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Dickens' relationship to Tobias Smollett

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DICKENS' RELATIONSHIP TO TOBIAS SMOLLETT

BY

EVELYN ARMSTRONG BEAMAN

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

MASSACHUSETTS STATE COLLEGE, AMHERST

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INTRODUCTION

On the surface the suggestion of a comparison between the works of Charles Dickens, on the one hand, and those of Tobias Smollett; on the other, may seem startling. Even though one cannot deny that the coarseness and indelicacy too frequently found in Smollett's novels seriously handicap his popularity, however, it is particularly significant that of all the early novelists he influenced Dickens to the greatest extent. Undoubtedly Arthur Machen, when he wrote of his own admiration for Smollett, understood those qualities in Smollett's writings which appealed at an earlier date to Dickens:

"It is curious that Fielding, who is always coupled with Smollett, never attracted me. I have read Tom Jones and Amelia once only, and I shall never read them again! But if you hold that Dickens was a mighty genius, and that Thackeray was an extremely clever fellow, then you will love Smollett and leave Fielding."¹

It is not my task here to explain my own kindred delight in much of the best that Smollett has written, although I hope that my discussion may indirectly reveal something of the pleasanter side of the works of a novelist who is not popularly known. I shall be mainly concerned with what evidence reveals of

1. Introduction of Humphry Clinker, Modern Library, 1929; p.

the influence which the generally beloved novelist, Charles Dickens, received directly from Smollett.

It is at once obvious to the thoughtful student that one cannot always ascribe as direct influence any single similarity in the works of two authors. On the other hand, an abundance of such similarities suggests more than mere coincidence. In the works of Charles Dickens there are so many striking instances of similarity and even parallelism that a considerable amount of influence could not be denied even had Dickens not openly admitted his intense fondness for Smollett.

To note all the similarities between all of the works of Smollett and all of the volumes of Dickens would be a tedious task. Accordingly, since Dickens made specific reference to only the three novels, Peregrine Pickle, Roderick Random, and Humphry Clinker, I shall limit my study, for the most part, to these three which I know Dickens knew most thoroughly and enjoyed. I shall make only occasional references to what seem to be rather obvious parallelisms in connection with the less significant novels, Ferdinand Count Fathom and Sir Launcelot Greaves, especially since I definitely find that both the external and the internal evidence of the influence of the one author upon the other centers largely around

Peregrine Pickle, Roderick Random, and Humphry Clinker.

Dickens' contemporaries were not unaware of the Smollett influence. When the ninth number of the Pickwick Papers appeared, "a writer in the Athenaeum decried the work as being made up of 'two pounds of Smollett, three ounces of Sterne, a handful of Hock, a dash of a grammatical Pierce Egan,-- incidents at pleasure served with original sauce piquante.'"¹ The "original sauce", I agree, is present even in Dickens' earliest works; it is my aim, however, to determine whether what may have been "two pounds" of Smollett in Pickwick Papers became less in the later novels as Dickens acquired his own individual habits and was less dependent upon a predecessor, and, if so, why. The flavor of Smollett never entirely disappeared.

1. Kitton, F. G., The Novels of Charles Dickens;
p. 21.

CHAPTER I

Dickens' Inheritance Acknowledged

It is unfortunate that the delightful qualities of Smollett have many times been blotted out by the indelicacy of his lines. Few people become acquainted with the robust humor and wide canvas of interesting characterizations with which his pages abound. Harsh as his satire may be, coarse as are many of his scenes, the most genial and lovable of the English novelists delighted in his writings and borrowed from them. This fact alone gives great significance to Smollett.

Dickens' delight in Smollett was of many years' duration. He first eagerly read Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, and Humphry Clinker when a young boy. In David Copperfield, which, it is accepted, is strongly autobiographical, the author is describing his own boyhood experiences when he writes:

"My father had left a small collection of books in a little room upstairs, to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) and which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphry Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and Robinson Crusoe came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that time and place . . . and did me no harm; for whatever

harm was in them, was not there for me; I knew nothing of it."¹

Even if one were inclined to feel that it is taking too great a liberty to assume the application of this passage to the life of the author merely because David Copperfield is in general accepted as autobiographical, John Forster², the most authoritative biographer of Dickens, assures one that this particular passage is "one of the many passages in Copperfield which are literally true."³

At other times, too, David Copperfield's youth reflects Dickens' early delight in the characters with which all readers of Smollett are familiar. It was not a casual acquaintance that the lad had with Roderick. David recalls,

"I have sustained my own idea of Roderick Random for a month at a stretch, I verily believe."⁴

In his loneliness, when he is first sent away from home, he reasons,

"It was of no use crying any more, especially as neither Roderick Random, nor the captain in the Royal British Navy had ever cried, that I could remember, in trying situations."⁵

At school David frequently entertains his companions by narrating portions of the stories written

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1. David Copperfield; p. 73.
 2. It is noteworthy that after the appearance of The Life of Goldsmith Dickens wrote in a personal letter to the biographer, "I desire no better for my fame . . . than such a biographer and such a critic." Letters and Speeches, Vol. I; pp. 221-222.
 3. Forster, John, Life of Charles Dickens; p. 8.
 4. David Copperfield; p. 73.
 5. Ibid; p. 83.

by his "favorite authors"¹ as the consequence of his having, on one occasion, "hazarded the observation that something or somebody -- I forget what now -- was like something or somebody in Peregrine Pickle."² He seems "to have been months over Peregrine."³

Upon first seeing the turnkey at the King's Bench Prison when he goes to see Micawber, David thinks "how, when Roderick Random was in a debtor's prison, there was a man there with nothing on him but an old rug."⁴ As a result of this recollection, he says, "The turnkey swam before my dimmed eyes and my beating heart."⁵

David speaks of having parted from his friends "at the wicker gate, where visionary Straps had rested with Roderick Random's knapsack in the days of yore."⁶

One cannot fail to sense, it seems to me, the genuineness of this delight which Dickens felt for the earlier novelist, when one recalls that at the age of thirty-eight the author described again and again the impressions which he received when he was a lad. They seem to have lost little of their vividness. When completing David Copperfield, the author wrote to Forster, "I am within three pages of the shore; and am strangely divided, as usual in

1. David Copperfield; p. 122.

2. Ibid; p. 122.

3. Ibid; p. 124.

4. Ibid; pp. 219-220.

5. Ibid; pp. 219-220.

6. Ibid; Vol. II, pp. 14-15.

such cases, between sorrow and joy. Oh, my dear Forster, if I were to say half of what Copperfield makes me feel to-night, how strangely, even to you, I should be turned inside out! I seem to be sending some part of myself into the Shadowy World."¹ And most delightfully, I feel, does he send that part of himself out into the world when he recollects the eagerness with which he was "reading as if for life"² while the other boys were at play.

"Every barn in the neighborhood, every stone in the church, and every foot of the churchyard, had some association of its own, in my mind, connected with these books, and stood for some locality made famous in them. I have seen Tom Pipes go climbing up the church-steeple; I have watched Strap, with the knapsack on his back, stopping to rest himself upon the wicket-gate; and I know that Commodore Trunnion held that chat with Mr. Pickle, in the parlour of our little village ale-house."³

It is not only in the autobiographical David Copperfield, however, that the reader finds specific references to Smollett. Indicating the books which he found in the Innkeeper's drawing room at Cumberland Fells, the author of The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices recalls, "Fielding was there, and Smollett was there."⁴ In this same story, the author remarks that "Thomas, now just able to grope his way along, in a doubled-up condition, with the aid of two thick

1. Forster, John, Life of Charles Dickens; Vol. II, p. 123.

2. David Copperfield; Vol. I, p. 74.

3. Ibid; Vol. I, p. 74.

4. Christmas Stories; Vol. II, p. 407.

sticks, was no bad embodiment of Commodore Trunnion."¹ As another student of Smollett and Dickens has noted, "An odd volume of Peregrine was one of the books with which the waiter at the Holly Tree Inn endeavored to beguile the lonely Christmas of the snowed-up traveller."² Of Peregrine Pickle and the Sentimental Journey, the traveller remarks, "I knew every word of the two last already, but I read them through again."³

One of Dickens' accounts of foreign scenes gave opportunity for an expression of something of his sentiment toward the earlier writer. In one of the selections from Pictures from Italy, he remarks of Leghorn that it was "made illustrious by Smollett's grave."⁴

In the Preface to Nicholas Nickleby, Dickens again recalls his early acquaintance with Smollett when he writes, "I cannot call to mind now how I came to hear about Yorkshire schools, when I was a not very robust child, sitting in bye places, near Rochester Castle, with a head full of Partridge, Strap, Tom Pipes, and Sancho Panza; but I know that my first impressions of them were picked up at that time."⁵

The Uncommercial Traveller, "a collection of

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1. (Lazy Tom), Christmas Stories; Vol. II, p. 459.
 2. Ward, Adolphus W., Charles Dickens; p. 197.
 3. Christmas Stories; Vol. I, p. 129.
 4. Pictures from Italy, To Rome; p. 466.
 5. Nicholas Nickleby; p. xviii.

Dickens' memories rather than of his literary purposes,"¹ published in 1861, only nine years before his death, again bears witness to Dickens' delight in Roderick Random. Upon seeing Joe Specks after a period of years, the traveller associates his recollections of him with his early delight in the hero of Smollett's novel. "Through many changes and much work," he recalls, "I had preserved a tenderness for the memory of Joe, forasmuch as we had made the acquaintance of Roderick Random together, and had believed him to be no ruffian, but an ingenuous and engaging hero."² Mention of Mr. Random, too, was sufficient to aid Joe Specks in recognizing his old schoolfellow. In relating this incident, the traveller states,

"I saw a boyish light in his eyes that looked well, and I asked him if he could inform me, as a stranger who desired to know and had not the means of reference at hand, what the name of the young lady was who married Mr. Random? Upon that, he said, 'Narcissa', and after staring for a moment, called me by name, shook me by the hand, and melted into a roar of laughter."³

Joe Specks' recollections of the characters he had delighted in as a boy were not nearly so clear, however, as those of the Uncommercial Traveller, who, in a friendly manner, records the one possible flaw which he found in his friend:

"Nor could I discover one single flaw in the good doctor -- when he reads this, he will

1. Chesterton, G. K., Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens, 1933 Ed; Introduction, p. xxvii.
2. The Uncommercial Traveller; p. 160.
3. Ibid; pp. 160-161.

receive in a friendly spirit the pleasantly meant record -- except that he had forgotten his Roderick Random, and that he confounded Strap with Lieutenant Hatchway, who never knew Random, howsoever intimate with Pickle." ¹

It is again, one suspects, the author's associations with these characters which prompts the sentiment in the heart of the traveller when he leaves the town where he lived as a child. The reader recognizes that delicate tinge of sorrow which mingles somehow harmoniously with all memories of a past pleasure which one cannot but would gladly recall:

"All my early readings and early imaginations dated from this place, and I took them away so full of innocent construction and guileless belief, and I brought them back so worn and torn, so much the wiser and so much the worse!" ²

Two of the Prefaces to Oliver Twist bear witness again. In defending his representation of crime, the author reminds his critics,

"If I look for examples, and for precedents, I find them in the noblest range of English literature. Fielding, DeFoe, Goldsmith, Smollett, Richardson, Mackenzie." ³

In the Preface to the "first cheap edition", published in 1850, reference to Smollett is included in Dickens' ironical thrusts at the critics who claimed that he was writing of fictitious localities:

"Remembering that when Fielding described Newgate, the prison immediately ceased to exist; that when Smollett took Roderick Random to Bath,

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1. The Uncommercial Traveller; p. 162.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Oliver Twist; Preface to the third Edition, 1841, p. xv.

that city instantly sank into the earth; that when Scott exercised his genius on Whitefriars, it incontinently glided into the Thames. . . . I was inclined to make this preface the vehicle of my humble tribute of admiration to Sir Peter Laurie."¹

Probably no other source is so significant in revealing an author's interests and sentiments as his personal letters. To Mr. Cattermole, Dickens wrote from Petersham, in 1839, of the reading matter he had carried with him on his journey. Although he mentioned "not having many books here",² he informed his friend, "I have Goldsmith, Swift, Fielding, Smollett, and the British Essayists 'handy'".³ At a later period, Dickens included in a letter to Mr. Frank Stone (May 30, 1854) a criticism of the most important novels written by Smollett:

"Humphry Clinker is certainly Smollett's best. I am rather divided between Peregrine Pickle and Roderick Random, both extraordinarily good in their way, which is a way without tenderness; but you will have to read them both, and I send the first volume of Peregrine as the richer of the two."⁴

In a letter written to Forster on the 5th of September, 1847, Dickens suggested a design which obviously was later abandoned:

"Supposing one wrote an essay on Fielding . . . and another on Smollett, and another on Sterne, recalling how one read them as a child (no one read them younger than I, I think), and how one gradually grew up into a different knowledge of them, and so forth -- would it

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1. Oliver Twist; pp. xix-xx.
 2. Letters of Charles Dickens; Vol. I, p. 32.
 3. Ibid; p. 32.
 4. Ibid; p. 403.

not be interesting to many people? I should like to know if you descry anything in this. It is one of the dim notions fluctuating within me."¹

Forster's account of the early childhood of Charles Dickens makes frequent reference, too, to the earlier novelist. Of the experiences of young Charles after his father's imprisonment, Forster includes the following:

"Then, at home, came many miserable daily struggles that seemed to last an immense time, yet did not perhaps cover many weeks. Almost everything by degrees was sold or pawned, little Charles being the principal agent in these sorrowful transactions. Such of the books as had been brought from Chatham, Peregrine Pickle, Roderick Random, Tom Jones, Humphry Clinker, and all the rest, went first. They were carried off from the little chiffonier, which his father called the library, to a bookseller in the Hampstead Road, the same that David Copperfield describes as in the City Road; and the account of the sales, as they actually occurred and were told to me long before David was born, was reproduced word for word in his imaginary narrative."²

Again, in regard to the Pickwick Papers, the biographer comments that it took not many more than half a dozen numbers "to make clear to the intelligent reader that a new and original genius in the walk of Smollett and Fielding had arisen in England."³

In addition to these specific references on the part of Dickens and the authoritative statements of Forster are the harmonious conclusions of many outstanding critics. George Gissing is assured

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1. Forster, John, Life of Charles Dickens; Vol. II, p. 16.
 2. Ibid; Vol. I, p. 21.
 3. Ibid; p. 89.

that "those which he read first were practically the only books which influenced Dickens as an author."¹

He continues, "His scenes, his characters, made a natural continuance of the stories told by Smollett, Fielding, Sterne and Goldsmith."² Adolphus William Ward, in the English Men of Letters series, has written:

"It was of course a happy accident, that as a boy he imbibed that taste for good fiction which is a thing inconceivable to the illiterate. Sneers have been directed against the poverty of his bookshelves in his earlier days of authorship; but I fancy there were not many popular novelists in 1839 who would have taken down with them into the country for a summer sojourn, as Dickens did to Petersham, not only a couple of Scott's novels, but Goldsmith, Swift, Fielding, Smollett, and the British Essayists; nor is there one of these national classics -- unless it is Swift -- with whom Dickens' books or letters fail to show him to have been familiar."³

Later Ward admits that "among these predecessors it has become usual to assert that Smollett exercised the greatest influence upon Dickens."⁴ Saintsbury likewise recognizes that Dickens "developed a keen, a most fortunate fondness for the great classics of English fiction, original or translated -- Smollett, perhaps, most of all."⁵ Upon Professor Ward's suggesting that "Dickens may have derived the first notion of Grip from the raven Ralpho -- likewise the

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1. Gissing, George, Charles Dickens, A Critical Study; p. 28.
 2. Ibid; p. 29.
 3. Ward, Adolphus W., Charles Dickens; pp. 197-198.
 4. Ibid; p. 198.
 5. Cambridge History of English Literature; Vol. XIII, p. 338.

property of an idiot -- who frightened Roderick Random and Strap out of their wits."¹ Frederic Kitton comments, "This is not improbable, remembering how Dickens, as a boy, revelled in the works of Smollett and Fielding."²

All criticism, however, does not tend to uphold this point of view. William Lyon Phelps, whose criticism I respect, even though I cannot wholeheartedly agree with it, is in direct opposition to the belief held by the other critics whom I have quoted. He states his own observations in The Advance of the English Novel:

"Critics whose zeal for parallels exceeds their knowledge of the subject have often repeated the saying that Thackeray is the child of Fielding, and Dickens of Smollett. The considerable amount of truth in the first half of the statement should not lead to any acceptance of the second. No two novelists in English literature are more unlike than Smollett and Dickens. Of all our writers of fiction, Smollett is the most heartless; he had a gusto for life, and men and women amused him prodigiously; but his books show no tenderness and no real sympathy . . . Now the one absolutely dominating characteristic of Dickens is tenderness; he had the mind of a man, and the heart of a child."³

He continues:

"Again, of all British novelists -- with the possible exception of Sterne -- Smollett is the least spiritual . . . There is no religious atmosphere of any kind. Dickens, on the other hand, is one of the most

1. Ward, Adolphus W., Charles Dickens; p. 47, footnote.
2. Kitton, F. G., The Novels of Charles Dickens; p. 80.
3. Phelps, William Lyon, The Advance of the English Novel; pp. 69-70.

powerful allies of Christianity that English Literature has ever produced."¹

That Smollett is primarily harsh, whereas Dickens is tender; that Smollett's novels lack spiritual atmosphere, whereas Dickens' frequently reveal a Christian spirit must be conceded. I cannot but agree with Dawson, however, and feel that Phelps has stated only a part of the truth.

"The old comparison which ranks Fielding with Thackeray, and Smollett with Dickens is not altogether wrong. It is significant that Dickens himself preferred Smollett's Roderick Random (1748) to any work of Fielding; no doubt its spirit of caricature was more agreeable to his own genius than the more reticent art of Fielding."²

Phelps, it will be noted, makes no mention of the methods of the two novelists; he is concerned only with the general tone and atmosphere, overlooking the fact that a slight modification of much in Smollett may make it wholly in the spirit of Dickens. In fact, as I shall point out more conclusively in a later chapter, Dickens' earliest fiction was criticized as being vulgar and coarse in parts, much as Smollett's novels have been criticized as a whole.

Dawson's mention of the possible appeal of the earlier novelist's "spirit of caricature" is significant. Probably no novelist has more frequently

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1. Phelps, William Lyon, The Advance of the English Novel; pp. 69-70.
 2. Dawson, W. J., Makers of English Fiction; p. 28.

been called, if somewhat unjustly, a caricaturist than has Charles Dickens. Herein, too, lies the secret of much of the humor found in the works of both novelists, their similar methods of characterization. With these and other methods Phelps is not concerned; he apparently draws his conclusions only from a comparative study of the general tone of the novels of each author, and even in such a study either has not noted or has held insignificant the coarse humor in Dickens' earliest works which is not unlike much of the humor of Smollett.

Saintsbury has met wisely, it seems to me, such an opinion as that expressed by Phelps. He comments in regard to the relationship between the two authors,

"Attempts have been made to deny the connection, chiefly on the ground that Dickens was of the order of Abou ben Adhem, and 'loved his fellow men,' while Smollett did not. This, if true, could be of little or no literary importance; and, as a matter of fact, Smollett, though possessed of a savage pen, seems to have had habits the reverse of uncharitable."¹

In spite of a lack of an extensive formal education, then, Charles Dickens, "destined to a place in the list of writers characteristically English, . . . found in the works of his predecessors a natural inheritance, and without need of studious

1. Cambridge History of English Literature; Vol. XIII, p. 341.

reflection came equipped to his task."¹ He grew in the schools of Smollett, of Fielding, of Sterne, and of Goldsmith. The personal charm and individual coloring which he himself brought to the novel have been treated elsewhere; the influences of Fielding, Sterne, and Goldsmith I leave to another or until such time as I have space to treat them adequately. I shall, however, consider further what I think to be the most dominant influence of the four, that of Tobias Smollett.

1. Gissing, George, Charles Dickens: A Critical Study; p. 29.

CHAPTER II

Titles and Nomenclature

Even more revealing than the external evidence of Dickens' interest in Smollett is the internal evidence to be found in the writings themselves. A study of this evidence makes it clear to an observant student that the earlier novels of Dickens are, in several respects, more in the nature of those of the predecessor than are his later ones. Possible reasons for this change I shall be concerned with in a later chapter. I turn now to the evidence of the change.

The most obvious similarities between Dickens' novels and those of Smollett are the choice of titles and the type of nomenclature which characterize both. Three of Smollett's five novels; namely, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, and Ferdinand Count Fathom have distinctly alliterative titles. This tendency is echoed in two of Dickens' early works, but not in the later ones. I refer to Pickwick Papers and Nicholas Nickleby. Pickwick and Nickleby, moreover, by their very sound, are suggestive of Pickle. No less a critic than Adolphus Ward has noted of Nicholas Nickleby that "the very title has the savour of Smollett about it."¹

1. Ward, Adolphus W., Charles Dickens; p. 34.

A study of the complete titles of both writers likewise is significant. Toward the end of his career Dickens made use of short, precise titles, as contrasted with the longer titles which he almost habitually used at an earlier date. The latter, comparison indicates, are considerably like those of Smollett. A chronological list of the titles of Dickens' novels¹, such as that which follows, shows that of fourteen novels, the last six have titles shorter than Smollett's, whereas five of the earlier ones are obviously like Smollett's in noting the "adventures" of certain individuals with whom they are concerned. I include the titles of Smollett's novels for the purpose of direct comparison.

<u>Smollett</u>	<u>Dickens</u>
"The Adventures of Roderick Random"	"The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club; Being a Faithful Record of the Perambulations, Perils, Travels, Adventures and Sporting Transactions of the Corresponding Members; Edited by Bcz"
"The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle, in Which Are Included Memoirs of a Lady of Quality"	
"The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom"	"The Adventures of Oliver Twist" or "The Parish Boy's Progress"
"The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves"	"The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby"

1. For want of a better classification I include Pickwick Papers in this list even though I am aware that technically it is not entitled to be classed as a "novel". Since it is customary, however, to treat this work as such in a loose sense, and since such a treatment cannot materially affect this investigation, the classification should not be confusing. Each of the works of Smollett, moreover, is given the title of "novel" with practically as little right.

"The Expedition of
Humphry Clinker"

"The Old Curiosity Shop"

"Barnaby Rudge: a Tale
of The Riots of '80"

"The Life and Adventures
of Martin Chuzzlewit"

"Dealings with the Firm of
Dombey and Son -- Whole-
sale, Retail, and for
Exportation"

"The Personal History,
Experience, and Observa-
tion of David Copperfield,
the Younger, of Blunder-
stone Rookery, which He
Never Meant to Be
Published on any Account"

"Bleak House"

"Hard Times"

"Little Dorrit"

"Great Expectations"

"Our Mutual Friend"

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood"

The nomenclature, too, of Dickens is not only very suggestive of that used by Smollett; but not infrequently parallels it. Both authors use freely names which are suggestive of the physical appearance, of the disposition, or of the social or economic position in life of the various individuals characterized. There is a Bunyan type of nomenclature, inoculated with abundant humor, frequently indicating individual peculiarities of either a physical or a mental nature. Although Fielding used this method occasionally, it was not characteristic of his work as a whole. One

recalls a Mr. Allworthy¹, a Mr. Supple², a Mrs. Honour³, but the majority of his names are not of this nature. The method adopted by Dickens is singularly that which saturates the pages of Smollett with humor. The great abundance of examples in Smollett, coupled with Dickens' acknowledged fondness for the novels in which they are found, leaves no doubt, it seems to me, as to the specific source from which Dickens drew suggestions for many of his names.

One finds literally a multitude of suggestive names in Humphry Clinker, Peregrine Pickle, and Roderick Random; they are less frequent in Ferdinand Count Fathom and in Sir Launcelot Greaves. Among those characters whose names convey a definite impression of physical appearance, for example, one readily recalls: Parson Marrofat⁴; "gay Colonel Tinsel"⁵; Jeremy Gawky⁶; Captain Weazel, "in the shape of a little thin creature"⁷, "whose body put one in mind of extension without substance"⁸; Lord Frizzle⁹; Miss Sparkle¹⁰; Withers, a hag¹¹; Earl Strutwell¹²; Lady Stately¹³; Mrs. Dainty¹⁴; Lord Hobble¹⁵; and Narcissa, in the countenance and carriage of whom "so much sweetness appeared . . .

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|---|---------------------------|
| 1. <u>Tom Jones</u> . | 8. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 57. |
| 2. <u>Ibid</u> ; Smollett also has a Mr. Supple. See <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 375. | 9. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 64. |
| 3. <u>Tom Jones</u> . | 10. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 299. |
| 4. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> ; p. 48. | 11. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 301. |
| 5. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 55. | 12. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 304. |
| 6. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; n. 24. | 13. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 265. |
| 7. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 56. | 14. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 265. |
| | 15. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 279. |

that my heart was captivated at first sight."¹

Again Smollett's nomenclature is indicative of personality or of an individual's disposition. Some of those characters which most loudly proclaim themselves are: Mr. Bramble who, Jery says, is "an odd kind of humorist, always on the fret and so unpleasant in his manner that rather than be obliged to keep him company I'd resign all claim to the inheritance of his estate"². Mr. Serles, whose disposition is "of a melancholy hue"³; Mr. Milksan, of "timorous disposition"⁴; Mr. Sowerby, who is "of a temper neither to be moved by fits, nor driven by menaces"⁵; Mr. Launcelot Crab, a resentful surgeon⁶; Squire Tattle⁷; Curate Shuffle⁸, who excels in pimping; Lord Trifle⁹ of the University; Isaac Rapine¹⁰, the usurer; Jack Rattle¹¹; Mr. Snarler, the severe examiner, "who seemed to have very little of the animal risible in his constitution"¹²; Mr. Vulture, the bailiff¹³; Simper¹⁴; Mrs. Sagely, who gave sound advice¹⁵; Mr. O'Varnish¹⁶; Messrs. Bragwell, Banter, Slyboot, and Ranter¹⁷; Miss Gripewell¹⁸; the "good-

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| 1. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 219. | 10. Ibid; pp. 56, 62. |
| 2. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> ; p. 5. | 11. Ibid; p. 63. |
| 3. Ibid; p. 79. | 12. Ibid; p. 92. |
| 4. Ibid; p. 356. | 13. Ibid; p. 134. |
| 5. Ibid; p. | 14. Ibid; p. 199. |
| 6. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 33. | 15. Ibid; pp. 214-216. |
| 7. Ibid; p. 48. | 16. Ibid; p. 375. |
| 8. Ibid; p. 47. | 17. Ibid; p. 268. |
| 9. Ibid. | 18. Ibid; 296. |

natured" Miss Biddy Gigler¹; Mr. Medlar²; Mr. Jumble, "in short, a mere jumble of learning and sense"³; Mr. Steady Steerwell⁴; and Lady Plausible.⁵

A third type of nomenclature in Smollett's works is that which indicates the social position of the character or his particular occupation. For example, from the multitude of names one notes: Mr. Potion⁶, an apothecary; Sawney Waddle⁷, a pedlar; Rifle⁸, a highwayman; Mr. Staytape⁹, a tailor; Hugh Strap¹⁰, a barber; Mr. Syntax¹¹, Monsieur Concordance¹², and Mr. Keepstick¹³, schoolmasters; Mr. Pallet¹⁴, a painter of a sort; Mr. Metaphor¹⁵, an "epic poet"; Tom Pipes, who is "an excellent hand at a song . . . --there is not such another pipe in the country"¹⁶; Peregrine, who travels considerably; Tom Hackabout, "who had been so famous for maiming bailiffs"¹⁷; Mrs. Drab, the "manty maker"¹⁸; Mrs. Patcher, of whom Winifred Jenkins says, she "learned me to wash gaze, and reflash rusty silks and bumbesums"¹⁹; Prankley, "exhibiting himself among the bucks and

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| 1. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 26. | 9. Ibid; pp. 81-82. |
| 2. Ibid; p. 265. | 10. Ibid; p. 24. |
| 3. <u>Peregrine Pickle</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 108. | 11. Ibid; p. 26. |
| 4. Ibid; p. 251. | 12. Ibid; pp. 101-102. |
| 5. Ibid; p. 357. | 13. <u>Peregrine Pickle</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 57. |
| 6. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 30. | 14. Ibid; p. 208. |
| 7. Ibid; p. 43. | 15. Ibid; Vol. II, p. 231. |
| 8. Ibid; p. 41. | 16. Ibid; Vol. I, p. 5. |
| | 17. Ibid; Vol. II, p. 272. |
| | 18. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> ; p. 47. |
| | 19. Ibid; p. 48. |

gamesters"¹; Mr. Crumb,² a butler; Dick Ivy, a prospective poet³; My Lord Potatoe, an Irishman⁴; Grieve, an apothecary⁵; and Mr. Thomas Clarke, attorney.⁶

One has but to turn to Pickwick Papers to discover that Dickens in his early work, at least, made frequent use of the method used by Smollett. The same three types of suggestive nomenclature are here again present. Of the first type, the use of names suggesting physical traits, there are such examples as: Muzzle, who has "a long body and short legs"⁷; Wilkins Flasher, Esquire⁸, a dandy; Jingle⁹ whose name is accounted for by his manner of speech; Tom Smart, whose ambition it is "to stand in a bar of his own, in a green coat, knee cords, and tops"¹⁰; Dowager Lady Snuphanuph¹¹; Dubbley, a man "something over six feet high, and stout in proportion"¹²; and Lord Mutanhed "the one with the long hair, and the particularly small forehead."¹³ Other characters possess names indicative of their individual personalities: Count Smorltork¹⁴; Captain Boldwig¹⁵; the boastful Magnus¹⁶; Buzfuz¹⁷, an ineffectual but

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| 1. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> ; p. 84. | 10. Ibid; Vol. I, p. 242. |
| 2. Ibid; p. 127. | 11. Ibid; Vol. II, p. 128. |
| 3. Ibid; p. 137. | 12. Ibid; Vol. I, p. 438. |
| 4. Ibid; p. 150. | 13. Ibid; Vol. II, p. 128. |
| 5. Ibid; p. 198. | 14. Ibid; Vol. I, p. 267. |
| 6. <u>Sir Launcelot Greaves</u> ;
p. 2. | 15. Ibid; Vol. I, p. 339. |
| 7. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 432. | 16. Ibid; p. 393f. |
| 8. Ibid; Vol. II, p. 492. | 17. Ibid; Vol. II, p. 81. |
| 9. Ibid; Vol. I, p. 122. | |

bullying barrister; and Serjeant Snubbin, who "leads the court by the nose"¹. The third type is represented by such names as the following: Dr. Slammer², a surgeon; Dr. Payne³, a surgeon; Job Trotter⁴, who travels with Jingle, finally going to the West Indies; Gabriel Grub⁵, a grave digger; Dr. Slasher⁶, a surgeon; Mr. Humm, who "moved that the assembly do regale itself with a song"⁷; Henry Beller⁸, a toastmaster; and Mr. Prosee, "who had written a lively book about the law of demises, with a vast quantity of marginal notes and references"⁹.

From Dickens' other novels, too, one finds many names of a similar suggestive nature. There are Mr. Quale¹⁰, whose hair is brushed to the back of his head; Mr. Sharp¹¹, a schoolmaster; the sharp-faced Mr. Pyke¹²; Grannett¹³, who relieves an outdoor dying person with an offer of a pound of potatoes and half a pint of oatmeal; the good-natured Messrs. Cheeryble¹⁴; Bass, who "can go down lower than any man. So low sometimes that you can't hear him"¹⁵; Crackit¹⁶, a housebreaker; grumbling Mr. Crawl¹⁷; Captain Cuttle¹⁸ and Sol Gills¹⁹, men of the sea;

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| 1. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> , Vol. II, p. 27. | 10. <u>Bleak House</u> ; Ch. 1. |
| 2. <u>Ibid</u> ; Vol. I, p. 27. | 11. <u>David Copperfield</u> ; Ch. 6. |
| 3. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 54. | 12. <u>Nicholas Nickleby</u> ; Ch. 19. |
| 4. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 281. | 13. <u>Oliver Twist</u> ; Ch. 23. |
| 5. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 520. | 14. <u>Nicholas Nickleby</u> ; Ch. 35. |
| 6. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 45. | 15. <u>Sketches by Boz</u> ; Scenes II. |
| 7. <u>Ibid</u> ; Vol. II, p. 73. | 16. <u>Oliver Twist</u> ; Ch. 22. |
| 8. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 72. | 17. <u>Nicholas Nickleby</u> ; Ch. 14. |
| 9. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 332. | 18. <u>Dombey and Son</u> ; Ch. 4. |
| | 19. <u>Ibid</u> ; |

Sownds¹, a beadle; Mr. Mould², an undertaker; Jack Dark³, a negro; Mr. Barley, who "keeps his grog readymixed in a little tub on the table"⁴; Lord Fred Verisopht⁵; Mr. Hubble⁶, a wheelwright; Mrs. Skiffinā "of a wooden appearance"⁷; and Mrs. Coiler, who when she "began to flatter me . . . had a serpentine way of coming close at me when she pretended to be vitally interested in the friends and localities I had left, which was altogether snaky and fork-tongued"⁸.

These examples are, I think, sufficient to convince the reader of the similarity in method; a closer study, however, reveals a number of what appear to be distinct parallelisms to be found within the pages of Smollett and Dickens.

Smollett

Dickens

Withers⁹

Withers¹⁰

Mr. Beblower¹¹

Henry Beller¹²

Rev. Melchisedech Howler¹³

Captain Whiffle¹⁴

Mr. Whiffers¹⁵

John Trotter¹⁶

Job Trotter¹⁷

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| 1. <u>Dombey and Son</u> ;
Vol. II, p. 10. | 10. <u>Dombey and Son</u> ;
Vol. I; p. 394. |
| 2. <u>Martin Chuzzlewit</u> ; Ch. 19. | 11. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 382. |
| 3. <u>Uncommercial Traveller</u> ;
Ch. 5. | 12. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. II, p. 72. |
| 4. <u>Great Expectations</u> ;
Ch. 46. | 13. <u>Dombey and Son</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 278. |
| 5. <u>Nicholas Nickleby</u> ; p. 312. | 14. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 196. |
| 6. <u>Ibid</u> ; Vol. I, p. 27. | 15. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. II, p. 160. |
| 7. <u>Nicholas Nickleby</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 361. | 16. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 56. |
| 8. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 235. | 17. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 281. |
| 9. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 301. | |

Dr. Grieve ¹	Dr. Payne ²
Mrs. Fickle ³	Gallanbile ⁴
Justice Buzzard ⁵	Buzfuz ⁶
Parson Marrofat ⁷	Lord Mutanhed ⁸
Miss Snapper ⁹	Susan Nipper ¹⁰
Potion ¹¹	Dr. Pilkins ¹²
Mr. Sowerby ¹³	Mrs. Sowerberry ¹⁴
Miss Sparkle ¹⁵	Sparkle ¹⁶
	Sparkler ¹⁷
	Mrs. Crisparkle ¹⁸
Tinsel ¹⁹	Wilkins Flasher, Esquire ²⁰
Tom Pipes ²¹	Anthony Humm ²²
Mr. O'Varnish ²³	Veneering ²⁴
Mr. Bragwell ²⁵	Mr. Boldwig ²⁶
Mr. Metaphor ²⁷	Mr. Prosee ²⁸
Lord Hobble ²⁹	Mr. Trundle ³⁰

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| 1. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> ; p. 198. | 17. <u>Little Dorrit</u> ; Ch. 21. |
| 2. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 54. | 18. <u>Edwin Drood</u> ; Ch. 6. |
| 3. <u>Peregrine Pickle</u> . | 19. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> ; p. 55. |
| 4. <u>Nicholas Nickleby</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 249. | 20. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. II, p. 492. |
| 5. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> ; p. 173. | 21. <u>Peregrine Pickle</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 5. |
| 6. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. II, p. 81. | 22. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 73. |
| 7. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> ; p. 48. | 23. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 375. |
| 8. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. II, p. 128. | 24. <u>Our Mutual Friend</u> . |
| 9. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 320. | 25. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 271. |
| 10. <u>Dombey and Son</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 345. | 26. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 339. |
| 11. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 30. | 27. <u>Peregrine Pickle</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 231. |
| 12. <u>Dombey and Son</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 126. | 28. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 332. |
| 13. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> . | 29. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 279. |
| 14. <u>Oliver Twist</u> ; Ch. 4. | 30. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 67. |
| 15. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 301. | |
| 16. <u>Bleak House</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 16. | |

Miss Gigler¹

Miss Giggles²

Isaac Rapine³

Gride (greed)⁴

The larger percentage of these parallelisms appears in the earlier novels of Dickens in the writing of which, it may be surmised, he was more dependent upon a model than he was when he wrote Our Mutual Friend, Great Expectations, and Bleak House. A comparative study of the percentage of the suggestive names used in representative novels reveals the following information:

<u>Earlier Novels</u>	<u>% suggestive Names</u> ⁵
"Pickwick Papers"	32.2
"Oliver Twist"	43.6
"Nicholas Nickleby"	20.5
"Martin Chuzzlewit"	23.5
<u>Later Novels</u>	<u>% suggestive Names</u>
"Our Mutual Friend"	19.6
"Little Dorrit"	25.7
"Great Expectations"	13.8
"Bleak House"	17.4

Thus, the average percentage of suggestive names in the earlier novels is 29.95%, as contrasted with

1. Roderick Random; p. 265. 3. Roderick Random; p. 56.
 2. Edwin Drood; Ch. 9. 4.
 5. These results have been compiled from a study of several hundred pages from each of the representative novels chosen.

19.1% in the later ones. Obviously, even though Dickens used this device to a smaller extent in his later novels, he did not by any means discard it. It is one of the bits of Smollett which is always present.

There is also a tendency on the part of Smollett to use alliterative combinations in naming his characters. This device, too, is echoed in Dickens. One has, for example, in Smollett, Jacob Jolter¹, Sir Timothy Thicket², Roderick Random³, Peregrine Pickle⁴, Cadwallader Crabtree⁵, Ferdinand Count Fathom⁶. In Dickens there are Gabriel Grub⁷, Miss Arabella Allen⁸, Nicholas Nickleby⁹, Samuel Slunkey¹⁰, Newman Noggs¹¹, Dr. Parker Peps¹², Daniel Doyce¹³, Christopher Casby¹⁴, Tom Tootles¹⁵, Tracy Tupman¹⁶, Conkey Chickweed¹⁷. The number of these names, however, is not sufficiently large for one to draw any specific conclusions as to Dickens' change of method in his later novels. One simply notes that he uses alliterative names occasionally throughout his writing much as did the earlier novelist.

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| 1. <u>Peregrine Pickle</u> ;
Vol. I, Ch. 15. | 10. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ; Ch. 13. |
| 2. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 221. | 11. <u>Nicholas Nickleby</u> ; Ch. 2. |
| 3. <u>Roderick Random</u> . | 12. <u>Dombey and Son</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 5. |
| 4. <u>Peregrine Pickle</u> . | 13. <u>Little Dorrit</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 158. |
| 5. <u>Peregrine Pickle</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 351. | 14. <u>Ibid</u> . |
| 6. <u>Ferdinand Count Fathom</u> . | 15. <u>Our Mutual Friend</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 89. |
| 7. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 520. | 16. <u>Pickwick Papers</u> ; Ch.1. |
| 8. <u>Ibid</u> ; Ch. 28. | 17. <u>Oliver Twist</u> ; Ch. 31. |
| 9. <u>Nicholas Nickleby</u> . | |

Besides obvious parallelisms in nomenclature there are definite parallelisms between characters in Dickens and characters in Smollett irrespective of the names. Since another student of Dickens, F. Wierstra, has thoroughly discussed this phase of the similarities between the two writers, I need only refer here to his study of "Smollett and Dickens"¹ in which he has cited example after example of parallelisms, such as those seen in Winifred Jenkins and Sam Weller, Mr. Dennison and Mr. Wardle, Mr. Bramble and Mr. Pickwick, Narcissa's aunt and Mrs. Leo Hunter. To my mind two of the most convincing parallelisms are those to be found in Strap and Sam Weller and in Hawser Trunnion and Captain^d Cuttle and Sol Gills. The adequacy of Wierstra's study leaves no necessity for further consideration here, except that I wish to note the significance of the small number of references which this author has made to Dickens' later Novels. In his discussion of characterization he notes only six characters from novels written later than David Copperfield; in his study of parallelisms of character as well as of incident, he devotes 49½ pages to Pickwick Papers, 2 pages to Oliver Twist, 6½ pages to Barnaby Rudge, 3½ pages to Nicholas Nickleby, ½ page to Martin

1. Wierstra, Frans Dirk, Smollett and Dickens.

Chuzzlewit, $3\frac{1}{4}$ pages to Dombey and Son, $3\frac{3}{4}$ pages to David Copperfield, $\frac{1}{2}$ page to Great Expectations, $\frac{9}{20}$ of a page to Our Mutual Friend, with no attention paid to Bleak House, Hard Times, and Little Dorrit. In all he devotes $58\frac{3}{4}$ pages to the Stollitt influence as seen in parallelisms of character and incident in the novels written before David Copperfield as set over against less than a page to that found in the novels written later than David Copperfield. Pickwick Papers, the first of Dickens' so-called novels, is obviously the greatest source.

CHAPTER III

The Nature of the Humor of Smollett and of Dickens

If one accepts as representing the novelist's purpose certain statements which appear in the preface to Roderick Random, he may assert that the aim in introducing coarse and immoral scenes is to expose their offensiveness as a moral lesson. Smollett praises Cervantes for "converting romance to purposes far more useful and entertaining, by making it assume the sock, and point out the follies of ordinary life."¹ Again, he declares:

"That the delicate reader may not be offended at the unmeaning oaths which proceed from the mouths of some persons in these memoirs, I beg leave to premise, that I imagined nothing could more effectually expose the absurdity of such miserable expletives than a natural and verbal representation of the discourse in which they occur."²

The seemingly deliberate introduction of immoral incidents, however, seems scarcely in keeping with a moral purpose. Certain it is that readers fail to recognize such a purpose. There is much of Smollett that is unquotable, with his close observations of low life and his detailed pictures of coarse humor, the brutal, and the obscene. Arthur Machen has most accurately described Roderick Random in his

1. Preface, Roderick Random; p. 4.

2. Ibid; p. 5.

statement that "it is not from the skill of Smollett's hot brain, lustful, furious, reeking with the fervour of unbroken youth, all raw and burning with the loves and hates of this perfervid Scot."¹ Peregrine Pickle, too, gives evidence of much that is hard, coarse, and rough. Even the least offensive, most genial of his novels, Humphry Clinker, has not escaped censure; it has been said of it that its "indecent and filth are what must be allowed to all Smollett's writings."² There is, however, in my estimation, much less that is rough and coarse in this work than in Smollett's other novels. The "indecent and filth" of which the author has here been accused are not nearly so evident as the criticism would suggest. They have become almost lost; the reader's attention is turned to something more agreeable than the author has before written, the humours of Matthew Bramble, of Tabitha, of Winifred Jenkins.

I have said that there is much in Smollett that is unquotable. A few of the less offensive passages, however, will illustrate the rough sort of humor which is characteristic of his novels. It is too frequently the boisterous spirit of the "club of politicians" of whom the following account

1. Introduction, Humphry Clinker; p. vi.
2. Ibid; p. 165.

is given:

"They broke their glasses in consequence of his suggestion, drank healths out of their shoes, caps, and the bottoms of the candlesticks that stood before them. . . They huzzaed, hallooed, danced, and sung, and, in short, were elevated to such a pitch of intoxication, that when Peregrine proposed that they should burn their periwigs, the hint was immediately approved, and they executed the frolic as one man. Their shoes and caps underwent the same fate by the same instigation; and in this trim he led them forth into the street."¹

The reader is again told of the unpleasant adventure of Trunnion's bride on her first night at her husband's home:

"It seems the hooks that supported this swinging couch were not calculated for the addition of weight which they were now destined to bear; and therefore gave way in the middle of the night, to the no small terror of Mrs. Trunnion, who perceiving herself falling, screamed aloud, and by that exclamation brought Hatchway, with a light, into the chamber."²

The consequences of Mrs. Trunnion's attempt to improve her new living quarters are of the boisterous nature that is typical of nearly all of the scenes in which the Commodore appears:

"Trunnion being disturbed and distracted with the uproar, turned out in his shirt like a maniac, and arming himself with a cudgel of crab-tree, made an irruption into his wife's apartment, where perceiving a couple of carpenters at work, in joining a bedstead, he, with many dreadful oaths and opprobrious invectives, ordered them to desist, swearing he would suffer no bulk-heads nor hurricane

1. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 105.
2. Ibid; p. 43.

houses to stand where he was master; but finding his remonstrances disregarded by these mechanics, who believed him to be some madman belonging to the family, who had broke from his confinement, he assaulted them both with great fury and indignation, and was handled so roughly in the encounter, that, in a short time, he measured his length on the floor, in consequence of a blow that he received from a hammer, by which the sight of his remaining eye was grievously endangered."¹

Typical, too, of the coarseness of his incidents is the account of the "duel" in which Macleaver smokes assafoetida with Miniakin.²

Too frequently to admit of delighting even the less delicate reader, Smollett's roughness becomes vulgarity as he relates the nocturnal adventures of Peregrine, of Roderick Random, of Ferdinand Count Fathom, or the misfortunes of Matthew Bramble at the beach,³ of Winifred Jenkins' descent⁴ by means of the ladder on the night of the fire at Harrigate, or of Lisamahago's similarly embarrassing descent⁵ at the home of Sir Thomas Bullford.

There is little moral reflection found in Smollett's novels if one excepts Ferdinand Count Fathom; Smollett's characters do not, as a rule, meditate upon their virtues and vices, feeling remorse for any of their questionable acts. Count Fathom, to be sure, apparently reforms when he is

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1. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 45.
 2. Ferdinand Count Fathom; Chapter 41.
 3. Humphry Clinker; p. 220 f.
 4. Ibid; p. 210.
 5. Ibid; p. 364.

seriously ill; such sudden reformation, however, on the part of one who has lived a deceitful, corrupt life seems highly unnatural. The generosity of those whom he has previously injured may offer a moral lesson to the reader, but one cannot feel of the novel, as the author claimed to feel, that in it Smollett "adorned virtue with honour and applause, branded iniquity with reproach and shame, and carefully avoided every hint or expression which could give umbrage to the most delicate reader."¹ This is, in my estimation, the one of Smollett's novels deserving most censure for its apparent immorality. Its subject and characters are, for the most part, disgusting. Nor can all the excuses and explanations of the author erase these impressions from my mind.

In Ferdinand Count Fathom Smollett has fallen short of his other works apparently in an attempt to refute charges made against him and to show himself allied to morality. That he is trying to soothe his public seems obvious from his own "Prefatory Address." There seems to be no reason for doubting that his observations of the reading public were the result of personal experience. In an effort to prepare a favorable reception for his

1. Prefatory Address, Ferdinand Count Fathom; p. 4.

novel, he makes his shallow explanations, for well he knows, "We live in a censorious age; and an author cannot take too much precaution to anticipate the prejudice, misapprehension, and temerity of malice, ignorance, and presumption."¹ It is important that we should note that such an anticipatory address as this is written after the receptions of Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle have doubtlessly taught him what he may expect. But Fathom is too distinctly an unmitigated scoundrel for one to grant any sincerity to Smollett's stated moral intentions. There is nothing in the rest of life of the "wretched Fathom"², of whom even the forgiving Serafina says, "His fraud, ingratitude, and villainy are, I believe, unrivalled"³, to account for his repentance and reformation at the close of the novel. It is a most unnatural speech which the reader hears from the lips of a man who has never before shown the slightest amount of sympathy, of gratitude, of anything but deep-seated villainy. Nothing, it seems to me, but an unsuccessful attempt upon the part of the author to convince the public that he was writing a moral tale could account for the ending of this novel. The rascal whose heartless

1. Prefatory Address, Ferdinand Count Fathom; p. 3.
2. Ferdinand Count Fathom; Vol. II, p. 227.
3. Ibid.

villainy the reader has witnessed throughout nearly two volumes arouses from his delirium to cry,

"O Elinor! . . . my delirium is now past; though I still remember the phantasies of my distempered brain. Among other reveries, my imagination was regaled distinct, as to emulate truth and reality. Methought Count de Melvil, Don Diego de Zelos, and the divine Serafina, the very persons who are now crying Before the throne of Heaven for vengeance against the guilty Fathom, stood by my bedside, with looks of pity and forgiveness; and that Renaldo spoke peace to my despairing soul. I heard the words distinctly. I retain them in my memory. I saw the tears trickle from Serafina's eyes. I heard her father utter a compassionate sigh; and should actually believe that they were personally present, had not I long ago seen with my own eyes the funeral procession of that young lady, whose wrongs God pardon; and were I not convinced that such a meeting could not be effected without the immediate and miraculous interposition of Heaven."¹

In a manner wholly contrary to his nature, he later pleads,

"Let me not perish until I shall have convinced them of my reformation, and seen them enjoying that felicity which ought to be reserved for such consummate virtue."²

Not such a reformation as this, I repeat, can lead the reader to forget the villainy and vulgarity with which Fathom's adventures are associated.

In view of the large amount of rough and indelicate scenes in Smollett, it is not surprising that a comparison between his work and that of the

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1. Ferdinand Count Fathom.
 2. Ibid.

genial and popular Charles Dickens at first seems absurd. Admitting the insincerity of Smollett's stated moral intentions and the subsequent indelicacy of his work, however, I find evidence of humor that is not unpleasant and of not a few humorous characterizations which are delightful. The account of Mr. Vanderpelt's experience during a political campaign has none of the vulgarity to be found in some pages of Smollett, if it does have something of his rough, masculine humor:

"'This,' cried he, 'is the solid basis and foundation upon which I stand.'

"These last words had scarce proceeded from his mouth, when the head of the barrel or puncheon on which he stood, being frail and infirm, gave way; so that ~~down~~ he went with a crash, and in a twinkling disappeared from the eyes of the astonished beholders. The fox-hunters, perceiving his disaster, exclaimed, in the phrase and accent of the chase, 'Stole away! stole away!'"¹

However, a humor of a quieter, keener sort is not infrequently found in Smollett's novels. Strap's indignation is at one time so greatly aroused that "after the fellow was gone a good way, he told me he would fight him for a farthing."²

It may be recalled that in an earlier chapter³ I modified Phelps' criticism that Smollett's "books show no tenderness" to the extent

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1. Sir Launcelot Greaves; Chapter 9, p. 100.
 2. Roderick Random; Chapter 13, p. 69.
 3. See page 15 of this thesis.

of conceding only that "Smollett is primarily harsh." Certain it is that in spite of the roughness of his nature, Hawser Trunnion is a character whom the reader learns to delight in. Whether one agrees or not with the judgment of the able critic, Arthur Machen, that "when Hatchway writes the Commodore's epitaph, there are tears flowing, and they are not the tears of sensibility which bedewed a good many pages in the late eighteenth century,"¹ the student of Smollett must indeed be cold at heart who can read the following letter without sensing a growing affection within him for the Commodore, for here certainly is as true an expression of tenderness as ever came from a rough old sailor's heart:

"My Good Lad, -- If I gave offence in my last letter, I'm sorry for't, d'ye see; I thought it was the likeliest way to bring you up; but, in time to come, you shall have a larger swing of cable. When you can spare time, I shall be glad if you will make a short trip and see your aunt, and him who is

Your loving godfather and humble
servant,

Hawser Trunnion

P.S. If you want money, you may draw upon me,
payable at sight."²

Humphry Clinker has much to delight the reader. The last of Smollett's novels, written when the author was ill, it lacks the harshness of his other works, having

1. Introduction, Humphry Clinker; p. vii.
2. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 130.

something of a mellowness which Smollett seems to have attained as he grew older. I should readily have assumed that Dickens' favorite of Smollett's novels was Humphry Clinker even had I not read his letter to Frank Stone in which he states that "Humphry Clinker is certainly Smollett's best."¹ Who, having read this novel, does not find great delight in Tabitha, Matthew, Clinker, Winifred Jenkins, and, yes, even Chowder? The geniality of the two concluding letters, those of Tabitha Bramble Lismahago and Winifred Jenkins Loyd are in the spirit which pervades nearly the entire volume. Tabitha writes to "Good Mrs. Gwyllim",

"Heaven, for wise porpuses, hath ordained that I should change my name and citation in life, so that I am not to be considered any more as manager of my brother's family; as I cannot surrender up my stewardship till I have settled with you and Williams, I desire you will get your accounts ready for inspection, as we are coming home without further delay. My spouse, the cartain, being subject to rummaticks, I beg you will take great care to have the blew chamber, up two pair of stairs, well warmed for his reception. Let the sashes be secured, the crevices stopt, the carpets laid, and the beds well touseled. Mrs. Loyd, late Jenkins, being married to a relation of the family, cannot remain in the capacity of a sarvant; therefore, I wish you would cast about for some creditable body to be with me in her room. -- If she can spin, and is mistress of plain-work, so much the better -- but she must not expect extravagant wages -- having a family of my own, I must be

1. Letters of Charles Dickens; Vol. I, p. 403.

more occumenical than ever. No more at present, but rests

Nov. 20. Your loving friend,
Tab. Lismahago"¹

Winifred writes to Mrs. Jones,

"Providinch hath bin pleased to make great halteration in the pasture of our affairs. -- We were yesterday three kiple chined, by the grease of God, in the holy bands of mattermoney, and I now subscribe myself Loyd at your service. . . Being, by God's blessing, removed to a higher spear, you'll excuse my being familiar with the lower sarvents of the family; but as I trust you'll behave respectful, and keep a proper distance, you may always depend upon the good will and purtection of

Nov. 20. Yours,
W. Loyd."²

Thus ends the Expedition of Humphry Clinker, and the reader closes the book with altogether different feelings from those with which he leaves the adventures of such rogues as Count Ferdinand Fathom, Roderick Random, or Peregrine Pickle.

I note this quieter phase of Smollett because I feel that a fair estimate of the tone of his work requires a consideration of it. The observing student can readily see, moreover, upon viewing Smollett fairly, that in spite of the coarseness and lack of tenderness which are commonly to be associated with this author, at times his works give evidence of a quality of humor which admits of a ready kinship between him and Charles Dickens.

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1. Humphry Clinker; p. 428.
 2. Ibid; pp. 429-30.

Such is the tone of Smollett. What, on the other hand, do Dickens' works reveal? Although Sketches by Boz is not a novel, it is particularly significant in a study of this nature, by virtue of its being Dickens' first important effort in the writing of fiction, and thus most apt to reveal the influences of earlier writers. It is for purposes of studying Dickens' growth as he gradually drew away from his dependence upon Smollett that I include the Sketches here.

In the Sketches, decidedly more than in the novels themselves, there are suggestions of the boisterous, unrefined humor which is so definitely associated with Smollett as to make an attempt to compare the later works of Dickens with the novels of Smollett seem; on the surface, an absurdity. As Adolphus Ward has written of the Sketches,

"The humor--more especially that of the Tales--is not of the most refined sort, and often degenerates in the direction of boisterous farce. The style, too, though in general devoid of the pretentiousness which is the bane of 'light' journalistic writing, has a trait of vulgarity about it, very pardonable under the circumstances, but generally absent from Dickens' later works."¹

G. K. Chesterton's judgment of these first efforts is that they are "journalism and sometimes vulgar journalism."²

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1. Ward, Adolphus W., Charles Dickens; p. 17.
 2. Chesterton, G. K., Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens; p. 4.

The boisterous, unrefined farce is obvious throughout The Tuggses of Ramsgate. Mr. Simon Tuggs "rose from the tub of weekly Dorset, opened his eyes very wide, gasped for breath, made figures of eight in the air with his pen, and finally fell into the arms of his anxious mother and fainted away without the slightest ostensible cause or pretence"¹; later an unmanageable donkey carries Mr. Cymon Tuggs "to the Pegwell Bay hotel in no time, where he deposited his rider without giving him the trouble of dismounting, by sagaciously pitching him over his head, into the very doorway of the tavern"²; and finally, Cymon experiences "Platonic love" with disastrous results:

"'It is my husband!' said Belinda, as the Captain's voice was heard below.

'And my family!' added Cymon Tuggs, as the voices of his relatives floated up the staircase.

"The curtain! the curtain!" gasped Mrs. Captain Waters, pointing to the window, before which some chintz hangings were closely drawn."³

In reply to Captain Waters, Lieutenant Slaughter

"drew back the curtain and discovered Mr. Cymon behind it; pallid with apprehension, and blue with wanting to cough.

'Aha!' exclaimed the captain, furiously.

'What do I see? Slaughter, your sabre!'

'Cymon!' screamed the Tuggses.

'Mercy!' said Belinda.

'Platonic!' gasped Cymon.

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1. Sketches by Boz; Vol. II, p. 3.
 2. Ibid; p. 19.
 3. Ibid; p. 24.

'Your sabre!' roared the captain:
'Slaughter--unhand me--the villain's life!'
'Murder!' screamed the Tuggses.
'Hold him fast, sir!' faintly articulated
Cymon.
'Water!' exclaimed Joseph Tuggs--and Mr.
Cymon Tuggs and all the ladies forthwith
fainted away and formed a tableau."¹

There are reminders here of faintings in the pages of Smollett, of Commodore Trunnian's ride to his wedding,² and of equally and more unrefined humor of situation in discoveries of closeted people.

In The Boarding-House³ there are examples of coarse, crude humor, and of vulgar punning. In the opening lines of The Pawnbroker's Shop Dickens expresses a point of view not unlike that suggested by Smollett; he maintains that although "the subject may appear, at first sight, to be anything but an inviting one, . . . we venture on it, nevertheless, in the hope that, as far as the limits of our present papers are concerned, it will present nothing to disgust even the fastidious reader."⁴ One is reminded of Smollett's claim, with the second edition of Peregrine Pickle to have "reformed its manners and corrected its expressions" and to have "expunged every adventure, phrase, and insinuation, that could be construed by the most delicate reader into a trespass upon the rules of decorum."⁵ Like Smollett,

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1. Sketches by Boz; p. 26.
 2. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 35f.
 3. Sketches by Boz; Vol. I, p. 345f.
 4. Ibid; pp. 233-234.
 5. Introductory Note, Peregrine Pickle; p. viii.

Dickens is accused of vulgarity in spite of his apparent intentions. In The Monthly Review of March 1836 there appeared this criticism of The Sketches:

"We must, without reserve, say that besides the undignified character of his subjects and the gloomy, contemptuous and disparaging tone of his descriptions, the author exhibits a vulgarity of sentiment too often, which is more displeasing still."¹

Although he does not offend to the extent that Smollett offends, Dickens follows Smollett's lead in depicting low life, in his earliest works frequently introducing boisterous humor which does not later often appear. Ned Twigger is akin to many of the characters in Smollett, whose constant practice it is "to swallow such plentiful draughts of inspiration that their mysteries commonly ended like those of the Bacchanalian Orgia."² When Ned Twigger is "securely locked up in the small cavern with the skylight, hard at work at the armour."³

"With every additional piece he could manage, he had an additional glass of rum; and at last, after many partial suffocations, he contrived to get on the whole suit, and to stagger up and down the room in it, like an intoxicated effigy from Westminster Abbey."⁴

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1. Kitton, F. G., Dickensiana; p. 205.
 2. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 104.
 3. Sketches by Boz; Vol. II, p. 364.
 4. Ibid.

Later,

"Mrs. Twigger tried to undo the armour, first in one place, and then in another, but she couldn't manage it; so she tumbled Ned into bed, helmet, armour, gauntlets, and all. Such a creaking as the bedstead made, under Ned's weight in his new suit! It didn't break down though; and there Ned lay, like the anonymous vessel in the Bay of Biscay, till next day, drinking barley-water, and looking miserable; and every time he groaned, his good lady said it served him right, which was all the consolation Ned Twigger got."¹

Upon the publication of Pickwick Papers there appeared contrasting criticisms. Whereas the Edinburgh Review, October 1838, stated that "We recollect no passage which ought to cause pain to the most sensitive delicacy, if read aloud in female society,"² a contributor to The Eclectic Review of April 1837 had observed "some jokes, incidents, and allusions which could hardly be read by a modest woman without blushing."³ One must not read an exaggerated import into this last criticism, for these jokes, incidents, and allusions are comparatively few even in Dickens' earliest works. Such incidents, however, as Mr. Pickwick's finding himself in the bedroom of the "middle-aged lady"⁴, and Mr. Winkle's embarrassing nocturnal adventure with Mrs. Dowler and the sedan-chair⁵ are suggestive of similar incidents in Smollett. Mr.

1. Sketches by Boz; Vol. II, p. 372.

2. Kitton, F. G., Dickensiana; p. 220.

3. Ibid; p. 208.

4. Pickwick Papers; Chapter 22.

5. Ibid; Chapter 36.

Winkle's experience, in particular, parallels the embarrassing ladder escapades of Winifred Jenkins¹ and Lismahago,² Mrs. Cluppins' bold testimony³ contains passages which are as indelicate as portions of Smollett.

Such boisterous farce as is found in Mr. Pickwick's adventure in the pound⁴ and in Mrs. Bardell's fainting in Pickwick's arms, as well as frequent drinking on the part of the Pickwickians, is again in the atmosphere of the earlier novelist. The masculine roughness of the rival editors, Pott and Slurk, is equal to many a rough scene in Roderick Random or Peregrine Pickle:

"Mr. Pickwick rushed between the infuriated combatants just in time to receive the carpet-bag on one side of his body, and the fire-shovel on the other. Whether the representatives of the public feeling of Eatanswill were blinded by animosity, or (being both acute reasoners) saw the advantage of having a third party between them to bear all the blows, certain it is that they paid not the slightest attention to Mr. Pickwick, but defying each other with great spirit, plied the carpet-bag and the fire-shovel most fearlessly. Mr. Pickwick would unquestionably have suffered severely for his humane interference, if Mr. Weller, attracted by his master's cries, had not rushed in at the moment, and, snatching up a meal-sack, effectually stopped the conflict by drawing it over the head and shoulders of the mighty Pott, and clasping him tight round the shoulders."⁵

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1. Humphry Clinker.
 2. Ibid; p. 364.
 3. Pickwick Papers; Vol. II, Chapter 34.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid; Vol. II, pp. 424-425.

There is a touch of Smollett's indelicacy in some of the humor of Nicholas Nickleby¹ and something of his boisterous farce in the descent of the man in small clothes by way of Mrs. Nickleby's chimney.²

In Dickens' later works rough scenes, when present, are introduced not for humorous purposes, but as a means of realistically depicting the London with which the author is thoroughly acquainted. They do not, moreover, go beyond the bounds of discretion as do many scenes in Smollett and a few in Dickens' early works. Wierstra's study of parallelisms in incident, both humorous and serious, indicates that about 93.95% of such parallelisms occur in the earlier novels³, 71.27% being in Pickwick Papers.

It is obvious that in the general tone of their work the two authors are not very closely akin. The examples of indelicacy and boisterous farce which may be found in Dickens' earliest fiction, even if sufficient to call forth adverse criticism on the part of some of his contemporaries, are still comparatively few. In the later works of the beloved author they have disappeared.

It still remains that both Smollett and Dickens are humorists. A study of the devices used

1. Chapter 36, for example.

2. Chapter 49.

3. Mainly in Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, Barnaby Rudge, Nicholas Nickleby, and Dombey and Son.

in creating humor reveals, moreover, that unlike as the two authors are in general tone, there are frequent parallelisms in method. It is this important observation which William Lyon Phelps¹ has neglected to make.

Both authors have been termed caricaturists. Evidence of this tendency is at once obvious to one who reads such typical descriptions as that of Commodore Trunnion² on the one hand, and that of Ned Cuttle³ on the other. The Commodore, who has "lost an eye and a heel in the service"⁴, is possessed of a voice at a distance resembling "the crying of quails and croaking of bullfrogs"⁵, or, if heard more closely, of "such a cadence as one would expect from a human creature scolding through the organs of an ass."⁶ The author further indicates:

"He was in stature at least six feet high, though he had contracted an habit of stooping, by living so long on board; his complexion was tawny, and his aspect rendered hideous by a large scar across his nose, and a patch that covered the place of one eye."⁷

Captain Cuttle appears as

"A gentleman in a wide suit of blue, with a hook instead of a hand attached to his right wrist; very bushy black eyebrows; and a thick stick in his left hand, covered all over (like his nose) with knobs. He wore a loose black silk handkerchief round

1. See his criticism quoted on page 14 of this thesis.
2. Peregrine Pickle; Chapter 2.
3. Dombey and Son; Chapter 4.
4. Peregrine Pickle; Chapter 2, p. 5.
5. Ibid; p. 7.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

his neck, and such a very large coarse shirt collar, that it looked like a small sail."¹

Lavement, the apothecary, is

"A little old withered man, with a forehead about an inch high, a nose turned up at the end, large cheek-bones that helped to form a pit for his little grey eyes, a great bag of loose skin hanging down on each side in wrinkles like the alforjas of a baboon; and a mouth so accustomed to that contraction which produces grinning, that he could not pronounce a syllable without discovering the remains of his teeth, which consisted of four yellow fangs, not improperly, by anatomists, called canine."²

And Ferret

"had something very forbidding in his aspect, which was contracted by an habitual frown. His eyes were small and red, and so deep set in the sockets, that each appeared like the unextinguished snuff of a farthing candle, gleaming through the horn of a dark lanthorn. His nostrils were elevated in scorn, as if his sense of smelling had been perpetually offended by some unsavoury odour; and he looked as if he wanted to shrink within himself from the impertinence of society. He wore a black periwig as straight as the pinions of a raven, and this was covered with a hat flapped, and fastened to his head by a speckled handkerchief tied under his chin."³

Dickens informs that

"Major Bagstock had arrived at what is called in polite literature, the grand meridian in life, and was proceeding on his journey downhill with hardly any throat, and a very rigid pair of jaw-bones, and long-flapped elephantine ears, and his eyes and complexion in the state of artificial excitement already mentioned."⁴

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1. Dombey and Son; Chapter 4, p. 56.
 2. Roderick Random; p. 102.
 3. Sir Launcelot Greaves; p. 3.
 4. Dombey and Son; Vol. 1, p. 114.

It is recorded of Mr. Scadder that

"He was a gaunt man in a huge straw hat, and a coat of green stuff. The weather being hot, he had no cravat, and wore his shirt-collar wide open; so that every time he spoke something was seen to twitch and jerk up in his throat, like the little hammers in a harpsichord when the notes are struck. . . Two grey eyes lurked deep within this agent's head, but one of them had no sight in it, and stood stock-still. With that side of his face he seemed to listen to what the other side was doing. Thus each profile had a distinct expression; and when the moveable side was most in action, the rigid one was in its coldest state of watchfulness. It was like turning the man inside out, to pass to that view of his features in his liveliest mood, and see how calculating and intent they were.

Each long black hair upon his head hung down as straight as any plummet-line; but ruffled tufts were on the arches of his eyes, as if the crow whose foot was deeply printed in the corners, had pecked and torn them in a savage recognition of his kindred as a bird of prey."¹

Thus Dickens closely follows Smollett in depicting physical peculiarities of his characters with minutest detail. So generally recognized a feature of the style of both authors does not, I feel, require more discussion here. It is significant, however, upon turning to Frans Wierstra's Smollett and Dickens to find a convincing analysis of many parallelisms in character. It is important here merely to observe that in this study, Wierstra devotes only slightly over one-half page to

1. Martin Chuzzlewit; Vol. I, p. 482.

parallelisms found in those of Dickens' novels which appeared after David Copperfield. In the early novels the parallelisms are numerous.

There are existing parallelisms in more minute devices used in humorous characterizations which have not been given thorough consideration heretofore. Certain it is that although the characters of Bleak House, Little Dorrit, Great Expectations, and Our Mutual Friend in their broad elements do not show the dependency upon earlier models that may be recognized in Sam Weller¹, Captain Cuttle², Mrs. Leo Hunter³, Mr. Dowler⁴, Pickwick⁵, Buzfuz⁶, Mr. Wardle⁷, Mrs. Bardell⁸, Mr. Creakle⁹, Arabella¹⁰, and Mr. Dombey¹¹, for example, Dickens is still using certain devices in his characterization which are habitually used by his predecessor. Two of these devices are his introduction of unexpected humorous contrasts and comparisons and his reiteration of certain phrases indicative of characteristic mannerisms of individuals. Smollett compares boots to a pair of leather buckets¹²; a man

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1. Pickwick Papers. Cp. Winifred Jenkins, Strap.
 2. Dombey and Son. Cp. Commodore Trunnion.
 3. Ibid. Cp. Narcissa's Aunt.
 4. Ibid. Cp. Captain Weazel.
 5. Ibid. Cp. Matthew Bramble.
 6. Ibid. Cp. Justice Buzzard.
 7. Ibid. Cp. Mr. Dennison.
 8. Ibid. Cp. Tabitha Bramble, especially pp. 113, 169f., Humphry Clinker.
 9. David Copperfield. Cp. Mr. Keypostick.
 10. Pickwick Papers. Cp. Lydia.
 11. Dombey and Son. Cp. Mrs. Pickle.
 12. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 38.

to a "syllabub or iced froth"¹, a "squirrel in a cage"², a "half-starved louse"³, an elephant⁴, a "statue of some river god"⁵, a bag of oats⁶; a woman's chin to a "shoemaker's paring-knife"⁷; children to "ragged colts"⁸; a head to a hatchet⁹; features to a pair of nut-crackers¹⁰; and a person's skin to that of a baboon.¹¹ Similarly Charles Dickens compares a toothpick to a "sort of young bayonet"¹²; an umbrella to "an unwholesomely forced lettuce that had lost in color and crispness what it had gained in size"¹³; a man to a bird¹⁴, a horse¹⁵, a weed¹⁶, a clock¹⁷, a bear¹⁸, "some old root in a fall of snow"¹⁹, "bad marble"²⁰; a woman to "a house of painted cards"²¹; a blown-out wax candle²², a horse²³; a shirt collar to a pulse²⁴; a moustache to "a recent trace of gingerbread"²⁵; and a hand to a fish or seaweed²⁶.

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| 1. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> ; p. 251. | 15. <u>Martin Chuzzlewit</u> ;
Vol. II, p. 183. |
| 2. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 362. | 16. <u>Ibid</u> ; Vol. I, p. 369. |
| 3. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 125. | 17. <u>Ibid</u> ; Vol. II, p. 155. |
| 4. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 380. | 18. <u>Ibid</u> ; Vol. I, p. 340. |
| 5. <u>Peregrine Pickle</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 221. | 19. <u>Bleak House</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 67. |
| 6. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 183. | 20. <u>Dombey and Son</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 578. |
| 7. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 218. | 21. <u>Ibid</u> ; Vol. I, p. 578. |
| 8. <u>Humphry Clinker</u> ; p. 205. | 22. <u>Little Dorrit</u> ;
Vol. II, p. 27. |
| 9. <u>Roderick Random</u> ; p. 323. | 23. <u>Our Mutual Friend</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 184. |
| 10. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 56. | 24. <u>Ibid</u> ; Vol. I, p. 536. |
| 11. <u>Ibid</u> . | 25. <u>Martin Chuzzlewit</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 359. |
| 12. <u>Martin Chuzzlewit</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 484. | 26. <u>Dombey and Son</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 72. |
| 13. <u>Our Mutual Friend</u> ;
Vol. I, p. 59. | |
| 14. <u>Ibid</u> ; p. 28. | |

If one observes closely, he becomes aware of such outstanding parallelisms among the unusual comparisons used by the two authors as the following, present as frequently in the later novels as in the earlier ones:

Smollett

Captain Weazel "appeared like a spider or grasshopper erect."¹

"Her head . . . bore some resemblance to a hatchet, the edge being represented by her face."³

Humphry may be compared to an English Pudding.⁵

"Her appearance acted upon his imagination like a spark of fire that falls among gunpowder."⁷

"He compared a woman to a great gun loaded with fire, brimstone, and noise, which, being violently heated, will bounce and fly, and play the devil."⁸

Dickens

"Who's the Spider, . . . the blotchy, sprawly, sulky fellow?"²

Wemmick is "a dry man . . . with a square, wooden face, whose expression seemed to have been imperfectly chipped out with a dull-edged chisel."⁴

"The train of nods . . . communicated a blanc-mange like motion to his fat cheeks."⁶

"Mr. Jingle knew that young men, to spinster aunts, are as lighted gas to gun-powder, and he determined to essay the effect of an explosion without loss of time."⁹

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1. Roderick Random; p. 57.
 2. Great Expectations; p. 259.
 3. Roderick Random; p. 323.
 4. Great Expectations; p. 208.
 5. Humphry Clinker; p. 251.
 6. Pickwick Papers; Vol. I, p. 137.
 7. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 109.
 8. Ibid; p. 15.
 9. Pickwick Papers; Vol. I, p. 137.

"Faded fruit and iced froth,
a good emblem of our land-
lady's character."¹

"This noble Refrigerator
had iced several Eutopean
courts in his time," and
now "cooled the wines,
chilled the gravy, and
blighted the vegetables."²

Tabitha acts upon Mr.
Bramble "as a perpetual
grindstone."³

'Sam Weller "runs on like
a new barrow with the
wheel greased."⁴

The old man's face is
"shrivelled into a
thousand wrinkles, his
gums were destitute
of teeth, his nose
sharp and drooping,
his chin peaked and
prominent, so that,
when he mumped or spoke,
they approached one
another like a pair of
nut-crackers."⁵

Miss Sarah Pocket is
"a little brown corrugated
old woman, with a small
face that might have
been made of walnut
shells."⁶

Pipes "opened his
mouth like a gasping
cod."⁷

Wemmick's mouth is
"such a post-office of
a mouth that he had a
mechanical appearance
of smiling."⁸

"Every biscuit . . .
like a piece of clock-
work, moved of its
own internal impulse,
occasioned by the
myriads of insects
that dwelt within it."⁹

"He had been running
down by jerks, during
his last speech, like
an ill-adjusted alarum."¹⁰

The actor "spoke as if
his throat had been
obstructed by an
hairbrush."¹¹

There is "a certain
yellow play in Lady
Tippins' throat like
the legs of scratching
poultry."¹²

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1. Humphry Clinker; v. 358.
 2. Little Dorrit; Vol. I, pp. 422-423.
 3. Humphry Clinker; p. 29.
 4. Pickwick Papers; Vol. I, p. 161.
 5. Roderick Random; p. 56.
 6. Great Expectations; Vol. I, p. 105.
 7. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 10.
 8. Great Expectations; Vol. I, p. 209.
 9. Roderick Random; p. 187.
 10. Little Dorrit; Vol. II, p. 67.
 11. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 251.
 12. Our Mutual Friend; Vol. I, p. 16.

"One wit, like a knuckle of ham in soup, gives a zest and flavour to the dish."¹

"My hair . . . hung down upon my shoulders as lank and straight as a pound of candles."³

Mr. Martin is seen to be "fluttering about justice like a moth about a candle."⁵

Trunnion "was led about the house like a blind bear growling for prey."⁷

"Trunnion's subjection was like that of a bear."⁸

Trunnion's voice resembles, at a distance, "the crying of quails and croaking of bull-frogs."¹⁰

"'Have you got any attorneys aboard?'"¹²

"'I find the anchor holds fast! I did suppose as how you would have slipt your cable, and changed your berth.'"¹⁴

Mr. Tulkinghorn is "an oyster of the old school whom nobody can open."²

"Wiry black hair striking out from his head in prongs, like forks, or hair-pins."⁴

"The cage door opened and when the small bird, reared in captivity, had tamely fluttered in, he saw it shut again."⁶

"'Like them Polar bears in the wild-beast-shows as is constantly a nodding their heads from side to side, it never can be quiet.'"⁹

Miss Lavinia gives utterance, when least expected, "to a sound between a sob and a bottle of sodawater."¹¹

"'Bunsby aboard?'"¹³

"'Whistle that 'ere tune near my old moorrings not as if you was a meaning of it, you understand, but as if you'd drifted there, promiscuous.'"¹⁵

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1. Humphry Clinker; p. 139.
 2. Bleak House; Vol. I, p. 174.
 3. Roderick Random; p. 68.
 4. Little Dorrit; Vol. I, p. 193.
 5. Humphry Clinker; p. 178.
 6. Little Dorrit; Vol. I, p. 138.
 7. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 46.
 8. Ibid; p. 101.
 9. Martin Chuzzlewit; Vol. I, p. 340.
 10. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 7.
 11. Our Mutual Friend; Vol. II, p. 345.
 12. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 7.
 13. Dombey and Son; Vol. I, p. 446.
 14. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 331.
 15. Dombey and Son; Vol. II, p. 25.

"Had I known the young woman was Ned Gauntlet's daughter, I shouldn't have thrown out signal for leaving off chase."¹

One man "was bent into a horizontal position like a mounted telescope, shoved in by a couple of chavimen."³

Lismahago is "as unmanageable as an elephant unbroke."⁵

Jery Melford compares Lismahago to "an old hedge-hog."⁷

Ferret's eyes are "small and red, and so deep set in the sockets, that each appeared like the unextinguished snuff of a farthing candle, gleaming through the horn of a dark lanthorn."⁹

"I know the looming of the vessel, though she has been hard strained since we parted . . . Ha! Matt, my old fellow cruiser, still afloat!"¹¹

"If I answer in another tune, do you stand off and on, and wait till I throw out further signals."²

"Another bulk-head-human, and very large, with one stationary eye in the mahogany face, and one revolving one, on the principle of some light-houses."⁴

Mr. Boffin is "of an overlapping rhinoceros build."⁶

"A porcupine's a featherbed" to Ralph Nickleby.⁸

"Eyes as red as if they had been small suns looking at you through a fog."¹⁰

"A commercial Colossus bestriding his own hearthrug, while the little ships were sailing in to dinner . . . Behold the vessels coming into port!"¹²

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1. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 331.
 2. Dombey and Son; Vol. II, p. 25.
 3. Humphry Clinker; p. 62.
 4. Dombey and Son; Vol. I, p. 447.
 5. Humphry Clinker; p. 362.
 6. Our Mutual Friend; Vol. I, p. 63.
 7. Humphry Clinker; p. 362.
 8. Nicholas Nickleby; Vol. I, p. 154.
 9. Sir Launcelot Greaves; p. 3.
 10. Dombey and Son; Vol. I, p. 46.
 11. Humphry Clinker; p. 62.
 12. Little Dorrit; Vol. II, p. 175.

Her chin is "peaked like a shoemaker's paring-knife."¹ Peggotty's forefinger is "roughened by needlework, like a pocket nutmeg-grater."²

The repetition of characteristic phrases of individuals is used more extensively by Dickens than by Smollett. Yet, several rather obvious parallelisms seems to indicate fairly conclusively that the later writer received the suggestion for his method from the pages of Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, and Humphry Clinker. Commodore Hawser Trunnion is at once recognized by his "d--n my heart", "d--n my limbs!", or "d--n my eyes!"³; Morgan by his repeated appeals to "Got"⁴ and his discourses upon fire and "burning primstone"⁵; a captain by his "damme"⁶; Winifred Jenkins by her malaprops⁷; Tabitha by her proverbs⁸; Bowling by his "Odds Bob"⁹ and other sea expletives. Similarly, in Dickens, Mantalini is characterized by his "demd", "demmit", "demnebly", and "demnition"¹⁰; Mrs. Chick is assured that "this is a world of effort"¹¹; Captain Cuttle is always admonishing his friends to

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1. Roderick Random; p. 218.
 2. David Copperfield; Vol. I, p. 17.
 3. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, pp. 8, 9, 34, 40, 61, 75.
 4. Roderick Random; pp. 151, 163, 173, 184, 194.
 5. Ibid; pp. 171, 173.
 6. Ibid; p. 32Cff.
 7. Humphry Clinker; pp. 3, 46, 47, 185-186, 265, 317, 372.
 8. Ibid; pp. 22, 97, 137.
 9. Roderick Random; pp. 21, 421.
 10. Nicholas Nickleby; Vol. I, p. 275ff.
 11. Dombey and Son; Vol. I, pp. 14, 26, 325.

"overhaul"¹ one book or another for certain information, and to "make a note on"²; Joe Bagstock prides himself upon being "de-vilish sly"³; Mr. Toots is certain that it "is of no consequence at all"⁴; Micawber waits and wonders if "anything will turn up"⁵; Uriah Heep is "'umble"⁶; and Mrs. Gummidge is a "lone lorn 'creeatur"⁷. Newman Noggs cracks his fingers⁸, Perch coughs⁹, Sam Weller quotes¹⁰ as readily as Strap, and Fanny Squeers uses malaprops¹¹ as freely as Winifred Jenkins.

This reiteration is likewise used frequently in the later novels of Dickens. Wemmick discusses the value of "portable property"¹²; Jaggers is characterized by the habit of biting "his forefinger"¹³;

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1. Dombey and Son; Vol. I, pp. 161, 443;
Vol. II, pp. 311, 479, 430, 483.
 2. Ibid; Vol. I, pp. 282, 442; Vol. II, p. 484.
 3. Ibid; Vol. I, pp. 115, 117, 167, 172, 496.
 4. Ibid; Vol. II, p. 439ff.
 5. David Copperfield; Vol. I, pp. 223, 231, 233, 345, 540.
 6. Ibid; pp. 542, 558; Vol. II, p. 123.
 7. Ibid; pp. 377ff, 503, 151ff.
 8. Nicholas Nickleby; Vol. I, pp. 176, 538;
Vol. II, pp. 341, 347.
 9. Dombey and Son; Vol. I, p. 403ff.
 10. Pickwick Papers; Vol. I, pp. 158, 166, 205, 255,
273, 278, 359, 446, 473, 506; Vol. II, pp. 1,
65, 105, 111, 117, 181, 242, 258, 272, 288, 408,
310, 339, 341, 355, 427.
 11. Nicholas Nickleby.
 12. Great Expectations; pp. 322ff, 357.
 13. Ibid; pp. 247ff, 261, 200, 167, 164.

the little dressmaker whose "back's so bad, and . . . legs so queer"¹ is always assured that she knows "their tricks and manners"²; Riderhood informs that he gets his living "by the sweat of my brow"³; Mr. Casby repeats his final phrases: "I mean your worthy self, your worthy self"⁴, "Those times are past and gone, past and gone,"⁵ ". . . she bears her trials, bears her trials."⁶ Mr. Snagsby habitually "coughs behind his hand"⁷, and Mr. Meagles insists that his are "practical people".⁸

Even this incomplete list is sufficient to show that the tendency to reiterate characteristic bits of speech or characteristic actions on the parts of his characters is more obvious in the pages of Dickens than in those of Smollett. The later novelist used this method so frequently throughout his writing career that it would be easy to assume that it is wholly Dickens' method, in that through greater use it became more truly characteristic of him than of Smollett. There are, on the other hand, certain parallelisms,

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1. Our Mutual Friend; Vol. I, pp. 301ff, 329.
 2. Ibid; pp. 303ff, 316, 326ff, 329.
 3. Ibid; p. 201ff.
 4. Little Dorrit; Vol. I, p. 196.
 5. Ibid; p. 197.
 6. Ibid. See also pp. 366-367.
 7. Bleak House; pp. 176, 187.
 8. Little Dorrit; Vol. I, pp. 23ff, 259, 434ff.

which although not numerous, are conclusive in indicating that Dickens obtained a definite suggestion from his predecessor. The most obvious ones are the Captain's "damme"¹ and Mantalini's "demmit" and "demd"²; the malaprops of Winifred Jenkins³ and Fanny Squeers⁴; Trunnion's "d--n my heart and liver"⁵ and Tom Smart's "damn my strans and whiskers"⁶ and Strap's⁷ and Sam Weller's quotations⁸ of proverbs or of what Strap or Sam Weller is pleased to think some one has said. These "quotations" are by far the most numerous, as the footnotes indicate. One recalls, for example: "Solomon says, 'Bray a fool in a mortar, and he will never be wise'"⁹, "'Do not they make unto themselves wings?' as the wise man saith,"¹⁰ "Business first, pleasure arterwards, as King Richard said when he stabbed the t'other king,"¹¹ and "Sorry to do anythin' as may cause

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1. Roderick Random; Chapters 53 and 54, p. 320ff.
 2. Nicholas Nickleby; Chapters 17, 34, and 64.
 3. Humphry Clinker; pp. 47.
 4. Nicholas Nickleby; Chapter 15, p. 232.
 5. Peregrine Pickle; Vol. I, p. 8ff.
 6. Pickwick Papers; Vol. I, p. 238.
 7. Roderick Random; pp. 78, 85, 54, 100, 334.
 8. Pickwick Papers; Vol. I, pp. 138, 166, 205, 255, 273, 278, 446, 473, 506; Vol. II, pp. 1, 65, 105, 111, 117, 181, 258, 408, 427, 310, 341.
 9. Roderick Random; Chapter 15, p. 78.
 10. Ibid; Chapter 16, p. 85.
 11. Pickwick Papers; Vol. I, p. 238.

an interruption to such wery pleasant proceedin's
as the king said when he dissolved the parliament."¹

1. Pickwick Papers; Vol. II, p. 355.

CHAPTER IV

Structure

Hannay very aptly maintains that "to adopt Johnson's frequently quoted criticism on Richardson, if you read Smollett for the plot, you would hang yourself."¹ Every thoughtful and observant reader of Smollett realizes how true this statement is. Regarding Roderick Random, for example, one remembers a wide variety of character, an abundance of adventures, but no thread of plot which connects those adventures, save the fact that they all occur during Roderick's life and within the range of his personal experiences. The complete title of the novel is The Adventures of Roderick Random, and the content is exactly what the title states. There is, moreover, little apparent thought for purposeful organization of the adventures. The reader very readily dismisses in chapter one all thought of Roderick's father; it is mere accident which returns him to the reader in chapter sixty-six, within four chapters of the end of the book. One reads of Roderick's demolishing the teeth of his tutor², of his associations with Mr. Launcelot

1. Hannay, The Life of Tobias Smollett; n. 60.

2. Roderick Random; Chapter 2.

Crab¹, of his coincidental meetings with Strap², of his adventures with a highwayman³, of a variety of adventures at every inn and ale-house visited⁴, of his experiences aboard ship⁵, and the rest, merely as chronologically recounted incidentals of an eventful life. The plot is so meandering that frequently **references** are not clear to the reader. For example, when the author refers to Miss Lavement in chapter fifty-two of the novel, so much has intervened since one last read anything concerning this woman that he has forgotten who she is.

Nor does the presence of a would-be heroine suggest plot. The love affair between Roderick and Narcissa ends happily, but few are the moments of thought for her when Roderick is away. Miss Williams⁶ at times claims his attention; Melinda makes his "heart bound with joy"⁷ and even receives from him a proposal of marriage⁸. He is eager to meet Miss Sparkle⁹, and equally eager again to accept the matrimonial scheme involving Miss Snapper proposed by Banter.¹⁰ As a result, when Narcissa reappears near the end of the novel,

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1. Roderick Random; Chapter 7.
 2. Ibid; Chapters 8 and 44.
 3. Ibid; Chapter 9.
 4. Ibid; Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 17, 43, for example.
 5. Ibid; Chapter 24ff.
 6. Ibid; Chapters 21, 23.
 7. Ibid; p. 278.
 8. Ibid; p. 288.
 9. Ibid; p. 299.
 10. Ibid; Chapter 53.

one is not prepared to feel any sincerity in such an exaggerated burst of feeling as Roderick describes,

"Narcissa! Good Heaven! what were the thrillings of my soul at that instant! my reflection was overwhelmed with a torrent of agitation! my heart throbbed with surprising violence! a sudden mist overspread my eyes! My ears were invaded with a dreadful sound! I paused for want of breath, and, in short, was for some moments entranced!"¹

The reader is convinced that this is another adventure; he is little concerned with it as a matter of interest as regards the development of a central theme.

What small thread of unifying element may be suggested by the fact that the adventures are all adventures with which Roderick, himself, has some concern is twice broken by inserted stories or episodes which are complete in themselves. Ten pages are given over to Miss Williams'² story of her experiences previous to the time at which she enters the story, and seventeen to Mr. Melopoy'n's³ account of his life.

It is not, I repeat, the plot then that one remembers in Roderick Random, but, even more than Roderick's adventures, individual pictures and studies of a Welsh doctor, of Lieutenant Bowling, of Jack Rattlin. As Hodges has written, "Smollett

1. Roderick Random; p. 353.
2. Ibid; p. 122ff.
3. Ibid; p. 373ff.

is doing with his pen what Hogarth was doing with his brush. One cannot turn over the pages of his book without constant reminders of the works of Hogarth. In both artists there is a wide selection of types, the same narrow observation of low life, the study of the fop, the impostor, the dupe, the criminal."¹

Turning to Peregrine Pickle, one finds a similar lack of plot and structure. "When its episodes are put aside, Peregrine Pickle is a tale of adventure on the lines of Roderick Random, and written on the same method."² The reader follows Peregrine from adventure to adventure as he has followed Roderick. The very name of the hero suggests the rambling nature of the story. Peregrine exposes his tutor³, is concerned in a dangerous adventure with a gardener⁴, lampoons another tutor⁵, has experiences at sea⁶, quarrels with a Mousquetaire⁷, is captivated by first one lady then another⁸, and tells fortunes with Cadwallader Crabtree⁹ to as little actual purpose as Roderick is concerned in event after event.

Here, again, as in Smollett's first novel, the love element is so insignificant a part of any

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1. Introduction, Roderick Random; p. xi.
 2. Hannay, The Life of Tobias Smollett; p. 87.
 3. Peregrine Pickle; Chapter 16.
 4. Ibid; Chapter 17.
 5. Ibid; Chapter 22.
 6. Ibid; Chapter 35.
 7. Ibid; Chapter 40.
 8. Ibid; Chapters 52, 59, for example.
 9. Ibid; Chapters 82, 83, 84.

probable suggestion of plot as to allow Peregrine to enjoy a variety of adventures with other women than the one of his choice without any qualms of conscience, once he is away from Emilia.

In Peregrine Pickle the inserted stories occupy an inordinate space, hindering the advance of even such rambling action as is present. Cadwallader Crabtree favors Peregrine with "a short sketch of his own history"¹ to which over 4 pages are devoted: Peregrine relates in 2½ pages the story of Count D'Alvarez²; and the Memoirs of a Lady of Quality³ and the Memoirs of a Prisoner⁴ occupy 110 and 43 pages, respectively, or 20.9% of the entire story. Although the Memoirs have frequently been "condemned as an interruption to the general scheme of Peregrine Pickle"⁵, I share the opinion of Lewis Melville that "there is no general scheme in that book with which it could interfere."⁶

Ferdinand Count Fathom is another series of adventures, the least pleasing series, I feel, that Smollett produced. As I have previously stated, in a discussion of the general tone of this novel, its ending is wholly unreasonable.

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1. Peregrine Pickle; Chapter 72.
 2. Ibid; Chapter 98.
 3. Ibid; Chapter 81.
 4. Ibid; Chapter 98.
 5. Melville, The Life and Letters of Tobias Smollett; p. 51.
 6. Ibid.

There are present, too, the inserted stories and episodes which have no bearing upon a central plan: The History of the Noble Castilian¹ occupies 21 pages, and "the episode . . . of King Theodore of Corsica does not greatly affect the story."²

Sir Launcelot Greaves, if slightly more unified in scheme has an obvious blunder in its general plan and conception in that the author has brought knight-errantry into the middle of the eighteenth century in England. It has, too, twenty-one pages devoted to the usual inserted stories, this time concerned with the history of Captain Clewline³, and Tom Clarke's account of the hero's early life.⁴

The last and most delightful of Smollett's novels, Humphry Clinker, has only the slightest thread to unify the adventures and experiences which its characters record. It is remembered for its delineation of character, for the "humours" of Tabitha, Winifred Jenkins, and Matthew Bramble, who is "always on the fret"⁵, but never for a central theme. Long after one may have forgotten why Jerry and Lydia are included in the story,

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1. Ferdinand Count Fathom; Chapter 26.
 2. Introduction; *Ibid.*, n. xvii.
 3. Sir Launcelot Greaves; pp. 227-233.
 4. *Ibid*; pp. 23-39.
 5. Humphry Clinker; p. 5.

he will recall with delight the consequences of Humphry Clinker's treading upon Chowder¹, Bramble's comments upon the many places which he visits, and Tabitha's ultimate success when she "cast the heys of infection upon such a carrying-crow a Lismihago! as old as Mathewsullia, as dry as a red herring, and as poor as a starved veezel."² The story is developed by means of a collection of letters, with frequent overlapping when two or three of the characters relate the same experience from different points of view. The strength of this work lies so definitely in the charm of its individual letters that one may read these letters at random, without regard for any general scheme or plot.

In his Prefatory Address to Ferdinand Count Fathom Smollett set forth his personal definition of a novel:

"A novel is a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups, and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of an uniform plan, and general occurrence, to which every individual figure is subservient. But this plan cannot be executed with propriety, probability, or success, without a principal personage to attract the attention, unite the incidents, unwind the clue of the labyrinth, and at last close the scene by virtue of his own importance."³

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1. Humphry Clinker; p. 99ff.
 2. Ibid; p. 371.
 3. Prefatory Address, Ferdinand Count Fathom; p. 3.

Smollett's novels follow this plan in so far as each consists of a "large diffused picture", "a principal personage", and characters "disposed in different groups". They do not, on the other hand, give evidence of an intricate "labyrinth" which needs a clue, their "uniform plan" being mainly a chronology of adventures. One is convinced, too, that there are so many interruptions from inserted, unrelated episodes and a variety of characters who, interesting as they may be, have no relationship to a plan, that the mission of the "principal personage" is lost sight of. "Without humours and experiences . . . Smollett was not, and could never have been a great novelist."¹

In tracing Smollett's influence upon the structure of Dickens' novels, one may find it particularly significant that Dickens' methods developed toward the close of his career to more individual methods of his own, changing with his experiences in writing, losing to a considerable degree a dependence upon the earlier writer.

As Chesterton correctly points out, the Sketches by Boz are mere "journalist, and sometimes vulgar journalism."² There is no continuity of thought present; they are merely what the name implies, sketches, or as Dickens

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1. Saintsbury, George, Introduction, Ferdinand Count Fathom; p. xviii.
 2. Chesterton, G. K., Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens; p. 4.

stated in his Preface to the first edition, "little pictures of life and manners as they really are."¹ Adolphus Ward, in commenting upon a lack of strong construction in Dickens' novels, explains that "This was due in part to the accident that he began his literary career as a writer of Sketches, and that his first continuous book, Pickwick, was originally designed as little more than a string of such. It was due in still greater measure to the influence of those masters of English fiction with whom he had been familiar from boyhood, above all to Smollett."²

In Pickwick Papers more than in the Sketches this relationship to Smollett is at once obvious, for here as in Humphry Clinker the same group of characters takes part in the various incidents and adventures throughout the book, travelling from place to place without any particularly significant purpose, except that by their travelling the author has an opportunity to introduce a greater variety of experiences. Like the novels of Smollett it lacks a central plot. The reason for his being at all is made clear when, after his travels are over, Mr. Pickwick remarks, "I shall never regret having devoted the greater part of two years to

1. Preface, Sketches by Boz; p. xii.

2. Ward, Adolphus W., Charles Dickens; pp. 197-198.

mixing with different varieties and shades of human character: frivolous as my pursuit of novelty may have appeared to many."¹ By means of the wanderings of the Pickwickians, then, Dickens has depicted for his readers "different varieties and shades of human character", much as has Smollett. The reader learns incidentally about Bath², about the law³, and about the prisons⁴, as he learns incidentally about Bath⁵, about the law⁶, and about the prisons⁷ in the pages of Smollett.

Dickens openly admits the looseness of the construction of Pickwick Papers when, in the Preface to the first edition, he explains the nature of this work:

"The author's object in this work was to place before the reader a constant succession of characters and incidents; to paint them in as vivid colours as he could command, and to render them, at the same time, life-like and amusing.

"Deferring to the judgment of others in the outset of the undertaking, he adopted the machinery of the club, which was suggested as that best adapted to his purpose: but, finding that it tended rather to his embarrassment than otherwise, he gradually abandoned it, considering it a matter of very little importance to the work whether strictly epic justice were awarded to the club or not.

"It was necessary or it appeared so to

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1. Pickwick Papers; Vol. II, pp. 515-516.
 2. Ibid; Chapter 35ff.
 3. Ibid; Chapters 20, 26, 31.
 4. Ibid; Chapter 41ff.
 5. Humphry Clinker; p. 28ff.
 6. Peregrine Pickle; Chapter 73.
 7. Roderick Random; Chapter 61.

the Author -- that every number should be, to a certain extent, complete in itself, and yet that the whole twenty numbers, when collected, should form one tolerably harmonious whole, each leading to the other by a gentle and not unnatural progress of adventure.

"It is obvious that in a work published with a view to such considerations, no artfully interwoven or ingeniously complicated plot can with reason be expected. The Author ventures to express a hope that he has successfully surmounted the difficulties of his undertaking. And if it be objected to the Pickwick Papers that they are a mere series of adventures, in which the scenes are ever changing, and the characters come and go like the men and women we encounter in the real world, he can only content himself with the reflection, that they claim to be nothing else, and that the same objection has been made of some of the greatest novelists in the English language."¹

One who is aware not only of Dickens' particular fondness for Smollett, but also of the nature of the earlier novelist's writings cannot help feeling that Smollett was uppermost in Dickens' mind when he reflected that "the same objection has been made of some of the greatest novelists in the English language." How accurately, indeed, Dickens' discussion of his own Pickwick Papers would fit Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, or Humphry Clinker!

There is, moreover, in Pickwick Papers a reflection of Smollett's method in the introduction of stories complete within themselves. One finds

1. Preface, The Pickwick Papers; p. xiv.

the adventures of the Pickwickians interrupted by: The Stroller's Tale,¹ The Convict's Return,² A Madman's Ms.,³ The Bagman's Story,⁴ The Parish Clerk,⁵ The Old Man's Tale about the Queer Client,⁶ The Story of the Goblin who Stole a Sexton,⁷ The True Legend of Prince Bladud,⁸ and The Story of the Bagman's Uncle.⁹ 10.97 per cent of the pages of Pickwick Papers is given over to these inserted stories.

Oliver Twist, the next novel to be written by Dickens, shows a suggestion of a plot which has not been carefully worked out. There are distinctly present two forces working against each other: Oliver's sense of right is set over against many evil forces in London which Fagin represents; there are those who are ready to help Oliver, as well as those who are just as ready to harm. This conflict of forces, with its definite suggestion of plot, has not been present in the earlier works. But Dickens was not skillful in the artifices of construction. Oliver Twist, as a result, is scarcely more than the works which preceded it, as far as general plan is concerned.

There are too many coincidences and unreal

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1. Pickwick Papers; Vol. I, p. 45.
 2. Ibid; p. 97.
 3. Ibid; pp. 185-195.
 4. Ibid; p. 236ff.
 5. Ibid; p. 300ff.
 6. Ibid; p. 372ff.
 7. Ibid; p. 520ff.
 8. Ibid; Vol. II, p. 135ff.
 9. Ibid; p. 363ff.

situations for this novel to be convincing. The discovery that Rose Maylie is Oliver's sister¹ is too strained and too convenient, just as Oliver's falling into the hands of Mr. Brownlow² is equally a matter of convenience in an earlier chapter, the discovery of Monks' interest³ in Oliver is stilted rather than skillfully handled. The tendency to shift back and forth from one scene to another, from one group of characters to an entirely different group deprives the story of continuity of action, making it decidedly episodic. For example, the author writes of Mr. Bumble, Mrs. Corey, and the death of an old woman at the workhouse in the town of Oliver's birth⁴; he then reverts to Mr. Fagin and his associates in London, only to be back with Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corey within a few pages. The next chapter brings the reader's attention back to the situation following the attempted burglary at the home of Mrs. Maylie in Chertsey. At the close of chapter twenty-two, Sikes is left running rapidly away from his pursuers, with Oliver in his arms, while chapter twenty-three takes the reader to Mr. Bumble and the workhouse. Six chapters later, the

1. Oliver Twist; Chapter 51.

2. Ibid; Chapter 11.

3. Ibid; Chapter 49.

4. Ibid; Chapters 23-27.

reader finds Sikes still running, Mr. Giles and Brittles still pursuing, Oliver still being carried by Sikes. There seems to be utter inconsistency, moreover, in Dickens' remark at the end of chapter twenty-seven that the reader is about to ascertain whether Oliver Twist "be still lying in the ditch where Toby Crackit left him."¹ As far as the reader can determine, Toby Crackit has not touched Oliver since the discovery of the thieves by the inmates of the house; in the following chapter Sikes, himself, lays "the boy in a dry ditch"² after Toby Crackit, who has been "making the best use of his long legs,"³ has reluctantly returned at Sike's command. It is only logical, then, that a contributor to The London Review, January, 1839, spoke of Oliver Twist as a "string of stories"⁴ and that an American writer, upon reviewing Oliver Twist preferred to call it "sketches from real life."⁵ A year earlier this criticism had been published in Dublin:

" . . . It is a jumble of striking scenes, many of them highly graphic, and some containing exquisite touches of nature, but carelessly thrown together, and obviously framed with little regard to mutual

1. Oliver Twist; Chapter 27.

2. Ibid; Chapter 28.

3. Ibid.

4. Kitton, F. G., Dickensiana; p. 221.

5. Ibid; p. 224: The Christian Examiner, Boston, November, 1839.

dependence or sequence, one upon the other. The plot, if it can be so called, is singularly unskilful, the incidents most improbable, and the catastrophe forced and unnatural in the highest degree."¹

Oliver Twist lives not because of any central plan, but in spite of an obvious weakness in respect to plot. The genial contemporary of Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, possessing, as he did, a natural skill in plot construction, was convinced that "the one defect of that wonderful book is the helplessly bad construction of the story."²

Nicholas Nickleby is the next of the early novels to be considered here. Even though, as G. K. Chesterton has observed³, this book represents Dickens' "first turning toward the novel as a form," a looseness of construction is still extremely apparent. The "Kenwigses", Mr. Lillyvick, the "Gentleman in the Small Clothes", and the Company of Mr. Vincent Crummies are responsible for too many unrelated episodes. Mrs. **Nickleby** herself has no significant share in the story. She annoys the reader sometimes, amuses him sometimes, but has no influence whatever upon the outcome of Nicholas Nickleby. The reader must listen to her

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1. Kitton, F. G., Dickensians; p. 220: The Dublin University Magazine, Dublin, December, 1838.
 2. Quoted by Kitton, F. G., The Novels of Charles Dickens; p. 36.
 3. Chesterton, G. K., Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens; p. 30.

long, wandering, irrelevant observations, if he is interested in Nicholas, Kate, Smike, or Madeline. He may recognize a familiar character and smile at her absurdities, among them her love affair with the insane old man¹, but he must find all these apart from the main thread of plot. The chapter heading, "Nicholas, accompanied by Smike, sallies forth to seek his fortune"² at once reflects the method used by Smollett in the construction of Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, and Humphry Clinker. There also are present two inserted stories, The Five Sisters of York³ and The Baron of Grogzwig.⁴

A study of Dickens' latest novels, Little Dorrit, excepted, shows a definite effort toward tighter structure which is the more obvious by virtue of its contrast with the extreme looseness of the early works. Of Bleak House, which appeared in 1853, Gissing has commented that it "is constructed only too well."⁵ He says "too well" perhaps because he is aware of a number of inconsistencies which seem necessary to the working out of the plot, such as Allan Woodcourt's appearing at Tom-All-Along's at the same time that

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1. Nicholas Nickleby; Chapters 41 and 49.
 2. Ibid; Chapter 22.
 3. Ibid; Chapter 6.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Gissing, George, Charles Dickens: A Critical Study; p. 67.

Jo cautiously returns¹, Esther's being at Deal at the same time that Allan returns from abroad², and modest Esther's presenting in her personal narratives such a delightful picture of herself. These inconsistencies, however, do not alter the truth that in this novel the author has one main consideration, Chancery. All the characters are in one way or another involved in Chancery. There are no superfluous characters who appear in episodes apart from the story, but all touch one another as the story moves steadily on with a singleness of interest and singleness of tone. Here is strong evidence of definite, undivided attention to structure.

Why Little Dorrit, written when Dickens was apparently giving more attention to structure, should be so extremely loose is open to conjecture. Some, doubtlessly, will opine with George Gissing that a reason may be found in the facts that "it was written in a time of domestic unhappiness"³ and that "the hand of the master is plainly weary."⁴ These suggestions cannot be carelessly thrown aside, because biography makes clear that it was less than a year after his completion of this novel that the separation between him and Mrs.

1. Bleak House; Chapter 46.

2. Ibid; Chapter 45.

3. Gissing, George, Charles Dickens: A Critical Study; p. 71.

4. Ibid.

Dickens was brought about. There is evidence of "a certain strain upon his invention,"¹ too, Forster reminds, in his resorting for the first time to "putting down written 'Memoranda' of suggestions for characters or incidents by way of resource to him in his writing."² There is, in my opinion, a third important element to be concerned. Dickens' growing interest in plot has led him to introduce too many potential sub-plots in Little Dorrit. The Meagles and Miss Wade element is neither closely knit to the central issue, nor carefully developed within itself; too much attention is devoted to the Merdles and Gowans from the point of view of the story of the Marshalsea. In an effort to deal with several not closely connected stories, not having a natural aptitude for plot construction, Dickens resorts to such unnatural and stilted means of development as Mr. Dorrit's unexpected claim to wealth³ and Miss Wade's personal "History of a Self Tormentor"⁴ disclosing the heretofore hidden chapters of her life, and breaks abruptly in upon a most important moment in the main plot of the story by carrying the reader away to the Merdles and Gowans.⁵ As though

1. Forster, John, Life of Charles Dickens; Vol. II, p. 246.
2. Ibid; p. 247.
3. Little Dorrit; Chapter 35.
4. Ibid; Chapter 21.
5. Ibid; Chapter 23.

these were not issues enough, room has to be made for John Baptist and Rigaud and the mystery of Mrs. Glennam. There is little wonder, I think, that Little Dorrit was not successful from the standpoint of structure; there was too much plot for Dickens. In spite of its weaknesses, however, this novel does reveal the author's increasing interest in mystery and in more involved plot, unsuccessful as he was in handling ~~them~~.

One wonders what the critic who doubted upon the appearance of Bleak House "whether, in any circumstances, he (Dickens) could work out a good plot"¹ may have said about Great Expectations; or what comment that novel may have called forth from the too enthusiastic contributor to The Christian Remembrancer, London, who wrote in December, 1842, of Nicholas Nickleby that "no other tale of our author's can boast so consistent and well-developed a plot, so sustained an interest in the action."² Surely Great Expectations is far away from Nicholas Nickleby in point of achievement of plot; it is superior to Our Mutual Friend, the last complete novel by Dickens, which appeared four years later. Partly by virtue

1. Kitton, F. G., Dickensiana; p. 274. Quoted from The Eclectic Review, London, Dec. 1853.
2. Ibid; p. 95.

of ~~the~~^{its} brevity, it has a consistency of tone and a sustained interest which, to my mind, are unequalled in any of the other works of this great author. The one unsatisfactory feature which Gissing notes,¹ the part concerned with Miss Havisham and Estella, is not a serious one. There is an absence of episode and of unnatural, strained situations, for these have given way to a plot which has a clearness of purpose, not lost sight of. Not only is there evidence of the interest in mystery suggested in Little Dorrit, but here it is carefully worked out. George Gissing does not hesitate to maintain that "Great Expectations (1861) would be nearly perfect in its mechanism but for the unhappy deference to Lord Lytton's judgment which caused the end to be altered,"² and a French critic, Louis Cazamian, is assured not only that "In his later work, Dickens endeavoured to brace up his rather lax construction",³ but also that "Great Expectations is a novel of a strong and sober texture, which takes a place apart from all the rest."⁴

Our Mutual Friend, if less pleasing through a lack of much of the spirit of the author's early

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1. Gissing, George, Charles Dickens: A Critical Study; p. 73.
 2. Ibid; p. 73.
 3. Legouis and Cazamian, A History of English Literature; p. 1170.
 4. Ibid.

fiction, is more commendable for its structure than the story of the Marshalsea. In November and December, 1865, there appeared these two seemingly contradictory criticisms of this novel:

"Perhaps, as a story, it is quite equal to any Mr. Dickens has told: it is sustained throughout; there is nothing in the plot too strained or unnatural. . ."¹

"Our Mutual Friend is, to our perception, the poorest of Mr. Dickens' works. And it is poor with the poverty not of momentary embarrassment, but of permanent exhaustion. It is wanting in inspiration."²

The length of the novel and a lack of the exuberance of his early work, due partly to his adapting himself to "a new time, new people, new manners",³ may readily lead one to feel a want of inspiration. That it is the poorest of Dickens' works, however, I am not ready to concede, for I feel with the contributor to The Eclectic Review that the plot is sustained, lacking the strained, unnatural situations that are found in some of the other novels I have discussed. There is a singleness of interest in the story of John Harmon which shows a much more successful handling of plot. That this plot, "depending on all manner of fantastical circumstances, unfolds itself with dreary elaboration"⁴ is due partly to the length of the novel, and partly,

1. Kitton, F. G., Dickensiana; p. 288; quoted from The Eclectic Review, London, November, 1865.
2. Ibid; p. 289; quoted from The Nation, New York, December 21, 1865.
3. Gissing, George, Charles Dickens: A Critical Study; p. 72.
4. Ibid; p. 71.

it seems to me, to too much "Podsnappery", which, with the Veneerings, seems to act as an unnecessary sort of chorus.

It cannot, in my opinion, be rightfully denied, however, that Our Mutual Friend has the ground-work of a novel, and that more carefully worked out than any ^{ix} of the early novels. It is worthy of note that after Gissing wrote of the "dreary elaboration" of its plot, he immediately continued,

"Yet I have a sense of ingratitude in speaking thus of Our Mutual Friend, for in it Dickens went far towards breaking with his worst theatrical traditions, and nowhere, I think, irritates one with a violent improbability in the management of his occurrences."¹

Thus the writer of Sketches ultimately became concerned with plot. As Smollett's Roderick Random can be read literally at random because of the author's characteristic "methodlessness" in his writing and a lack of plot, so can The Pickwick Papers of Dickens. A similar looseness of structure is present in all Dickens' early work before Dombey and Son. In later novels, primarily in Bleak House, Great Expectations, and Our Mutual Friend², on the other hand, Dickens seems

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1. Gissing, George, Charles Dickens: A Critical Study; p. 71.
 2. I omit The Tale of Two Cities because of its being an historical novel. It is worthy of note, however, that Dickens' more mature attention to plot is likewise present in this work.

definitely to be making an effort, once a very successful effort, to tighten his previously lax construction. With possible reasons for this change I shall deal in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER V

Accounting for the Change

I am aware of several plausible answers to the question, "Why the change that is obvious in Dickens' later novels?" One may speculate that Dickens little by little merely happened upon elements of plot as he copied and rather steadily improved upon his own successes, or that his interest in theatricals affected the construction of his novels. He may speculate, too, that the author's sensitivity to public opinion urged him, when he was accused, as he sometimes was, of lack of plot to attempt to overcome this apparent fault in his work. Another may suggest that Dickens was not only influenced by popular opinion, but frequently by the advice of a single individual, whose opinion he particularly valued.

It is well known that Dickens did feel both public and personal sentiment keenly enough to be guided by it. When the sales of Martin Chuzzlewit had fallen to little over twenty thousand, as contrasted with the sixty and seventy thousand of The Old Curiosity Shop and Barnaby Rudge,¹ the author

1. Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens; Vol. I, p. 344.

immediately transferred his hero to America in an effort to increase interest. I have already pointed out in an earlier chapter¹ contemporary criticisms of the vulgarity present in the Sketches and in Pickwick Papers and the subsequent absence of this element in the later works of the author. André Maurois calls attention to a letter to Forster in which Dickens requests, concerning a change which he has in mind for Dombey and Son, "'Do you think it may be done, without making people angry?'"² One recollects the generous and kind Riah in Our Mutual Friend who was the author's answer to a Jewish lady's objection to the character of Fagin in Oliver Twist. The ending of The Old Curiosity Shop is Forster's rather than Dickens', much as the ending of Great Expectations is Bulwer Lytton's. Forster writes of the earlier of the two novels,

"I was responsible for its tragic ending. He had not thought of killing her, when, about half way through, I asked him to consider whether it did not necessarily belong even to his own conception, after taking so mere a child through such a tragedy of sorrow, to lift her also out of the commonplace of ordinary happy endings, so that the gentle, pure little figure and form should never change to the fancy. All that I meant he seized at once, and never turned aside from it again."³

Dickens wrote of Bulwer Lytton's share in Great Expectations,

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1. See Chapter III of this thesis.
 2. Maurois, Andre, Dickens; p. 126.
 3. Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens; Vol. I, p. 148.

"You will be surprised . . . to hear that I have changed the end of Great Expectations from and after Pip's return to Joe's and finding his little likeness there. Bulwer, who has been, as I think you know, extraordinarily taken by the book, so strongly urged it upon me, after reading the proofs, and supported his view with such good reasons, that I resolved to make the change. . . I have no doubt the story will be more acceptable through the alteration."¹

I am convinced, however, that the explanation lies largely not in an accidental happening upon elements of construction, nor in a weak dependence upon public sentiment, but in Dickens' relationship to a single contemporary, Wilkie Collins.

Dickens first met Wilkie Collins in 1851, "through the intermedium of Augustus Egg."² This date is significant in that it was not until 1852 that the first of Dickens' novels indicating a complexity of plot foreign to his early work began to appear. This novel was Bleak House.

That Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins became intimate is evident, not only in biographical sketches, but in the many Letters³ which Dickens wrote to the younger author. In spite of the fact that in Dickens' biography he omits quotations from Dickens' letters to Collins because, as Ellis claims,

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1. Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens; Vol. II, p. 368.
 2. Ellis, Sr M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others; p. 14.
 3. There are more than a hundred of them which have been collected for publication.

he "was resentful and extremely jealous of the affection and jolly friendship entertained by Dickens for Wilkie,"¹ John Forster admits that "Mr. Wilkie Collins became, for all the rest of the life of Dickens, one of his dearest and most valued friends."² Genial affection is evident in the accounts which personal letters give of visits, trips, or literary enterprises. Perhaps in none of the earlier letters is it more openly expressed, however, than in one written from Dover, on the thirtieth of April, 1856, from which the following excerpt is taken:

"My Dear Collins, -- Wills brought me your letter this morning, and I am very much interested in knowing what o'clock it is by the Watch with the brass tail to it. You know I am not in the habit of making professions, but I have so strong an interest in you and so true a regard for you that nothing can come amiss in the way of information as to your well-doing.

"How I wish you were well now! For here I am in two of the most charming rooms (a third, a bedroom you could have occupied, close by), overlooking the sea in the gayest way. And here I shall be, for a change, till Saturday. And here we might have been, drinking confusion to Baronetcies, and resolving never to pluck a leaf from the Toady Tree, till this very small world shall have rolled us off! Never mind. All to come -- in the fullness of the Arctic season."³

Later letters reveal a strengthening of interest and affection rather than any lessening of them. For example, Dickens writes in October 1861,

1. Ellis, S. M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others; p. 37.
2. Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens; p. 94.
3. Letters of Charles Dickens; Vol. I, pp. 490-491.

"My dear Wilkie, -- On coming here just now (half-past one) I found your letter awaiting me, and it gave me infinite pleasure -- you can scarcely think how much pleasure; for to hold consultation on the quiet pursuits in which we have had so much common interest for a long time now is a delightful and wholesome thing in the midst of this kind of life -- in the midst of any kind of life.

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"From Brighton I will write you again, suggesting the course of proceedings for the Xmas No. in my ten or eleven days of reserve. Until then and ever, believe me,
Affectionately."¹

Their almost constant association, working and traveling together, shows the feeling which must have existed between them. Collins' Hide and Seek (1854), moreover, was dedicated to Dickens "as a token of admiration and affection."² Within the letters one finds more than an indication of affection. They are filled with discussions of plots and incidents in connection with the writings of both authors. It is obvious, then, that there was a literary significance in their association as well as the readily recognized social one. Particularly significant in this respect are some of Dickens' estimates of Collins as a writer. Of Basil Dickens wrote,

"I have read the book with very great interest, and with a very thorough conviction that you have a call to this same art of fiction."¹

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1. Letters of Charles Dickens; Vol. II, pp. 78-79.
 2. Ellis, S. M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others; p. 16.
 3. Letters of Charles Dickens; Vol. I, p. 336.

In a letter written to Wilkie Collins on the nineteenth of March, 1855, one finds the following:

"I have read the two first portions of Sister Rose with the greatest pleasure. An excellent story, charmingly written, and showing everywhere an amount of pains and study in respect to the art of doing such things that I see mighty seldom."¹

Dickens' admiration for The Woman in White is made obvious in another personal letter to Collins:

"I know that this is an admirable book, and that it grips the difficulties of the weekly portion and throws them in a masterly style. No one else could do it half so well. I have stopped in every chapter to notice some instance of ingenuity, or some happy turn of writing; and I am absolutely certain that you never did half so well yourself."²

Admiration for the younger author and interest in his work are responsible for Dickens' declaring, after having read the second volume of No Name,

"I cannot tell you with what a strange dash of pride as well as pleasure I read the great results of your hard work. Because, as you know, I was certain from the Basil days that you were the Writer who would come ahead of all the Field -- being the only one who combined invention and power, both humorous and pathetic, with that invincible determination to work."³

It seems logical that Dickens' admiration for Collins, added to the care and attention with which Dickens read these works, ^{should} inevitably have resulted in his thinking of plot and ingenuity of construction

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1. Letters of Charles Dickens; Vol. I, p. 439.
 2. Ibid; Vol. II, p. 31.
 3. Ibid; p. 162.

in connection with his own novels.

Moreover, Dickens and Collins worked together. Collins contributed complete works to Household Words¹; he collaborated with Dickens in writing such stories as No Thoroughfare and The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices.

Some knowledge of the nature of Collins' art as a writer of fiction is necessary if one is to judge whether or not Dickens may have gained suggestions from him. Wilkie Collins possesses, first of all, outstanding ability in handling the mechanics of plot. Whereas Dickens' ^{early} novels reveal at most a rambling sort of plot construction, Collins' work gives evidence of ingenious handling of elaborate plot in creating "a mental labyrinth through the intricate windings of which he conducts the reader, rarely, if ever, losing his bearings, whether as to time, place, or person."² Collins once said, "I have always held the old-fashioned opinion that the primary object of a work of fiction should be to tell a story."³ He kept his eye so consistently on the construction of that story that Anthony Trollope, "dealing with Collins as a novelist of construction, a fictional method he had not him-

1. "The Ostler", "Sister Rose", "The Yellow Mask".

2. The Cambridge History of English Literature;
Vol. XIII, p. 486.

3. Ellis, S. M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others;
p. 3.

self practised, remarked: 'Of Wilkie Collins it is impossible for a true critic not to speak with admiration, because he has excelled all his contemporaries in a certain most difficult branch of his art.'"¹ Thomas Hardy similarly observed² of him, "He probably stands first, in England, as a constructor of novels of complicated action that depend for their interest on the incidents themselves and not on character."³

The closely woven plot and the intense and carefully worked out mystery of The Woman in White and The Moonstone bear witness ^{to} ~~of~~ the accurateness of such criticisms of Collins as I have already quoted. Two consecutive statements of one of the characters in The Woman in White might be very aptly applied as a criticism of the novel itself, indicating the elaborate planning and the ingenuity present:

"But for the fatal resemblance between the two daughters of one father, the conspiracy of which Anne had been the innocent instrument and Laura the innocent victim could never have been planned. With what unerring and terrible directness the long chain of circumstances led down from the thoughtless wrong committed by the father to the heartless injury inflicted on the child!"⁴

Yet, direct and unerring as the progress of the plot may be, Collins plans it so skillfully as to maintain an intensity of interest throughout. The reader

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1. Ellis, S. M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others; p. 3.
 2. In a letter to Mr. A. Compton-Rickett, 1912.
 3. Ellis, S. M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others; pp. 3-4.
 4. The Woman in White; p. 507.

does not know the entire explanation of the mystery until Collins is willing that he should know at the end of the novel. To ~~any~~one who has read this novel, its having been said of Thackeray that he "sat up all night in order to read the exciting tale he could not put down"¹ does not seem at all illogical.

Collins has kept the interest so intense by keeping consistently concerned with the one central issue of the mystery of the "woman in white" and the extraordinary similarity between the features of this woman and those of Laura that the reader eagerly follows him without confusion through the intricate situations which arise. No characters are introduced which do not have some bearing upon the plot. Ellis observes² that a writer in The Times asserted of The Woman in White that it "is the first of English novels of plot and situation."

The Moonstone is again a typical example of Collins' skillful construction. The mystery itself is more intense because of the verisimilitude which Collins produces through the method of having different individuals give accounts of those parts of the mystery which they were personally most closely connected with and, therefore, most capable

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1. Ellis, S. M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others; p. 29.
 2. Ibid; footnote, p. 29.

of relating accurately. One feels ^{the} reality of Betteredge's details particularly because of the completeness of that characterization, with his doubts, his human curiosity, and his personal suspicions. The account of The Storming of Seringapatam, as related by the cousin of John Herncastle, has all the verisimilitude of Defoe.

In such an atmosphere of reality Collins develops the mystery of the Yellow Diamond, leading the reader steadily through the involved maze of situations which arises ~~around~~ around the jewel to the logical discovery of the truth, avoiding confusion as only a skillful artist could. Every character which comes within the pages of the novel is touched by the mystery of the Moonstone until the mystery becomes more and more intricate. Carefully and skillfully the plot is unwoven, with a steadiness of purpose which keeps the interest intense and sincere, until all the details are attended to. Not once does Collins swerve from the single issue with which he is concerned. There seems to be no opportunity for one to wonder at Ellis' calling it the "greatest of 'detective' stories"¹ or at Swinburne's considering it "a

1. Ellis, S. M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others; p. 38.

wonderful story!"¹

If, as biography definitely indicates, Dickens and Collins "were constantly together, dining or foraging in the City, making expeditions over the country"², and collaborating in the writing of various stories, frequently discussing elements of plot, it seems only logical to assume that Dickens' attempt to tighten lax construction of his novels, with partial success, was a result of the influence of this master mechanic of plot. It is at once obvious, moreover, that the first significant indication of Dickens' aiming to build up ingenious plots is in Bleak House, a novel which began to appear during the year after Dickens met Collins. There is ~~moreover~~ in this novel, as there is to a large extent, in Great Expectations and Our Mutual Friend, a singleness of interest not present before in Dickens.³

The contrast between the method of tone of Bleak House and such works as Pickwick Papers and Nicholas Nickleby is aptly stated by John Forster:

"Ingenuity is more apparent than freshness, the invention is neither easy nor unrestrained, and though the old marvellous power over the real is again abundantly manifest, there is some alloy of the artificial. . . The novel is, nevertheless, in the very important particular

1. Ellis, S. M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others; p. 38.
2. Ibid; p. 22.
3. See Chapter IV of this theses.

of construction, perhaps the best thing done by Dickens."¹

The restraint and lack of ease are indications, to my mind, of the novelty of Dickens' situation. He is not by nature a master of plot; the "true Dickens" is in Pickwick Papers, in Nicholas Nickleby. His associations with Wilkie Collins, however, called his attention to the challenge which plot construction may offer, and he accepted the challenge with some success. That he never attained the skill of Collins is no more surprising nor unexpected than that Collins never attained "the universality of Dickens or his sudden turns into the byways of broad humour."² Much as Dickens' turning toward ingenious plot construction in novels of mystery and crime, such as Bleak House, Our Mutual Friend, Great Expectations, and Edwin Drood³ led to the loss of some of the spontaneity and Dickensian quality of humor which are associated with the early novels, Collins' more serious concern with "the novel of propaganda which aimed at redressing some wrong or exposing some social or legal injustice, which was his last reaction to the influence of

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1. Forster, John; The Life of Charles Dickens; Vol. II, p. 142.
 2. Ellis, S. M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others; p. 41.
 3. Notes which Dickens made for this novel, published in The Problem of "Edwin Drood" by W. Robertson Nicoll, reveal Dickens' serious concern for the plot of this story of crime.

Dickens"¹ resulted in his decline as a successful novelist.

1. Ellis, S. M., Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others;
p. 41.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to make clear what the "two pounds of Smollett"¹ which a contributor to the Athenaeum discovered in Dickens actually consisted of and to ascertain what new influence accounts for Dickens' departure from the method of Smollett in his later novels, which contrast rather strikingly with his early works.

The Sketches, Pickwick Papers, and, to a small degree, Nicholas Nickleby give evidence of something of the coarseness of humor which may be found in Smollett. This element, however, is not characteristic even of Dickens' early work as a whole. His nature was not such as to allow him to follow Smollett in the general tone of his work, and besides, he was writing in the nineteenth century rather than in the eighteenth.

Briefly, my observations have revealed that Smollett's laxity of construction and several of the methods which became characteristic of his writing are reflected to a large extent in Dickens' works of fiction from the Sketches (1836) through David Copperfield (1849). His later works show a decided change. There is an original brevity in his titles;

1. Kitton, F. G., The Novels of Charles Dickens;
p. 21.

there are fewer suggestive names, fewer parallelisms of character and of incident; there is a tightening of structure which, more than anything else, makes Dickens' Bleak House, Great Expectations, and Our Mutual Friend strongly contrasted with the loosely constructed Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, and Humphry Clinker, which possess scarcely a suggestion of plot. I can agree only in part, however, with Adolphus Ward who states of Dickens' latest fiction that it "gradually lost all traces of the older masters both in general method and in detail; while he came to condense and concentrate his effects in successions of skilfully-arranged scenes."¹ It is true that the general method was distinctly changed, but certain details still reflect the earlier novelists, the type of nomenclature to a much smaller extent than in the early novels, but the use of unusual comparisons and reiterated phrases about as freely as ever. These last two devices Dickens seems to have made permanently his own; in fact, his use of characteristic repeated phrases is much more extensive than that of Smollett.

As he apparently owed much to Smollett in his humor and characterizations, Dickens owed to Wilkie Collins the improved structure of his latest

1. Ward, Adolphus W., Charles Dickens; p. 200.

works. Yet no just critic of Dickens can neglect to acknowledge that the "original sauce piquante"¹ which Dickens brought to the novel was so much more the cause of his great success than these other influences, that while Smollett and Collins are known only to the scholar, the author of Pickwick Papers is still ^{universally} known and loved, so great that Smollett and Collins are small in comparison.

1. Kitton, F. G., The Novels of Charles Dickens;
p. 21.

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