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Dickens's Lifetime Reading

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I.3 Dickens's Lifetime Reading

Leon Litvack

Abstract

Dickens's reading knowledge was vast, and serves as a testament to how effectively he digested and recalled a range of material that could be used in his various forms of output, including fiction, journalism, letters, and speeches. His primary influences stemmed from childhood reading: nursery stories, fairy tales, and the Bible. To these he added more standardised reading acquired at school, including the classics, and from the age of eighteen, a systematic programme of reading, including the works of Shakespeare, that was consciously undertaken in order to make the transition to a professional writing career. Other major influences include the eighteenth-century poets, novelists, and essayists, the Romantic poets, and early nineteenth-century novelists and poets. He was intimately familiar with the literary trends of his own day in poetry and fiction, as well as in such diverse fields as history, geography, travel, science, and industry; such wide comprehension assisted not only his own imaginative output, but also his work as editor of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*.

Keywords:

Library

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Influences

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Fairy tales

Bible

Common Prayer

Shakespeare

I. 2 Lifetime Reading

Leon Litvack

In order to assess what Dickens read from childhood onward, and to determine how this vast and varied storehouse contributed to his imaginative output, journalism, speeches, and other forms of public pronouncement, it is reasonable to consider the records of volumes he purchased and possessed at various points in his life. Evidence comes primarily from three sources: the inventory of the contents of his house in Devonshire Terrace, completed in 1844 before his departure for Italy;¹ the 'book accounts' with his publishers, stretching from 1844 to 1858, which served as a convenient credit facility for purchasing volumes directly through the book trade;² and the catalogue of the library at his last home, Gad's Hill, compiled before the final sale in 1878.³ Among the topics that feature are the following: English and American fiction, poetry, and drama of various periods; the classics; collections of essays; French and Italian literature; biography; books about London; science and industry; sociology and social reform; parliamentary reports; art; adventure and shipwrecks; travel; dreams and the occult; criminal, naval, and military trials; and standard reference works, including encyclopaedias, dictionaries, and books of phrases, quotations, and slang. These three sources, while significant, do not provide a comprehensive picture of the wealth of printed material that Dickens absorbed, then employed intelligently and imaginatively, to create those monumental works for which he is best remembered. Rather, they serve as a convenient checklist for confirming that individual intertextual references may be related to volumes Dickens is known to have had in his library. They are, perhaps, most useful when considered in outline, rather than in detail.

From his earliest years Dickens was an avid reader. He vividly recalled the mnemonics and rhymes through which he learned the alphabet,⁴ and referred to himself as ‘a great reader of good fiction at an unusually early age’,⁵ who became anxious when he had no reading material to hand.⁶ His childhood experiences provided fertile ground for nourishing the life of his imagination,⁷ and he continually returned to them for inspiration. Even before he could read, his nursemaid Mary Weller (who lived with the Dickens family in the years 1817-1822) related to him such gruesome stories as Captain Murderer, which Dickens claims to have heard ‘hundreds of times’ from this ‘female bard’, who had a ‘fiendish enjoyment’ of the young boy’s ‘terrors’.⁸ Dickens also reminisced about ‘the most astonishing picture-books’ he had devoured as a child, which were ‘all about scimitars and slippers and turbans, and dwarfs and giants and genii and fairies, and blue-beards and bean-stalks and riches and caverns and forests [. . .] all new and all true’.⁹ His literary adviser and biographer Forster remarked that ‘No one was more intensely fond than Dickens of old nursery tales’,¹⁰ and he read this type of literature into adulthood, in such collections as *The Child’s Fairy Library*.¹¹ Nursery tales and nursery rhymes were infused into his work in both casual and fundamental ways.¹² For example, in *Great Expectations* one of Mr Jaggers’s clients is described as ‘pulling a lock of hair in the middle of his forehead, like the Bull in Cock Robin pulling at the bell-rope’;¹³ in *Our Mutual Friend*, ‘a pretty little dead bird’ in Mr Venus’s shop is likened to ‘Cock Robin, the hero of the ballad’.¹⁴ Such incidental references demonstrate Dickens’s easy familiarity with tales and legends that were at the bedrock of English culture, and could be alluded to casually in order to add imaginative colour to his narratives. In other cases nursery stories that Dickens knew were put to more extended use; for example, in *Dombey and Son* the story of Dick Whittington (who rises to become a wealthy merchant and Lord Mayor of London) serves as the model for the progress of the hero, Walter Gay – particularly in the early portion of the novel.¹⁵ His uncle, Solomon Gills, imagines his nephew’s prospects:

‘Why it may be his House one of these days, in part. Who knows? Sir Richard Whittington married his master's daughter’.¹⁶ This iconic self-help story is treated with humour and a modicum of irony by Dickens, so that it never appears didactic; it is an example of the sophisticated way in which he uses a well-loved legend to infuse his narrative with playful satire, while at the same time enhancing Walter’s character by anchoring him to a popular touchstone of English culture.

Dickens was intimately familiar with other well-known tales, including Bluebeard, Dick Turpin, Tom Thumb, Jack the Giant Killer, Sleeping Beauty, Hansel and Gretel, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Babes in the Wood, Puss in Boots, and Cock Robin. He encountered them in various forms, including chapbooks, those small, cheaply produced paper booklets (printed on a single sheet then folded), which formed the staple reading material of those with little money to spare, and which, Dickens wrote in his journalistic piece ‘Out of the Season’, ‘were infinite delights to me’.¹⁷ He mentioned the tales fancifully in correspondence; for example, in a letter to his friend William Charles Macready he makes reference to Cinderella: ‘You [. . .] have flung away your glass slipper, and changed your triumphal coach into a seedy old pumpkin.’¹⁸ He was able to use details from grisly narratives like that of the wife-killer Bluebeard for comic purposes; in *Pickwick Papers*, for instance, Sam Weller jokes, ‘I think he's the wictim o' connubiality, as Blue Beard's domestic chaplain said, vith a tear of pity, ven he buried him’.¹⁹ Such details came effortlessly to Dickens, and confirm how fluently – and widely – he ranged across the literature he knew from early childhood, and employed creatively throughout the course of his career. These fairy tales also served as an important touchstone for his complex emotional life. In December 1857 he delved deeply into this wellspring of his imagination to express the torment he felt in his burgeoning love for the young Ellen Ternan:

I wish I had been born in the days of Ogres and Dragon-guarded Castles. I wish an Ogre with seven heads (and no particular evidence of brains in the whole lot of them) had taken the Princess whom I adore – you have no idea how intensely I love her! – to his stronghold on the top of a high series of Mountains, and there tied her up by the hair. Nothing would suit me half so well this day, as climbing after her, sword in hand, and either winning her or being killed. – There's a state of mind for you, in 1857.²⁰

As Dickens grew, and began to attend the school run by William Giles, his reading widened to include, as Forster notes, ‘not only [. . .] the famous books that David Copperfield specially names, of *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, *Humphrey Clinker*, *Tom Jones*, the *Vicar of Wakefield*, *Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Arabian Nights* and the *Tales of the Genii*,²¹ but also [. . .] the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, the *Idler*, the *Citizen of the World*, and Mrs. Inchbald's *Collection of Farces*.²² The last of these volumes is especially noteworthy, given the great significance of the drama in Dickens's imaginative development. He not only attended the theatre from an early age,²³ and saw such plays as Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Macbeth*;²⁴ he also read cheap periodicals featuring popular burlesques, including the *Portfolio of Entertaining and Instructive Varieties*.²⁵ Dickens owned a toy theatre,²⁶ replete (as he later recalled) with ‘its familiar proscenium, and ladies in feathers, in the boxes’.²⁷ He made use of the texts of juvenile dramas, such as *The Miller and His Men* (which featured a sensational explosion) and stage performances,²⁸ and made reference to this play in, for example, *Dombey and Son* (12, 154). Given Dickens's extraordinary powers of recollection, such childhood reading and performing constituted for him ‘a teeming world of fancies so suggestive and all-embracing’, to the extent that in later years he could maintain the ‘charming’ and immediate effect of these early experiences ‘as with the freshest garlands of the rarest flowers’.²⁹

Dickens's school days were also occupied with the study of standard educational texts, like Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* – a volume he often derided and parodied. In *Nicholas Nickleby*, for example, Squeers responds to Peg Sliderskew's question ('Is that you?'), in these words:

“Ah! it's me, and me's the first person singular, nominative case, agreeing with the verb 'it's', and governed by Squeers understood, as a acorn, a hour; but when the h is sounded, the a only is to be used, as a and, a art, a ighway,” replied Mr Squeers, quoting at random from the grammar.³⁰

He was also familiar with Francis Walkingame's pervasive arithmetic text, *The Tutor's Assistant*, which he also treated with disdain (NN 7, **page**).³¹ His Latin training was sound:³² he knew Ovid and Virgil,³³ and wrote about Paul Dombey's experiences at Dr Blimber's school with sensitivity and humour (DS 11-12, 142-62). Dickens also had experience of devotional works like Isaac Watts's *Divine Songs, Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children*, evoked through hypocrites like Pecksniff, who recalls one of the poems Dickens himself recited with 'such action and such attitudes':³⁴ 'Tis the voice of the sluggard, I hear him complain, you have woke me too soon, I must slumber again'.³⁵ Dickens passionately opposed the dreary and ridiculous attitudes these texts often adopted towards their young readers. For him the epitome of such wrongheaded, patronizing didacticism was Mr Barlow, the 'irrepressible instructive monomaniac' in the popular children's book *The History of Sandford and Merton*, who 'never made, or took, a joke', forced upon the young 'a cold shower-bath of explanations and experiments', and stifled all imaginative thought.³⁶

Yet relief was provided by other writers – particularly the eighteenth-century English essayists – whose works the schoolboy Dickens read many times before the age of eleven. When he moved from Chatham to London in 1822 his schoolmaster William Giles gave him a copy of Oliver Goldsmith's journal *The Bee*, which Dickens 'kept for his sake, and its own, a

long time afterwards'.³⁷ He recalled this volume, and others like it, in his plans for a new journal in 1839: 'The best general idea of the plan of the work might be given perhaps by reference to *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and Goldsmith's *Bee*; but it would be far more popular both in the subjects of which it treats and its mode of treating them'.³⁸ Though his design did not come to fruition until 1850, with the establishment of *Household Words*,³⁹ Dickens clearly bore in mind the example of figures like Addison's *Spectator*; as he wrote to Forster, 'If the mark between a sort of *Spectator*, and a different sort of *Athenæum*, could be well hit, my belief is that a deal might be done'.⁴⁰

The evocative passage on childhood reading, from the fourth chapter of *David Copperfield*, is often taken as evidence of how such early experiences contributed centrally to the imaginative life of the author.⁴¹ Dickens confirms, through David, that 'When I think of it, the picture always rises in my mind, of a summer evening, the boys at play in the churchyard, and I sitting on my bed, reading as if for life' (*DC* 4, 48). Forster unambiguously asserts that 'Every word of this personal recollection had been written down as fact'.⁴² Dickens depended for his creative sustenance upon such works as Alain René Lesage's *Gil Blas*, Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and especially the *Arabian Nights*,⁴³ which, even when he was at the height of his fame, continued to occupy 'far too high a place in the imagination to be burlesqued and parodied'.⁴⁴

The first indication of Dickens's wish to systematise as a reader was his application for a ticket at the British Museum, the day after his eighteenth birthday in 1830. The few surviving library slips indicate that his course of miscellaneous reading included Goldsmith's *History of England*, Joseph Addison's *Miscellaneous Works*, engravings of Hans Holbein's *The Dance of Death*, and, most notably, the *Life and Dramatic Works* of Shakespeare.⁴⁵ This Elizabethan dramatist, with whom Dickens had a deep and abiding familiarity, proved to be a greater creative stimulus to him than any other single author. Not only did he possess several

editions of the plays and poems; his library was also stocked with works of Shakespearian biography, bibliography, and textual annotation.⁴⁶ He called Shakespeare ‘the noblest of all dramatists’,⁴⁷ and considered his plays ‘an unspeakable source of delight’.⁴⁸ When he travelled to the United States in 1842, he took with him a one-volume edition of Shakespeare, which, he told Forster, ‘I constantly carry in my great-coat pocket’.⁴⁹ Dickens referred to Shakespeare constantly in correspondence, speeches, and journalism, as well as in fiction.⁵⁰ The playwright was constantly before him at his home, Gad’s Hill: as Dickens delighted in informing visitors, the house was built ‘on the identical spot where Falstaff ran away’.⁵¹ To emphasise the point, Dickens displayed a framed plaque on the upstairs landing; it opened thus: ‘THIS HOUSE, GADSHILL PLACE, stands on the summit of Shakespeare’s Gadshill, ever memorable for its association with Sir John Falstaff in his noble fancy’.⁵² *Henry IV*, parts I and II held a special attraction for Dickens on account of Falstaff, and he delighted in recalling him, for example, at the opening of a speech for the establishment of the Shakespeare Foundation Schools in 1864. He said, referring to himself, ‘it is the duty of the chairman on an occasion of this nature, to be very careful that he does not anticipate those speakers who come after him. Like Falstaff, with a considerable difference, he has to be the cause of speaking in others’.⁵³ He used this favourite character in fiction as well; ‘Mr. Dombey’, Dickens writes, ‘seemed to grow, like Falstaff’s assailants, and instead of being one man in buckram, to become a dozen’ (*DS* 8, 53).

Dickens ranged widely across the Shakespearian *oeuvre* in his allusions. *Henry V* and *Othello* inspired the titles of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, respectively.⁵⁴ Lines from *The Merchant of Venice* are artfully used in his critique of the design competition for the fresco *The Spirit of Chivalry*: ‘Hath not a commissioner eyes? Hath not a commissioner hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Does he lose them all in the Commission Room, and dwindle into a mere polite machine: a deferential and obsequious instrument?’⁵⁵

He frequently referred to the apothecary episode from *Romeo and Juliet* Act V, Scene I; for example, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Mr Crummles suggests that Smike should be cast in the role, and when the unfortunate boy delivers the line ‘Who calls so loud?’, he is acclaimed, ‘alike by audience and actors, the very prince and prodigy of Apothecaries’ (*NN [ch., page]*). Years later, in 1865, he referred to a chemist’s shop as being ‘very like the apothecary's in *Romeo and Juliet*’.⁵⁶

Dickens drew on other plays, including *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Tempest*, *King Lear*, and *As You Like It* for elements of structure.⁵⁷ But the two Shakespearian works that appealed to him most were *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. He was fascinated by the three witches in the first act of *Macbeth*, and recalled them in such texts as *Great Expectations*, where Pip describes the ‘diseased affection of the heart’ on the visage of a Soho housekeeper: ‘I had been to see *Macbeth* at the theatre, a night or two before, and [. . .] her face looked to me as if it were all disturbed by fiery air, like the faces I had seen rise out of the Witches' caldron’ (*GE 2:7*, 212). In *David Copperfield* several characters poignantly quote from *Macbeth*. For example, the impecunious Wilkins Micawber animates his correspondence with a single word: ‘If any drop of gloom were wanting in the overflowing cup, which is now "commended" (in the language of an immortal Writer) to the lips of the undersigned’ (*DC 28*, 366). James Steerforth recalls *Macbeth*’s interruption of a gathering, after the departure of the Ghost, from Act 3 Scene 4; he says, “Why, being gone, I am a man again,” like *Macbeth*. And now for dinner! If I have not (*Macbeth*-like) broken up the feast with most admired disorder, Daisy’ (*DC 22*, 275). Dickens referred to *Macbeth* freely in correspondence; for example, in 1842, when he visited President John Tyler in the White House, he shaped his reaction so as to employ *Macbeth*’s inability to utter ‘amen’ after the murder of Duncan: ‘He expressed great surprise at my being so young. I would have returned the compliment; but he looked so jaded, that it stuck in my throat like *Macbeth*'s amen.’⁵⁸ In writing to his sister-in-

law Georgina Hogarth about the ‘emulative moustaches’ of his close friends, he notes that the whiskers of Augustus Egg ‘are not near his nose, but begin at the corners of his mouth, like those of the Witches in Macbeth’.⁵⁹

Dickens’s allusions to *Hamlet* are equally pervasive. In a speech at the Conversazione of the Birmingham Polytechnic Institution in 1844 he concluded with an appeal for comprehensive liberal education, by adapting Hamlet’s address to Yorick’s skull in Act 5, Scene 1: ‘Now hie thee to the council chamber, and tell them, though they lay it on in sounding language and fine words an inch thick, to this complexion they must come at last’.⁶⁰ In his recollections of his time at Wellington House Academy he described the Latin master as being ‘solemn as the ghost in Hamlet’.⁶¹ In *The Old Curiosity Shop* Dick Swiveller and Mr Chuckster (both members of the ‘Lodge of Glorious Apollos’) exchange lines based on Hamlet’s soliloquy in Act 3, Scene 2: ‘Tis now the witching—’/‘Hour of night!’/‘When churchyards yawn,’/‘And graves give up their dead’.⁶² Dickens also demonstrated his knowledge of *Hamlet* in performance, in chapter 31 of *Great Expectations*: Mr Wopsle (the parish clerk with theatrical ambitions) stages a wretched – though hilarious – performance of the play. Dickens writes: ‘Whenever that undecided Prince had to ask a question or state a doubt, the public helped him out with it. As for example; on the question whether ’twas nobler in the mind to suffer, some roared yes, and some no, and some inclining to both opinions said "Toss up for it;" and quite a Debating Society arose’ (*GE* 2:12, 254). These examples attest to the author’s deep and abiding love of Shakespeare – both in outline and in detail. In his public life he supported the efforts of the London Shakespeare Committee (of which Forster was Chairman) to purchase the birthplace in Stratford, and his amateur dramatic company’s performances of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* contributed to the endowment of a curatorship.⁶³ He also counted among his close associates the leading Shakespeare scholars

and actors of the day, including Charles Knight and Macready. For him Shakespeare was, without doubt, ‘the great master who knew everything’.⁶⁴

In terms of the sheer number of references discernible in Dickens’s output, Shakespeare is far outweighed by the Bible and the Anglican Prayer Book. While he cannot be described as an overtly religious man, he did have clear ideas about the merit and import of religious – particularly Christian – sentiments.⁶⁵ In 1853 he wrote to his friend Clarkson Stanfield on the death of the artist’s son: ‘I heartily sympathize with you my dear friend in resigning him to the mercy of God and that blessed Saviour in whom we all trust humbly, according to our several ways’.⁶⁶ The last phrase is significant: Dickens’s own way was to trust and abide by the example of the historical Jesus. When his youngest son Edward (affectionately known as Plorn), was departing for Australia in 1868, Dickens wrote to say that while he didn’t wish to harass his family about ‘religious observances, or mere formalities’, he nevertheless had put a New Testament among the books his son was to take with him, ‘for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes that made me write an easy account of it for you,⁶⁷ when you were a little child; because it is the best book that ever was or will be known in the world, and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty can possibly be guided’. Dickens also beseeched his dear boy: ‘Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers, night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it’.⁶⁸

Though scholars have attempted to catalogue the references in Dickens’s fiction to the Old and New Testaments and the *Book of Common Prayer*,⁶⁹ such efforts represent only a small portion of the thousands of allusions in his work. What is clear, however, is that his familiarity with these texts derived from direct reading. References to the Old Testament outweigh those to the New, and he used the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures in different

ways. He employed the Old Testament for diverse effects: its narratives, images, and language (in the Authorised, or King James, Version) were recalled easily. Thus in *David Copperfield* Ham Peggotty refers to the book of Job (3:17) in his plea to David to say to Little Em'ly 'anything as might bring her to believe as I was not tired of my life, and yet was hoping fur to see her without blame, wheer the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest' (*DC* 51, 631). Belshazzar's feast, from Daniel chapter 5, is the inspiration for Dickens's fascinating description of Rosa Dartle's facial scar: 'There was a little altercation between her and Steerforth about a cast of the dice at back gammon—when I thought her, for one moment, in a storm of rage; and then I saw it [the scar] start forth like the old writing on the wall' (*DC* 20, 252). Dickens occasionally combined Old Testament allusions for comic effect: in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, for example, General Choke tells Martin, 'Well! you come from an old country: from a country, sir, that has piled up golden calves as high as Babel, and worshipped 'em for ages. We are a new country, sir; [. . .] we have no false gods; man, sir, here, is man in all his dignity' (*MC* 21, 348). This passage fuses Genesis 11 with Exodus 32, and supplements them with an allusion to the Ten Commandments (from Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 4:4-21), in order to emphasise the ridiculousness of a character who is ironically called '[o]ne of the most remarkable men in the country' (*MC* 21, 347).⁷⁰

There were certain Old Testament stories that Dickens used repeatedly; among them was Noah's Ark – particularly through associations with childhood. In 'A Christmas Tree' he recalled a boyhood toy, 'the wonderful Noah's Ark! It was not found seaworthy when put in a washing-tub, and the animals were crammed in at the roof, and needed to have their legs well shaken down before they could be got in'. His son Plorn also had such a plaything: 'a Noah's Ark with all the animals out walking, in company with Noah Ham, Shem, and Japhet, Mrs. N, Mrs. H, Mrs. S, and Mrs. J'.⁷¹ Toy arks also feature in his fiction: in *Esther's* narrative in *Bleak House*, Peepy Jellyby takes a Noah figurine 'out of an ark I had given him before we

went to church', and 'would dip him head first into the wine-glasses and then put him in his mouth' (*BH* 30, 376); thus playing out Noah's drunkenness from Genesis 9:18-23; in *Our Mutual Friend* the Boffins purchase a toy Noah's ark for little Johnny (*OMF* 2:9, 326).

Dickens also alludes to the ark in *American Notes*, where he describes a night steamer on the Potomac River as 'not unlike a child's Noah's ark in form, with the machinery on the top of the roof'.⁷² In *Great Expectations*, after the recapturing of Magwitch, the young Pip likens 'the black Hulk lying out a little way from the mud of the shore' to 'a wicked Noah's ark' (*GE* 1:5, 41). Such passages indicate how wonderfully evocative the Old Testament could be for Dickens, especially when viewed through the lens of childhood.

Whereas the author's versatile allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures tended to derive from cheerful juvenile habituation and a genuine love of story, his references to the Christian Scriptures, and to some extent the *Book of Common Prayer*, were more directly inspired by a wish to teach and comfort. Particularly noteworthy in this regard are the set-piece deathbeds of such characters as Jo the crossing sweeper, where he and Allan Woodcourt recite the Lord's Prayer (from Matthew 6:9-13, and Luke 11:1-4); this is followed by the omniscient narrator's stark admonition: 'Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with Heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us, every day' (*BH* 47, 572). Likewise, in an attempt to lend solemnity and purpose to the death of Magwitch, Pip recalls – and Dickens slightly misquotes⁷³ – the episode of the Pharisee and the Publican from Luke 13:18:

'Mindful, then, of what we had read together, I thought of the two men who went up into the Temple to pray, and I knew there were no better words that I could say beside his bed, than "O Lord, be merciful to him, a sinner!"' (*GE* 3:17, 456-57). Sidney Carton's approaching death in *A Tale of Two Cities* is imbued with pathos, through four occurrences of a poignant phrase from the Anglican burial service: 'I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he

that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die'.⁷⁴ These lines echo the more general theme of resurrection in the text,⁷⁵ and reinforce that some aspect of Carton will live on, in the family of Charles Darnay and Lucie Manette.

Dickens's was especially fascinated by Jesus's utterance beginning 'Suffer the little children', which appears in Matthew 19:14 ('Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven') and Mark 10:14 ('Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God'). When the daughter of Maria Winter died in 1855, he wrote to say, 'The simplest and most affecting passage in all the noble history of our Great Master, is his consideration for little children. And in reference to yours, as many millions of bereaved mothers poor and rich will do in reference to theirs until the end of time, you may take the comfort of the gracious words "And he took a child, and set it in the midst of them."' ⁷⁶ He used this image for similar purposes in *Bleak House*, where Esther Summerson and Ada Clare try to comfort Jenny, the brickmaker's wife, whose baby has died: 'we whispered to her what Our Saviour said of children' (*BH* 8, 100). The idea of hope in the face of adversity is also present in *Hard Times*, when Louisa Gradgrind thinks back on her old home and the dreams of childhood, 'so good to be remembered when outgrown, for then the least among them rises to the stature of a great Charity in the heart, suffering little children to come into the midst of it'.⁷⁷

Whereas Dickens tended to treat the New Testament with veneration and seriousness, he treated the Prayer Book with more latitude, and a modicum of humour. At Paul Dombey's christening, for example, 'Miss Tox kept her Prayer-book open at the Gunpowder Plot, and occasionally read responses from that service' (*DS* 5, 60). In the same novel, Captain Cuttle conflates the service of baptism with both the Ten Commandments and the bans of marriage. He says, 'Wal'r, my lad [. . .] providing as there is any just cause or impedimint why two

persons should not be jined together in the house of bondage, for which you'll overhaul the place and make a note, I hope I should declare it as promised and wowed in the banns' (*DS* 50, 670). For the wedding of Bella Wilfer and John Harmon in *Our Mutual Friend*, the text of the service is inordinately compressed: 'Who taketh? I, John, and so do I, Bella. Who giveth? I, R. W. Forasmuch, Gruff and Glum, as John and Bella have consented together in holy wedlock, you may (in short) consider it done, and withdraw your two wooden legs from this temple. To the foregoing purport, the Minister speaking, as directed by the Rubric, to the People, selectly represented in the present instance by G. and G. above mentioned' (*OMF* 4:4, 665-66).

Dickens clearly did value the *Book of Common Prayer*, and recommended it for daily use by the inmates of Urania Cottage.⁷⁸ As with the Bible, it was an important element of the cultural currency of nineteenth-century English life, and thus merited a place of significance in his imaginative storehouse.

Dickens's working knowledge of prose fiction was immense. He was, for example, intimately familiar with works produced at the inception of the genre, including John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. He did not, however, appreciate the volume for its devotional or moralistic elements;⁷⁹ instead he valued its imagery and its peripatetic structure, which he used as a frame for *Oliver Twist* (subtitled '*The Parish Boy's Progress*'), and for *The Old Curiosity Shop*, in which Nell says to her grandfather, 'I feel as if we were both Christian, and laid down on this grass all the cares and troubles we brought with us; never to take them up again' (*OCS* 15, 126). The works of Defoe (whom he called 'that wonderful genius for the minutest details in a narrative')⁸⁰ were also among his favourites – particularly *Robinson Crusoe*, the work that 'kept alive' David Copperfield's 'fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time' (*DC* 4, 48). Dickens strongly defended Defoe's text in his polemical piece, 'Frauds on the Fairies'.⁸¹ He also loved the work of Swift (which he recalled reading 'with a delicious laziness')⁸² – particularly *Gulliver's Travels*, with its satire, which

he poignantly employed to describe the aims of Americans, in their consumption of food: ‘to empty, each creature, his Yahoo’s trough as quickly as he can, and then slink sullenly away’ (*American Notes*, ch. 15, [page]).

Dickens’s debt to Henry Fielding (after whom he named his eighth child) was significant. He called him ‘one of the greatest English writers’, particularly for his ‘profound knowledge of human nature’.⁸³ He drew on the mock heroic (evident in Fielding’s *Joseph Andrews*) for the early portions of *Pickwick Papers*, such as the opening of chapter 2: ‘That punctual servant of all work, the sun, had just risen, and begun to strike a light on the morning of the thirteenth of May, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, when Mr. Samuel Pickwick burst like another sun from his slumbers, threw open his chamber window, and looked out upon the world beneath’ (*PP* 2, 7-8). *Tom Jones* was also a greatly beloved text, and provided some inspiration for *Great Expectations*, in terms of the developing relationship between Pip and Estella: two characters from widely divergent social classes.

In ‘The Holly Tree Inn’ Dickens claimed to know ‘every word’ of Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey* and Tobias Smollett’s *Peregrine Pickle*.⁸⁴ Sterne (whose *Tristram Shandy* was also a favourite) inspired Dickens’s treatment of sentimental scenes, like the deaths of Little Nell and Paul Dombey. Dickens recalled Sterne often in his work, as in ‘Shops and their Tenants’ from *Sketches by Boz*: ‘What inexhaustible food for speculation, do the streets of London afford! We never were able to agree with Sterne in pitying the man who could travel from Dan to Beersheba, and say that all was barren’ (Dent 1, ‘Shops and Their Tenants’, 61-64, 61). From Smollett, through such texts as *Roderick Random* and *Humphry Clinker*,⁸⁵ Dickens appreciated the techniques of the grotesque, particularly in physiognomy; the construction of characters like Sam Weller from *Pickwick Papers* demonstrates how Dickens adapted from Smollett elements of the picaresque,⁸⁶ a feature he also admired in Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, in which he found ‘some of the finest things’.⁸⁷

Dickens's reading in writers of the eighteenth century exercised an inordinate influence on his output – particularly up to 1848, with the completion of *Dombey and Son* and the Christmas Books. He did, of course, read and appreciate a wide range of later, nineteenth-century prose fiction – particularly authors like Walter Scott, whom he called 'Foremost and unapproachable in the bright world of fiction'.⁸⁸ He read *Kenilworth* 'with great delight',⁸⁹ and used this and other historical novels, including *Waverley* and *The Heart of Midlothian*, as models for *Barnaby Rudge*.⁹⁰ Dickens spoke out of deep familiarity with the Waverley novels when he told an Edinburgh audience in 1841 that Scott ('the mighty genius') was 'equally at home in the wild grandeur of Highland scenery or the burning sands of Syria, and in the low haunts of London life'.⁹¹

As a professional writer and editor, Dickens's sensibilities were highly sensitised to the output of his contemporaries. He followed literary trends with interest, and in writing such works as *Oliver Twist* he was conscious of its resemblance to Newgate novels⁹² like *Paul Clifford*, by Edward Bulwer Lytton, and *Rookwood*, by William Harrison Ainsworth, whose *Jack Sheppard* Dickens published in *Bentley's Miscellany* in 1839. This first outing as the editor of a periodical obliged Dickens to read a host of (then) popular authors, including James Sheridan Knowles, Francis Mahony ('Father Prout'), Edward and Henry Mayhew, Samuel Lover, Gilbert À Beckett, and Richard Harris Barham ('Thomas Ingoldsby'). While he published all of these authors, there were others whose contributions did not make it into *Bentley's*, or into his subsequent journals, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*.⁹³ Dickens's editorial reading was extremely laborious: the scale of it is demonstrated in an 1853 article by the author and Henry Morley, who note that in 1852, 'we read nine hundred manuscripts, of which eleven were available for this journal, after being entirely re-written',⁹⁴ in one case, Dickens's efforts to 'hack and hew' a single piece into shape for his journal made the proofs look like 'an inky fishing-net'.⁹⁵ It should not, of course, be assumed that such

reading and editing necessarily translated into literary influence; however Dickens was clearly attuned to the efforts of novelists like William Makepeace Thackeray, whose *Vanity Fair* appeared around the same time as *Dombey and Son*. Indeed in 1848 Dickens confessed to Thackeray, concerning an article by the latter in the satirical journal *Punch*, I cried most bitterly over [it] [. . .] and shall never forget it.⁹⁶

In later years some writers he published were subjected to high levels of scrutiny, and indeed intervention in their creative processes. In the case of Harriet Martineau (a writer Dickens described as ‘grimly bent upon the enlightenment of mankind’)⁹⁷ Dickens fundamentally disagreed with her approach to such subjects as education and factory legislation, and excised from her work passages he believed did not subscribe to the ethos of the journal.⁹⁸ He wrangled with Elizabeth Gaskell, a regular contributor to *Household Words*, particularly about her novel *North and South*, which he was publishing in the journal. In a later moment of intense frustration he burst out, ‘If I were Mr. G. O Heaven how I would beat her!’⁹⁹

Dickens of course read across many genres, including poetry, and his library featured numerous anthologies, such as *The British Poets*, and many books about poetry such as *Sketches of the Poetical Literature of the Past Half-Century*, and Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets*.¹⁰⁰ He frequently alludes to John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, for example in chapter 58 of *Great Expectations*, where Pip serves as a type of Adam, gaining knowledge of good and evil.¹⁰¹ There are also many references to Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Man*, such as in *Little Dorrit*, where Mrs Merdle recalls Epistle I when she says to Amy Dorrit, ‘There used to be a poem when I learnt lessons, something about Lo the poor Indians whose something mind!’¹⁰² Thomas Gray’s ‘Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’ is quoted in Dickens’s fiction, and he wrote a parody of the poem for Mary Boyle in 1849.¹⁰³ He knew Robert Burns’s songs and

poems, including ‘Auld Lang Syne’,¹⁰⁴ and he often referred to and sang the *Irish Melodies* of Thomas Moore.¹⁰⁵

Dickens drew inspiration from Romantic poets such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and compared his own photographic portrait by John Watkins to the Ancient Mariner, on account of his ‘grim and wasted aspect’.¹⁰⁶ He purchased a copy of Wordsworth’s *Prelude* at about the time he composed David Copperfield’s retrospective self-examination, set in the Alps,¹⁰⁷ and referred to the last line of the ‘Immortality’ Ode in a letter to Forster: ‘there are thoughts, you know, that lie too deep for words’.¹⁰⁸ The works of Byron held a particular attraction for him – especially *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, both of which he employed satirically. In ‘The Boarding-House’ from *Sketches by Boz*, Mr Hicks ‘could not resist the singularly appropriate quotation, beginning “But beef is rare within these oxless isles”’, from the second canto of *Don Juan* (Dent 1:280). Dickens also used the motif of the Byronic Hero in his portrayals of Steerforth in *David Copperfield* and Eugene Wrayburn in *Our Mutual Friend*.¹⁰⁹

Dickens read the poetry of his contemporaries, and particularly appreciated the work of Tennyson, after whom he named his fourth son. He considered *Idylls of the King* ‘all wonderfully fine – chivalric, imaginative, passionate, admirable’,¹¹⁰ and told listeners at the Liverpool Mechanics’ Institution that Tennyson ‘is one of us’, and ‘uses his great gifts [. . .] for the general welfare’.¹¹¹ Dickens also enjoyed the poetry of Edward Bulwer Lytton with ‘deepest interest, admiration and delight’,¹¹² and published works by Coventry Patmore, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and George Meredith in *Household Words*.¹¹³

There are, of course, new possibilities for researching this broad, deep, and above all endlessly captivating subject, which adds so significantly to the vast storehouse of influences on Dickens’s creative impulse. Fresh opportunities are offered by the ongoing digitisation of the periodicals that Dickens edited, and to which he contributed – not only *Household Words*

and *All the Year Round*, but also *The Morning and Evening Chronicle*, *Bell's Life in London*, *Bentley's Miscellany*, *The Daily News*, and others. It is also important to recall that he amended (in an unacknowledged fashion) the contributions of others to his journals; further examination of these might well reveal undocumented intertexts. Substantial work also needs to be carried out on the influences of another of his favourite authors, Ben Jonson: Dickens cast himself in both *Every Man in His Humour* and *The Alchemist*,¹¹⁴ and he was to have written a 'jeu d'esprit' on the occasion of his amateur company's theatrical tour in 1847, in which Mrs Gamp would have provided 'her critical opinion of Ben Jonson as a literary character'.¹¹⁵ Sustained analysis is also wanted on contemporary American writers, including Washington Irving (one of his favourites), to whom he intimated that 'everything' he had written was 'upon my shelves, and in my thoughts, and in my heart of hearts'.¹¹⁶ Dickens spoke French well, and carefully read such authors as Voltaire, whose work he took with him to Italy in 1844;¹¹⁷ there has been little investigation of how Dickens uses *Candide*, or Lesage's *Gil Blas*, which he knew from an early age.¹¹⁸

Many of Dickens's works display evidence of substantial research; for example, the death of Krook in *Bleak House* from spontaneous combustion was, in the author's estimation, an extrapolation based on reliable scientific evidence.¹¹⁹ While this particular turn of plot may fall into the realm of pseudo-science, Dickens's appreciation of more widely acknowledged advancements may be judged from the great variety of articles by others that he published in his journals; they treated such topics as evolutionary biology, conservation, steam-powered machinery, medicine, astronomy, photography, thermodynamics, and chemistry. Dickens owned and used a variety of reference works: encyclopedias;¹²⁰ dictionaries (of, for example, pronunciation, Latin phrases, biography, antiquities, nautical terms, human and comparative anatomy, 'universal knowledge', and the United States Congress);¹²¹ chronicles of London (manners and customs, history, prisons, water supplies, sanitation, diseases, pauperism, night

scenes, ‘underground’ life, and the ‘vulgar tongue’);¹²² and official reports (on, for instance, slavery, insanity, immigration, education, agriculture, urban burial, anaesthetics, and capital punishment).¹²³ All of these could bear closer scrutiny.

What appears above is a representative summary of the main areas of influence that books exercised over Dickens’s life and work. Yet to appreciate fully the breadth and depth of Dickens’s reading, it necessary to consider carefully and comprehensively the references and subjects (not all of them overt) in his works, his vast correspondence, his speeches, his library listings, and the comments of his friends, family, and professional contacts. One could also add to this impressive list those book titles that were never intended as reading material, but only as fictitious (often satirical) volumes that Dickens invented for the dummy book backs he had constructed to line the Gad's Hill library walls; these included *Hansard's Guide to Refreshing Sleep* (many volumes); *Noah's Arkitecture* [sic], 2 vols.; *Malthus's Nursery Songs*; and *The Wisdom of Our Ancestors. I.—Ignorance; II.—Superstition. III.—The Block. IV.—The Stake. V.—The Rack. VI.—Dirt. VII.—Disease.*¹²⁴ Even then one would still wonder at the inventive and tireless reading potential and experience of a man who possessed an exceptional memory, carried all that he knew effortlessly, and was gifted with an imagination that naturalised everything and transformed it into serviceable material. Dickens cannot, then, simply be considered a ‘literary’ writer, but rather one whose creative efforts emerged from a lifelong habit of reading that was active, perceptive, and incessantly productive.

¹ *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. Madeline House, Graham Storey, et al., Pilgrim/British Academy Edition, 12 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-2002). Subsequent citations: *PLets* followed by volume:page range, page, and hn for headnote, n or nn for footnotes, with page range given before page cited. Here, 4:711-25; hereafter ‘Devonshire Inventory’.

² See Leon Litvack, ‘What Books did Dickens Buy and Read? Evidence from the Book Accounts with his Publishers’ (*Dickensian* 94, 2 [Summer 1998]: 85-130); hereafter ‘Book Accounts’.

³ *Catalogue of the Library of Charles Dickens from Gadshill, reprinted from Sotheran’s “Price Current of Literature” Nos. CLXXIV and CLXXV, Catalogue of his Pictures and Objects of Art, sold by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, July 9, 1870, Catalogue of the Library of W. M. Thackeray, sold by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, March 18 1864, and Relics from his Library, Comprising Books Enriched with his Characteristic Drawings, reprinted from Sotheran’s “Price Current of Literature” No. CLXXVII*, ed. J. H. Stonehouse (London: Piccadilly Fountain Press, 1935), 5-120; hereafter ‘Stonehouse’.

⁴ See *Bleak House*, ed. George Ford and Sylvère Monod, Norton Critical Edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), chapter 8, 88, and [Dickens], ‘A Christmas Tree’, *Household Words*, 21 December 1850. Subsequent references to *Bleak House* are inserted parenthetically in the text by chapter, page.

⁵ Dickens, ‘New Uncommercial Samples: Mr. Barlow’, *All the Year Round*, 16 January 1869.

⁶ See *PLets* 9:519-20, 519.

⁷ See Michael Slater, *Charles Dickens* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 6.

⁸ [Dickens], ‘The Uncommercial Traveller’, *All the Year Round*, 8 September 1860.

⁹ [Dickens], ‘The Child’s Story’, *Household Words*, 25 December 1852.

¹⁰ John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, ed. J. W. T. Ley (London: Cecil Palmer, 1928), 317.

¹¹ See *Plets* 6:164-65, 165.

¹² For a more comprehensive treatment of Dickens's interest in fairy tales see Elaine Ostry, *Social Dreaming: Dickens and the Fairy Tale* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002).

¹³ *Great Expectations*, ed. Margaret Cardwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 2:1, 167.

Subsequent references are inserted parenthetically in the text by volume:chapter, page.

¹⁴ *Our Mutual Friend*, ed. Michael Cotsell, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1:7, 79. Subsequent references are inserted parenthetically in the text by book:chapter, page.

¹⁵ For Dickens's intended alteration of Walter's fate (that is, to have him 'disappoint all the expectations' and regress 'from that love of adventure and boyish light-heartedness, into negligence, idleness, dissipation, dishonesty, and ruin') see Forster 473, and *PLets* 4:589-93, 593.

¹⁶ *Dombey and Son*, ed. Alan Horsman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 4, 45. Subsequent references are inserted parenthetically in the text by chapter, page. On Whittington see also 6, 78; 9, 112; 10, 136; 15, 209; and 17, 227.

¹⁷ [Dickens], 'Out of the Season', *Household Words*, 28 June 1856.

¹⁸ *PLets* 4:9-13, 11.

¹⁹ *Pickwick Papers*, ed. James Kinsley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 20, 300. Subsequent references are inserted parenthetically in the text by chapter, page. See also *PLets* 5:152-53.

²⁰ *PLets* 8:487-89, 488. See also Michael Slater, *Dickens and Women* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1983), 202-17.

²¹ See *David Copperfield*, ed. Nina Burgis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 4, 48.

Subsequent references are inserted parenthetically in the text by chapter, page.

²² Forster, 8. He adds that these volumes were, for Dickens, ‘a host of friends when he had no single friend’.

²³ See Forster, 7.

²⁴ [Dickens], ‘The Uncommercial Traveller’, *All the Year Round*, 30 June 1860.

²⁵ Forster, 27. See also Robert Langton, *The Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1912), 77-78.

²⁶ Forster, 10.

²⁷ [Dickens], ‘A Christmas Tree’, *Household Words*, 21 December 1850.

²⁸ Forster recalls that Dickens performed in *The Miller and His Men* at Wellington House Academy, 44.

²⁹ ‘A Christmas Tree’.

³⁰ *Nicholas Nickleby*, ed. Paul Schlicke, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), ch. 57, [ed: get edition and check quotations and page numbers inserted in text] Subsequent references are inserted parenthetically in the text by ch., page.

³¹ Despite his contempt for Walkingame, Dickens purchased a copy in 1847---probably for the use of his children (see Litvack, ‘Book Accounts’, 108-109).

³² See Forster, 4.

³³ [Dickens], ‘A Christmas Tree’.

³⁴ Langton, 26. See also Slater, *Charles Dickens*, 8.

³⁵ *Martin Chuzzlewit*, ed. Margaret Cardwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 9, 153. Subsequent references are inserted parenthetically in the text by chapter, page.

³⁶ [Dickens], 'New Uncommercial Samples: Mr. Barlow', 16 January 1869.

³⁷ Forster, 8. See also *PLets* 5:432-33.

³⁸ *PLets* 1:562-65, 563.

³⁹ See *PLets* 5:621-23.

⁴⁰ *PLets* 4:658-60, 660.

⁴¹ See Slater, *Charles Dickens*, 11.

⁴² Forster, 6.

⁴³ For a catalogue of emotional reminiscences of the *Arabian Nights* see 'A Christmas Tree'.

⁴⁴ [Dickens], 'Where We Stopped Growing', *Household Words*, 1 January 1853.

⁴⁵ See William Miller, 'Dickens Reads at the British Museum', *Dickensian* 43, 2 (Spring 1947): 84, and Slater, *Charles Dickens*, 32.

⁴⁶ See Devonshire Inventory, 716, 725; and Stonehouse, 22, 24, 87, 100-101.

⁴⁷ *The Speeches of Charles Dickens*, ed. K. J. Fielding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 231; hereafter 'Speeches'.

⁴⁸ *PLets* 3:165-66, 165.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See Valerie Gager, *Shakespeare and Dickens: The Dynamics of Influence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 251-369.

⁵¹ *PLets* 8:328-29, 329; 333-34, 334.

⁵² Forster, 652.

⁵³ Speeches, 333.

⁵⁴ *Henry V*, Act 4, Scene 3, supplied the motto for *Household Words* ('Familiar in his mouth as household words'); *Othello*, Act 1, Scene 3, inspired the motto for *All the Year Round* ('The story of our lives from year to year').

⁵⁵ [Dickens], 'The Spirit of Chivalry', in *The Dent Uniform Edition of Dickens' Journalism*, ed. Michael Slater and John Drew, 4 vols. (London: J. M. Dent, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993-2000), 2:79. These lines were excised at proof stage. Subsequent references to these volumes are inserted parenthetically in the text as Dent volume:title, page.

⁵⁶ *PLets*, 11:30-31, 31.

⁵⁷ On *King Lear* see, for example, Alexander Welsh, *From Copyright to Copperfield: The Identity of Dickens* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 87-99.

⁵⁸ *PLets* 3:109-12, 111.

⁵⁹ *PLets* 7:175-76, 175.

⁶⁰ Speeches, 64.

⁶¹ [Dickens], 'Our School', *Household Words*, 11 October 1851.

⁶² *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ed. Elizabeth M. Brennan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 56, 432-33. Subsequent references are inserted parenthetically in the text by chapter, page.

⁶³ See, for example, *PLets* 5:277-79, 278-79; 315-16, 315.

⁶⁴ [Dickens], 'The Uncommercial Traveller', *All the Year Round*, 21 July 1860.

⁶⁵ See Dennis Walder, *Dickens and Religion* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981).

⁶⁶ *PLets* 7:17.

⁶⁷ *The Life of Our Lord*, written in 1846, but only published in 1934, after the death of Dickens's last surviving child, Henry. See Gary Colledge, *Dickens, Christianity, and The Life of Our Lord* (London: Continuum, 2009).

⁶⁸ *PLets* 12:187-88, 188. On the 'biblical Dickens' see Janet L. Larson, *Dickens and the Broken Scripture* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 6-14.

⁶⁹ See, for example, Nicholas Bentley, Michael Slater, and Nina Burgis, *The Dickens Index* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 20-21, 28-29, and Larson.

⁷⁰ The epithet is also used of Jefferson Brick and other American characters (see *MC* 16, 272).

⁷¹ *PLets* 7: 563-64, 564.

⁷² *American Notes*, ed. Patricia Ingham (London: Penguin, 2000), ch. 9, [ed.: insert page number] Subsequent references are inserted parenthetically in the text by chapter, page.

⁷³ On this misquotation see Edgar Rosenberg's comment in *Great Expectations*, Norton Critical Edition (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1999), 452-53.

⁷⁴ *A Tale of Two Cities*, ed. Andrew Sanders, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), volume 3, chapter 9, 387, 388, 389; chapter 15, 464.

⁷⁵ See Andrew Sanders, *Charles Dickens: Resurrectionist* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 166-70.

⁷⁶ *PLets* 7:648-49, 648.

⁷⁷ *Hard Times*, ed. Fred Kaplan, 4th edn., Norton Critical Edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016), book 2, ch. 9, [ed.: page].

⁷⁸ *PLets* 5:192.

⁷⁹ See *PLets* 6:783.

⁸⁰ *PLets* 8:62-63, 62.

⁸¹ [Dickens], 'Frauds on the Fairies', *Household Words*, 1 October 1853.

⁸² *PLets* 2:238-39, 238.

⁸³ *PLets* 7:648-49, 648; 5:651-54, 652.

⁸⁴ [Dickens], 'The Holly-Tree Inn: The Guest', *Household Words* Christmas number, 15 December 1855.

⁸⁵ See *PLets* 7:458.

⁸⁶ See, for example, *Pickwick Papers*, ch. 10, 137-48; ch. 16, 230-41.

⁸⁷ *PLets* 8:153-55, 153.

⁸⁸ [Dickens], 'Review of Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott', in *Dent* 2, 37.

⁸⁹ *PLets* 1:576.

⁹⁰ See Andrew Sanders, *The Victorian Historical Novel, 1840-1880* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 68-96.

⁹¹ *Speeches*, 12.

⁹² See Dickens's 1841 Preface to the third edition of *Oliver Twist*, lxiii.

⁹³ See John Drew, *Dickens the Journalist* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 181-82, and Kathryn Chittick, *Dickens and the 1830s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 92-113.

⁹⁴ [Dickens and Henry Morley], 'H. W.', *Household Words*, 16 April 1853.

⁹⁵ *PLets* 8:139.

⁹⁶ *PLets* 5:227-28, 228.

⁹⁷ *PLets* 7:438-40, 438.

⁹⁸ See Drew, *Dickens the Journalist*, 125-28.

⁹⁹ *PLets* 7:699-700, 700 and n1. The humorous outburst concerned a story by Gaskell, 'Half a Lifetime Ago'. On *North and South* see, for example, *PLets* 7:417-18, 417 and n.

¹⁰⁰ Stonehouse, 15, 81, 94.

¹⁰¹ See Jerome Meckier, *Dickens's Great Expectations: Misnar's Pavilion versus Cinderella* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 178.

¹⁰² *Little Dorrit*, ed. Harvey Peter Sucksmith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), volume 1, chapter 20, 237.

¹⁰³ See, for example, *David Copperfield* 49, 608, where Micawber quotes from the poem ('Each in his narrow cell [. . .]'). The parody for Boyle is printed in *PLets* 5:708-709.

¹⁰⁴ See *David Copperfield* 17, 225, and 49, 608; and *Our Mutual Friend* 4:6, 477.

¹⁰⁵ See *PLets* 2:79 and nn.1, 3. See also Leon Litvack, 'Dickens, Ireland and the Irish Part I', *Dickensian* 99, 1 (Spring 2003): 36-41.

¹⁰⁶ *PLets* 9:465-66, 466. See also *PLets* 2:103-104, 103.

¹⁰⁷ See Litvack, *Book Accounts*, 94-95, 103. See also *David Copperfield* 58, 697-98.

¹⁰⁸ *PLets* 3:204-11, 211. Wordsworth's line is 'thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears'.

¹⁰⁹ See William R. Harvey, 'Charles Dickens and the Byronic Hero', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 24 (1969-1970): 307-13.

¹¹⁰ *PLets* 9:106-107, 107.

¹¹¹ *Speeches*, 56.

¹¹² *PLets* 5:500-501, 500.

¹¹³ See, for example, Patmore's 'The Golden Age', in *Household Words*, 2 November 1850; E. B. Browning's sonnet 'Hiram Power's Greek Slave', in *Household Words*, 26 October 1850; and Meredith's 'Monmouth', in *Household Words*, 1 November 1856.

¹¹⁴ On *Every Man in His Humour* see *PLets* 4:332-33; 347-48, 347; 359-60, 359; 364-65; 377-78, 377; on *The Alchemist* see *PLets* 4:441; 5:195n5, 202, and 242n2; 6:256-59, 258 and n3, and 7:881n5.

¹¹⁵ *PLets* 5:140-41.

¹¹⁶ *PLets* 2:267-69, 267.

¹¹⁷ *PLets* 4:174-75, 174 and n2.

¹¹⁸ [Dickens], 'The Uncommercial Traveller', *Dent* 4:172.

¹¹⁹ See *Bleak House* 32, 403. See also *PLets* 7:22-23.

¹²⁰ See, for example, *Stonehouse*, 42, 83.

¹²¹ See Stonehouse, 6, 11, 14, 42, 47, 51, 62, 66, 71, 96, 103, 116, 119.

¹²² Stonehouse, 9, 15, 25, 41, 45, 60, 74, 82, 88-9, 104, 116

¹²³ Stonehouse, 61, 87-9.

¹²⁴ See Langton, 122-27.

Further Reading

Philip Collins, 'Dickens's Reading', *Dickensian* 60, 3 (Autumn 1964): 136-51

T. W. Hill, 'Books that Dickens Read', *Dickensian* 45, 2 (Spring 1949): 81-90; 45, 3
(Summer 1949): 201-207

Norbert Lennartz and Dieter Koch, eds., *Texts, Contexts, and Intertextuality: Dickens as a Reader* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2014)

George Henry Lewes, 'Dickens in Relation to Criticism', *Fortnightly Review* 11 (1872): 141-
54

Harry Stone, *Dickens and the Invisible World: Fairy Tales, Fantasy, and Novel-Making*
(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979)