An Edwardian's View of Dickens and His Illustrators

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Illustrators in Context

A
fter each illustrator's dates the page numbers for Furniss's discussion are given and unreferenced quotations in the entries are to these pages. The entries are intended to provide the background for a fuller appreciation of Furniss's discussion of the main illustrators, to assess its accuracy in light of modern scholarship, and to comment on some of the issues raised.


Furniss's bible for his lecture was F. G. Kitton's Dickens and His Illustrators (1899) but this is not readily available and the best modern work on the topic is Jane R. Cohen's Charles Dickens and His Original Illustrators (1980). This may be supplemented by the entries in the indispensable Oxford Reader's Companion to Dickens, ed. Paul Schlicke, (1999). Also useful are J. R. Harvey's Victorian Novelists and Their Illustrators (1970) and Nicolas Bentley's "Dickens and His Illustrators" (1969).

Dickens's two main illustrators, George Cruikshank and Hablot Knight Browne, have attracted the attention of modern scholars. Mention may be made of Robert Pat

Frederick Barnard (1846–1896) "A Sketch of Boz" 77–84

Barnard was the main illustrator for the Household Edition of the novels (1871–1879), the first to be published after Dickens's death. His designs are marked by a uniformly representational "sixties" style shared by two of the other illustrators briefly discussed by Furniss, Green and Mahoney (75–77 and note 143). Barnard contributed nearly 450 illustrations to nine of the twenty volumes and then produced Character Sketches from Dickens, consisting of six sketches for each of the three series (1879, 1884 and 1885). As Hammerton notes in the 1910 Furniss edition these were subsequently reproduced and widely circulated "in many shapes and sizes, and they have probably seen as much service as any eighteen Dickens pictures ever published" (vol. 17, 40).
Their appearance as prints and postcards, in magazines, advertisements and other formats meant that next to Phiz Barnard probably most influenced the public’s visualization of Dickens’s characters.

According to Furniss had Barnard illustrated all of Dickens “the world would have enjoyed a supreme combination of artist and author” since he was “a very great draughtsman” who alone approached Dickens’s “truth to nature.” In doing so he demonstrated technical skill without sacrificing the “spirit of the author,” an appreciation of Dickens’s “sensibility” also recognized by modern commentators (see Introduction, 11). As one of the leading black-and-white artists of his day he contributed to *Punch*, the *Illustrated London News*, and to Furniss’s own short-lived weekly, *Lika Joko* (1894–1895), for which he produced a series of “Shakespearic characters as played by well-known Dickens Stars” (Figs. 51–55).

A “wonderful mimic” and practical joker, whose company Furniss clearly enjoyed, Barnard’s life ended tragically in the manner described, accidentally “burnt to death in his bed.” Furniss’s pen and ink caricature of the artist is in the National Portrait Gallery.

**Hablôt K. Browne (1815–1882)**  
“A Sketch of Boz” 52–65

Hablôt Knight Browne, otherwise known as Phiz, was Dickens’s main illustrator, contributing, over a period of twenty-three years from 1836 (*The Pickwick Papers*) to 1859 (*A Tale of Two Cities*) more than 700 designs in both steel and wood to ten (of the fifteen) major novels. His pseudonym, which he retained throughout his career, “was adopted, as the artist admitted, to correspond with Dickens’s ‘Boz’” but also because it was an abbreviation of “physiognomy,” the art of judging character from facial features.

Once Buss’s illustrations for *The Pickwick Papers* had been deemed unsuitable Dickens personally selected Browne (and not Thackeray who also applied for the job) as his successor because he had been trained at the firm of Finden, the engravers (though it was his friend and fellow apprentice, Robert Young, who actually etched Browne’s designs), but above all because “with his youth, inexperience, and receptive and malleable character he was ideal for Dickens’s purposes” (Harvey 34). Lacking “Cruikshank’s vanity, Seymour’s hypersensitivity, and Buss’s etching inexperience” (Cohen 63), Browne’s compliant nature smoothed the way for what is arguably the most successful collaboration in the history of book illustration. As Furniss says Phiz “was by far the best man for Boz, and some of his works are masterpieces.”

From these Furniss selects the so-called “dark plates” for *Bleak House* and *Dombey and Son*. Few, however, would go so far as to say that in *On the Dark Road* (Fig. 23) “Phiz’s art even surpassed his author’s” but modern scholars should, perhaps, pay more attention to the dark plates with their marvellously atmospheric alternations of light and dark, produced with the aid of a ruling machine.1 They have languished too long in the shadow of the more preferred caricature-style illustrations whose often dense and emblematic Hogarthian “accessories,” according to Furniss, “would have been better left out” but which lend themselves more readily to contemporary critical
exegesis. But even Furniss indulges in such analysis as is shown in his discussion of *Mr. Carker in his Hour of Triumph* (Fig. 28) which predates those by Reed (28–30), Leavis (459), Steig (104–105), and Cohen (99). And like some of his successors Furniss considered Phiz’s illustrations to *Dombey and Son* to be “his best scenes in any of Dickens’s novels.” However, Furniss’s general assessment of Phiz is uncertain if not contradictory: he admired the “great” scenic dark plates, found him “always effective” and yet “clever as Phiz undoubtedly was, his fun was artificial, and his technique painfully mannerised” (79). Few today, though, would lambast Phiz for his lapse into the repulsive “grotesqueness” of his designs for *The Old Curiosity Shop*, but as discussed in the Introduction (10–11) this attack on extreme caricature and Furniss’s preference for Phiz’s “purely picturesque illustrations” is a reflection of changing attitudes towards style in book illustration during the nineteenth century.

It was partly this change that led to Browne’s demise as Dickens’s main illustrator. In particular the emblematic and interpretative detail of Browne’s caricatural style had become outdated. Furthermore Boz’s art had outgrown the need for Phiz’s even before *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), the last novel he illustrated. “Dickens’s prose, through its descriptive powers, was usurping the usual role of illustrations” (Schlicke 62) so that his mature novels needed illustrating less and less. As Furniss says “if ever a writer could dispense with an artist to illustrate his works, that author was Charles Dickens,” though he is referring to the whole of Dickens’s *oeuvre*, not just to his later novels. It is an odd statement coming from an illustrator who was to produce 500 new designs for his 1910 edition.

The significance of Furniss’s contention that all of Phiz’s “characters in the whole Dickens gallery are French, not English” is discussed in the Introduction (18). As for Browne’s French connection the family was descended from Huguenots named Bruneau and he was, indeed, “called Hablôt after a French Officer at Waterloo,” a certain captain Nicolas Hablôt who at the time was believed to have been killed in battle and who had been engaged to Browne’s sister Kate. But recent evidence suggests he survived Waterloo and that Browne was probably the illegitimate son of Nicolas and Kate (Oxford DNB). Thus, if one believes artistic ability to be in part inherited (and all of Browne’s surviving nine children were artistically endowed), then Furniss’s argument that Hablôt’s style and technique “were thoroughly French” should be given due consideration.

Furniss is at his most defensive when discussing Phiz’s working relationship with Dickens (see also Introduction, 11–12). What emerges is a plea for a greater appreciation of the art of the illustrator and a recognition of the difficulties under which he laboured: the pressure of deadlines, especially when producing for the serial “mode of publishing,” which occasionally led to blunders; authors who, like Dickens, “did not understand art, and who did not know how to control or guide his illustrators”; poor remuneration relative to what authors and publishers earned; and the sheer workload that, Furniss implies, wore Phiz out and eventually led to his collapse. Certainly his output was prodigious: in addition to Dickens he also illustrated, as Furniss mentions, “Lever and others,” among them Ainsworth, Bulwer-Lytton, Harriet Beecher Stowe,
and Trollope, in all “about 3660 images over his lifetime” (Oxford DNB). But his collapse had more to do with his failing health, particularly his paralysis, and his general decline was exacerbated by his increasingly desperate financial circumstances that came about partly because of his poor business sense and his refusal to “emulate Oliver Twist and ask for more” for his work. Eventually his poverty was relieved not by a government pension (that Disraeli refused to grant) but through the intervention of fellow artists such as Fildes, Frith and Wells who persuaded the Royal Academy to award him “the pension previously held by George Cruikshank, in recognition of his services to art” (Cohen 122). This enabled him to retire to Brighton where he died on 8 July 1882.

**Robert W. Buss (1804–1875) “A Sketch of Boz” 51–52**

When Seymour committed suicide with only two numbers of *The Pickwick Papers* illustrated, the publishers Chapman and Hall desperately sought a replacement. They found one in Buss, a young portrait painter who, though his father was an engraver, had no experience at all in the relatively new technique of etching in steel, used for the *Pickwick* illustrations. It was, as Furniss says, “altogether out of keeping with his method” of oil painting but to his credit Buss taught himself the new skill in “three weeks,” though in order to make the publication deadline he was forced to engage “a professional etcher whose faithful execution lacked the verve and spontaneity of the original artist’s hand” (Schlicke 64). Predictably then, the two published plates for the third number, *The Cricket Match* and *The Fat Boy Awake* (Fig. 14), were of inferior quality if not actually the “fiasco” that Furniss, all too aware himself of how technical deficiencies could destroy artistic merit, termed it. Chapman and Hall soon replaced Buss, who had worked for them for less than a month, with the longest serving of Dickens’s illustrators, Browne. Buss not unnaturally felt he had been treated unfairly since, on the basis of the two already published illustrations, he assumed he was to be engaged for the life of *Pickwick*. He had even designed two further plates for the fourth number and while waiting instructions he returned to the Academy picture that he had “put aside... in order to oblige the publisher and author” when the former tersely informed him that “they had placed the work in the hands of Mr. Hablot Browne!” (qtd. Cohen 55). Furniss’s “sympathy” for Buss is thus well founded and not merely that of a fellow illustrator who had “suffered by like treatment.”

On the other hand Furniss’s hostility towards “Dickens’s Home Secretary” (69) Forster (see Introduction, 12–13) is revealed in his calling the latter’s minor slight of Buss (note 63) a “snub,” which in any case Forster, to whom Buss had written explaining his association with *The Pickwick Papers*, promised to rectify in the next edition of his *The Life of Charles Dickens*, though he died before he could do so.

The well-known but unfinished watercolour *Dickens’s Dream* (Fig. 15), begun after Dickens’s death, of the author dozing in his chair at Gad’s Hill surrounded by characters from his own novels is testimony not just to Buss’s harbouring “no ill-will” but to his continued admiration of the novelist as expressed in the oils, watercolours and
drawings of characters and scenes from several novels and in his praise of Dickens's moral vision in his *English Graphic Satire* (1874). Furniss's sympathetic and understanding account of Buss's relation with Dickens and, conversely, posterity's unwarranted "contempt" is in line with Cohen's neat summary of the artist's reputation: "To be forever remembered, if at all, as a failure in association with the most popular novel of the century was a fate Buss hardly deserved" (51).

**George Cattermole (1800–1868) “A Sketch of Boz” 67–70**

Cattermole trained as an architectural draughtsman and when Dickens persuaded him, along with Browne, to contribute to the new journal *Master Humphrey's Clock* he had already exhibited and published drawings of ancient English buildings, been elected to the rather exclusive Society of Painters in Water Colours, and illustrated the novels of Scott and Bulwer-Lytton. Thus his expertise and standing (he was offered but turned down a knighthood in 1839) made him the ideal person to illustrate, with wood engravings dropped into the text, the picturesque and "architectural subjects" that, together with Browne's grotesqueries, create the powerful visual dimension of *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*, the two novels that quickly took over the initially ailing periodical.

Furniss rightly praises Cattermole's "architectural bits" and singles out his drawing of the sixteenth century Maypole Inn (Fig. 39) for special attention; he contends it is at the limit of picturesque caricature and yet it was in this period that "English building rambled most freely, and ornament could multiply with abandon" (Harvey 125), thus allowing Cattermole to indulge his undoubted talent in this direction.

But in drawing human figures he was less successful. Inevitably Furniss discusses perhaps the most controversial of Dickens's illustrations, Little Nell on her deathbed (Fig. 38). It is for Furniss "one of the most pathetic pictures ever penned" and his criticism of Cattermole's depiction of "a somewhat plain, well developed, comfortable, country lass, having a quiet sleep in an impossible bed" is in line with modern assessments. For example, Cohen notes Nell's "broad, crudely delineated face" and even the antiquarian surroundings, Cattermole's forte, are marred by "hackneyed symbols of immortality" (129). Not that Dickens's contemporaries, steeped in a culture of traditional iconography, considered them in this way. Their response to the death that supposedly, Diana-like, cast a whole nation into mourning, is for Furniss typical of Victorian sentimentality as his quotation from Macready's diary exemplifies. Yet was the reaction typical and widespread or a legend, here perpetuated by Furniss, based upon one or two anecdotes?

According to the editors of the Pilgrim Letters "since 1897, when F. G. Kitton cited Daniel O'Connell, Lord Jeffrey and W. C. Macready as three who were overcome with grief, one writer after another has . . . support[ed] a generalization about the grief of the majority" which is not supported by the evidence. Furniss, who is no doubt relying on Kitton, is one who reinforces "the questionable view that, on reading of Nell's death, most of Dickens's readers wept" (2: ix). Macready and Jeffrey did cry but the Irish Na-
tionalist O’Connell flung *The Old Curiosity Shop* out of his railway carriage window from “indignation, not tears” (2: x). Furniss’s puzzlement over the Victorians’ supposed sentimental reaction was in keeping with the attitude of his time, best captured by Oscar Wilde’s notorious quip that “one must have a heart of stone to read the death of Nell without laughing” (qtd. Schlicke 436). But Nell’s death was no laughing matter for Dickens whose deeply felt grief at the unexpected loss of his seventeen-year-old sister-in-law Mary Hogarth informs the fictional deathbed scene and may have so blinded him to the technical deficiencies of the illustration that he could write that “this is the very first time any designs for what I have written have touched and moved me, and caused me to feel that they expressed the idea I had in my mind” (Letters, 2: 199, 30 January 1841). Cohen asserts that “Dickens was moved more by the nostalgic associations evoked by the pictures than by the pictures themselves” (128) but the suspicion by some that the textual and visual rendering of Nell’s death, more than three years after Mary’s, was a calculated exercise in the manipulation of readers’ responses, reveals as much about the Edwardians’ (and modern readers’) discomfort with the Victorians’ overt, not to say exaggerated indulgence in grief, as it does about any possible insincerity on Dickens’s part.

Whether it was Dickens’s emotional state at the time, his rather distant “connection with Cattermole by marriage,” a genuine affection for his beloved “Kittenmoles” with whom he frequently dined and relaxed, an admiration for his art, or the artist’s considerable reputation—whether it was some or all of these, his working relationship with Cattermole was unusually diplomatic, cordial and even deferential, “the most pleasant partnership Dickens enjoyed with any of his artists.” He even allowed him to choose on occasion his own subjects, a privilege rarely accorded to anyone else.

**George Cruikshank (1792–1878) “A Sketch of Boz” 46–49**

The leading social and political caricaturist of the Regency period Cruikshank was already an established book illustrator when he met the ambitious Dickens, twenty years his junior, in 1835. Their working relationship lasted six years during which time Cruikshank provided 41 illustrations for *Sketches by Boz* and 21 for *Oliver Twist* as well as the cover design for the 1839 edition of *Sketches by Boz*, a visual depiction of Dickens’s metaphor in his 1836 Preface (quoted by Furniss) of novelist and artist ascending in a balloon (Fig. 9). There is little doubt, as Furniss claims, that Cruikshank “piloted him to fame” and of all the illustrations to his novels Cruikshank’s, especially of Oliver asking for more and of Fagin in the condemned cell, are the most memorable, though he had “absolutely no idea of female beauty” (73). As heir to Hogarth, Rowlandson and Gillray in the tradition of English graphic satire Cruikshank, who Furniss terms the “Grand Old Man of caricature,” was eminently suited to illustrating the early Dickens who was himself at the time compared to Hogarth.

But the struggle for artistic control between established artist and aspiring novelist led Dickens to replace the independently minded Cruikshank with the more tractable
Browne. However, their personal friendship survived this professional separation until Cruikshank’s conversion to teetotalism and his increasingly fanatical campaign on behalf of the temperance movement in the 1850s that Dickens openly attacked in his own journal *Household Words*. Whether Cruikshank was “a vain old humbug” who continued to drink in private after his public conversion as Furniss claims is a moot point though Cohen asserts that “documents of the period evidently imply he lapsed back into excessive private drinking” (38).

Be that as it may the prohibitionist Cruikshank became “openly hostile” to the moderationist Dickens and on the latter’s death in 1870 commented that “one of our greatest enemies [is] gone” and then famously claimed *Oliver Twist* to be “entirely my own idea & suggestion and all the characters are mine” (qtd. Cohen 36). Dickens’s close friend and biographer Forster dismissed this as a “deliberate untruth” and Furniss reluctantly concedes, as a professional illustrator who viewed him as an interfering busybody, the “probability . . . of Forster’s opinion.” This has remained the modern consensus until, that is, Robert Patten’s reassessment in his definitive biography of Cruikshank. Of his role in the inception of *Oliver Twist* he writes: “The general outline is not simply a lie, as Forster charged, nor a ‘delusion’ of Cruikshank’s old age, as it was labelled at the time by his friends and later by most commentators on the novel” (vol. 2, 53). “It is not impossible,” then, “that the artist’s influence materially affected the course of the novel” (56) because, as Patten argues later, the relationship between author and artist in the 1830s was one of equals, in which the role of Cruikshank was “coordinate rather than subordinate” (481). Furniss would have endorsed Patten’s assessment of the relationship as essentially collaborative had he been able to overcome his objections to the illustrator as “a vain old humbug” who was “a very immoral man.”

**Richard Doyle (1824–1883)**

“A Sketch of Boz” 70

The son of John Doyle (“HB”) the well-known political cartoonist of the early nineteenth century and uncle to Arthur Conan Doyle, “Dicky” Doyle as his old *Punch* friends called him, designed the famous *Punch* cover (which lasted until 1956) which incorporated his nickname: a bird perched on top of his initial “D” in the bottom left hand corner. For seven years he contributed social and political caricatures marked by whimsical and fairy-like figures before resigning in 1850 over the magazine’s hostility towards Catholicism. His playful and fanciful style lent itself to “Dickens’s charming Christmas books” for which he drew ten designs: four for *The Chimes* including *Trotty Veck Among the Bells*, the one alluded to by Furniss, three for *The Cricket on the Hearth*, and three for *The Battle of Life*. He was not exactly “unknown to Dickens” but was never a personal intimate like Cattermole or Maclise. Given Furniss’s antipathy towards Forster it is surprising he does not here take another swipe at “the big wasp . . . buzzing round” (66) the illustrators while Dickens was on the Continent during much of the preparation for the publication of the Christmas books.

Fildes was hired to illustrate The Mystery of Edwin Drood when Charles Collins, Wilkie’s younger brother and Dickens’s son-in-law, fell ill, having completed only the cover design for the last novel, itself half finished when Dickens died in June 1870. Fildes, who ended up as a Royal Academician (1887) with a knighthood (1906), began his career as a book and periodical illustrator in 1866 and was influenced by the black-and-white school of social realists who included Fred Walker and John Everett Millais. It was the latter who spotted Fildes’s Houseless and Hungry (note 134) in the first issue of the Graphic, to which Furniss also contributed in the 1880s. Millais brought this first of Fildes’s realistic depictions of the urban poor to “the notice of Charles Dickens” who, no doubt attracted by its striking and sympathetic portrayal of its subject matter, engaged him after seeing further examples of his work. It not only marked, as Fildes himself admits, the “turning point of my career” (qtd. Cohen 222) but also the final nail in the coffin of the caricature style of illustration that had, via the pencils of Cruikshank and Phiz, dominated Dickens’s novels for so long. Fildes worked from studio models for his characters, visited London and Rochester landmarks for the background to his illustrations, and then had them photographically transferred onto the woodblocks—all in order to produce “veritable photographs” as Dickens called them (Kitt 211), a far cry from the Hogarthian “accessories” (61) of Browne’s designs. Furthermore, Fildes was “not afraid of modern dress”: though the novel is set in the early period of Victoria’s reign he clothes his characters in contemporary (1870) costume.

Fildes, on the basis of a series of social realist paintings mentioned by Furniss, but especially The Doctor of 1891, which even today may be seen in some surgeries, became one of the most popular English painters of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. He also “painted Venetian scenes” based upon his visit to Venice with his fellow Dickensian illustrator Marcus Stone. Furniss amusingly parodies both aspects of Fildes’s art—its Italian classicism and English realism—by combining them in Venice in London (Fig. 41).

Furniss writes: “In illustrating Dickens, Mr. Fildes found him difficult to please and rather puzzling to work with.” The first assertion is misleading since their working relationship was cordial and trusting to the extent that as Dickens’s confidence in his new illustrator grew he did not always examine the designs before they were sent to the engraver, Charles Roberts, a friend of Fildes. In one instance he even allowed Fildes to persuade him to change his mind about the subject for an illustration.

The second assertion, that Fildes found Dickens “rather puzzling to work with,” is more accurate because the need to keep secret the mystery of Edwin Drood’s disappearance led to the author reluctantly giving “sufficient details for the pictures to illustrate the story.” Still, however guarded Dickens was in his dealings with Fildes it was enough for Droodian sleuths to relentlessly pursue the latter in the vain attempts to solve the mystery at the expense, one might add, of informed critical analysis of both text and illustrations, of which the artist did six before Dickens died, plus six more for the yet unpublished and unfinished manuscript. He commemorated the death with a
pognant study of Dickens's library, The Empty Chair, that appeared in the 1870 Christmas number of the Graphic, the periodical that first brought Fildes to Dickens's attention.

On the strength of the “almost unlimited power . . . and wonderful variety” of his illustrations for The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Lewis Carroll invited Fildes to work with him on a new tale. This was eventually published as Sylvie and Bruno (1889) but presumably he declined since none other than Harry Furniss ended up as the illustrator. Furniss's pen and ink sketch of Fildes is in the National Portrait Gallery.

**Sir John Gilbert (1817–1897)**  
“A Sketch of Boz” 79

Furniss's admiration for “the greatest black and white artist of the Victorian era” derives from Gilbert's pivotal role in enhancing the reputation of pictorial journalism with his 30,000 designs for the Illustrated London News over a period of thirty years since its first issue in May 1842. "Grand, broad [and] stilted in design" yet “full of richness and colour” his work captured the pomp and ceremony of military and civic pageantry but lapsed at times into “dull historical set pieces” (Houfe 316). Furniss, himself renowned as a rapid and prolific caricaturist, no doubt appreciated the same qualities in Gilbert. He could, it was said, compose and draw directly onto a woodblock while the publisher’s messenger waited, and his productivity was legendary. In addition to his Illustrated London News work he illustrated, among others, Longfellow, Scott, Wordsworth, Milton and above all Shakespeare: his “grand illustrations” to eighteen separate editions of the plays, including the monumental Staunton edition of 1860 (829 designs), eventually led to his knighthood in 1872.

His contribution to Dickens illustration is virtually unknown: 32 plates for The Pickwick Papers (Fig. 50 and note 147) and 32 more for Nicholas Nickleby in 1847; six woodcuts for The Cricket on the Hearth (Pictorial Times, 27 December 1845); a few frontispieces for Townsend & Co.’s Household Edition; and woodcuts for four children’s stories, printed serially as Holiday Romance in the Boston periodical Our Young Folk (1868). Furniss's pen and ink sketch of Gilbert is in the National Portrait Gallery.

**John Leech (1817–1864)**  
“A Sketch of Boz” 65–66

Leech is best known as the creator of those full-page satirical prints that quickly established Punch as the leading critical voice of Victorian England and which he called “cartoons,” a term used ever since to describe topical political and social satires in newspapers and magazines. Although he failed in his bid to become Seymour's successor as illustrator to The Pickwick Papers his popularity and growing reputation with Punch attracted Dickens's attention and he became his “personal friend” in the 1840s, developing “a warmly sympathetic friendship” (Schlicke 331) that lasted until his death in 1864. But Dickens was well served by Browne, and Leech, with his Punch
work flourishing, did not need more work so his status as a Dickens illustrator is relatively slight, confined to the Christmas Books (1843–1848) for which he contributed a total of 28 designs, the best remembered being those for *A Christmas Carol* (1843). It is worth noting the influence of Leech’s gently humorous style of cartooning on the trend away from the viciousness and vulgarity of Rowlandson’s and Gillray’s Regency satires and, it is said (Cohen 149), on Dickens’s own, less caricatured, humour from *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–1844) onwards.

Apart from his illustrations for the Christmas Books Leech exploited his connection with Dickens in a less direct way: he mined the canon for his *Punch* cartoons, producing a series of brilliant political satires based upon characters and scenes from the novels: Peel and Russell as Dombey and Son (28 August 1847), Louis Philippe as Fagin (20 October 1847), Lord Brougham as Miss Mowcher (6 April 1850), and many others. As Furniss notes “ever since that paper was founded Mr. Punch has always been ready to collar an idea of the immortal Boz and drag it into his pages” (66–67) as did Furniss on several occasions: he actually imitated Leech’s originals for *A Christmas Carol* in casting Gladstone as Scrooge, Disraeli as Marley’s Ghost, and Mr. Punch as Bob Cratchit (26 December 1885), though his claim (67) to have originated Tenniel’s well-known cartoon of Gladstone as *The Political Mrs. Gummidge* (Fig. 35) is doubtful (note 119).

The brief comments on Leech are really an opportunity for Furniss first of all to emphasise once more the “exceptional difficulties” illustrators worked under in order to meet deadlines and this pressure of the “rushing process” inevitably led to “blunders” such as the one in Leech’s design for *The Battle of Life*. And secondly Furniss again criticises Forster for his needless interventions (see Introduction, 12–13) but in this particular instance Forster was very much needed since the whole project, involving an anxious and absent author (Dickens was in Switzerland), squabbling illustrators (Maclise, Doyle, and Stanfield as well as Leech), engravers, printers and publishers, required careful coordination (Cohen 146–47). Forster thus helped rather than hindered and Leech’s “blunder” is due more to his apparent failure to read the whole story, and to Dickens’s absence abroad and his reluctance to clarify the plot, than to any obstructionism on Forster’s part, though the illustrator was ill at ease in the company of “Dickens’s Home Secretary” (69). Unusually for Dickens he “smothered his feelings” and on this occasion let the mistake stand, testimony to the great personal charm that captivated all of Leech’s acquaintances.

**Robert Seymour (1798–1836)**  “A Sketch of Boz”  51–52

Seymour, the first of three illustrators of *The Pickwick Papers*, began his association with Dickens in 1836 when he was “fully established with the public as a prolific, influential, and popular caricaturist” (Cohen 40) specializing in the subgenre of satirical drawings of amateur sporting gentlemen. When he approached Chapman and Hall with the idea for “a series of cockney sporting plates of a superior sort to those he had already published” the publishers “thought they might do, if accompanied by letterpress and published in monthly parts” (Letter to Dickens 9 July 1849, qtd. Cohen 41). It
was to this suggestion, then, that “the Pickwick Papers owe their origin” for Dickens agreed to write the letterpress, though he initially regarded it as little more than hack work to help defray the expenses of his upcoming marriage to Catherine Hogarth. In any case, given his personality and his reputation by association with the renowned George Cruikshank, he was not prepared to play second fiddle to anyone. The story is well-known among Dickensians. Instead of Dickens “writ[ing] up to Seymour’s designs” the reverse happened: “It would be infinitely better” he insisted, “for the plates to arise naturally from out of the text” and his views were “deferred to” (1847 Preface to The Pickwick Papers). When the domineering Dickens suggested some changes to his drawings Seymour, an overly sensitive and insecure artist with a history of mental instability who was already “depressed about his finances and about the mediocrity of his career” (Schlicke 536), went home and shot himself in his garden in April 1836, having completed three of the four plates for the second number. Furniss’s statement that the worry over “starvation prices’ for his work and no time to do it in ... led him to commit suicide” must thus be seen in context: his dealings with Dickens and the publishers may have precipitated but they did not cause Seymour’s tragic end. He even admits in his suicide note to his wife “it is my own weakness and infirmity. I don’t think anyone has been a malicious enemy to me” (The Pickwick Papers, Kinsey, ed., xxix). Kinsey concludes that “on the evidence, the causes of Seymour’s fatal derangement were mainly of his own making” (xxx).

Furniss’s contention that Seymour authored the character of Winkle is correct only so far as he alone of the Pickwickians is a sportsman, for as Dickens says “I put in Mr. Winkle expressly for the use of Mr. Seymour” (Preface to The Pickwick Papers). Similarly, the artist’s famous depiction of the immortal Pickwick, bald, beaming, bespectacled, and wearing tights and gaiters, owes something to Edward Chapman’s suggestion that Seymour’s originally thin Pickwick be made fat. Mrs. Seymour subsequently alleged in a pamphlet, An Account of the Origin of the ‘Pickwick Papers’ (1854), that her husband had “some share of the invention” of the novel (see note 60), a claim Dickens rightly dismissed as “intangible and incoherent assertions” (Kinsey 886, note 2). Still, it was The Pickwick Papers, defined in part by Seymour’s memorable portrait of the eponymous hero, that, as one reviewer put it, catapulted Dickens to fame “like a skyrocket” (qtd. Schlicke 451) and “led to his undying reputation.”

Clarkson Stanfield (1793–1867)  “A Sketch of Boz”  72

Stanfield, whose name Furniss persistently misspells Stansfield, was a professional scene painter for various London theatres until 1832 when he decided to concentrate on landscape and marine paintings (the latter informed by his nautical experience) for which he is best known. The “celebrated painting,” admired by Thackeray, of a ship in a storm with a lighthouse in the background still hangs in the Garrick Club (reproduced in Collins, Thackeray, vol. 2, plate 12).

Stanfield first met Dickens in 1837 and became his “great and personal friend,” a warm friendship that lasted until the artist’s death thirty years later when Dickens
wrote an affectionate tribute to “old Stanny” in his periodical All The Year Round, calling him “the soul of frankness, generosity and simplicity. The most genial, affectionate . . . and the most lovable of men” (“The Late Mr. Stanfield,” 1 June 1867). As Furniss notes he also dedicated Little Dorrit (1857) to the artist.

They shared a passion for the theatre, became friends with the famous actor Macready and so, when Dickens put on his amateur productions, it was natural for him to turn to Stanfield to supervise the set construction and paint the scenery for Every Man In His Humour (1845), Not so Bad as We Seem (1851), The Lighthouse (1855), and The Frozen Deep (1857) (see note 136). Stanfield’s “Act-Drop” of the Eddystone lighthouse for Wilkie Collins’s 1855 melodrama was later framed by Dickens, hung in the entrance hall of his house and at the Gad’s Hill sale after his death sold for 1,000 guineas. Stanfield’s “landscape work in the Christmas books” consisted of two illustrations for The Chimes, one for The Cricket on the Hearth, three for The Battle of Life, and three for The Haunted Man.

Marcus Stone (1840–1921) “A Sketch of Boz” 71–72

Largely forgotten as an illustrator Stone is best remembered for having “suggested to Dickens an important character in Our Mutual Friend” (48 and note 47), namely the taxidermist and articulator of “human various” Mr. Venus. Furniss is not exaggerating when he says of Stone that “no living artist was better acquainted with Charles Dickens” who had known him since he was a child when the families were friends and neighbours in Tavistock Square in the 1850s. Stone’s father was an intimate of Dickens having participated in his amateur theatricals (as did Marcus) and part-illustrated one of the Christmas books, The Haunted Man, so when Frank died in 1859 Marcus became virtually an adopted member of the Dickens family. “With a kindness peculiar to him” Dickens started the naturally gifted and, importantly, acquiescent son, who had been informally trained in his father’s studio, on his career, first as a book illustrator and later as a painter. On Dickens’s recommendation Stone was commissioned by Chapman and Hall to provide drawings for several volumes in the Illustrated Library Edition including eight woodcuts for Great Expectations in 1862, the first time that the novel had been illustrated. This led to Stone’s major contribution to Dickensian illustration, the 40 wood engravings for Our Mutual Friend (1864–1865), Dickens’s last completed novel.

Today they are generally regarded as undistinguished, “unmemorable” (Schlicke 294), and even the work of an illustrator who “was no better than a hack” (Bentley 224), but Cohen is more understanding, pointing out that Stone’s illustrations give Our Mutual Friend “an updated look with his more realistic figures” (207), something Stone’s contemporaries admired: “we are conscious of an enormous advance in their artistic quality and the disappearance of the old hearty humour of Phiz and Cruikshank . . . they are so essentially modern in conception and execution” remarked J. A. Hammerton in the 1910 Furniss edition of Dickens’s works (vol. 17, 19). In short they signalled a major departure in the style of Dickens illustration, from Hogarthian
caricature to a sixties naturalism (see Introduction, 10–11), that Fildes continued in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, something Dickens, as always moving with and often ahead of his times, seemed not to object to for he consulted closely with Stone and even allowed him to choose his own subjects. Furthermore Stone’s medium was not the etched steel plate but the engraved woodblock, increasingly used now that photography enabled the direct transfer of drawing to block, and this too was partly responsible for the new “Sixties look.”

Stone and his successor as Dickens’s illustrator, Luke Fildes, were elected to the Royal Academy in the same year 1887, though unlike Fildes, whose hugely popular social realist paintings owed much to his Dickens connection, Stone owed “nothing” to “any influence of his early patron.” His “pretty pictures,” or “maudlin pot-boilers with a Regency flavour” (224) as Bentley calls them, revived a tradition, popular in the 1840s, of sentimental depictions of romantic females. Furniss’s parody, *Rejected Addresses* (Fig. 40), is based principally on one of Stone’s best-known oils, the enigmatically titled *Il y a Toujours un Autre* (1882). Furniss says that Stone invented the “Matinee Hat” and sketches him in *Some Victorian Women* (172).