically wanted to be part of the novel he was writing; Dickens wrote his novels with the effect of the illustrations in mind, and thus, Michael Steig argues,

> So prevalent was the practice during the latter two-thirds of the nineteenth century of publishing novels with illustrations, that the illustrated novel may with justice be claimed as a kind of Victorian subgenre. Works not illustrated in their initial appearance should probably not be considered to belong to this subgenre; the illustrations must have been published with the novel in its original form . . . and there must have been some degree of collaboration between novelist and illustrator . . . and we read such novels properly as products of their time only if we consider them in their full original form. To read an illustrated novel as though it had no illustrations is to distort it. . . .[5]

If as Harvey says "the function of the illustrator and his art is not to change or distort his subject but to sharpen our sense of the novelist's creation"[6] and if the illustrations fulfill this function then they should remain part of the novel; in this respect Phiz's work can be seen working hand in hand with Dickens intentions and "an author could

have no justification for wishing away such illustrations as improprer intrusions in his art, or as evasions of his own responsibility".[6]

If we glance at some of the traditions behind engraving and etching, we have to look at the work of Hogarth and Gillray, and also a "French Connection" in the person of Daumier, the latter artist's influence being felt most strongly in the depiction of Sarah Gamp in Martin Chuzzlewit. There seemed to be especial favour for the works of Hogarth and Leech and a set of Hogarth's engravings hung in Dickens' study at Gad's Hill. Such derivations from earlier artists and traditions, even going back as far as medieval emblem book tradition, play their part in adding to the strength of Browne's achievement.

> *The satiric art of the eighteenth century had a social focus in the coffee-house and an aesthetic meeting-point, between literature and visual art, in Hogarth, whose moral series of prints were accessible to the illiterate and implied a moral and fictional narrative which the viewer inevitably supplied for himself (there was of course a long tradition of popular art in woodcuts behind the popularity of Hogarth's art). Hogarth's moral and satiric work was known to the ale-house, the farm, the inn and the cottage, as well as to the frequenter of the London print-shops and coffee-houses.*[7]

Professor Q. D. Leavis, in the chapter "The Dickens Illustrations: Their Function" (in Dickens: The Novelist), traces the line of artistic development from Hogarth, through Gillray, to Cruikshank and Browne. In several of the plates

Browne creates for Dickens we can see obvious references to these earlier artists and the reading public of Dickens' day would be aware of how he was incorporating these traditions into his own original work.

In dealing with the audience for the illustrated novel we start again with such traditions of visual-literary, moralistic-satiric art with their roots in Hogarth and even earlier. To some extent the audience would have had a kind of visual training and would know how to "read" the details which the artist deliberately included in the illustrations, and usually such details would function as a comment, or an implied message or moral, in the picture. Especially in the middle novels of Dickens, with which this discussion is concerned, Browne began to realise the effect of such additions; a painting on a wall, for example, or the inclusion of a particular piece of sculpture, or even such an obvious comment in the form of a cat watching a mousehole in plate 25 in Bleak House, Attorney and Client, which reflects upon Mr. Vholes, the lawyer, preying upon the helpless Richard Carstone, playing "cat and mouse" with him.

The presence of these "choric" details in the illustrations seems to be due to the invention of the artist, thus demonstrating that Browne could add original and perceptive comments to Dickens' stories as he executed his illustrations. The evidence for this assumption lies

in the fact that

> first of all, the technique itself is not original with Browne, but is a standard practice of earlier English graphic artists. Hogarth's engravings abound with inscriptions and symbols that support his satirical point, but closer to Browne's practice is the use of such details by Gillray in some of his non-topical prints. . . . The device also occurred in Victorian narrative paintings . . . and the fact of an artistic tradition of contextual allegorical details would lead one to think that it is the artist's, rather than the author's idea to introduce them into Dickens' novels".8

Nevertheless, author and artist did work very closely together in the case of the relationship between Dickens and Browne, and despite the unfortunate incident where Browne destroyed most of his correspondence with the authors he worked for in a bonfire when he was moving house, there is still plenty of proof that cooperation between them was close and usually friendly. As we shall see, in the cases of the particular novels to be discussed in the following chapters, sometimes Browne worked from the text when the first two or three numbers had already been written and he had been allowed an opportunity to read them, but at other times Dickens supplied him with a description of the scene to be illustrated and the artist did not see the monthly number until it was actually published.

Despite the close professional relationship which existed between Dickens and Browne, and despite the evidence that Brown contributed his own original ideas to the

illustrations in the Dickens' novels, there seems to be almost a tradition which denies him his rightful place in the artistic partnership. A study by Philip James, English Book Illustration: 1800-1900, mentions Phiz only once and then it is in a disparaging comparison with George Cruikshank. The latter "was working in his short-lived partnership with Dickens, and here we can measure his real greatness. His illustrations to Oliver Twist or the Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi make those by 'Phiz', the commonly acknowledged illustrator of Dickens, seem tame in conception and feeble in drawing".[9] This judgement, which can only have been arrived at by a cursory examination of Browne's work, was made in 1947, but in 1969 Nicolas Bentley talks of the artist's "instinctive inclination to play second fiddle",[10] in his discussion of Browne's contribution to Dickens' work.

When it comes to "damning with faint praise" though, John Harvey, even after a sensitive examination of Browne's work, concludes that

> the great advantage of . . . Hablot Browne, was his unformedness and transparency: he was ready to let Dickens' imagination work through him. But a man so transparent is not likely to be strong, and though Browne, working in this way, produced many sensitive and functional illustrations, he is obviously not the equal either of Dickens or of Cruikshank in creative power. His own psyche had little to offer or to add. . . .11

What this present study hopes to argue is that Browne should

be judged on his own merits and the success of his work should be considered only after a careful review of the illustrations in question. It seems to be an unnecessary and fruitless exercise to continally compare him to either Dickens or to other illustrators in the way that Harvey does. Artistic comparisons are valid as long as they are based on scholarly examination and do not rely on general epithets such as "unformedness and transparency". Certainly Dickens provided stimulus and direction in his instructions for the illustrations but this does not take away from Browne's strength in the partnership, with his originality and perception.

Hablot Browne's particular success in his illustrations to the Dickens' novels can be outlined in a brief discussion of the reasons for the creation of the illustrated novel; and of the illustrations' function once this "sub-genre" had been firmly established. When talking of the "rich tradition and the visual education" that Hogarth's visual art had instilled and inspired in the ordinary reader of Dickens' day, Professor Q. D. Leavis finds that

> even those who took their installments of fiction orally could fix those in their memories by the two or more full-page pictures that came with each, with the added help of the descriptive pictorial cover that Dickens always had drawn to summarize the plot and themes and show the leading characters in appropriate combinations and context, with the addition of the meaningful frontispiece and often a vignette on the title-page.12

The illustrations, then, establish for the reader the identity of a character and the continuity of the action of the novel. The author and the artist worked for a public which, in some respects, did not easily imagine what it read and so illustrations were a valuable aid in laying the characters before the readers' imagination and in emphasising the main themes of the work. Previously, some novels of the 1830's had been in three or four volumes without illustrations and an added drawback was that this form of the novel was expensive to buy; the monthly part novels, usually priced at one shilling for each part, allowed the novelist to reach a far wider audience. When the monthly part novels appeared they were bound in coloured paper wrappers with a design created especially to foreshadow the main themes of the work and to provoke the curiosity of the reader as to what would happen in the story. The two plates which accompanied each part were bound together facing each other at the beginning of the monthly number; this arrangement would invite comparison between them and Browne could work on parallels and contrasts in the pairs of illustrations. Also the booksellers could use the illustrations as a very effective means of advertising the new novel and often placed the parts in their shop windows with the pages open at the front to reveal the etchings. <u>*The Pickwick Papers*</u>*, was one of the novels that would have*

appeared like this, "and no sooner was a new number published than needy admirers flattened their noses against the bookseller's windows, eager to secure a good look at the etchings, and peruse every line of the letterpress that might be exposed to view, frequently reading it aloud to applauding bystanders".[13]

The functions of the illustrations in revealing the characters or themes, in helping the reader follow the moral pattern of the story or in simply advertising the monthly numbers are fairly basic and strengthen the links between the text and the etching and imply the close relationship between the author and the artist. It can be argued though that the Dickens-Browne novel has other more complex functions such as

> *the paralleling, through visually and/or conceptually analogous details, of one part of the novel, or one character, with another; the complex use of emblematic details to interpret some part of the text; and finally, the use of allusion to earlier graphic art. These three functions . . . go beyond the mere intensifying and underlining of thematic emphasis through subject-choice and some of the more obvious uses of emblematic details; they are the artist's special contribution to the novel.*[14]

It is to be hoped that the following examinations of <u>*Martin Chuzzlewit*</u>, <u>*Dombey and Son*</u>, *and* <u>*Bleak House*</u>, *can justify this special claim for Browne; and that we can come to see him as "both an executor of Dickens' directions and an inspired contributor to and interpreter of his texts".*[15]

CHAPTER II

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT. THE MORAL OF SELFISHNESS

Publication of *Martin Chuzzlewit* was started in January 1843 and it was in this novel that Browne began to respond to Dickens' creation of a unified moral framework, and both illustrator and author worked together, in their own ways, to knit the tale around the joint themes of selfishness and hypocrisy. As part of this response we become aware of an advance in the illustrations from "the previous more caricatural style to a more complex and realistic one".[1] Moreover, the illustrator has improved in his art,

> for when Browne returns to etching for Dickens, his work is crisp and bright. His figures are full-size and solid, and while he retains the acuteness and economy of his caricatures, he seems concerned less with caricaturing people and more with drawing them well. The biting-in has produced an unusually clean line that shows Browne's etching at its most sensitive; the line takes delicate curves yet looks as though it has been slit in the paper with a razor.2

Several other critics have agreed with this view that Browne's work showed distinct signs of improvement in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. F. G. Kitton in 1899 talks of the "vigour and precision of touch indicating the artist's riper experience"[3] and Hemstedt, as recently as 1971,

says that "in the better plates, although the background is often crowded, he achieves a wholeness of design by placing the figures in a larger proportion to the whole frame and clarifying their relation to each other".[4] *In several of the plates there is this striking quality of a relationship being delineated by the illustrator; Browne produces a graphic commentary on the relationships that Dickens has worked on in the text. The first plate, for example, "Meekness of Mr. Pecksniff and his charming daughters" is important in establishing for the reader, in the first monthly number, or at the beginning of the book, Tom Pinch's submissive behaviour towards Pecksniff. Tom is seen standing in the doorway, head bowed, and hesitating whether to disturb his master. In this plate especially Browne emphasises slightly the fact that Tom looks older than his actual age, and on the other hand exaggerates Pecksniff's smooth condescension in the bland patronising look of the face and the gentle touching together of the fingertips. The relationship is established visually and the title of the plate gives the clue to the hypocrisy of Pecksniff, the excessive "meekness" of this grotesque self-satisfied character.*

Later in the novel Browne attempts to depict the relationship between Martin and Mark in a way in which, perhaps, the author did not foresee or intend. The

relationship between Martin and Mark starts off as a master and servant relationship and the illustrator passes a subtle comment in the two plates, 13 and 14, "Mr. Jefferson Brick proposes an appropriate sentiment" and "Mr. Tapley succeeds in finding a jolly subject for contemplation". These would have been bound opposite each other at the beginning of that particular number, the seventh, and a contrast would have been implied by their opposition. Martin is inside the newspaper office being entertained with champagne by Mr. Jefferson Brick while Mark looks after the luggage and makes the acquaintance of the negro slave. As one of the main themes of this "American" section of the novel is how Martin comes to realise the extent and nature of Mark's friendship for him, especially after they have visited Eden and Martin is taken ill, these two plates reflect the distance yet between the two men. While Martin talks to the newspaper editors Mark makes friends with an American slave and Browne's implicit comment is that their relationship is still too much like that of master and servant and that Martin still has a lot to discover about his attitudes to other people.

In the discussion of the improvements in Browne's work apparent in this novel Nicolas Bentley, another recent critic, comments on the relationship between Dickens

and Browne and suggests that the author was responsible, indirectly, for such advances.

> *For these improvements, Phiz's perseverance and his own sensibility were no doubt responsible. But improvement in characterisation, facial appearance, gestures, and deportment, may well have been due to a considerable extent to Dickens, who from the very beginning showed a keen, not to say masterful interest, in the illustrations for all his works.5*

We shall see evidence of the cooperation between Dickens and Browne in the etchings for <u>*Dombey and Son*</u>*, especially where the character of Dombey himself is concerned, and in* <u>*Bleak House*</u> *where the new technique of the "dark plates" is used to any great extent. When Bentley uses the word "masterful" however, we are reminded of the description of Dickens given by Arthur Waugh in* <u>*Nonesuch Dickensiana*</u> *which talks of the "author throned in the chair of authority, with his hand guiding the pencil of the artist at his own free will".*[6] *This is an absurd exaggeration of the facts and this extreme position would relegate Browne to a very subordinate place in the author/artist partnership and it, and many other critical opinions of past and present, have clung to this unrealistic view so that it has almost become tradition. Similar folly is likewise responsible for the fact that many people still regard Cruikshank as Dickens' principal illustrator whereas a simple count of the number of illustrations executed for the Dickens' novels will*

reveal that Browne completed the majority. Such a view clings to the idea that Browne "was a man of talent without a single idea of his own, and was found more malleable and manageable".[7] However, with the evidence of the illustrations before us, it should not be too hard to counter this view with one more balanced and more firmly based on close examination of the plates in question.

The unified moral framework around which the text and illustrations are built has, as an essential part of itself, the idea of the "progress", as does another novel, Oliver Twist; or the parish boy's progress, which "alludes to Hogarth's famous sequence of narrative engravings".[8] Hogarth's work provides the tradition and background for such an idea and there are plates in this novel, and the other two under examination in this study, whose origins can be traced back to the influence of that great artist. Michael Steig, in Martin Chuzzlewit's Progress by Phiz and Dickens, examines the similarities in detail between the title-page vignette from that novel and the first plate in Hogarth's The Harlot's Progress. He concludes, after displaying convincing evidence, that the similarities are intentional; and shows that Browne was working with Hogarth's plate in mind, "that Phiz could consciously have drawn such an analogy at all makes evident his subtlety and originality of invention as well as the extent to which he, like Dickens, worked within the tradition of the moral progress".[9]

If we accept the idea of the moral progress as being part of the overall design for the novel, then we can begin to make some sense of the parallels and contrasts between the plates that were originally conceived by the artist. The progress of Pecksniff will be seen to be from complacent hypocrisy to an ultimate, and literal, fall, the latter being illustrated by plate 37, where old Martin finally renounces him and is so overwhelmed that he knocks him to the ground to the great delight of most of the other major characters of the novel. The fate of his two daughters, Charity and Mercy, will be no less drastic, and in Charity's case no less dramatic. She faints when she learns that Moddle has deserted her on the day of her wedding and she is the object of derision of the people gathered to celebrate her "nuptials". Mercy, in the end, realises the folly she has committed in marrying Jonas Chuzzlewit who, of course, becomes the murderer of Tigg. However, there are more optimistic progresses in the novel and old Martin, his grandson, and Tom Pinch, all know themselves better at the end of the novel and they have learnt who to trust and to have a clearer view of the world. It is significant that plate 37, where old Martin denounces Pecksniff, also shows the old man as being physically active, whereas before he has been shown sitting or in bed;

once the deception has ceased to blind him to Pecksniff's true qualities he can assume a more vital pose and participate in life again, instead of being a passive character.

Moreover, Browne uses allegory and symbolism in his use of details through the designs of his subjects and the parallels and contrasts between the individual plates. Each monthly part would be published with the two illustrations opposite each other at the beginning of the number, thus inviting the reader to work out the link between them and also allowing the artist to illustrate the novel in a more more refined and complex manner.

The subjects for the illustrations were specified by the author and in the case of Martin Chuzzlewit were often given in great detail and it is interesting to note exactly what Browne did with these instructions. Dickens is reported to have said that his illustrator worked best not from the text but from a "short description" of the subject for then "he can't help taking it in".[10] *Perhaps this is where the idea of Browne as a man who lacked ideas of his own sprang into being; but there is evidence that he contributed original additions to the illustrations, ideas which Dickens had not specified in any way.*

For example, we witness the directions given, in a letter from Dickens to Browne, on the subject of plate

18, The thriving city of Eden as it appeared in fact:

> *The first subject having shown the settlement of Eden on paper, the second shews it in reality. Martin and Mark are displayed as the tenants of a wretched log hut (for a pattern whereof see a vignette brought by Chapman and Hall) in a perfectly flat, swampy, wretched forest of stunted timber in every stage of decay, with a filthy river running before the door, and some other miserable log houses distributed among the trees, whereof the most ruinous and tumbledown of all is labelled Bank and National Credit Office. Outside their door, as the custom is, is a rough sort of form or dresser, on which are set forth their pot and kettle and so forth, all of the commonest kind. On the outside of the house, at one side of the door, is a written placard, Chuzzlewit & Co:, Architects and Surveyors, and upon a stump of a tree, like a butcher's block before the cabin, are Martin's instruments -- a pair of rusty compasses etc. On a three legged stool beside this block sits Martin in his shirt sleeves, with long dishevelled hair, resting his head upon his hands -- the picture of hopeless misery -- watching the river and sadly remembering that it flows home. . . .11*

This specification is in very great detail and Dickens himself must have imagined the scene quite vividly to write at such length. Browne followed the instructions fairly well to the letter but at the same time he began to introduce ideas of his own which mirror themes in the novel. One example here is the addition of the two toads in the foreground, on the bank of the river, one looking up inquisitively at Martin and the other diving into the river, and the latter detail has been interpreted as an allusion to Martin's thoughts of suicide.[12] *This detail was not*

specified by the author and Browne makes use of it in another plate, thus displaying his awareness of the techniques he was using and his control over such allegorical details. In plate 25, Mr. Tapley is recognised by some fellow citizens of Eden, there are the two toads again, one sitting down, as before, and the other now dancing on its front legs, which presumably mirrors the joy with which the dejected family greet Mark.

Some ideas about how Dickens conceived the purpose of the illustrations can be gleaned from the instructions to plate 18. Firstly, his invention of the contrasting titles is obvious evidence that he was aware of the effect of the plates: The city of Eden as it appeared on paper and The city of Eden as it appeared in fact would be opposite to each other so that the reader would be aware of the delusion Mark and Martin undergo before he actually reads the text. The effect of the chapter therefore is not based on any form of suspense but rather it takes up the examination of how the two characters cope with the reality of the factual Eden and with their bitter disappointment at discovering they have let themselves be tricked. The plates stand as a "prefiguration of the narrative"[13] and allow the reader to concentrate on the changes taking place in Martin's self-awareness, from the "consciousness of being a landed proprietor in the thriving

city of Eden" to sitting "gazing at the current as it moved towards the open sea, the high road to the home he never would behold again".

In laying out the directions for plate 18 so carefully Dickens is taking great pains to elicit a specific response from his reader. He wants Browne to depict the most wretched scene he can without being unrealistic; we have the "wretched log hut", the "forest of stunted timber" and also references to Martin's now useless surveying tools which underline the irony of the situation. "The picture he describes is a typical Hogarthian scene of tumbledown confusion, with its ironic written placards, and characterizing utensils that are not being used . . . the details are almost emblematic and Dickens intends his readers to concentrate on each of them in turn and take its point."[14] *The author then can gain a response from the reader through the illustrations; and a greater response still is gained when Browne introduces his own devices from emblematic tradition.*

If we remember some of the traditions behind engraving and etching we come to Hogarth and Gillray and also a "French Connection" in the person of Daumier. As we have seen though, Browne seemed to be moving away from the more extreme caricatural style of the earlier novels and this movement found a parallel in Dickens' own views.

There is evidence that Dickens was rejecting, by the time of Martin Chuzzlewit, the extreme presentation of caricature in his writings.

> Writing in 1848, Dickens called his friend and contemporary, John Leech, "the very first English caricaturist (we use the word for want of a better) who has considered beauty as being perfectly compatible with his art", and contrasted him with earlier English graphic humorists: "If we turn back to . . . the works of Rowlandson and Gillray, we shall find, in spite of the great humour displayed in many of them, that they are rendered wearisome and unpleasant by a vast amount of personal ugliness. Now, besides that it is a poor device to represent what is satirised as being necessarily ugly . . . it serves no purpose but to produce a disagreeable result".15

Certainly the illustrations in Martin Chuzzlewit reflect a move away from the more exaggerated characterisation and in this respect more favour was shown, by both author and illustrator, towards the examples of Hogarth and Leech. The faces of the grotesque characters in the illustrations to the novel are portrayed more realistically and in the case of Mrs. Gamp her features are derived from La Garde-Malade by Daumier and also precisely reflect Dickens own conception of her in the text.

> In the Chuzzlewit plates the influence of Daumier can be detected in a characteristic way of rendering eyelids and eyebrows, but the clearest proof of the connection is to be found in the studies of Sarah Gamp, who closely resembles Daumier's sick-nurse of 1842. In both of Browne's etchings Sarah's head is seen from the same angle as the other nurse's, is drawn in the

> *same style, and has the same features, down to the cleft chin. From Daumier, Browne acquired a new fertility and fineness in the witty touching in of faces; many of the Chuzzlewit plates are crowded, but each face in the crowd is an individual study. Earlier plates like The Trial (in Pickwick Papers) had been packed with comic individuals, but the Chuzzlewit plates show a more generous sense of the range and substance of individuality.16*

Browne, of course, still delighted in etching every face and endowing it with vitality as in plate 16, Mr. Pecksniff on his Mission. Each figure Browne has drawn in this plate has a sturdy liveliness to it, from the movements of the two quarrelling street urchins in the foreground to the various expressions on the faces of the gossiping women. The facial expressions are not as distorted as some of those to be found in the Nicholas Nickleby plates and in some figures in Martin Chuzzlewit the illustrator strikes a fine balance between the reality and the caricature; when he draws Pecksniff for instance the reader can believe in the character more firmly perhaps than in those of Dotheboys Hall, but there is still enough of a hint of caricature to make the figure comic, especially when seen in one of its characteristic poses.

We often see Pecksniff in grave poses, as in plate 24, Mr. Pecksniff discharges a duty he owes to society, when he dismisses Tom Pinch from his door. His facial expression is fairly realistic, certainly credible, but his theatrical pose gives him away. Pecksniff constantly performs his own

character, but this is greater than mere theatricality because his visual human dimension is still obvious and this creates a blend of the comic and the sinister, and therefore also a kind of tension.[17] The illustrator, in evoking this vivid suggestion of character, can develop a novel's themes in visual terms; and in organising this novel round the themes of selfishness and hypocrisy, can use his ability, his knowledge of the previous traditions (especially the realism in Hogarth), and his use of emblematic details in creating parallels and contrasts between the plates, in order to emphasise the themes.

We can compare plates 3 and 37, the enthronement of Pecksniff as the leader of the people who were seeking old Martin's fortune, and the plate which shows his eventual and literal fall; the individual plates themselves and the comparison between them are quite effective. In plate 3, Pleasant little family party at Mr. Pecksniff's, we see Pecksniff installed as chief of the legacy hunters. Mr. Spottletoe contests the claim of Mr. Pecksniff's distinction and in contrast to the ebullient figure Browne has drawn here we can see the prominent but silent figure of Tigg and the intent faces of Jonas and his father. If we examine carefully the complex emblematic detail in the form of a mirror, or halo-shape, behind Pecksniff's head, we see that "it resembles a coronation ceremony and can

note the spiky hair of the figure being crowned".[18] *This is a visual hint to the idea of enthronement of the vice of selfishness and seeking after wealth and Pecksniff is portrayed in another proud, self-assumed pose. Plate 37 deals with the literal fall of Pecksniff in* Warm reception of Mr. Pecksniff by his venerable friend. *Dickens' instructions for this plate run as follows:*

> *The room in the Temple. Mrs. Lupin with Mary in her charge, stands a little way behind Old Martin's chair. Young Martin is on the other side, Tom Pinch and his sister are there too. Mr. Pecksniff has burst in to rescue his friend from this horde of plunderers and deceivers. The old man in a* perfect *transport of burning indignation, rises from his chair, and uplifting his stick knocks the good Pecksniff down; before John Westlock and Mark who gently interpose (though they are very much delighted) can possibly prevent him. Mr. Pecksniff on the ground. The old man full of fire and energy and resolution.*

On looking at the illustration we can note the titles of the two books which fall from the table; Paradise Lost *and* Le Tartuffe. *There are no instructions for including such details and Michael Steig has called them Browne's own "contextual allegorical details",*[19] *and Kitton finds "in the accessories (such as the titles of books and pictures) sly touches of humour peculiarly apropos of the principal theme".*[20] *We can also see the look of delight and surprise on the face of the portrait on the wall. There is emphasis on context and emotional attitudes in Dickens'*

instructions but the exact detail is left to the illustrator. In The Nuptials of Miss Pecksniff receive a temporary check (plate 38) Browne has added many other details. There is a bird in a cage, the fisherman in the picture losing his catch -- actually with the exclamation"gone!" appearing with him -- and Aesop's dog is seen dropping his bone, and all of these reflect the fall of Charity. Also there is a Cupid writing down details of the scene in the top right-hand corner of the plate. The two plates of the respective falls, that of father and daughter, would have been opposite and would therefore invite parallel examination by the reader; and in this case probably would have caused much humour to be generated by the long awaited downfalls of the two characters.

Especially in the use of emblems, like the ones we have seen in the plates of the two "falls", we can see how aware the illustrator must have been of his links with the earlier traditions, including Hogarth and possibly going back as far as those of emblem books. The ordinary reading public of Dickens' day would appreciate the "explanations" of the story offered through these visual details and, to some extent, they would be familiar with what Browne was doing. The artist, in his visualisation of the text and by following Dickens' instructions for the illustrations, can comment significantly on the narrative by means of such

details, and we can find examples in plates 15, 17 and 18 in Martin Chuzzlewit. The Dissolution of Partnership, which shows the death of Anthony Chuzzlewit, has, as one of its details, the hands of the grandfather clock pointing at midnight and this would be a visual symbol for the reader that "the time had come" for the old man's death. In plate 17, The city of Eden as it appeared on paper there is the detail of the cobweb in the top right hand corner, symbolising Scadder entrapping the two young men. It is interesting to find that this is one of the details Browne uses several times in the course of his work for Dickens' novels. In Bleak House, in plate 25, Attorney and Client, we see another spider's web which again signals to the reader the fact that, in this particular case, Richard Carstone is being entrapped by the lawyer he believes is representing his best interests in the case in Chancery. One might suppose that Browne just tended to fall back on such details and introduced them whenever he thought it apt, but perhaps he is creating his own visual shorthand for use in his illustrations to Dickens' books. As much as Dickens himself has a verbal shorthand for several, usually minor, characters throughout his novels, and uses recognisable, almost formulaic language when dealing with them, so Browne could easily have built up a tradition of his own and used his own formulaic devices in different

novels. Thus, if one were to study the entire range of Browne's illustrations, it might be possible to work out a visual language of the artist's own creation; a language which paralleled and reflected Dickens' own style. One further detail, to be seen in the title page vignette could be taken in this context of visual language, and it also indicates Browne's awareness of the moral implications of the tale.

As we have already seen, Professor Michael Steig has pointed out the similarities between the title-page vignette and the first plate in Hogarth's The Harlot's Progress, thus establishing a strong link between Browne and the earlier artist. Professor Steig also comments that the signpost seen in the vignette has one arm broken off, and that is the arm which points towards Pecksniff's house; so Browne is already signifying in visual terms that that particular way leads nowhere -- that it is a "dead end" for the young Martin Chuzzlewit whom Pecksniff is meeting. This is a very strong indication of how aware the illustrator was of the traditions of the moral progress and how the author wanted those traditions incorporated into his work; the moralising of the details in the illustrations constantly underpins the unified moral framework of the novel.

For the frontispiece Dickens specified to Browne to depict "any little indications of his history rising out of Tom Pinch's organ". If we look at the illustration and the monthly wrapper not only can we see evidence of Browne's individual and independent imagination but also a concern to emphasise the parallels and contrasts in the two plates and in the novel as a whole. This examination should demonstrate Browne's art and his ability to expand on Dickens' ideas to the improvement of the novel and should serve as proof of the validity of the author's and illustrator's joint artistic achievement. "The frontis-piece is Tom at his organ with a pensive face; and any little indication of his history rising out of it and floating about it, as you please; Tom as interesting and amiable as possible."[21]

"As you please" was certainly the direction Browne took up without hesitation because the frontispiece is crowded with the characters of the novel and reflections of the main themes. It is interesting to note that the author has left the explanation of the future up to the illustrator: "instead of saying what became of the people, as usual, I shall suppose it to be explained in the sounds". Tom is at the organ and Ruth, with a rolling pin, and John Westlock, are immediately in front of him. On either side of the organ pipes are two figures and one has a pole and

a cup with Tom's smiling head and has its complement in the monthly wrapper in the pole surrounded with roses; the other figure has a pole and a spike with Pecksniff's head impaled upon it as in the spiked shaft in the wrapper surrounded by a dead plant. The wrapper puts forward the idea of the subtitle, "who came in for the silver spoons and who for the wooden ladles", and is divided into two halves, those of fortune and misfortune. There is an image of a man in the shape of a top being whipped by the fates; the bird of paradise opposes the owl sitting on the gibbet and there are two types of cradle at the top of the design -- one cradle with the silver spoons as its motif and the other the cradle of misfortune with a very prominent wooden spoon being seen.

The frontispiece shows how these original themes from the monthly wrapper have been carried through and resolved. Browne usually made the frontispiece as the 39th plate out of the 40 he executed for each of the three novels under discussion in this thesis, and so he could resolve the main themes at the end of the story. The title page illustration would be plate 40 and then the reader could, if he so desired, have the monthly parts of the novel bound together and transfer these last two plates to the beginning of the book. In the case of the frontispiece for

Martin Chuzzlewit the left hand side consists of a dance motif symbolising the idea of marital bliss. There is the Dragon Inn in the village, the married couples forming a line of dancers, Poll Sweedlepipe and Bailey, Mark and Mrs. Lupin with the dragon; Mrs. Gamp is shown with a bandbox for her head with nearby cowering figures in nightdress. We see the weeping Moddle and the teasing Merry. Then we have the couples again, dancing along on an unrolling carpet of music. Browne shows us Jonas and Pecksniff, both surrounded by grotesque reflections of themselves in the forms of moneybags and mirrors respectively. Pecksniff is seen actually "hoist by his own petard" on the right hand side and is mocked by animated architectural and surveying tools. There are indications of Tom's life on the right-hand side down from the top; Pecksniff is seen leering at Mary in the church, Tom at his drawing board and Pecksniff again admiring his own achievements or those he has misappropriated from his students. Browne illustrates the stile episode where Tom hits Jonas after their argument; Tom is shown as being mocked by Mercy and Charity and then as comforting a young lady, possibly Mary. The fates and Medusae-like creatures torment Jonas and there is Charity as an "old maid" sitting in a window with a cat on her lap -- and there is a definite smile on the cat's face.

Such detail testifies to Browne's enthusiasm and delight in his work as much as Dickens delighted in the concept of poetic justice at the end of the novel when he describes Charity being jilted. Browne's delight is matched by his imagination and perception, both in the use of emblematic tradition and the traditions of the earlier masters. Throughout <u>*Martin Chuzzlewit*</u> *the illustrations are an integral part of the novel as a work of art and much of the meaning of the ideas in the novel would be lost without Browne's contribution.*

CHAPTER III

DOMBEY AND SON. THE PROGRESS OF PRIDE

On 30th September 1846 the first number of Charles Dickens' new novel, Dombey and Son, was published and released to the booksellers. Probably, when the shops displayed the issue in their windows, people felt a similar reaction to the one Dickens himself expresses when describing Tom Pinch wandering around the shops in Salisbury before meeting Martin. "And in the window were the spick-and-span new works from London, with the title pages, and sometimes even the first page of the first chapter, laid wide open: tempting unwary men to begin to read the book, and then, in the impossibility of turning over, to rush blindly in, and buy it!"[1] If the public looked in the booksellers' windows for the first issue of Dombey and Son they would come across the green wrapper for the monthly parts, designed by Hablot Knight Browne, and "Dealings with the firm of Dombey and Son, Wholesale, Retail and for Exportation", would be the full title of the novel. As in the cover design for Martin Chuzzlewit, where we have the addition of "who came in for the silver spoons and who for the wooden ladles", the full title reflects upon the design of the cover and the main themes of the novel. Apparently

in the case of this novel though, Dickens was worried that Browne would give too much of the story away in the etching he made for the wrapper and only wanted the novel "foreshadowed" by his illustrator. However, "the cover does what Dickens wanted; it 'shadows out the drift and bearing' of the whole, not disclosing secrets, not committing the author, but still picturesquely confirming and enlarging the promise of the title, and clearly showing the existence of a ruling general design for the unwritten story".[2]

Butt and Tillotson, in Dickens at Work, *have described the design Browne created, and found in it an advance from the cover from* Martin Chuzzlewit *in that here there is a narrative line running through the illustration, whereas previously the* Martin Chuzzlewit *cover relied on obvious and simple contrasts. The narrative line they describe, following the cover clockwise from the figure of the confident young Mr. Dombey in the bottom left hand corner, holding his wealth up with his thumb, to the old Dombey crushed by the weight of his fortunes in the bottom right hand corner, is the line of the wheel of Fortune. As such, this narrative line, this progress of pride, embodies a "moral curve", and we will see Browne reflect the aims of the author in the succeeding illustrations, where the fortunes of the main character especially are traced in a much more subtle manner than the lives of the*

characters in Martin Chuzzlewit.

The illustration for the frontispiece to the novel ties up the themes outlined in the monthly wrapper. Again Browne is following his usual practice for, in Martin Chuzzlewit, he had resolved the main ideas set out in the monthly wrapper in his design for the novel's frontispiece, where Tom's thoughts as he plays the organ bring the novel to its conclusion. The author left the explanation of the future up to the illustrator in that novel: "Instead of saying what became of the people, as usual, I shall suppose it to be explained in the sounds; making the last swell of the organ a kind of expression of Tom's heart".[3] In the frontispiece to Dombey and Son the illustrator gathers the threads together, sums up all the elements of the story we have just finished. The top third of the design is devoted to Paul's life; from his birth and the death of his mother and his time as a baby, on the right hand side; through his encounter with his father and the question of "what is money" back towards the left; his listening to the grandfather clock at Blimber's and watching the workman who came to mend it when it had broken down, his lessons with Cornelia and Dr. Blimber and finally his death, after which he is received by angels who occupy most of this top third. On the right hand side, below the scenes with Paul we see the encounter between Dombey and Edith, with Carker and

Bagstock in attendance. Browne shows Florence after she had been hit by her father, and below that there is a devil-like figure with an hourglass summoning Mrs. Skewton, who drops her fan with a startled look on her face. Just to the right of this devil figure, almost out of the picture there is a skeleton dancing gleefully while watching the surprised old lady, and who reminds us of the maid who ought to have been a skeleton. ". . . Mrs. Skewton's maid appeared, according to custom, to prepare her gradually for night. At night, she should have been a skeleton, with dart and hourglass, rather than a woman, this attendant; for her touch was of the touch of Death." [4] *Obviously here Browne has read the actual text of the novel, to be so close to it in his illustration. With many of the other illustrations the circumstances under which he had to design his plates were very different and he did not have the text. This problem will be discussed later. For the moment, if we continue to look briefly at the frontispiece we can see scenes with the sea in the lower third and to the left; some are comic with Miss Tox and Major Bagstock, one relates to Sol Gills being away at sea and then returning; and the remaining two show Florence welcoming Walter home, with Captain Cuttle for company, after Walter has been literally shipwrecked and "rescuing her symbolically shipwrecked father"* [5] *while holding on to Paul, her*

own son. The remaining scene shows the nemesis of Carker, with an angel of death hurling a thunderbolt at him as he is about to be run down by the train. All of these little scenes centre around Florence as she sits by Paul in his chair on the shore of the sea. "The whole answers the design on the wrapper, now that the story is known and complete."[6]

Browne's treatment of the themes in the novel, his "shadowing out" the main ideas in the wrapper and then tying them up in the resolution of the frontispiece indicates his awareness of the overall plan of the novel, and on a larger scale parallels some of the contrasts he makes between pairs of opposite illustrations for the monthly parts. As we have seen in the earlier novel this was one of the major ways Browne could use to expand upon Dickens' instructions for the plates and to introduce a moral pattern to the whole set of etchings. In Dombey and Son though this practice is not carried out to such a great extent, and where it does happen the contrasts and parallels are more subtle. For example, in plates 1 and 2 from the first number, we become aware of the contrast between the Toodles family and the Dombey family. Browne uses the same setting for each etching, especially with the muffled chandelier hanging from the ceiling. In plate 1, where Miss Tox introduces the family to Louisa Chick, Browne

groups the Toodles closely together to the left of the scene. They hold each other by the hands and the two youngest children seek the protection of Jemima in their shyness. The whole family is a little over-awed, by the satirical majesty of the character of Mrs. Chick. In plate 2 the division within the family is very apparent, and is reinforced when one takes the first plate into consideration. Dombey is the central figure, in the foreground, and Browne has taken great pains over executing his likeness. Dickens and Browne entered into quite lengthy selection processes for this character and the illustrator executed a sheet of preliminary sketches from which Dickens could choose the one he wanted. As it is, Dombey sits stiffly and only the movement of his eyes towards Florence in the doorway betrays the unease he feels. Richards, the Mrs. Toodles from the previous illustration, is anxious as well and the ominous muffled chandelier takes on even more the quality of a gigantic teardrop. Paul sits looking at his father and his sister. Florence holds herself very rigidly at the right hand side of the etching, and in this Browne already prefigures the isolation she is to undergo when her father rejects her.

To some extent similar feelings are produced when the second pair of plates are examined; <u>*The Christening*</u>

Party and Polly rescues the Charitable Grinder; the pretence at being the happy, united Dombey family is revealed by the father's cold gaze at Florence as she succeeds in amusing her brother. Again there is the emphasis on the stiffness in the main character which Dickens repeatedly brings out in the text. Dombey holds himself in a pose, and in this case his pose reveals his lack of understanding, his lack of warmth. In plate 4 there is apparent disorder and chaos with plenty of movement in the figures and humour in the portrayal of their energetic distorted faces. But the point Browne makes is that there is more genuine "family feeling" in the attempt that Polly makes to rescue Rob, despite the melée and the confusion and the open surroundings, than there ever can be in the cold, contained stature of Mr. Dombey and the claustrophobic, dismal room in which the celebrations are held.

When the author and illustrator agreed on the kind of visual presentation they favoured for the main character of the novel, Mr. Dombey, they were continuing the trend towards a more sober and realistic delineation. Harvey sums up Browne's portrayal of Dombey with special reference to plate 2. The Dombey Family:

> *Here there is no facetiousness or exaggeration, although we might infer that the artist was an expert caricaturist from the very sharp sensitivity of the line that touches in Dombey's face. It is done with few strokes, but the Dombey of the text is caught to the life: proud and handsome, but with his meanness showing in the contracted mouth, in the nose pinched in a fastidious sniff, and in the tired eyed which wander uneasily and resentfully towards his daughter, while he keeps his head turned away. It is Dombey, also, in the elegant clothing and in the way he sits: he crosses his legs and sits back, as though relaxing a little, yet he remains completely stiff. The line is delicate but strong: it looks as though the needle ran through the wax quickly and easily, but without any vagueness or neglect. The effect is of a fine and subtle clarity.*[7]

In the context of Browne's portrayal of Dombey it is interesting to note that charges of distortion and excessive caricaturisation have been laid against the artist, notably by Graham Everitt who attacks the illustrator for these reasons and continues: "Another fault of this artist . . . is the weakness of his outline, and the singular absence of solidarity, stability, and even of 'vitality' in his figures".[8] *However, in this plate, number 2, and also in plate 3, the main figure is very solid and exceptionally well drawn. Harvey points out the exactness with which Browne captures Dickens' conception of the character. There is stability in the lay-out of the illustrations, even in plate 4 with its intended scene of disorganisation, we can focus upon Polly's attempt to*

rescue Rob, the mother's wild dash to get her son away from his tormentors; and in Dombey himself there is a vitality in his very stiffness and control, an energy which Browne portrays as being unnaturally pent up and perverted into his proud stance. Moreover, Browne adds to Dickens' conception of Dombey's character, can reinforce and even add slightly different facets. Michael Steig shows how Dickens

> *further develops the possibilities of grotesque portrayal. Unlike Pecksniff, Mr. Dombey lacks any comic dimension, though he is an equally pointed satire of a social type. Lacking any demonism, he disturbs us through what might be called his world view, a total solipsism unredeemed by any of the Falsaffian qualities of a Pecksniff or a Mrs. Gamp . . . ; Dickens everywhere stresses Dombey's rigidity, and the chilling qualities of his presence. It is a part of Dickens' new concern with a kind of realism that Dombey shall be, in the conventional view, a handsome man; unlike Pecksniff, who is frequently described in terms that make him sound low and rather greasy, Dombey is impeccable in his appearance and demeanour.*[9]

Drawn as he is by Browne, Dombey is an echo of Dickens' intentions, proper in his manner and behaviour but sinister and chilling in his reliance upon the self. Alan Horsman says of the sheet of preliminary sketches that "Four of them are marked with an arrow, perhaps to show Dickens' preferences, though the Dombey of the actual plates is somewhat smoother and less forceful than any of these".[10] *In being "smoother and less forceful" the character portrayed by the illustrator becomes more magnetic and holds*

the centre of the stage for the reader.

The way in which Dombey was portrayed came as a result of the circumstances under which Browne had to create the etchings for the novel. For some of the illustrations he had the benefit of seeing Dickens' reaction to his preliminary sketches, for example for plates 2 and 13, The Dombey Family and Major Bagstock is delighted to have that opportunity. In one of the sketches for plate 2 he queries "Qy. Whether twere better -- to have him standing thus stiff as a poker with a kind of side glance at his daughter -- or sitting as in the other?". The final choice is the plate with Dombey sitting, being aware of Florence in the doorway, as described by Harvey above. Harvey also proceeds to demonstrate how the illustration here is, in fact, not an exact mirror of the text but reflects a conjunction of two scenes; thus showing that both author and illustrator were well aware that illustrations could do more than just capture one moment of the narrative. "Illustration in this plate is something very different from the precise visualization of what a moment in the dramatic action would have looked like: it involves searching for a tableau that will serve as a poignant epitome of what, most importantly, the text had to say . . . Dickens desired illustrations to assist in communication as well as depiction". [11]

In the case of plate 13 Dickens actually asks for a sketch to be sent to him so that he can comment on it. "The first subject I am now going to give is very important to the book. I should like to see your sketch of it if possible". In giving his subject to Browne he does so fully and gives his illustrator the clues to the future: ". . . the Major introduces Mr. Dombey to a certain lady, whom, as I wish to foreshadow dimly, said Dombey may come to marry in due season".[12] *In the preliminary sketch Dickens criticised the Native and suggested changes in his appearance and also commented that the Major might look older. Perhaps his care in giving Browne the means to make the etching as much like his own perception arose from one of the earlier plates that Dickens had not appreciated, but which had gone to the printers and had been included in the number before he had seen it.*

This was plate 5, Paul and Mrs. Pipchin, and Dickens evidently wanted the illustration to make Mrs. Pipchin look even older and, especially, to have Paul looking up at her instead of just across at her. Up to this time Browne did have the benefit of the text to work from, and the narrative which describes the scene for this illustration does not contain anything specifically to tell Browne to make the lady look older or have Paul look up at her instead of across at her. After this though, when

publication had begun, Browne had only Dickens' descriptions of the subjects for illustration. Even then, in plate 7, Dr. Blimber's young gentlemen as they appeared when enjoying themselves, Browne did not correspond to his intructions and increases the number of young gentlemen from ten to seventeen, including Paul; moreover, "Browne did have some opportunity to exercise originality, not only in the rendering of specific detials, but in the introduction of details of his own, as when he added six urchins variously enjoying themselves to contrast with the solemnity of Dr. Blimber's young gentlemen . . . Dickens' very detailed instructions make no mention of these urchins".[13] *One further example of the joint effort made by Dickens and Browne, and of the circumstances under which the etchings were executed is pointed out by Steig again when he shows that in plate 20, Coming home from Church, "sitting to the right of the doorway, glaring balefully at the newly married couple, is an old, ugly, and ragged woman, who bears a considerable resemblance to Mrs. Brown as she is depicted in other plates, particularly in number 29, Abstraction and Recognition". The figure of the old lady takes account of the otherwise puzzling lines in Chapter XXXI: "And why does Mr. Carker, passing through the people to the hall-door, think of the old woman who called to him in the Grove that morning? Or why does Florence, as she*

passes, think, with a tremble, of her childhood, when she was lost, and of the visage of good Mrs. Brown?" In Steig's view this shows that Dickens sent instructions about the inclusion of "good Mrs. Brown" to Browne, as Browne would not have known of her presence at the wedding until part 11; "it clarifies what otherwise appears to be an oversight in the text, and it demonstrates that Dickens may be seen as virtually 'composing' the illustrations as integral components of the text. No reading of the novels that pretends to completeness, then, can afford to ignore the original illustrations".[14]

As the novel progresses Browne's portrayal of Dombey reflects the "moral curve" noticed by Butt and Tillotson in the monthly wrapper design. Plate 27 is the last illustration where we see him with any dignity and here he has drawn himself up to his full height as he instructs Carker to be his confidential agent. Here he is stiff and arrogant but, ironically, the portrait of Edith casts its gaze down upon him from behind. Also Browne depicts Carker at his most menacing; R. D. McMaster in "Man into Beast in Dickensian Caricature"[15], demonstrates Dickens use of feline metaphors to describe Carker, and indeed Browne etches him as he is poised on the edge of his seat, leaning forward, almost ready to spring upon Dombey. "The central facet of Carker's character is his sinister

sexual vitality; it accounts for the wolf, monkey and cat imagery and links him with the world of dust and worms." In Dombey and Son the world of "dust and worms" of Bleak House is already prefigured; previous transgressions of sexual mores by Carker and Alice Brown provide the key to unravelling the complex web of relationships. In the later novel Browne will be called upon to illustrate a world shot through with disease and darkness and his use of the so-called "dark plates" with their emphasis on physical manifestations of the disease, as in Tom All Alone's or darkness, as in Night and Morning, will provide the framework for the novel. Plate 37 of Dombey and Son, Let him remember it in that room, years to come, shows Dombey after he has fallen, after his pride has brought him low and his only hope is Florence; the illustrations have repeated the pattern in the monthly wrapper and the Dombey of plate 2 has changed from a man who, in his pride, can hold himself firm and erect, to a man whose frame is shrunken and whose face is haggard.

An essential theme of the novel which Browne was called upon to illustrate was that of the family, as indicated in the title of the novel. In portraying the different families in the book, the poor but happy Toodles, and the rich but broken family of Dombey to cite the most obvious contrast, there is prefiguration again of Bleak

House where the division between mother and daughter, Lady Dedlock and Esther, provides the core of the novel's mystery, and the subject of several of the plates. Plates 23 and 24, Mr. Dombey at Home and Miss Tox pays a visit to the Toodle family, seem to be a deliberate contrast of wealth and poverty, insecurity and happiness, division and union. Browne makes much of the backgrounds in each plate; in plate 23, for all the wealth of the chandeliers, and the paintings and the rich fireplace, the scene is vague and insubstantial, whereas the scene with the Toodle family is rich in detail and solid in its feeling -- we can see Mr. Toodles' pipe on the mantel shelf and the smallest child's toys on the floor. The manner in which the characters are distributed throughout the plate also reflects the contrast; the cluttered groups of guests in the Dombey house, posed satirically by Browne for the reader, are an obvious foil to the strong and natural groupings in the second plate, with the children playing on their father's knee.

But the stress on the idea of family is taken further, and developed by the illustrator to include related themes like education and childhood. The novel, after all, centres around the relationship between Dombey and Paul, and then Dombey and Florence; the frontispiece makes it clear,

from the central position of Florence and Paul, that these two characters will serve to cement such themes together. The sets of plates in the third and fourth numbers demonstrate Browne's concern to mirror themes as well as events, to provide "communication" as well as "depiction".

Plates 5 and 6, Paul and Mrs. Pipchin and Captain Cuttle Consoles his Friends contrast Paul and Walter, the two characters who will be closest to Florence. Walter is older than Paul but the difference in the way Browne portrays them is still heavily marked, Paul looking very small and young, and Walter, working his way up in the world in the firm of Dombey, confident enough to be able to be reassuring to his Uncle about the called-in debt. Plate 5 could almost be a dark plate, with its sinister, claustrophobic atmosphere, and Mrs. Pipchin in her black bombazeen skirts dominating the picture. In 6, on the other hand, Browne obviously intended to introduce some humour as well, despite the crisis precipitated by the recalled debt. In the top right hand corner of the plate some sort of lamp seems to be smiling at the scene with a little face, and even the barometer directly behind Captain Cuttle has facial characteristics. Mr. Brogley is caught in the doorway "endeavouring to make himself acquainted with the use of the globes, setting parallel rulers astride on to his

nose, and amusing himself with other philosophical transactions", and amuses the reader as well.

Plates 7 and 8, Dr. Blimber's Young Gentlemen . . ., and Paul's exercises, bring the theme of education to the fore. In plate 7, as has been pointed out by Michael Steig, Browne adds original details such as the six urchins who are enjoying themselves in various antics while Blimber shepherds the young gentlemen in his charge along at a serious and sombre pace. The relationship between Paul and his sister is stressed in plate 8 where Florence works at Paul's exercises herself in order to be able to make his understanding of the problems clearer. Already in the text Dickens has satirised the Blimber establishment and the digging up of dead languages by Cornelia, as an example, and pointed out the useless forcing of the children.

Throughout the illustrations we can still see examples of Browne's use of emblematic and allegorical details, the kind which played an important part in some of the plates of Martin Chuzzlewit. In this novel their use is more restrained and more subtle, but no less effective. John Harvey notes the Hogarthian touches in plate 20, Coming home from Church;

> *. . . there is the other marriage-tableau of a Punch and Judy show. In the far background a hearse, driving away, serves as an unobtrusive reminder of the two deaths on which this marriage is founded; but it also has a more immediate, severe, and thrilling purpose,*

> *for it associates with the wedding-party's coach and makes the point Blake made in his phrase "marriage-hearse". The effect is evidently calculated for the reader of novels who also "read" pictures: the hearse is not likely to be noticed in the first glance at the plate, and the "reader" was presumably intended to experience a shock of realization as the barb in the illustration suddenly pulled.16*

Details in two of the plates remind us of Martin Chuzzlewit *especially. In plate 29,* Abstraction and Recognition *and plate 38,* Another wedding *we see Browne using posters on the wall to echo the idea expressed in the illustration. Thus, there are various posters on the wall beside Mrs. Brown and Alice, and one of them refers to Cruikshank's series "The Bottle" and could be taken as a hint on the part of the illustrator of the degeneracy of the two women, and possibly referring to the black fate of Carker, as he drinks wine after his dinner while fleeing from Dombey which makes him unsteady enough to fall in the path of the train. In plate 38 the posters are for a more humorous purpose; "Wanted fine young men", "La Marriage Forge", and "She Stoops to conquer" are three which refer to Mrs. McStinger laying matrimonial hands, so to speak, on Captain Bunsby.*

> *. . . Bunsby is led to the altar against his will and (the plate) contains an unusually large number of allegorical details. The significant signs, posters, and billboards visible at the wedding procession of Mrs. MacStinger and Jack Bunsby are as follows: "JOLLY TAR"; "CITY THEATRE/SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER/BLACK EYED SUSAN"; "CLIPPER/ SCHOONER/WASP"; (Plate 38A; in 38B "TRIUMPH"*

> *is substituted for "WASP"); "REWARD!/LOST!/ STOLEN"; "FRENCH PLAYS/ST. JAMES/LA MARRIAGE (sic) FORCE"; and "WANTED/SOME FINE/YOUNG MEN/ HECTOR/AMAZON".*[17]

The illustrator intended this to be a reflection also on the wedding of Florence and Walter, this being "Another Wedding". As we have seen in several of the plates this kind of work both recalls the previous background of Browne's contribution to Dickens' novels and also reinforces the impression that he is gaining more mastery over his medium. Nicolas Bentley talks of plate 20 in an article, but his comments could equally apply to this plate and to the quality of the plates for Dombey and Son *in general. "Crowded scenes such as* Coming home from Church *or* Mr. Dombey at Home*, in spite of their abundant detail, have a unity of design and a command of perspective that are often lacking in Phiz's earlier work, even up to the time of* Martin Chuzzlewit*".*[18] *In that novel, of course, in plate 6,* Mark begins to be Jolly under Creditable Circumstances*, Browne had used the same device found in the above two plates from* Dombey and Son*, the posters on the wall behind Mark, as he leaves the village, reading "Lost, Stolen, Strayed", and "Last Appearance". So Browne here in* Dombey *gathers his previous experience and makes advances as well.*

The most striking of those advances, and one which will play an important part in Bleak House, is the introduction of the "dark plate", in this case plate 35, On the dark Road, where Carker is fleeing from Dijon and fears that Dombey is not far behind. "There was no wind; there was no passing shadow on the deep shade of night; there was no noise. The city lay behind him, lighted here and there, and starry worlds were hidden by the masonry of spire and roof that hardly made out any shapes against the sky. Dark and lonely distance lay around him everywhere, and the clocks were faintly striking two." (p. 732). In Dickens' description we get hints of some of the dark plates in Bleak House and also of the way Browne uses dark and light, space and detail in some of the plates in Little Dorrit.

> *In Dombey and Son . . . was first introduced the oblong form of illustration, this lending itself more appropriately to the subjects so treated. . . . When nearing the end of the story he (Browne) essayed, with considerable success, a new method of obtaining chiaroscuro, and he afterwards adopted it whenever striking effects were required. The only plate in Dombey so treated is On the Dark Road, on which by means of a ruling machine, a tint had been placed before the subject was drawn, and, by a process of biting-in, stopping-out, and burnishing, an effect resembling mezzotint was obtained.* 19

Here though, the illustration has caught the fear and thwarted passion of Carker as he flees in the carriage. Back into the distance recedes a line of poplar trees and to the left of the horses is a cross, or a signpost, which they are about to pass. Streaks of light are seen on the horizon, but otherwise the atmosphere is of gloom and menace. In the foreground a clump of reeds overhangs a dank pool of water and a frightened bird flaps across them. The horses and the carriage and the figures of the driver and Carker are caught as if in a sudden lightning flash; at once the horses are so static and yet so full of wild energy, wishing to gallop on. The driver holds himself ready to give the whip another crack -- and the whip snakes out threateningly over the horses' heads. Carker himself holds himself stiffly, gazing back along the road they have just come, in fear they may be followed. The whole plate is caught, in an instant, so full of power and despair; whereas the dark plates Browne creates in Bleak House *are often illustrations of resignation and death, this plate in* Dombey and Son *conveys the wildness of the mind of the fleeing man and is filled with brooding weirdness.*

From the monthly wrapper to the inception of the oblong dark plate, On the Dark Road*, Browne has worked to contribute his own particular effects to the novel. The circumstances under which the novel was produced ensured*

that Dickens and Browne were in fairly close contact where most of the illustrations were concerned and in the end Dickens was apparently pleased with the results that his artist had given him. Browne has progressed in several ways from the few years before when he illustrated Martin Chuzzlewit *and, especially where the dark plate is concerned we see him striving to produce a new way to communicate to the reader of the novel and to the "reader" of the illustration; but nowhere must we forget that the illustrator always underpinned Dickens' ideas and themes in the novels and in doing so made a strong worthwhile and original contribution.*

CHAPTER IV

BLEAK HOUSE. THE "IDIOM OF MYSTERY"[1]

When Geoffrey Hemstedt talks of "Browne's illustrations reproducing the idiom of mystery in Bleak House", in his doctoral thesis Some Victorian Novels and their Illustrators, we can agree that the artist's progress in his techniques, especially in the form of the "dark plates" in that novel, tended to emphasise the weirdness and intrigue which Dickens had introduced to the story. One of the earliest critics of the illustrations, D. C. Thomson, praises one of the dark plates in particular, and this praise could be extended to the illustrations in general, even though Browne's handling of figures and settings does not seem particularly successful in some instances. Thomson says of The Morning, plate 36 in the novel, "Weirdness, horror, and loneliness are the characteristics of the design, which is one of the best Hablot Browne ever did. It goes a long step further than the description in the letterpress, excellent though it be, and has done much more to realise the painful sentiment of the story".[2] The characteristics that are seen in the design are typical of this novel and this is where the advance in Browne's art lay; an advance that was to continue into the illustrations for Little Dorrit, and the use

of light and dark in the plates we see there offsets the otherwise uneven nature of the illustrations as a whole.

Hand in hand with the advance in Browne's art went his usual thorough attention to detail and his treatment of Dickens' main themes. The monthly wrapper is "emblematic of the Court of Chancery"[3] and its success lies in the vitality and humour of the scenes and their general foreshadowing of the novel's concerns. The framework for the design is a rectangle of sticks, ornamented with a tendril design. The title is simply Bleak House, avoiding any subtitle or further description, as was the case in both Martin Chuzzlewit and Dombey and Son, and the letters are little wooden logs. At the top of the wrapper and above this stick rectangle is depicted a general melée around the mace and woolsack, the seat of the Lord Chancellor. The lawyers, in gowns and wigs, are playing some version of "blind man's buff" and sending everyone scattering in all directions; people are trodden on and documents are seen falling about or being carried away. Two small figures hang rather precariously from the stick design just above the title. On either side of the rectangle are various scenes from the novel, notably Krook drawing his initials on the wall in the right hand side of the design at the top; and Miss Flite, giving her birds their liberty after the case has ended, on the left hand

side near the bottom. At opposite sides of the wrapper at the bottom level we see lawyers playing shuttlecock, with what seem to be human people, and playing chess, again with real people as their chess pieces. This is Browne's reflection of the idea Dickens puts into Richard Carstone's mouth in chapter V of the book, just after they have paid their visit to Krook's old shop and talked to Miss Flite. ". . . Strange, indeed! all this wasteful wanton chess-playing is very strange. To see that composed Court yesterday jogging on so serenely, and to think of the wretchedness of the pieces on the board, gave me the headache and the heartache both together. My head ached with wondering how it happened, if men were neither fools nor rascals; and my heart ached to think they could possibly be either." [4]

At the same time as he is concerned with showing the Court of Chancery in the light of satire, Browne reflected Dickens' preoccupation, indeed his contempt, for the kind of telescopic philanthropy seen in the novel and embodied in Mrs. Jellby and Mrs. Pardiggle. At the bottom of the design, within the rectangle, is a scene in front of a building, possibly one of the inns of court, although there is a reminder of Tom All Alone's in the timber beams that buttress the left hand wall. The significance of the figures before the building has been pointed out by Butt and Tillotson in Dickens at Work, *where*

they demonstrate the author's concern with topical problems. They cite an instance of a particular expedition to the River Niger and quote Dickens:

> "The African Expedition . . . is in no respect an exception to the rule. Exeter Hall was hot in its behalf, and it failed. Exeter Hall was hottest on its weakest and most hopeless objects, and in those it failed (of course) most signally." The Niger expedition succumbed to fever, the few surviving colonists of the model farm were murdered by "King Boy", and "King Obi" returned to his profitable trade in slave selling: Borrioboola Gha failed "in consequence of the King of Borrioboola wanting to sell everybody -- who survived the climate -- for Rum". The connection between the actual and the imagined episodes would have been clear enough, even if Hablot Browne had not inserted on his cover-design the figure of a woman embracing two black children, and by her side a man who wears a fools-cap and carries a sandwich board bearing the legend "Exeter Hall".[5]

When we move on from the monthly wrapper to the frontispiece and title-page Browne implies one of the major ideas in the novel without resorting to his former technique of filling these two plates with the various figures and plots that make up the story. Also whereas, in Martin Chuzzlewit and Dombey and Son, the monthly wrapper design could be tied to the frontispiece, and the latter resolved the themes foreshadowed by the wrapper, here in Bleak House the frontispiece is intended to contrast with the title page. The frontispiece shows Chesney Wold and is based on the description Dickens gives in chapter 2.

"The waters are out in Lincolnshire. An arch of the bridge in the park has been sapped and sopped away. The adjacent low-lying ground, for half a mile in breadth, is a stagnant river, with melancholy trees for islands in it, and a surface punctured all over, all day long, with falling rain. My Lady Dedlock's 'place' has been extremely dreary." (p. 60). The title page shows Jo the crossing sweeper and the presence of the dog in the illustration ties this down to the description in chapter XVI, Tom-All-Alone's. "A band of music comes and plays. Jo listens to it. So does a dog -- a drover's dog, waiting for his master outside a butcher's shop. . . ." (p. 268). The contrast is between the home of the nobility, the high people in society, and the setting for the lowest and most unenlightened members of society. The theme implied is that of disease creeping throughout society, bred by the dirt and ignorance found in places like Tom-All-Alone's, and fostered by the "people in charge" refusing to do anything about it. One of the major problems of Dickens' day was that of disease in slums and he was very aware of the problem; in Oliver Twist the author describes Jacob's Island in terms which remind us of this extract from the present novel. "Now, these tumbling tenements contain, by night, a swarm of misery. As, on the ruined human wretch, vermin parasites appear, so these ruined shelters have bred a crowd of foul

existence that crawls in and out of gaps in walls and boards; and coils itself to sleep, in maggot numbers, where the rain drips in; and comes and goes, fetching and carrying fever, and sowing more evil in its every footprint. . . ." (p. 266). In the novel Dickens describes the spread of actual disease, as well as the disease of human misery, when he traces the links between Captain Hawdon, Lady Dedlock and Esther, and shows how Esther catches the disease from Jo. In Browne's illustrations we see a kind of decay in both worlds, that of Chesney Wold and that of Tom-All-Alone's; the trees in the frontispiece are gaunt and lifeless, their roots trailing down into the stagnant water, and the house looms darkly in the distance; the atmosphere is one of brooding despair. In the title page illustration, Jo and the dog are shown in almost similar poses, heads turned and slightly to one side as they listen to the music. Jo's isolation in poverty and ignorance is conveyed in the listless way he leans against the post and the blank, unknowing look the artist has given him.

We see Jo again in plate 10. Consecrated Ground, and the other illustration which made up the pair would have been plate 9, The Dancing School. Although at first these two do not seem to be connected in any way Browne has linked some of the ideas in them. In plate 9 the artist obviously plays upon the foppish tiredness of

Turveydrop and his self-satisfied pose, and the surface glitter of the young ladies being taught how to dance. One critic has pointed out how Browne introduces original allusions into his illustrations, in this case a reference to a work by George Cruikshank.

> *. . . The Dancing School . . . shows Turveydrop standing, with the back of his head reflected in a mirror. The most likely source for his pose is a famous print by George Cruikshank, executed in 1821 after the Regent's coronation as George IV. This print -- which, unlike most of Cruikshank's portraits of the Regent, is not a caricature -- shows the king with the Royal Pavilion at Brighton in the background, a detail in the print which may have, through association with the reference to Brighton in the text, been responsible for Phiz's choosing this particular portrait as a model.*[6]

Browne introduces this allusion into a plate which, although crowded with figures, in static in its composition, and this frozen quality reflects upon the kind of life the characters so illustrated lead. But in plate 10 there is life, indeed the reader himself is drawn inward by the terrible fascination with the "burying ground". The design of the plate contributes to this inward movement, with the dark arch, flanked on either side by the crooked and rotting gravestones, containing the two figures; one points with his hand and the other follows with her eyes and they are both illuminated by the strange pale glow from behind. The sharp railings add a kind of horror, and if we already know the story, they add a touch of irony as well, separating

the woman from her dead husband, the proud noblewoman from her suitor of low birth. Of course we shall see these railings in one of the very last plates in the novel, plate 36, The Morning, where Lady Dedlock has died on the steps leading to them. In this plate it has been noticed that Browne refers subtly to one of the main themes in the novel by keeping Lady Dedlock's face hidden. Michael Steig approaches the technique Browne is using in this way:

> There may indeed be a very great difference between the experience of reading the novels with the original illustrations and that of reading without the illustrations, but it is a difficult distinction to communicate in any but an impressionistic way. Occasionally, however, a pattern may be discerned in successive illustrations of a Dickens' novel which seem to emphasise a point made perhaps only obliquely in the text, a pattern which can be taken to verify an interpretation of the text which can otherwise be offered only tentatively and speculatively. A striking instance of this is found in Browne's illustrations to Bleak House.7

Steig goes on to point out how, in at least half the plates showing Lady Dedlock or Esther, Browne illustrates the character "with face averted or veiled". He suggests that

> the cumulative effect of these and the other illustrations discussed here is to reinforce strongly the connections that are barely implied in the novel between Lady Dedlock's original crime and Esther's disfiguring disease. If we had only the pictures of Esther we could draw no such inference, but for Lady Dedlock . . . the averted face is clearly a symbol of disgrace, and the similarity between her figure and Esther's is like a visual echo of Esther's thoughts after

> she learns of her mother's identity: "I could not disentangle all that was about me; and I felt as if the blame and the shame were all in me, and the visitation had come down".[8]

Turning to plates 25 and 26, Attorney and Client and Sunset in the Drawing Room at Chesney Wold, we can see further examples of Browne's contribution to Bleak House. In plate 25 we can see a typically cluttered Browne interior, with several of the details contributing to the "message" or "moral" of the illustration. Dickens himself has outlined the Attorney/client relationship for the reader in the text, and here Browne can add his own special visual touches. The two obvious examples are the cat watching the mousehole in the bottom left hand corner of the picture, as per the text; and the spider's web at the top right hand side of the mantelpiece, which symbolises Richard being entrapped by Vholes. The web device has been used before, notably in the City of Eden as it appeared on Paper in Martin Chuzzlewit where Zephaniah Scadder watches Martin and Mark patiently as they make up their minds to go to the newly planned, but not yet built city. There are other emblems in the illustration, the picture of the fisherman above Richard's head being one, with what seems to be fishing tackle upright in the corner emphasising the idea that Richard is caught by the lawyer. Perhaps the most interesting and the most elusive though is

seen in the figure of a fox on the right hand side of the mantel shelf; the fox seems to be trying to jump at something above him. We might pass over this as just another detail in the clutter of the room were it not for Dickens supplying us with a clue in the text, in chapter XXXIX: ". . . and Vholes, left alone, employs himself in carrying sundry little matters out of his Diary into his draft bill . . . so might an industrious fox, or bear, make up his account of chickens or stray travellers with an eye to his cubs."[9] *Moreover, if we return to the monthly wrapper we can see Browne has introduced two foxes into the design. One is on the left hand side and is creeping towards the figure of a woman; and one is on the top of the wind vane in the scene at the bottom of the design, the vane being situated in front of the buildings which could be the Inns of Court. The pervasiveness of this emblem then is sufficient to make the reader aware of the foxy, sly nature of the lawyer, Vholes in particular, and lawyers in general; and one critic has seen these beast descriptions as part of Dickens' caricatural method. Here it is "Mr. Vholes as cat and vampire and these animal expressions . . . reflect the diseased human condition",*[10] *and the novel as a whole is about that diseased condition.*

In plate 26, Browne has worked carefully to produce a more subtle effect, one which may not be noticed at first glance. Again we get our clue from the text. "But the fire of the sun is dying. Even now the floor is dusky, and shadow slowly mounts upon the walls, bringing the Dedlock down like age and death. And now, upon my lady's picture over the great chimney piece, a weird shade falls from some old tree, that turns it pale, and flutters it, and looks as if a great arm held a veil or hood, watching an opportunity to draw it over to her. . . ." (p. 148). "Looking back to the illustration, we find the portrait of Lady Dedlock in the top left-hand corner -- it might not have been noticed before -- with an ominous shadow rising to blot it out. What had been a neutral area of shadow becomes a threatening force, and a picture that had seemed simply mellow, dignified, and calm, now insinuates menace."[11] *More often than not, in the later plates of the novel, Browne turns to the effects of light and dark to introduce the thread of fear and menace which is an undercurrent of the book. In using these effects he has advanced his art, and his technique by means of the "dark plates", and no examination of the illustrations in this novel would be complete without looking at the reasons Browne introduced this new method and the success he achieved with it.*

For an explanation of the birth of the dark plates

we must turn to Edgar Browne in his book Phiz and Dickens who claims that the first such plate The Ghost's Walk was the result of previous bad printing on the part of the publishers. His reasons are lengthy but interesting.

> In the Chuzzlewit drawings we shall notice that the figures are vividly relieved from the background, and the whole drawing errs, if in anything, by being too sharp, but the general effect in the Bleak House series is rather that of woolliness and flatness, and a uniformity of greyness, as if the backgrounds ahd been too strongly bitten in; though that is not the fault. If closely examined the lines will be seen to be a little thicker than usual, and with a dull edge, as if they were printed on blotting paper . . . the engraver's unforgivable sin -- the rotten line.

Browne goes on to blame the defective impressions on the lithographic process that had been used to cope with the large demand for the illustrations and continues to relate what Hablot Browne did under these circumstances.

> . . . as a sort of joke (he) sent up a plate wholly composed of fine parallel lines which were liable to blotch if transferred to stone, and therefore must be printed in a proper copperplate press. This was the Ghost's Walk. So far from its being regarded as a joke or a reproof, it was received with acclamation, and considered by the publishers and the public as a novelty of very attractive nature. The drawing in question, taken on its own merits, is interesting and impressive.12

Harvey explains the technique in practical terms:

> the etcher first uses a machine to draw, through the etching ground, a very close set of fine lines. When biting in he can take the plate out of the acid any number of times and cover certain parts with stopping-out varnish. When

> *the process is completed, the areas bitten deeply will print a rich dark tone, while those bitten very lightly will print a pale grey; an infinite range of possible tones is available. White highlights can be added by covering parts of the plate with varnish before it ever goes into the acid; while with further drawing into the etching ground, one can produce blacks as dark as one wishes. With this technique, the etcher can achieve an effect very similar to that of pen and wash. . . . 13*

In the Ghost's Walk we can see this "interesting and impressive" effect, and study the care with which Browne must have prepared the plate. Only the original illustrations do any justice to the dark plates and the etchings published in the monthly parts are the clearest of all. From the illustration in the Gadshill Edition we can get some idea of what Browne intended; far from being woolly and grey, as Edgar Browne suggests, the atmospheric quality of the plate gives it a strange clarity and power. The old house looms at us from the dark background, but nevertheless there is a lot of detail in the stonework and on the balustrade. The artist seems to be following Dickens' ideas as expressed in the text. "Then the way went by long lines of dark windows, diversified by turreted towers, and proches, of eccentric shapes, where old stone lions and grotesque monsters bristled outside dens of shadow, and snarled at the evening gloom over the escutcheons they held in their grip." (p. 87). The

illustration does take details from earlier in the passage though, where Esther talks of the bats which fly close to her, and Browne has two bats flying in the dark sky above the trees. Streaks of light are in the evening sky and this is reminiscent of <u>*On the Dark Road*</u> *in* <u>*Dombey and Son*</u> *where the streaks of light were those of dawn. In the centre of the illustration it is darkest and there seems to be a thick cloud gathering above the terrace and casting its shadow over the walk as it recedes into the archway; the dominant mood is one of brooding menace and this is realised in the text when Esther's feet echo on the path as she passes underneath her mother's window.*

Quite apart from Edgar Browne's account of how the dark plates came into being, other critics have put forward what are, perhaps, more reasonable explanations and shown how the genesis of the new technique could have been a result of cooperation between the author and his illustrator. This is important because we have seen in both <u>*Martin Chuzzlewit*</u> *and* <u>*Dombey and Son*</u> *the kind of contact that there was between Dickens and Browne and how this affected the illustrations. Also it must be noted that the dark plates are singularly different from the other plates in that, on the whole, they concentrate on producing an atmospheric effect from a study of a physical setting rather than of human beings. F. G. Kitton relates how Browne went*

to look at things to study them before embarking on his etching.

> *Phiz invariably depended upon his imagination or memory for his scenes and characters; as the artist himself expressed it, he would merely go "to have a look at a thing" and then be able to prepare his picture without further aid. For instance, before designing the weird illustration of The Lonely Figure in Bleak House, he visited a lime-pit, in order to see what the big crushing wheels were like that he desired to introduce, and made a mental note of them without leaving the seat of his trap.*[14]

In the plate Kitton refers to we can see all the range of effects available to the illustrator; the varying grades of dark or light and the highlighting being two such examples. A small figure is in the very centre of the picture and the scene around her closes in on her and becomes very claustrophobic; the natural elements, the dark sky and the slanting snow combine with the man-made elements of the kilns and the crushing wheels to make the whole picture one of waste and depression.

> *On the waste, where the brick-kilns are burning with a pale blue flare; where the straw-roofs of the wretched huts in which the bricks are made, are being scattered by the wind; where the clay and water are hard frozen, and the mill in which the gaunt blind horse goes round all day, looks like an instrument of human torture; -- traversing this deserted blighted spot, there is a lonely figure with the sad world to itself, pelted by the snow and driven by the wind, and cast out, it would seem, from all companionship. (p. 393)*

This isolation of the human figure is one of the main features of the dark plates.

> *What would usuaully be background is now the centre of interest. Human figures, when present, are small and insignificant, while of the ten dark plates the first four and last two have no figures at all. Before the first dark plate in Part Twelve of Bleak House, Dickens had not given Browne "atmospheric" subjects without figures; the change of style was radical and sudden. This development would not be surprising if, by this stage, bRowne were choosing his own subjects, and were free to design a new kind of subject when a new technique occurred to him. Dickens letter to Browne of 29 June 1853 shows, however, that at the end of serial publication of Bleak House, author and artsit were on the best of terms and that Dickens was still supervising the illustrations closely and specifying each subject. . . . Yet the technical innovations involved in producing the dark plates, and the sudden change in subject-matter that went with this, make it seem very unlikely that Dickens himself should have conceived the new mode. The likelihood, then, is that Browne conceived it and suggested it to Dickens who responded enthusiastically, and the new illustrations were the product of experiment and consultation. One credits Dickens with enthusiasm because, after the first dark plate, more illustrations were done in this style than in the old one. On Browne's part, the development of this mode shows the depth of his response to Dickens' writing at this time, for it is ideally suited to conveying the oppressive gatherings of fog and darkness in human affairs so powerfully presented in the novel. Browne's small fugitive figures reflect not only Lady Dedlock's situation, but also the novel's general intimation of the pitiable helplessness and isolation of hounded human beings.* [15]

In plates 35 and 36, The Night and The Morning, Browne shows the helplessness of human beings against the menace of the darkness and disease so prevalent in the novel, especially in the latter plate where Lady Dedlock is shown lying dead on the steps to the burying ground; we saw her once before on those steps when Jo was pointing out to her the grave of Captain Hawdon. In plate 35 though, Esther and the detective are shown crossing the bridge, and Bucket is alerted by the sight of the "homeless woman". The night sky presses down on the figures and the details of the waterfront buildings, the church, and the jumble of the outlines of the ships, grope their way through the gloom. A bridge in the far background provides the scene with perspective and the streaky sky lies behind it. In the foreground the bridge on which the carriage crosses recedes into the distance behind the figures and is lost; the carriage is illuminated by the ghostly light of the lamp on the bridge, and the air is so dark and thick that we can see the rays of light from the map as they try and penetrate the night air. This last effect, the rays of light from the lamp, is seen in The Morning, where if anything the plate is darker than The Night. The light hangs high above the iron railings and casts down its feeble rays upon the scene. The arch looks like the entrance to a tomb and its black and forbidding. Beyond

the railings the gravestones are seen lying crazily in every direction; the movement of the illustration is inwards and downwards as the walls of the archway close in and then round at the top, the darkness presses down, and the blackness of the scene behind the railings is impenetrable. The steps and the path leading to them glisten evilly with the cold slimy water and the figure is brought into relief as the artist draws her in a lighter tone; her pose is unnatural as she lies, as if she had fallen face forward, and she clutches round behind the railings. Even the walls of the arches on either side seem covered with a damp growth which creates patterns out of the darkness. John Harvey talks of the suspense this plate would have caused in the mind of the reader of the monthly parts, coming as it did in partnership with *The Night*.

> *The two plates, then work together . . . and play on the confusion Lady Dedlock causes by using Jenny to cover her tracks. The effect is to increase the tension in the reader's mind as he hurries through the number to the final discovery. With the last words of the chapter, "it was my mother, cold and dead", all the tensions are relaxed, and the plate ceases to be an ominous, ambiguous portent, playing off hope against fear; it remains with us now as a clear sad picture of Lady Dedlock's end.*[16]

Yet, although Harvey is right in seeing Browne's illustrations working on the hopes and fears of the reader, the plate under discussion seems to remain something more than just a "clear sad picture". If we notice Dickens' description of the scene then we can come to appreciate the weight of tragic resolution that the illustration seems to hold; it is a summing up of the disease theme and visualises the pain and terror of this aspect of the whole novel. "Weirdness, horror and loneliness are the characterics of the design . . . and it has done much more to realise the painful sentiment of the story." This is Thomson, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, and however much Harvey ties up the plate with the effects of tension on the reader, it cannot be denied that this plate in particular is very powerful and in being so, sums up the power of the novel.

Finally, to end this reading of the illustrations in Bleak House, *we can concentrate on two plates which (perhaps more than any other) visualise the spiritual and physical degeneration which Dickens has made so much of in his story. One plate shows the decay of an individual, Krook, and in doing so, by comparing him with the Lord Chancellor, points to the results of the process of law. Plate 3,* The Lord Chancellor copies from memory, *displays the interior of Krook's shop and Krook drawing the initials*

of Jarndyce, one by one, on the wall in front of Esther. The illustration is solid and full of details, each one of which contributes to the effect of dirt and disorder. "One had only to fancy, as Richard whispered to Ada and me while we all stood looking in, that yonder bones in a corner, piled together and picked very clean, were the bones of clients, to make the picture complete." (p. 61). Ironically, it is Richard who makes the comparison between the bones in the corner and the "bones of clients", as, in the future, he will become one of those clients and be picked clean by Vholes, torn apart by his false hopes and fears.

Krook himself has been described in the text as "cadaverous, and withered" and Browne conveys this impression well, in the thin, pinched face, and his slight frame; the cat perched on his shoulder provides an extra macabre touch. His confrontation with Esther is at the mouth of the trapdoor where he is storing his packages, and Browne makes the hole very dark indeed, and it forms the centre of the plate; with the bones and padlocks surrounding the two figures, it could almost be the entrance to a grave. The mock Lord Chancellor will die from Spontaeneous Combustion, consumed in his own evil as it were; and in its own way this might be a hopeful prefiguration of what might happen to Chancery. As it is the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case consumes itself in itself, and

the whole thing is absorbed in costs. Krook himself gives implicit criticism of the system as he described his own lifestyle. "And I have so many old parchmentses and papers in my stock. And I have a liking for rust and must and cobwebs. And all's fish that comes to my net. And I can't abear to part with anything I once lay hold of . . . or to alter anything, or to have any sweeping, nor scouring, not cleaning, nor repairing going on about me. That's the way I got the ill name of Chancery." (p. 63).

If we look closely at the plate we see a kind of doll hanging in the doorway of the entrance to the shop and we see this same doll in two other illustrations; in plate 20, The appointed time, and in plate 28, Tom-All-Alone's. Plate 20 is concerned with the spontaneous combustion of Krook and the doll is seen hanging from the rafter, looking down on the scene, with its startled eyes. More significantly though is its presence in the latter plate, where it hangs from a hook outside a doorway in the court of Tom-All-Alone's. Presumably Browne made this doll-like figure the link between the world of Krook, and therefore the world of the real Lord Chancellor, and the world of the miserable slum. The doorway outside which the doll hangs could well be Krook's and his shop is only just behind the walls of Lincoln's Inn where the real Lord Chancellor sits in his High Court of Chancery.

This etching has been called one of Browne's masterpieces and bears a resemblance to Hogarth's "Gin Lane", Dickens himself in The Drunkard's Children comments on the engraving and there seems to be no doubt that Browne had Hogarth in mind when he composed his etching.

> *When we look at Browne's version of the slum . . . the connection with Hogarth's engraving seems undeniable. Here too, but more prominently, we have a church tower passively overlooking a scene of degradation; here too, the buildings are in danger of collapsing and are held up by wooden supports. But the differences are as significant as the similarities. Whereas in Hogarth's picture human beings are central, in Tom-All-Alone's they are absent; while Hogarth's composition gives a sense of chaos, Browne (or Dickens?) has chosen to make the composition as symmetrical as possible, so that the contrast between the visual repose afforded by the wooden supports in the centre of the picture, and what we know to be their function, is full of irony and tension. But most startlingly of all, Browne has framed the upper edge of the picture with a horizontal brace between two house in such a way that the very sky seems to be held up by this untrustworthy support, a brilliant way of underlining the connection between the condition of Tom-All-Alone' and that of the rest of society. If one may say that this etching represents a refinement upon an earlier tradition, it is equally true that Browne goes far beyond what Leech, the most refined caricaturist of his age, could achieve in subtlety and profundity. Just as Dickens in his later works goes far beyond the "gentler kind of humour" he "substituted for the coarse directness of his predecessors" in Pickwick, so Browne, inspired by Dickens, introduces a new kind of power into the art of illustration.*[17]

The quote from "Dickens, Hablot Browne and the Tradition of English Caricature" by Michael Steig, seemed worthwhile introducing at length here; not only does it show how Browne used the past traditions but how he altered them to make something original and striking which he could contribute to the partnership which existed between him and Dickens. Browne can draw on the moral and spiritual deprivation which Hogarth illustrated and combine it with his own scene of physical degradation and decay. And as the houses fall down, and we can see the slimy heaps of dirt in the illustration, and the rat scuttling away, and the church loftily towering over the whole scene, as does the cross of St. Paul's when Jo sees it "the crowning confusion of the great, confused city; so golden, so high up, so far out of reach", we became aware that Tom-All-Alone's has a life of its own; that out of the death and decay it harbours comes a living, but destructive force.

> *There is not an atom of Tom's slime, not a cubic inch of any pestilential gas in which he lives, not one obscenity or degradation about him, not an ignorance, not a wickedness, not a brutality of his committing, but shall work its retribution, through every order of society, up to the proudest of the proud, and to the highest of the high. Verily, with what tainting, plundering, and spoiling, Tom has his revenge. (p. 225)*

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Browne's "work in later years, as might naturally have been expected, shows a woeful decline of power; and when the suggestions from which he derived inspiration were no longer at his back, the poverty of invention which characterised the man when left to his own devices becomes painfully apparent".[1] Such strong views as this can be countered by the evidence of the illustrations to Little Dorrit, one of the last two novels that Browne was to illustrate for Dickens, the other being A Tale of Two Cities. Quite contrary to the expected "decline of power" the illustrations to Little Dorrit continue the emphasis which author and illustrator had worked towards in Bleak House, and several of the dark plates in particular are as effective as those of the earlier novel.

The cover design for the monthly wrapper is of a more sombre mood than the ones which Browne had previously designed for the earlier novels and Dickens "communicated at full explanatory length" with his illustrator in order that the illustration might embody his main themes. There is a predominant concern to "foreshadow" the political and social themes of the story and "across the top of the

design is what is virtually a political cartoon. Two aged figures, crippled and half blind, lead the procession, followed by a line of dotards and a dandy; Britannia in a bath-chair, asleep, is propelled by a line of men in fools' caps, followed by a crowd of toadies. . . ."[2] *What is most striking about the cover though is the centrepiece, where Little Dorrit herself emerges from the gate of the Marshalsea Prison into a shaft of sunlight; the letters of "Little" are represented as large stone blocks set around the top of the archway, and the letters of "Dorrit" are obviously of metal, linked together with a chain. The two "R s" are separate though and the right hand of the two has a lock and bolt in it, presumably implying that the whole design could be "locked together" around the gate from which Amy appears. The design, executed like this, is severe and foreboding, symbolising the cold heartlessness with which Little Dorrit is faced in her life; her shadowy form seems to step hesitantly out of the dark archway into the world outside the prison and Browne's masterful eye for the light and dark effect of the illustration creates a feeling of both pathos and hope as the rays of sunlight strike the heroine of the novel. In itself this centre part of the monthly wrapper foreshadows even the very end of the novel where Dickens plays with the ideas of light and dark, hope*

and fear, as he describes Arthur and Amy leaving the church after their wedding: "They went quietly down into the roaring streets, inseparable and blessed; and as they passed along in sunshine and in shade, the noisy and the eager, and the arrogant and the froward and the vain, fretted and chafed, and made their usual uproar".[3]

Two of the dark plates demonstrate the links between the world of this novel and that of Bleak House. In plate 8, Little Dorrit's Party, there are reminders of the scene in Tom All Alone's, with the dark houses leaning on the buttresses, the pawn-shop sign in the background, and the sombre and unpromising church standing aloof as the small human figures of Amy and Maggy crowd themselves fearfully into the very left-hand bottom corner. This also emphasises the idea of the "world dehumanised", and in the

> eight dark plates, though none is devoid of human figures, several extend the peculiar emphasis of the Bleak House etchings. In The Birds in a Cage, plate 1, Rigaud and Cavaletto are subordinated to the overall impression of an airless, lightless prison cell, surely a visual foreshadowing of the centrality of prisons in the novel . . . and it is clear that this effect depends largely on the dark-plate technique.[4]

In plate 6, Making Off, Cavaletto is shown as a small figure in the near foreground, but the illustration is dominated by the gloom and menace of the huge gaunt trees, and the light and dark of the night sky behind them. The trees, with their gnarled branches, seem almost on the point of closing

round and trapping the small figure which runs into the long avenue, and they are reminiscent of the lifeless trees in the Chesney Wold frontispiece to Bleak House.

The other plate in which reminders of Tom All Alone's are to be seen is plate 37, Damocles, where Rigaud sits smiling complacently in the window of Mrs. Clennam's old house, unaware of the fate which is in store for him. Two details that link the plate with the former in Bleak House are the buttresses which support the crumbling stone-work, and the animal, this time a cat, which runs away in the left-hand corner. The house seems already on the point of collapse, and pieces of masonry can be seen falling from the guttering above the buttresses; this is a link also with the monthly wrapper, where, on the left-hand side of the design, can be seen "a crumbling castle, on whose tottering top is seated a sleeping man in an arm-chair with a handkerchief over his eyes and a newspaper on his knees. Against the castle lies a falling tree; the 'supporters' of the coat of arms are rats. This is 'the world' in its material aspect".[5]

The detail of the "falling tree" against the castle is very similar to the buttresses in plate 39, and the illustrator ties together the theme of the decay of society, and the necessity to shore things up against its ruin, from the very beginning to the end of the novel. In Damocles

however, the shoring up of the decaying house is unsuccessful and Rigaud becomes the fitting victim of the decay of society, having contributed fully to that decay himself.

> *In one swift instant the old house was before them, with the man lying smoking in the window; another thundering sound, and it heaved, surged outward, opened asunder in fifty places, collapsed, and fell. . . . As they looked up, wildly crying for help, the great pile of chimneys which was then alone left standing, like a tower in a whirlwind, rocked, broke, and hailed itself down upon the heap of ruin, as if every tumbling fragment were intent on burying the crushed wretch deeper. (p. 448)*

Browne's conception of the plates in Little Dorrit and his control of the details which he introduced into his illustrations testify to the continuing strength of his contribution to Dickens' work. Unfortunately in this late period, beginning with Little Dorrit, there seem to have been problems which led to a decline in the previously strong relationship between author and artist and this may have led critics to believe that there was a corresponding decline in the quality of Browne's work.

On the one hand there came "a severance of that fortuitous collaboration between author and artist which had been maintained during a period of twenty-three years. As there is no evidence of any actual rupture between them it is fair to assume that a legitimate desire on the part of Dickens for a new illustrator constituted the actual reason

for the severance".[6] However, other critics suggest that the partnership had become "querulous and unproductive" over a number of years prior to the execution of the illustrations to Little Dorrit and this is also where it is implied that the plates to that novel are weaker than those in Bleak House. "After Bleak House there is no creative advance to be recorded although Browne went on to illustrate Little Dorrit . . . and from that time there followed a period of difficult personal relations between Dickens and Browne, the final result of which was that Browne ceased to be Dickens' regular illustrator."[7] As we have seen though, although the illustrations as a set do not have the effort behind them which Browne obviously worked very hard for in the previous novels, individual plates are just as striking in their design and execution. What is important here in this examination of the three novels discussed at length in the previous chapters, is that Browne can be shown to be continuing in his contribution to Dickens work. In some cases this involved an interpretation of the author's instructions; and it was in this way that Browne could give his own originality and draw from the traditions of visual art behind him.

Throughout the study of Browne's illustrations one has to demand continually that the artist be taken on his own merits rather than be compared to other illustrators

whose work had a different emphasis and direction. This is the case when Browne and Cruikshank are mentioned together and tradition has it that Browne comes off worst. In recent years though, an upsurge in interest in Dickens' principal illustrator has meant that a more balanced judgement is beginning to be reached. In 1969, for example, Nicolas Bentley wrote that "none of Dickens' illustrators, not even Cruikshank, were as successful as Phiz in interpreting the sinister, as distinct from the barbarous, side of Dickens' imagination"[8], and this is particularly evident in the dark plates in Dombey and Son and Bleak House. Even in the three novels discussed here there are major advances in Browne's art and it was during this period that the relationship between the great novelist and his illustrator proved most fruitful.

The success of the Dickens-Browne novel lies of course with both the author and artist, the former providing stimulation and encouragement in his directions for the illustrations to his novel and the latter contributing his original and perceptive ideas for inclusion into the finished book, the complete work of art.

> *Dickens may have been exacting in the demands he made upon his artists, and upon Phiz especially, and his acute and unremitting efforts must sometime have been exasperating, particularly when time was short. But that there developed between himself and Phiz an almost perfect understanding is shown by the continuing popularity of Phiz's illustrations as against those of the innumerable artists who have since tried their hands at Illustrating Dickens.9*

In Browne's illustrations to the middle novels of Dickens the "perfect understanding" came about; Dickens' verbal language in the novel could be matched by Browne's visual language in the illustrations and together they created the fortuitous collaboration that has hardly been equalled since.

APPENDIX

A short account of Browne's life and training seems appropriate here as it proves interesting when considering the work he did for Dickens. Born in July 1815, he was the ninth son of a London merchant. In his youth a fairly well-to-do brother-in-law sponsored him in his art training by paying him to be apprenticed at Finden's, who was one of the leading engravers of his day. Success came when he was only eighteen when he won a silver medal for his skill in engraving a scene depicting John Gilpin's famous ride.

He was able to cancel his articles two years early, being on good terms with Finden, and transfer his accomplishments to working for Dickens. He had just reached the age of twenty-one when he was beginning the drawings for <u>*The Pickwick Papers*</u>*. His relationship with Dickens is of great importance in considering the illustrations for the novels, as their success depended on the understanding which author and artist conceived between themselves. The amount of communication between them, and its effect on the illustrations, are mentioned often in the body of the thesis.*

Browne died some twelve years after Dickens, on 8 July 1882, and suffered badly in his last years from a paralysis of his right arm and leg, the result of a serious

illness in 1867. During his life he had illustrated novels for many authors; he worked on no less than seventeen novels for Charles Lever. Other novelists who sought the services of Browne were Ainsworth, Robert Surtees and Frances Trollope and when one realises the amount of work Browne did for these people, and for other minor novelists, one cannot help but admire the energy of the man. It is sad that the paralysis inhibited his ability to etch; yet, his early successes, and the fine accomplishments of his mature years as Dickens' principal illustrator, speak for themselves.

NOTES

NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

[1] E. S. Lumsden, The Art of Etching (London, 1924), p. 23.

[2] John Harvey, Victorian Novels and their Illustrators (London, 1970), p. 190.

[3] Harvey, op. cit., p. 183.

[4] Lumsden, op. cit., p. 21.

[5] Michael Steig, "Martin Chuzzlewit's Progress by Phiz and Dickens", Dickens Studies Annual, II (1972), 119.

[6] Harvey, op. cit., p. 180.

[7] F. R. and Q. D. Leavis, Dickens: The Novelist (London, 1970), p. 333.

[8] Michael Steig, "Dickens, Hablot Browne and the Tradition of English Caricature", Criticism, XI (1969), 227.

[9] Philip James, English Book Illustration, 1800-1900 (London, 1947), p. 29.

[10] Nicolas Bentley, "Dickens and his Illustrators", Charles Dickens, 1812-1870, ed. E. W. F. Tomlin, p. 216.

[11] Harvey, op. cit., p. 175.

[12] Leavis, op. cit., p. 335.

[13] Harvey, op. cit., p. 10.

[14] Michael Steig, "The Critic and the Illustrated Novel", Huntingdon Library Quarterly, XXXVI (1972), 57.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

[1] M. Steig, "Dickens, Hablot Browne and the Tradition of English Caricature", Criticism, XI (1969), 232.

[2] J. Harvey, Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators (London, 1970), p. 130.

[3] F. G. Kitton, Dickens and his Illustrators (London, 1899), p. 87.

[4] G. C. Hemstedt, "Some Victorian Novels and their Illustrators", (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Princeton, 1971), p. 63.

[5] N. Bentley, "Dickens and his Illustrators", Charles Dickens, 1812-1870, ed. E. W. F. Tomlin, pp. 205-207.

[6] Arthur Waugh, "Charles Dickens and his Illustrators", Nonesuch Dickensiana (Bloomsbury, 1937), pp. 33-34.

[7] G. Everitt, English Caricaturists (London, 1893), p. 347.

[8] Hemstedt, op. cit., p. 37.

[9] M. Steig, "Martin Chuzzlewit's Progress by Phiz and Dickens", Dickens Studies Annual, II (1972), 148.

[10] J. Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens (Everyman's edition), II, 29.

[11] Charles Dickens, Letter to Browne, 7 February 1843. Nonesuch edition, i, pp. 506-507.

[12] Michael Steig, "Martin Chuzzlewit's Progress. . .", 135.

[13] Hemstedt, op. cit., p. 23.

[14]Harvey, op. cit., p. 134.

[15]Leech's "The Rising Generation" (Examiner, December 30, 1848), Miscellaneous Papers, I (Gadshill edition), XXXV, p. 148.

[16]Harvey, op. cit., p. 133.

[17]Steig, ". . . the Tradition of English Caricature", 224.

[18]Steig, "Martin Chuzzlewit's Progress . . .", 127.

[19]Steig, ". . . Tradition of English Caricature", 226.

[20]Kitton, op. cit., p. 87.

[21]Steig, "Martin Chuzzlewit's Progress . . .", 143.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

[1]Charles Dickens, Martin Chuzzlewit (Oxford, 1951), p. 71.

[2]Butt and Tillotson, Dickens at Work (London, 1957), p. 94.

[3]M. Steig, "Martin Chuzzlewit's Progress by Dickens and Phiz", Dickens' Studies Annual, II, 143.

[4]Dombey and Son (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 381. (Clarendon Edition.) All further references will be to this edition.

[5]Butt and Tillotson, op. cit., p. 95.

[6]Alan Horsman, ed., Dombey and Son (Oxford, 1974), p. 871.

[7]J. Harvey, Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators (London, 1970), p. 136.

[8]G. Everitt, English Caricaturists (London, 1893), p. 337.

[9]Steig, "Dickens, Hablot Browne and the Tradition of English Caricature", Criticism, XI (1969), 224-25.

[10]Horsman, op. cit., p. 865.

[11]Harvey, op. cit., p. 139.

[12]Letter to Browne, 10 March 1847. Nonesuch, ii, 17-18.

[13]Steig, ". . . Tradition of English Caricature", 222.

[14]Steig, "Dombey and Son: Chapter XXXI, Plate 20", English Language Notes, VII (1969), 124-27.

[15]R. D. McMaster, "Man into Beast in Dickensian Caricature", University of Toronto Quarterly, XXXI, no. 3 (April 1962), 354-61.

[16]Harvey, op. cit., p. 141.

[17]Steig, "The Iconography of Sexual Conflict in Dombey and Son", Dickens Studies Annual, I, 166.

[18]Nicolas Bentley, "Dickens and his Illustrators", Charles Dickens, 1812-1870, ed. E. W. F. Tomlin, p. 212.

[19]F. G. Kitton, Dickens and his Illustrators (London, 1899), p. 90.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

[1]Geoffrey Hemstedt, "Some Victorian Novels and their Illustrators" (Princeton, 1971), p. 21.

[2]D. C. Thomson, The Life and Labours of H. K. Browne, Phiz (London, 1884), p. 135.

[3]F. G. Kitton, Dickens and his Illustrators (London, 1899), p. 109.

[4]Bleak House (London: Chapman and Hall, 1897), p. 87. (Gadshill Edition.) All further references will be to this edition.

[5]Butt and Tillotson, Dickens at Work (London, 1957), p. 194.

[6]Michael Steig, "The Critic and the Illustrated Novel", Huntingdon Library Quarterly, XXXVI (1972), 59.

[7]Michael Steig, "The Iconography of the Hidden Face in Bleak House", Dickens Studies, IV.I (March 1968), 19.

[8]Michael Steig, "The Iconography of the Hidden Face . . .", 22.

[9]My text here is that of the New Oxford Illustrated Dickens.

[10]R. D. McMaster, "Man into Beast in Dickensian Caricature", University of Toronto Quarterly, XXXI, no. 3 (April 1962), 360.

[11]John Harvey, Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators (London, 1970), p. 155.

[12]Edgar Browne, Phiz and Dickens (London, 1913), pp. 289-291.

[13]Harvey, op. cit., p. 151.

[14]Kitton, op. cit., p.

[15] Harvey, op. cit., pp. 152-53.

[16] Harvey, op. cit., p. 155.

[17] Michael Steig, "Dickens, Hablot Browne and the Tradition of English Caricature", Criticism, XI (1969), 231.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

[1] G. Everitt, English Caricaturists (London, 1893), p. 350.

[2] J. Butt and K. Tillotson, Dickens at Work (London, 1957), p. 225.

[3] Little Dorrit (London: Chapman and Hall, 1861), p. 489. (Library Edition.) All further references will be to this edition.

[4] M. Steig, "Dickens, Hablot Browne and the Tradition of English Caricature", Criticism, XI (1969), 231.

[5] Butt and Tillotson, op. cit., p. 225.

[6] F. G. Kitton, Dickens and his Illustrators (London, 1899), p. 112.

[7] J. Harvey, Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators (London, 1970), p. 160.

[8] N. Bentley, "Dickens and his Illustrators", Charles Dickens, 1812-1870, ed. E. W. F. Tomlin, p. 216.

[9] N. Bentley, op. cit., p. 226.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Dickens, Charles. Bleak House. London: Chapman and Hall, 1897. (Gadshill Edition)

---------. Dombey and Son. London: Oxford University Press, 1974. (Clarendon Edition)

---------. Little Dorrit. London: Chapman and Hall, 1861. (Library edition)

---------. Martin Chuzzlewit. London: Chapman and Hall, 1897. (Gadshill Edition)

Secondary Sources

Allchin, A. "An Illustrator of Dickens: Hablot Knight Browne (Phiz)", The Century Illustrated Magazine (January, 1893), 386-394.

Bentley, N. "Dickens and his Illustrators", Charles Dickens 1812-1870, ed. E. W. F. Tomlin. London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1969.

Borowitz, D. and J. Hillis Miller. Charles Dickens and George Cruikshank. W. A. Clark Memorial Library: University of California Press, 1971.

Browne, E. Phiz and Dickens. London: Nelson, 1913.

Buckley, J. H. The Victorian Temper. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961.

Butt, J. and K. Tillotson. Dickens at Work. London: Methuen, 1957.

Cohen, R. The Art of Discrimination. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964.

Dickens, C. "Book Illustrations", All the Year Round (August 10th, 1867), 151-155.

Everitt, G. English Caricaturists. London: Sonnenscheim & Co., 1893.

Gombrich, E. H. Art and Illusion. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960.

--------. Meditations on a Hobby Horse. London: Phaidon Press, 1963.

Hagstrum, J. H. The Sister Arts. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Harvey, J. Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators. London: Sidgwick and Johnson, 1970.

Hemstedt, G. C. "Some Victorian Novels and their Illustrators" Unpublished doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1971.

Houghton, W. E. The Victorian Frame of Mind. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

James, P. English Book Illustration 1800-1900. London: Penguin, 1947.

Jchannsen, A. Phiz: Illustrations for the Novels of Charles Dickens. Chicago: 1956.

Kayser, W. The Grotesque in Art and Literature. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963.

Kitton, F. G. Dickens and his Illustrators. London: Redway, 1899.

Leavis, F. R. and G. D. Dickens and the Novelist. London: Chatto & Windus, 1970.

McLean, R. Victorian Book Design. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972.

McMaster, R. D. "Man into Beast in Dickensian Caricature", University of Toronto Quarterly, XXXL.3 (April 1962), 354-361.

Panofsky, E. Meaning in the Visual Arts. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1957.

Patten, R. L., ed. "George Cruikshank: A Revaluation", Princeton University Library Chronicle, XXXV (Autumn, Winter, 1973-74), Nos. 1 and 2.

Pointon, M. R. Milton and English Art. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.

Steig, M. "The Iconography of the Hidden Face in Bleak House", Dickens Studies, IV, I (March 1968), 19-22.

---------. "Dickens, Hablot Browne and the Tradition of English Caricature", Criticism, XI (1969), 219-233.

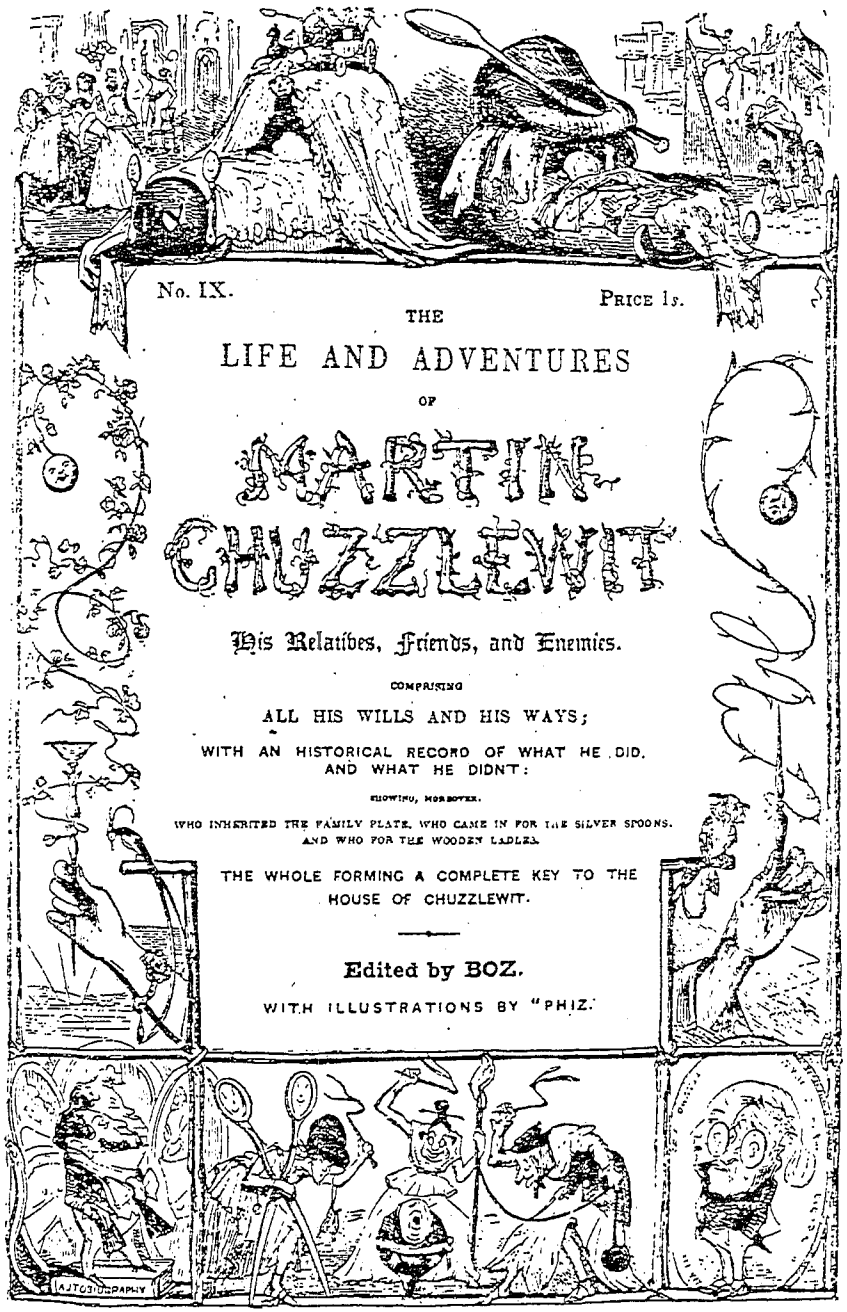
---------. "Dombey and Son: Chapter XXXI, Plate 20", English Language Notes, VII (1969), 124-127.

---------. "The Iconography of Sexual Conflict in Dombey and Son", Dickens Studies Annual, I (1971), 161-167.

---------. "Martin Chuzzlewit's Progress by Dickens and Phiz", Dickens Studies Annual, II (1972), 119-149.

---------. "The Critic and the Illustrated Novel", Huntingdon Library Quarterly, XXXVI (1972), 55-67.

Tayler, I. Blake's Illustrations to the Poems of Gray. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971.



LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL, 186, STRAND.

September 1843

Martin Chuzzlewit, *engraved wrapper for monthly parts.*

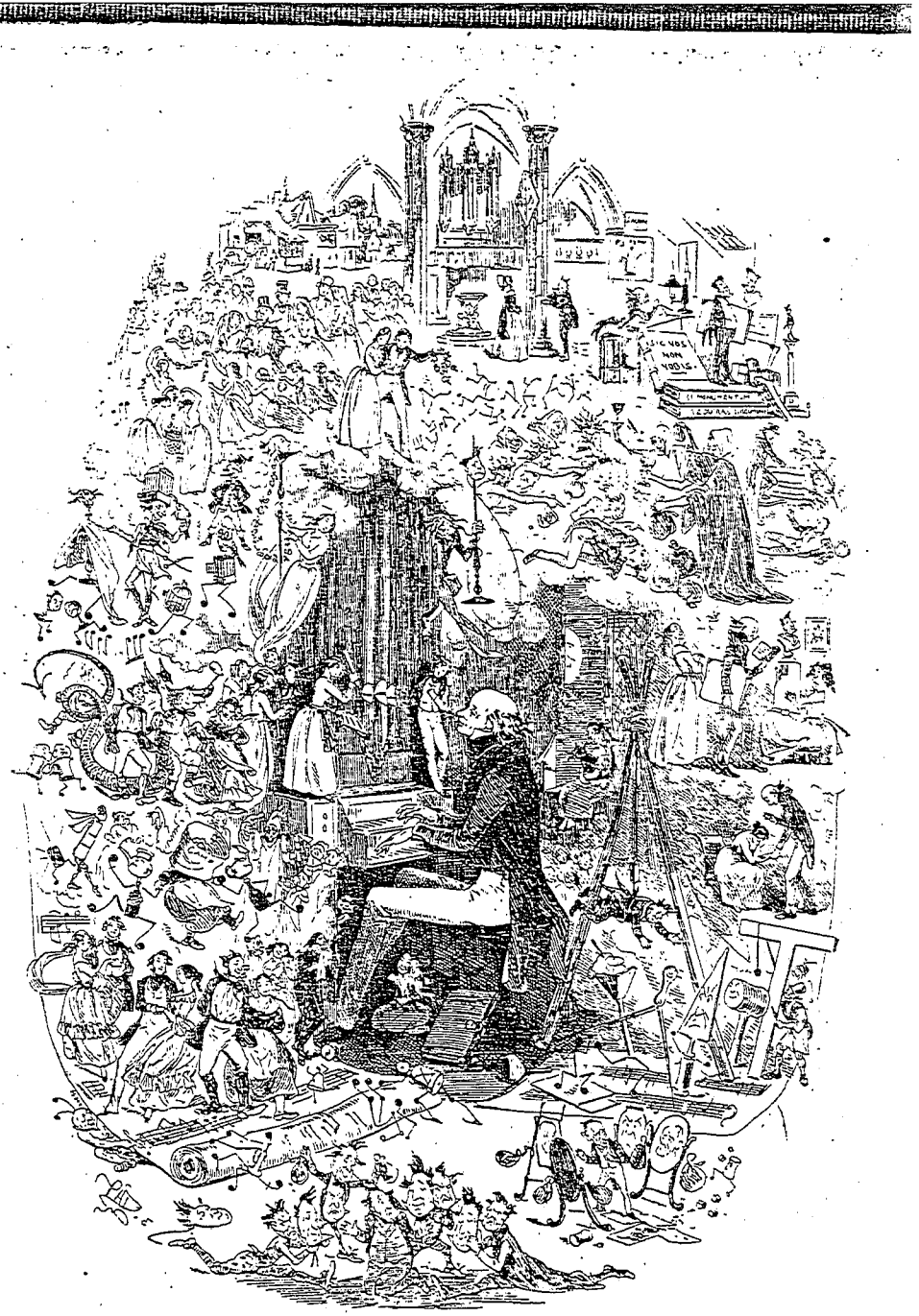


Plate 39.

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

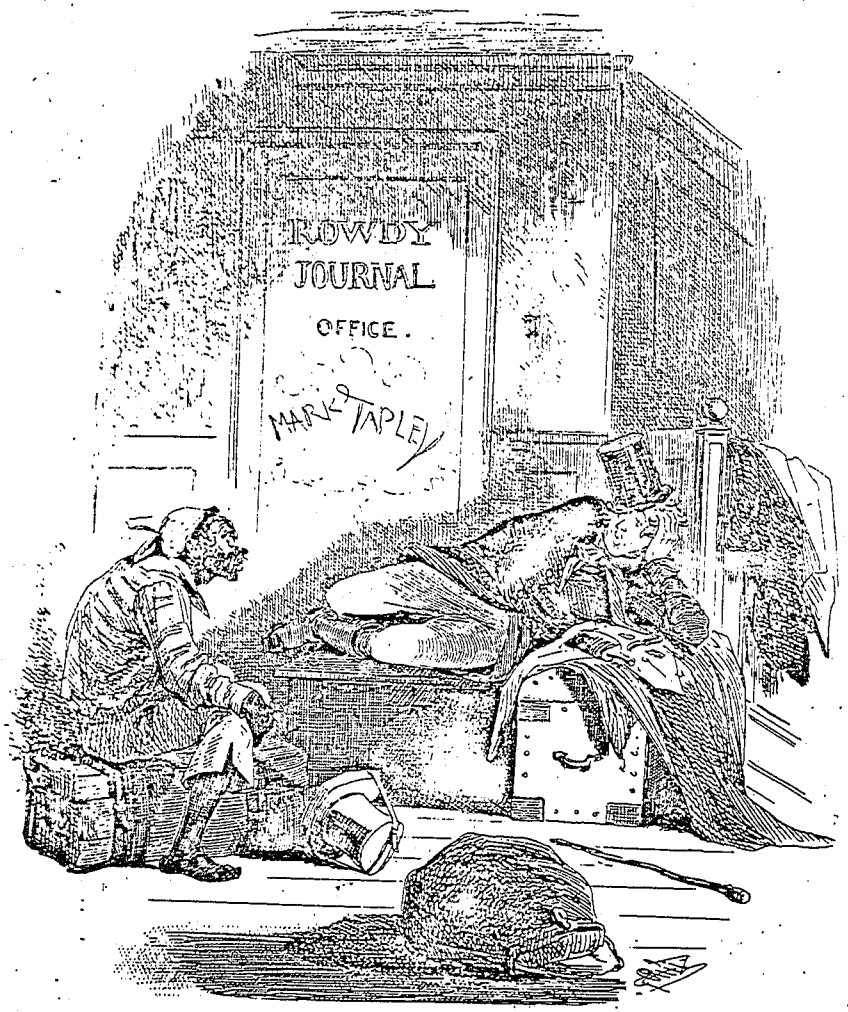
LONDON.
CHAPMAN AND HALL.

Plate 40

Meekness of Mr. Pecksniff, and his charming daughters.

Mr Jefferson Peruke proposes an appropriate sentiment.

PLATE 13.



Mr Tapley succeeds in finding a jolly subject for contemplation

PLATE 14.

The thriving City of Eden, as it appeared on paper.

PLATE 17.

The thriving City of Eden, as it appeared in fact.

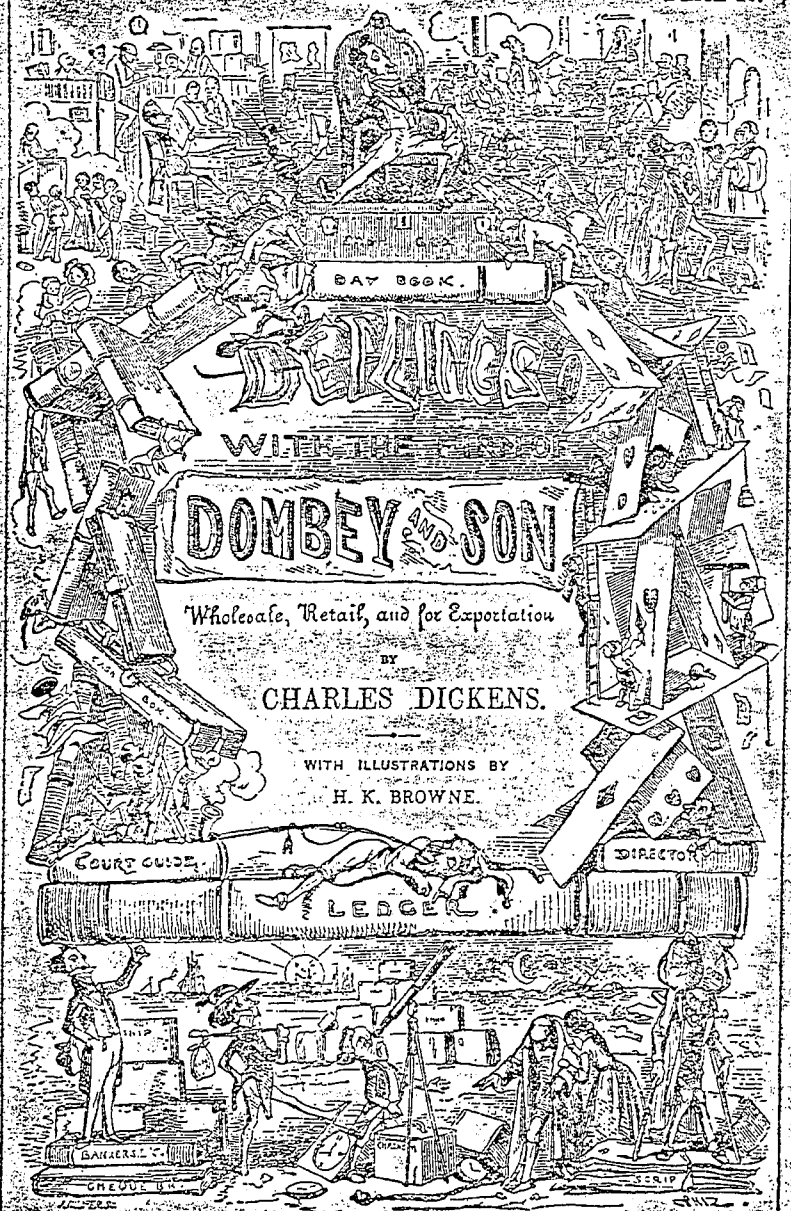
PLATE 18.

Pleasant little family party at Mr. Pecksniff's.

Plate 3.

Warm reception of Mr. Pecksniff
by his venerable friend.
Plate. 37.

No. VI. MARCH. Price 1s.



DOMBEY AND SON

Wholesale, Retail, and for Exportation

BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

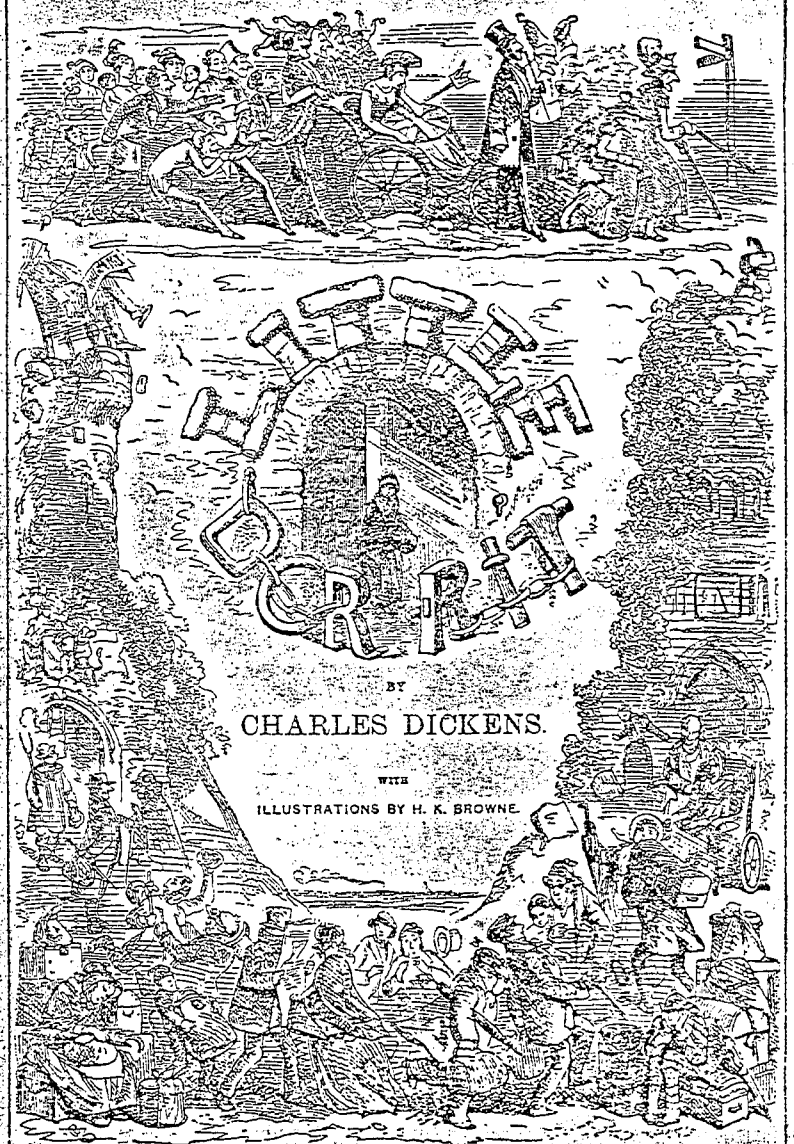
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

H. K. BROWNE.

LONDON: BRADBURY & EVANS, WHITEFRIARS.

AGENTS:—J. MENZIES, EDINBURGH; J. MACLEOD, GLASGOW; J. M'GLASHAN, DUBLIN.

No. IX. AUGUST. Price 1s.



DOMBEY AND SON

BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. K. BROWNE.

LONDON. BRADBURY & EVANS, BOUVERIE STREET.

AGENTS: J. MENZIES, EDINBURGH; MURRAY AND SON, GLASGOW; J. M'GLASHAN, DUBLIN.

Miss Fox introduces the Party

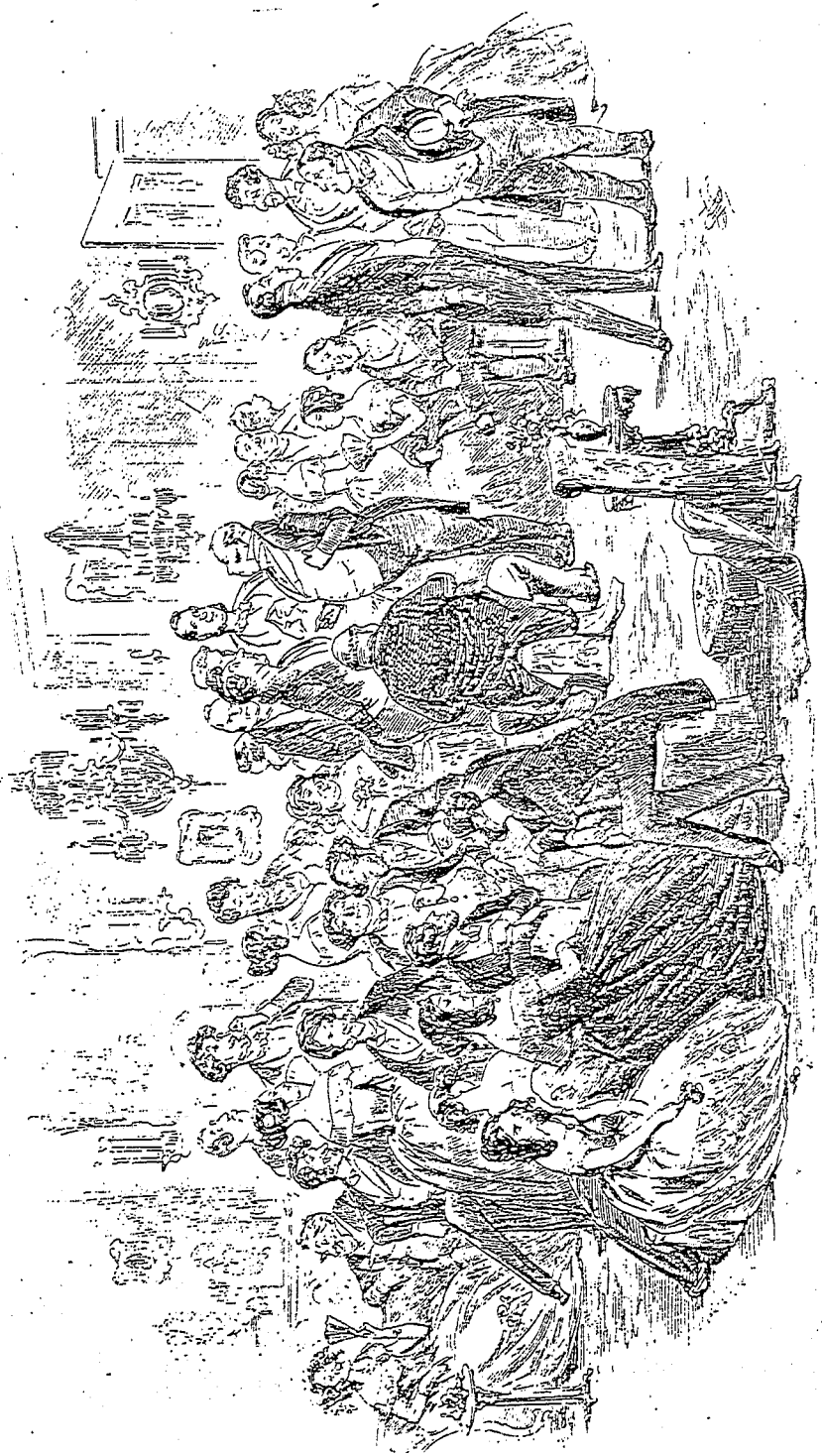
Plate 1.

The Dombey Family

plate 2.

The Christening Party

Polly rescues the Charitable Grinder.



Mrs Dombey at Home.

Miss Tox pays a visit to the Toodle Family.

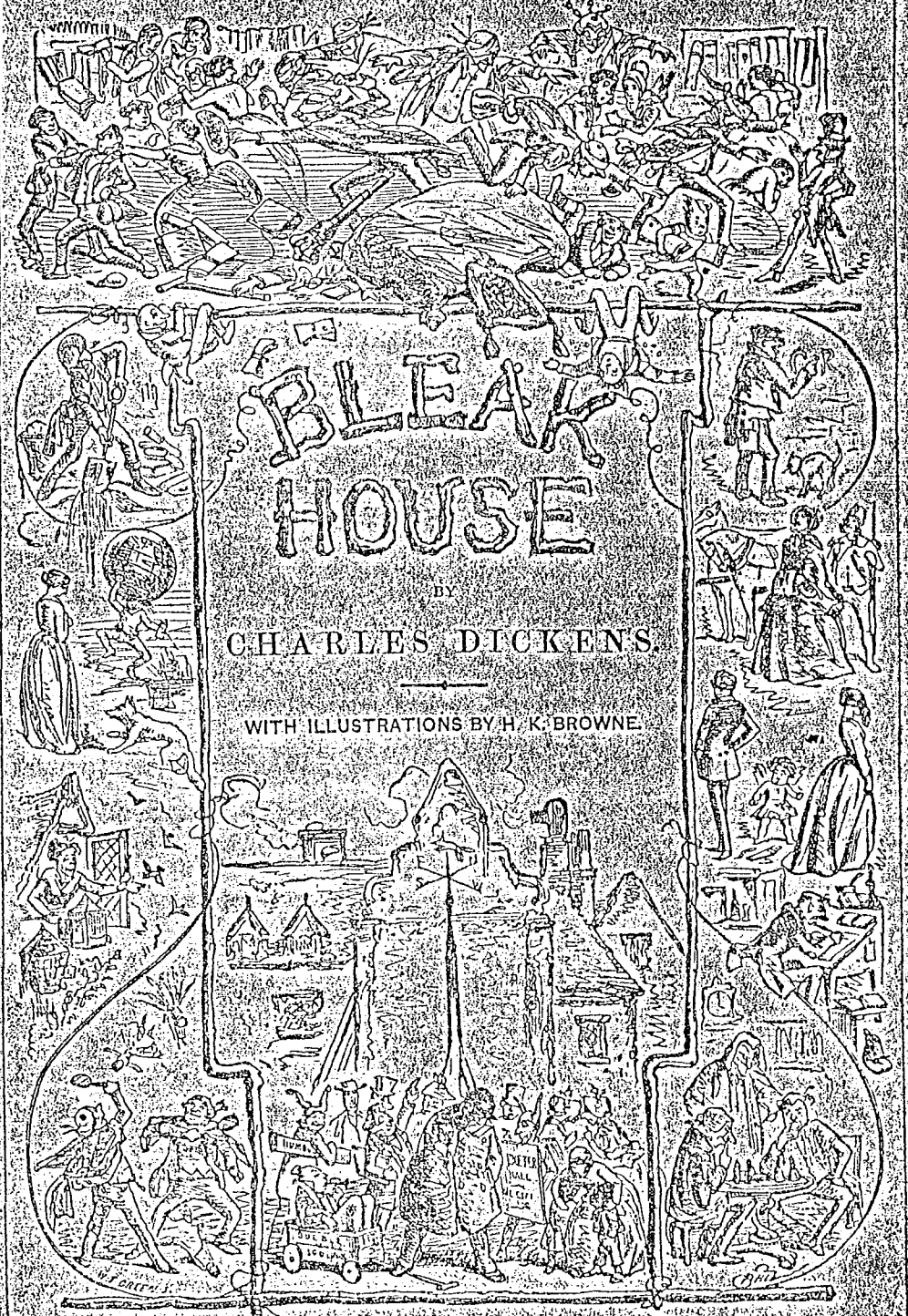
Another Wedding Plate 38.

Coming home from Church. plate 20

On the dark Road.

Plate 35

No. VII. SEPTEMBER. Price 1s.



BLEAK HOUSE

BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. K. BROWNE.

LONDON: BRADBURY & EVANS, BOUVERIE STREET.

AGENTS: J. MENZIES, EDINBURGH; MURRAY AND SON, GLASGOW; J. M'GLASHAN, DUBLIN.

The Front Wrapper to the original edition of "Bleak House," as published in 19/20 monthly parts, 1852-1853.

Consecrated ground.

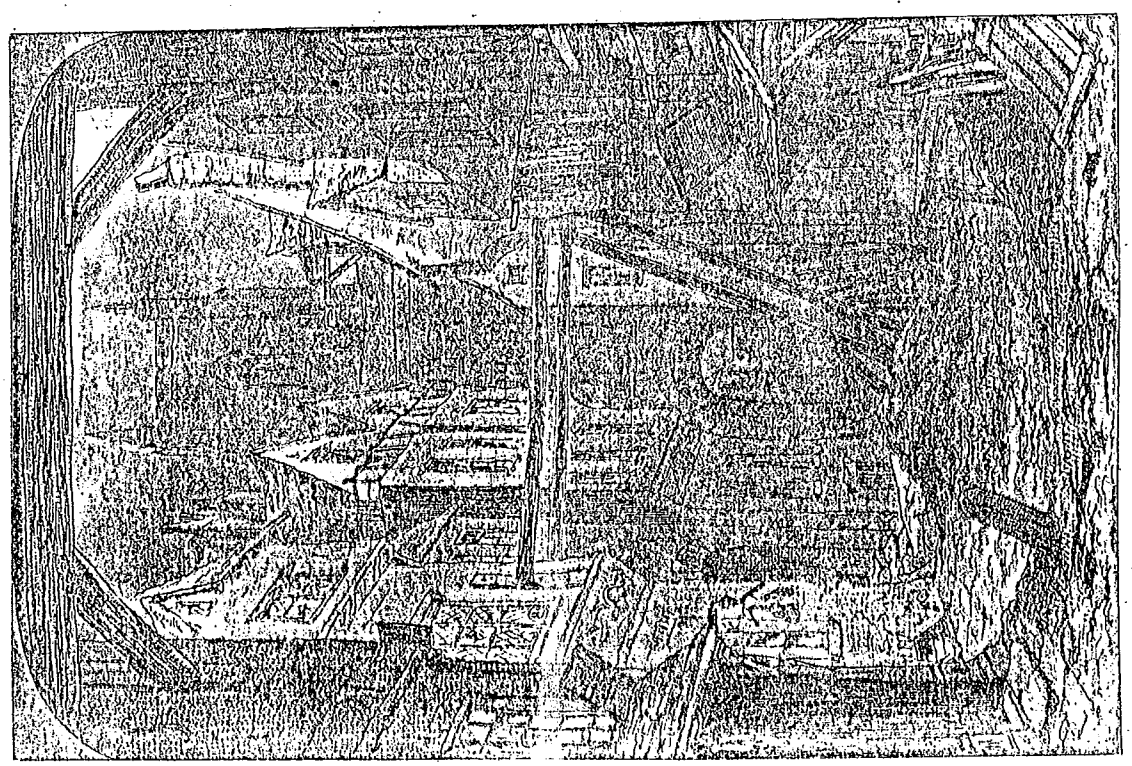
BLEAK HOUSE

BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

LONDON:
BRADBURY & EVANS, BOUVERIE STREET.
1853.

Attorney and Client, fortitude and impatience.
plate 25.



Tom - All - Alone's
plate 28.