"All-of-a-Twist" -- The relationship of George Cruikshank and Charles Dickens (concluded)

"All-of-a-Twist": the Relationship of George Cruikshank and Charles Dickens[149]

Jane R. Cohen

(Concluded)

"Lord Bateman" was never more than a diversion for Dickens, whose *Nicholas Nickleby* had followed fast upon *Oliver Twist*. He was still obliged to write *Barnaby Rudge* for Bentley, who was now trying to enforce delivery by advertising its forthcoming publication. Cruikshank cautiously inquired of the author, "in doubt as to having Barnaby illustrated or not," if he would let the artist know his decision.[150] "I am going forthwith tooth and nail at Barnaby," Dickens replied, "and shall have MS by the middle of the month for your exclusive eye."[151] But by the middle of the month, having worked out agreements with Chapman and Hall for *Master Humphrey's Clock*; he became hysterically determined to find some way of withholding even this long-contracted work from Bentley. Thanks to the protracted negotiations of Forster, Dickens was finally extricated from "the Bentleian bonds."[152] Chapman and Hall were the publishers of *Barnaby Rudge* when it at last appeared in 1841 as part of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, illustrated not by George Cruikshank but by George Cattermole, engaged to help out Phiz.

"Lord Bateman" proved Dickens' and Cruikshank's last joint enter-

[149] All citations to the work of Charles Dickens, Robert Seymour, and George Cruikshank given parenthetically in the text refer to their location in *The Nonesuch Dickens*, ed. Arthur Waugh, Hugh Walpole, Walter Dexter and Thomas Hatton (Bloomsbury, 1938). When relevant, the original date and place of publication are supplied in a separate footnote.

[150] The Pilgrim Edition of *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. Madeline House and Graham Storey (Oxford, 1965–), of which only one volume has appeared at the time of writing (referred to hereafter as Pilgrim, I), 589 note 4, Cruikshank to Dickens, n. d.

[151] Pilgrim I, 589, Cruikshank [?3 October 1839].

[152] Pilgrim, I, 504, Talfourd, 31 January [1839].

prise. In February 1836 Dickens had been eager to talk over the artist's idea "relative to a little Satire on the class of pieces usually presented, at the Theatres in these times" which he thought he could turn to good account, but nothing further came of this project.[153] In February 1838 Ainsworth informed Crossley that he and Dickens were about to write some tales about "ancient and modern London in a Pickwick form" with illustrations by Cruikshank and Leech;[154] nothing materialized from this venture but the veteran artist's cover design, subsequently used for the monthly parts of *Old St. Paul's*. Many readers insisted that Dickens had written *More Hints on Etiquette*, a slim volume with woodcuts by Cruikshank which appeared in 1838; they based their argument on the fact that two of the MS. leaves bore sketches for "Oliver plucks up a spirit."[155] Yet there is nothing in the substance, style, or Greek pseudonym (*Pedagogue*) of this mock-courtesy book which suggests Dickens' hand. While the author was embroiled in his final controversy with Bentley, Cruikshank became preoccupied with planning his *Omnibus*, which appeared in the course of the publication of *Barnaby Rudge*. Dickens may have regretted the absence of Cruikshank's pencil, but there was nothing he could do except send "all good wishes to, — the 'Buss.' "[156]

In 1839, then, Dickens' professional relationship with Cruikshank ended, but readers had to be constantly reminded that Cruikshank did not illustrate the author's novels. "I did not illustrate the works of Mr. Charles Dickens to the extent that most people suppose," the artist told McClellan in 1870. He added, however, "I am not surprised at the fact of their being misled, for the other artists employed upon his works imitated my STYLE as closely as possible, and hence the public supposed that — as Charles Dickens wrote under the name of 'Boz' — that I designed and etched under the name of 'Phiz.' "[157]

[153] Pilgrim, I, 122 and note 1, Cruikshank [?1 February 1836].

[154] Ainsworth, Letter to Crossley, 8 February 1838 in S. M. Ellis, *William Harrison Ainsworth and His Friends* (London, 1911), II, 332, quoted in Pilgrim, I, 358–359 note 5.

[155] John Eckel, *The First Editions of the Writings of Charles Dickens* (New York, 1932), pp. 205–206. A search for the predecessor implied by the title yielded nothing.

[156] *The Letter of Charles Dickens*, 3 vols., ed. Walter Dexter (Bloomsbury, Nonesuch Press, 1938), hereafter referred to as Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 317–318, Cruikshank, 2 May 1841.

[157] Cruikshank, Letter to McClennan, 12 November 1870, quoted in William Glyde Wilkins, "Cruikshank versus Dickens," *Dickensian*, XVI (April 1920), 81.

More than a century later, the *Dickensian* still reminds readers, as well as critics,[155] that of Dickens' major books Cruikshank illustrated only *Sketches by Boz* and *Oliver Twist*.

As Austin Dobson suggests, Cruikshank resembles Dickens both in his gifts and his limitations: "Had he illustrated more of that writer's works the resemblance would probably have been more evident." [159] There are many Dickens characters — from Quilp and Pecksniff to Podsnap and the Billikin — that Cruikshank would have delineated to the life. The artist, like the author, would have dealt less successfully with Little Nell, Dora Spenlow, or Edith Dombey. Swinburne granted that Cruikshank "could not have bettered many if any" of Browne's figures. Yet he wished that Cruikshank could have shown him the wood in which Jonas Chuzzlewit struck down Montague Tigg, and the nooks and corners of Mr. Peggotty's dwelling. Swinburne particularly lamented his absence in *Great Expectations*, convinced that the artist "would have shown us the marshes and the river and the sky and the beacon and the gibbet which Dickens shows us as seen by a frightened child with such perfection of power and such vivacity of truth that even the incomparable first chapter" would "hardly have been above comparison with his illustrations to it." [160] Other readers felt Cruikshank's contribution to Dickens vastly overrated. Characteristic was the argument of Fraser, who cited the advance in the art of book illustration since the time "when any drawing signed by George Cruikshank, however atrocious, was considered good enough to illustrate the writings of the greatest master of humor and of pathos England ever produced." [161] Most readers would be more sympathetic to Sacheverell Sitwell's exaggeration that "the whole

[158] V. S. Pritchett, "Books in General," *New Statesman and Nation*, XXIII (28 February 1942), 142, lamenting the disappearance of illustrations from English fiction, unintentionally, perhaps, gives the impression that Cruikshank was Dickens' only illustrator, which provoked the editor of the *Dickensian*, XXXVIII (1 June 1942), 129, to comment: "Mr. Pritchett is, of course, right in his arguments, but he should put the name of Phiz in front of Cruikshank with Stone and Fildes to follow it."

[159] Austin Dobson, "Illustrated Books," in *The Library*, ed. Andrew Lang (London, 1892), p. 155.

[160] Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Charles Dickens* (London, 1913), pp. 13–15.

[161] W. A. Fraser, "The Illustrators of Dickens," *Dickensian*, II (May, 1906), 122 and see Gleeson White, *English Illustration, 'The Sixties': 1855–1870* (London, 1897), pp. 18–19; cf. Kay White, "Cruikshank, 'Phiz,' and Modern Taste," *Dickensian*, II (September, 1906), 239–240.

of Dickens has become visible to us through the eyes of Cruikshank." [162] The truth lies between these extremes.

In the early 1840's Dickens and Cruikshank continued their association on the social basis established from the commencement of their work together. They rarely corresponded, however, for Cruikshank barely tolerated even short notes.[163] The author frequented the Pentonville home of the artist and his first wife, about whom so little is known that even her maiden name remains undiscovered.[164] Cruikshank was always welcome among Dickens' family and friends who found the artist "a live Caricature himself." [165] The author delighted in recalling the afternoon Cruikshank was turned away from the Pantheon aviary because he was splashed to the shoulders with mud; or the morning the artist, "smelling of tobacco, beer, and sawdust," stumbled into Devonshire Terrace; having been out all night, he forced the author to accompany him to various taverns all day until he finally exhausted himself and went home.[166] Cruikshank's noted high spirits enlivened Dickens' obligatory occasions as well as his formal parties.[167] Inviting Ainsworth to dine at his house with "Little Hall" and his "big partner," Chapman, Dickens reassured him "the illustrious George and his stout lady" were also coming "so that the anti-Bores will be triumphant and keep the Bores in due subjection." [168]

During his 1842 trip to America Dickens described Richard Henry Dana's father as "exactly like George Cruikshank after a night's jollity

[162] Sacheverell Sitwell, "George Cruikshank," in *Trio* (London, 1938), p. 248.

[163] Pilgrim, I, 249, Cruikshank [?20 April 1837] and p. 434, Cruikshank [?17 September 1838].

[164] Pilgrim, I, 342, Forster [12 December 1837]; p. 396, Cruikshank [16 April 1838]; p. 639, Diary Entry, 31 January 1839; and Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 293, Forster, 11 January [41]. See Ruari McLean, *George Cruikshank: His Life and Work As An Illustrator* (London, 1948), p. 32, who notes that Cruikshank married his second wife, Eliza Widdison, on 7 March 1850 but there is no evidence that Dickens met her.

[165] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 702, Coutts, 17 September 1845; see also Pilgrim, I, 253, Bentley [28 April 1837]; p. 332, Cruikshank [?16 November 1837]; p. 633, Diary Entry, 17 April 1838; p. 447, Forster [? Autumn, 1838]; Unpublished Pilgrim, Longfellow, 29 December 1842; Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 526, Cruikshank, 22 June 1843; p. 549, Cruikshank, 7 December 1843; Unpublished Pilgrim, Cruikshank, 13 August 1845 and Cruikshank, 1 October 1845.

[166] Quoted in Blanchard Jerrold, *The Life of George Cruikshank* (London, 1882), pp. 221–222.

[167] Pilgrim, I, 465, Harley [? November 1838]; Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 474, Cruikshank, 20 August 1842.

[168] Pilgrim, I, 358, Ainsworth [25 January 1838].

— only shorter." [169] The dignified editor of the *North American Review* would not have felt complimented by the analogy had he been present at the Greenwich dinner with which Dickens' friends welcomed him home. For Cruikshank was "perfectly wild." After singing "Lord Bateman" and marine songs, he wound up the reunion by travelling the six miles to London "*on his head*" in Dickens' open phaeton to the astonishment of the metropolitan police.[170] "He was last seen," Dickens wrote Thomas Beard, "taking Gin with a waterman." [171] When young Longfellow visited England in October of that year, he found that the artist, whom he considered a genius of rare talent, also excelled in hilarity at the uproarious dinners at Devonshire Terrace.[172]

Cruikshank, though "always very jolly" in Dickens' presence, was not always engaged in revelry. At the time of these inebriated parties for Longfellow, the artist was soberly caring for the dying William Hone, one of his earliest publishers and friends, who had once been arraigned for blasphemy.[173] Hone diverted himself by reading the works of Dickens and "wanted to shake hands with 'Boz' before 'he went.'" At Cruikshank's insistence the author reluctantly undertook this "cheerless mission" he would "willingly have avoided." [174] When Hone died, Dickens peculiarly relished a subsequent scene with Mrs.

[169] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 379, Forster, 29 January 1842.

[170] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 431, Felton, 31 July 1842.

[171] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 462, Beard, 11 July 1842.

[172] Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Letters of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, ed. Andrew Hilen (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), II, 482, Forster, 15 December 1842 and 495, Freiligrath, 6 January 1843. See also Unpublished Pilgrim, Longfellow, 29 December 1842.

[173] See Jerrold, pp. 71–72 and Robert W. Buss, "My Connexion with the Pickwick Papers," in Walter Dexter and J. W. T. Ley, *The Origin of Pickwick* (London, 1936), p. 417 for further details on Hone, a publisher, writer, a pioneering collector of folklore and seller of lampoons and parodies of the Litany and Church catechism against Cruikshank's advice. He was arraigned for blasphemy in 1828. Cruikshank, citing his friend's otherwise orthodox Christian piety, vainly begged the Attorney-General not to take proceedings. He then rehearsed the trial with Hone in his own studio, which he commemorated in his *Handbook for Posterity*, Sketch No. 16, and reproduced in the *Drawings of George Cruikshank*, plate XII. The jury acquitted him. The minister officiating at Hone's funeral was incensed by an obituary of the deceased which stated that after Hone failed as a book seller, having been arraigned for blasphemy, he was persuaded by the same clergyman to try the pulpit. The minister alluded to this matter before the burial service. See also another drawing of the pair in Jerrold, p. 73.

[174] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 481, Forster, 5 October 1842.

Cruikshank, who wanted him to prevent her husband from attending the funeral, partly because she feared George might be indiscreet, partly because she could not bear "those horrid Miss Hones." [175] Nevertheless, the artist and the author were the principal non-family mourners at the burial which took place on a raw November day.

Dickens, to whom Cruikshank always looked "queer enough at the best," barely repressed a grin at the sight of his fellow mourner, whose enormous whiskers wetly straggled down and stuck out "like a partially unraveled bird's nest." He found even funnier the artist's reaction to the jumbled prayer of the presiding minister who had gratuitously insulted Hone before the service: "If that wasn't a clergyman, and it wasn't a funeral," Cruikshank whispered to Dickens, "[I'd] have punched his head." George makes the oddest remarks, Dickens had prefaced his account of the funeral to Felton, "without any intention of being funny, but rather meaning to be philosophical." [176] The author demonstrates less of a sense of humor about the serio-comic scene, than a lack of appreciation for the artist's display of loyalty. If his remarks inadvertently spotlight the most admirable, if laughable, side of the artist's character, they are less flattering to Dickens, whose condescension toward Cruikshank deepened as the disparity between their success increased. Yet Dickens was soon able to notify Cruikshank that the Literary Fund had granted £50 to relieve Mrs. Hone whose need the author had so earnestly recommended to their notice.[177]

No one was more aware than Dickens, however, of the validity of his own "premise that Cruikshank is one of the best creatures in the world in his own odd way." [178] None of the author's friends responded more quickly to his plea for "the relief of the seven destitute children of poor Elton the actor, who was drowned in the Pegasus" [179] than the artist, who donated his time as well as his name to the committee.[180] Dickens had no doubt that Cruikshank had already contributed from his own meager purse to the sixty-year-old sub-editor of the *Morning Herald*, in which some of Boz's earliest sketches had appeared, whose job had been taken away by its new owners and whose daughter tried

[175] Quoted in Jerrold, p. 72.
[176] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 510–511, Felton, 2 March 1843.
[177] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 494, Cruikshank, 16 December 1842, and Unpublished Pilgrim, Cruikshank, 24 November 1842.
[178] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 702, Coutts, 17 September 1845.
[179] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 530, Cruikshank, 26 July 1843.
[180] Unpublished Pilgrim, Cruikshank, 31 July 1843.

to commit suicide after the death of her betrothed of fourteen years, before asking him to "influence any rich friend in the sufferer's behalf." [181]

Cruikshank, if permitted, doubtless would have exerted himself as strenuously in the benefit amateur theatricals which Dickens staged throughout the 1840's and 1850's. It is surprising that Cruikshank was not more prominent in these renowned performances. The artist's earliest ambition, like that of Dickens, had been to act. As a boy, he and his brother had acted *Blue Beard* with the then obscure Edmund Kean in a neighbor's kitchen; as a young man, he had obtained a commission to paint drop-scenes for the Drury Lane Theatre, on whose stage he wished to appear.[182] All his life, Cruikshank delighted in performing, on or off stage. He and his wife were constantly included in Boz's early theatre parties.[183] But when the restless author began in 1845 to prove that he could be as successful on the boards as he had been "between them," [184] he did not immediately call on Cruikshank.

Only when Stanfield resigned his part in the opening production of the company did Dickens think of asking the artist to participate and then only after giving his "brains a shake." [185] "You have heard of our intended Play," which had been arranged "quite offhand" at a casual dinner, he wrote Cruikshank in his "artfullest manner." He had "often wanted" to include the artist in the company, but "never had a reasonably good part to offer" him until Stanfield said he would gladly resign his part if Cruikshank would accept it.[186] Cruikshank either did not reply or was unable to take over Downright in Johnson's *Every Man in his Humour*,[187] nor was George Cattermole cajoled into playing the role.[188] The Cruikshanks did receive, however, one of the prized invitations to attend the company's debut on 20 September.[189]

Dickens readily invited Cruikshank to participate in the 1847–1848

[181] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 702–703, Coutts, 17 September 1845.

[182] See Jerrold, p. 19.

[183] See Pilgrim, I, 186, Mrs. Cruikshank [?28 October 1836]; p. 197, Cruikshank [18 November 1836]; p. 460, Forster [?23 November 1838]; p. 487, Cruikshank [? Winter 1838–1839]; p. 639, Diary Entry for 1 February 1839.

[184] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 680, Forster [June 1845], and see Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 456, Felton, 21 May 1842.

[185] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 696, Leech, 22 August 1845.

[186] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 697, Cruikshank, 22 August 1845.

[187] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 698, Cruikshank, 27 August 1845.

[188] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 699, Cattermole, 27 August 1845.

[189] Unpublished Pilgrim, Mrs. Cruikshank, September [1845].

benefits for Hunt, Poole, and Knowles.[100] By then the author was aware that the artist's name was more important on the program than was his performance on the stage. Cruikshank was a noted mimic, but as an actor proved mainly "good at disguise." [101] "In spite of all the trouble he gives me," Dickens once complained to Forster, "I am sorry for him, he is so evidently hurt by his own sense of not doing well." [102] The author took great pains to find suitable roles for the dissatisfied artist. There was the "small part — not a good bit, as actors say —" in *Every Man* which he thought Cruikshank might like.[103] It was risky to give Cruikshank the lead in *Turning the Tables*, but the brief role of Old Knibbs would be perfect for a busy artist who memorized slowly.[104] Minor parts were found for him in *The Alchemist*,[105] *Animal Magnetism*, and *Love, Law and Physic* and changes in *The Poor Gentleman* could easily be made to include George Cruikshank [see Plate IX].[106] In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Mrs. Cowden-Clarke was not the only one to find him "supremely artistic." [107] Dickens subsequently offered Cruikshank his choice of parts in *Used Up*.[108] After long deliberation the artist chose the shorter blacksmith's role over that of the middle-aged dandy, gave it up upon his wife's illness, then

[100] See Kitton, *Dickens by Pen and Pencil*, II, 108–111 for various theatricals performed between 1845 and 1848 with dates, casts of each performance, programs, etc. The story of Cruikshank's participation in Dickens' theatricals is sketchy; the forthcoming Pilgrim volumes should remedy this situation.

[101] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 38, Lemon, 4 July 1847.

[102] Quoted in J. W. T. Ley, *The Dickens Circle* (London, 1918), p. 22, yet see Forster, p. 456 where the names Dickens refers to in his letters are disguised with other initials. Dickens' comment is as applicable to Leech or Frank Stone, for example, as to Cruikshank.

[103] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 28, Cruikshank, 8 June 1847 and p. 32, Cruikshank [June 1847].

[104] Unpublished Pilgrim, Cruikshank, 9 June [July? misdated?] 1847; see also Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 39, Cruikshank, 4 July 1847; p. 38, Lemon, 4 July 1837; p. 41, Lemon, 9 July 1847. If Pilgrim dating is correct, then the whole Nonesuch *Letters* sequence should be one month earlier.

[105] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 61, Cruikshank, 26 November 1847.

[106] Unpublished Pilgrim, Frank Stone, 10 January 1848, and Unpublished Program for "The Rent Day" and "The Poor Gentleman," 18 May 1850 from the collection of Noel Peyrouton. Cruikshank's name is also listed on the "Committee of Management."

[107] Quoted in Kitton, *Dickens by Pen and Pencil*, II, 114; and see Unpublished Pilgrim, Cruikshank, 1 May 1845 and 18 May 1845; and Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 123, Cruikshank, 9 October 1845.

[108] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 107, Cruikshank, 1 July 1848 and 3 July, 1848.

wanted the role back again upon her sudden recovery. "O questa femina maladetta!" Dickens complained to Lewes while rejuggling the cast, "O impressario sfortunato! — ma, sempre dolce, tranquillissimo, cristianissimo, exempio di pazienza!" [199]

The maladroit actor was one of the few in the company who never lost sight of their charitable purpose. While participating in an Edinburgh benefit for Leigh Hunt, Cruikshank learned that a local friend was on the brink of ruin for lack of £50. "I *must* send it to the poor fellow immediately," he told Dickens. "That would be very kind to him, but very unkind to yourself," the manager replied, wondering aloud if the artist had £50 in his pocket. "Oh dear, no," replied the artist, "but I want you to lend me the money to send him — now — at once." [200] More to Dickens' purpose was Cruikshank's assistance in behalf of Hunt. The performances for that impecunious writer had netted £400; Dickens wanted £500 and hoped to make up the difference by writing Mrs. Gamp's "eyewitness" account of the company's railway expedition north; the account was to be inscribed to Mrs. Harris and illustrated by the artists in the troupe.

Cruikshank is prominently mentioned in this burlesque "Piljians Projiss" as the longhaired, bewhiskered gentleman with a large shirt-collar, hook nose, and an eye "like one of Mr. Sweedlepipe's hawks." He greets Mrs. Gamp by name, finds her a "second-cladge ticket for Manjester" and assists her into the carriage. "P'raps," say a courteous fellow passenger, "you don't know who it was that assisted you into this carriage!"

> "No, sir," I says, "I don't indeed."
> "Why, ma'm," he says, a wisperin', "that was George,
> ma'am."
> "What George, sir? I don't know no George," says I.
> "The great George, ma'am," he says. "The Crookshanks."

As Sairey tells Mrs. Harris, "I turns my head, and see the wery man a making pictures of me on his thumb nail, at the winder!" (*Collected Pieces*, I, 745–747). Her account was never finished, because the other artists in the party, as Forster anticipated,[201] failed to supply

[199] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 110, Lewes, 9 July 1848 and Lemon, 11 July 1848.

[200] Quoted in Jerrold, p. 224.

[201] Forster, pp. 458–459: The account "perished prematurely, as I feared it would, from failure of the artists to furnish needful nourishment. Of course it could not live alone. Without suitable illustration it must have lost its point and pleasantry."

the illustrations which Dickens thought essential to its success. Only Cruikshank fulfilled the obligation by illustrating the scene in which he is supposed to be addressing the famous Saircy with his hat politely raised [see Plate X].[202]

Cruikshank's name was notably absent from the theatrical program after 1850. Before that date two events occurred which ultimately and irrevocably strained relations between Dickens and his formerly "Illustrious Illustrator."[203] In 1845 Bradbury and Evans, Dickens' new publishers, after the disappointing sales of *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *A Christmas Carol*, planned a new edition of *Oliver Twist*. The monthly reissue would require a cover, unnecessary when the story originally appeared in the *Miscellany*. The publishers doubtless wondered whether Cruikshank might not find this task wearisome and whether another artist might give their edition some novelty. After the triumphant debut of his theatrical company, Dickens approached Cruikshank "in reference to the Oliver Twist cover" which the artist was "more than ready to do." "It is clear," the author wrote the publishers, "it would never have done to have handed it on to anybody else."[204]

Cruikshank took out his old portfolio for *Oliver Twist* and set to work. The artist must have bitterly contemplated the reversal of his fortunes since the beginning of his association with Dickens. "Long before Boz was heard of," wrote the *Quarterly Review* in 1839, "George Cruikshank had captured a snug niche in the Temple of Fame."[205] By 1845 Dickens was increasingly esteemed by the public while Cruikshank was being gradually supplanted by younger illustrators. "Neither will grudge to the other," *Blackwell's* was to write of Dickens and Cruikshank, "the share in the fame which has justly attended their joint labours."[206] The artist, however, must have re-

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Dickens thought the "little thing" would be "droll and attractive." "So it certainly would have been," says Forster, "if the Thanes of art had not fallen from him; but on their desertion it had to be abandoned after the first few pages were written."

[202] The sketch was first published in 'Some Unpublished Sketches by George Cruikshank" (anon.) *Strand Magazine*, XIV (August 1897), 188. See also water-color of Mrs. Gamp, reproduced in Jerrold, *Life of George Cruikshank* (London, 1880), plate IV, fac. p. 165; this extra-illustrated edition is in the Widener Collection.

[203] See Unpublished Pilgrim, Cruikshank, 8 November 1845.

[204] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 705, Bradbury and Evans, 29 September 1845; see reproduction of the 1846 cover in McLean, frontispiece.

[205] [Ford], *Quarterly Review*, LXIV, 102.

[206] [John Paget], "George Cruikshank," *Blackwood's*, XCIV (August 1863), 219.

sented the growing popularity of an author whose first major work he had illustrated. Certainly he must have felt that Dickens had received undue honor for his share in their endeavors on the *Sketches* and especially on *Oliver Twist*.

Cruikshank habitually exaggerated the effect of his own productions. He always maintained that his "Bank Note" had stopped the hanging of forgers and that his "Bartholomew Fair" had caused the suppression of such gatherings. He would attribute nearly all the advances of the temperance cause to his own efforts.[207] He was similarly prone to overestimate his role in any literary collaboration. Thackeray's laudatory remarks about *Jack Sheppard* in 1840 must have echoed, if not stimulated, Cruikshank's own estimate of his contribution to many of Ainsworth's novels. "It seems to us that Mr. Cruikshank really created the tale and that Mr. Ainsworth, as it were, only put words to it," Thackeray wrote. "Let any reader of the novel think it over for awhile," he added, "and tell us what he remembers of the tale? George Cruikshank's pictures — always George Cruikshank's pictures." [208] The *Quarterly Review* had difficulty determining how many of the "powerful impressions" left on the reader of *Oliver Twist* were "due not to the pen, but to the pencil"; [209] *Fraser*'s, noting discrepancies between the graceful Oliver and his graceless education, maintained that "the letterpress was written 'to match, as per order' " the desire of the artist.[210] Cruikshank would have been further gratified had he known that an American small boy's remembrance of *Oliver Twist* was so dominated by the illustrations that the novel seemed "more Cruikshank's than Dickens's." [211]

The illustrator, whose drawings so impressed young Henry James, half-heartedly began the *Oliver Twist* cover. Utilizing his old sketches, supplying some entirely new ones, he depicted eleven of the leading incidents on the wrapper. The task fresh in mind, Cruikshank received a visit from R. Shelton MacKenzie, an English journalist who later became the literary editor of the *Philadelphia Press*. Waiting for the artist, MacKenzie perused the portfolio with its bundle of *Oliver Twist* drawings, about which he subsequently inquired. Cruik-

[207] Jerrold, pp. 61 and 147–148.
[208] Thackeray, Essay, 53.
[209] [Ford], *Quarterly Review*, LXIV, 102.
[210] "Charles Dickens and His Works" (Anon. rev.), *Fraser's Magazine*, XXI (April 1840), 399–400.
[211] James, p. 69.

shank confided to the journalist that he had contemplated, long before Dickens' novel, showing the life of a London thief in a series of drawings which would not require any letterpress. The author "dropped in here one day, just as you have done," explained the artist, "and while waiting until I could speak with him, took up that identical portfolio, and ferreted out that bundle of drawings." After studying the sketches, particularly the one of the imprisoned Fagin, Dickens was "tempted" to change the plot of his recently-begun *Oliver Twist* so that his hero, instead of remaining in the country, would become involved with London thieves. Cruikshank "consented" to let the author "write up to as many of the designs" as would suit his purpose. In this way Sikes, Nancy and Fagin were created. "My drawings suggested them," he insisted to MacKenzie, "rather than his strong individuality suggested my drawings."

MacKenzie apparently published this conversation in an American periodical.[212] Oddly, it went unchallenged at this time. Dickens, preoccupied with his preface refuting Seymour's similar allegations regarding *The Pickwick Papers*, which may have stimulated Cruikshank's regarding *Oliver Twist*, remained silent. Possibly he was unaware of MacKenzie's piece; more probably, he wisely decided to refrain from publicly contradicting the artist. Unlike Seymour, Cruikshank was still alive, still his friend, and still participating in his amateur theatricals. The uncontested matter of *Oliver Twist*, in contrast to the *Pickwick* controversy, consequently died of inertia at this time. Cruikshank did not press his claim. He was suddenly preoccupied with an important success which was unquestionably his own.

Dickens was among the earliest of the many purchasers of Cruikshank's "The Bottle," a set of eight large engravings which depicted the downfall of a respectable household on account of alcohol. The series had a "Dickensian" success. It sold 100,000 copies in a few days; was dramatized in eight theatres; inspired a sonnet from Matthew Arnold to "the artist, whose hand, with horror wing'd" had wrought a work as powerful as Hogarth's "Gin Lane";[213] and prompted Browne

[212] *Oliver Twist*, ed. Tillotson, pp. 393 note 3 and 395 note 4 says MacKenzie did not publish his account in "the American *Round Table* as stated by Hotten and others after him." MacKenzie did, however, write an article on Cruikshank for the London *Journal* (20 November 1847), praising the illustrations but making no reference to any such claims. See R. Shelton MacKenzie, *Life of Charles Dickens* (Philadelphia, 1870), pp. 164–165, reprinted in Forster, pp. 112–113 note.

[213] Matthew Arnold, "To George Cruikshank," in *Early Poems, Narrative Poems*

to include an advertisement for it in one of his illustrations for *Dombey and Son* (fac. p. 636). Cruikshank's comprehensive approach to intemperance was prefigured in "The Gin Shop" (*Sketches by Boz*, fac. p. 182); Boz's conclusion to this sketch remained his lasting attitude on the subject. Drinking "is a vice in England, but wretchedness and dirt are a greater," Dickens had written in 1835. If "Temperance Societies would suggest an antidote against hunger, filth, and foul air, or could establish dispensaries for the gratuitous distribution of bottles of Lethe-water, gin-palaces would be numbered among the things that were" (*Sketches by Boz*, p. 184). The author accordingly thought the artist's new production powerfully drawn but philosophically erroneous. Had Cruikshank indicated that drinking really began "in sorrow, or poverty, or ignorance," his design "would then have been a double-handled sword," Dickens wrote Forster, "but too 'radical' for good old George, I suppose." [214]

The weakened ego of the artist clutched at this timely straw of success. Overnight the onetime climber of lamp-posts and wallower in gutters became a fanatical teetotaler, adding the force of personal example to his pencil and platform preaching. His *volte face* should not have surprised his early intimates. The young artist had met the drunkard Gillray who kept insisting, "You are not Cruikshank, but Addison; my name is not Gillray but Rubens." [215] By the time Cruikshank reigned over the field of caricature, from which Gillray and then Rowlandson had withdrawn, he had to confront the spectre of his own father hurried by a boastful tippler's bet to a premature grave. The artist had long been following their ruinous path especially during the past decade, spent in the shadow of the very figure whom he had helped to raise. "The Bottle" was the first notable success since he had met Dickens in 1835 that Cruikshank could call his own.

The artist utilized his familiarity with the author in his early temperance speeches. "My friend Dickens (who, I am sorry to say is not a teetotaler)" had asked him to take wine, related Cruikshank on one occasion, "but I told him I had taken to water, for, in my opinion, a

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and Sonnets (New York, 1923), p. 8. See also Mclean, p. 34 and Dickens, Letter to Coutts, 5 February 1849, *Letters of Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts*, ed. Edgar Johnson (London, 1952), p. 140.

[214] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 52, Forster, 2 September 1847.

[215] Quoted in Buss, p. 128. See also Jerrold, p. 240 and Draper Hill, *Mr. Gillray the Caricaturist* (London, 1965), p. 152.

man had better take a glass of prussic acid than fall into the other habit." The artist, however, was happy to relate, "Charles Dickens quite agreed with me, that a man had better wipe himself out at once, than extinguish himself by degrees by the soul-degrading and body-destroying enemy." [216] If teetotalism infused Cruikshank's life and art with revived purpose, it also functioned as a social strait-jacket. At one of Dickens' parties a female guest was about to sip some wine when the artist suddenly snatched her glass. He was prevented from dashing it to the floor by the restraining hand of his infuriated host. "How dare you touch Mrs. Ward's glass?" thundered the author who felt it an inexcusable license for the teetotaler to "object to an innocent glass of sherry." [217]

Such incidents strained but did not end their friendship. In 1848, however, Dickens felt compelled to record in the *Examiner* "a few words by way of gentle protest" about "The Drunkard's Children," the artist's sequel to "The Bottle." "Few men have a better right to erect themselves into teachers of the people than Mr. George Cruikshank," the author declared, but his teaching should begin not with the effect but with the many causes of alcoholism. Hogarth never attempted a Drunkard's Progress, he speculated, because "the causes of drunkenness among the poor were so numerous and widespread, and lurked so sorrowfully deep and far down in all human misery, neglect, and despair, that even *his* pencil, could not bring them fairly and justly into the light" (*Collected Pieces*, I, 157–158). Dickens, lavishly praising the plates, carefully limited his criticism to Cruikshank's philosophy. Readers must have found the author's objections more convincing because they disputed the ideas of one known to be his friend.

The artist, always sensitive and increasingly self-righteous about his new cause, took such criticism personally. He was hardly mollified by Chapman and Hall's commission, offered after Dickens' insistence, for a new frontispiece for their 1850 edition of *Oliver Twist*.[218] Cruikshank attributed the infrequency of his encounters with the author as a sign of "coolness." Dickens hastily expressed his "old unvarying feeling of affectionate friendship" for George, apologized for the interposition of the "host of those small circumstances" that had pre-

[216] Quoted in Jerrold, pp. 241–242.
[217] Henrietta Ward, *Memories of Ninety Years* (London, 1924), p. 117.
[218] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 206, Edward Chapman, 13 February 1850.

vented their meeting, and looked forward to seeing him soon; he hoped "with one shake of the hand to dispel any lingering remainder" of the artist's "distrust." [219] Gradually the busy author drifted towards younger, less demanding friends, leaving Cruikshank to prove before strangers "the advantages of a union of genius with water-drinking." [220] Dickens' earlier warning to the artist that his avid participation in temperance societies "will keep many of your friends away from your side, when they would most desire to stand there" proved prophetic.[221]

In the 1850's Dickens and Cruikshank communicated mainly through periodicals, where they aired their differences on the temperance question before the public. Dickens continued to attack Cruikshank's philosophy; Cruikshank continued to take these attacks as a personal slight. In August 1851 Dickens wrote a stinging article for *Household Words* entitled "Whole Hogs" in which he assaulted all fanatics who insisted on uncompromising positions on peace and vegetarianism as well as teetotalism (*Collected Pieces*, I, 379–385). Cruikshank did not reply immediately to this impersonal threefold critique; but he was hurt when *Household Words* rejected a temperance pamphlet written by him the following year.[222]

In 1853 Cruikshank was preoccupied with traditional fairy tales which Thackeray had long hoped he would recall and revivify with his pencil.[223] The artist not only supplied illustrations but altered part of the texts with a view to making them vehicles of temperance principles. In *Cinderella*, for example, when the king announces his plans to celebrate the Prince's wedding with "fountains of wine," he encounters strenuous opposition from Cinderella's godmother. "The history of the use of strong drinks is marked on every page by *excess*," she heavy-handedly contends, "*which follows*, as a matter of course, *from the very nature* of their *composition*, and is always accompanied by ill-health, misery, and crime." [224] The king gives in to her argument, but Dickens was outraged that anyone should alter "for any purpose" these "beautiful little stories which are so tenderly and

[219] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 301, Cruikshank, 25 April 1851.

[220] Frederick Wedmore, quoted in Howard Simon, *Five Hundred Years of Art and Illustration* (New York, 1942), p. 106.

[221] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 71, Cruikshank, 15 February [1848].

[222] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 398, Cruikshank, 23 June 1852.

[223] Thackeray, Essay, 10.

[224] Cruikshank, "Cinderella" in *George Cruikshank's Fairy Library* (London, 1853), pp. 26–27.

humanly useful to us in these times when the world is too much with us, early and late." [225]

His formal protest, "Frauds on the Fairies," appeared in *Household Words*. He "half playfully and half seriously" grieved that the "Whole Hog" who intruded into "the fairy flower garden" had been driven there by "a man of genius, our own beloved friend, MR. GEORGE CRUIKSHANK" (*Collected Pieces*, I, 464). Dickens urged Miss Coutts to read his devastating critique in a letter to her which concluded with an impassioned plea for "a little more fancy among children and a little less fact" in their utilitarian age.[226] Ruskin was far more disturbed by Cruikshank's drawings. As a child, Ruskin had loved copying the artist's illustrations to Grimm's *Fairy Tales* which he later maintained were "the finest things, next to Rembrandt's" that "have been done since etching was invented." [227] But he found the results of Cruikshank's present venture into fairyland "over-laboured, and confused in line." [228] Ruskin's criticism, however, was not published until 1857. It was from Dickens' article that Cuthbert Bede found the artist smarting on an autumn day in 1853.[229] Cruikshank added no more stories to his *Fairy Library*; he felt driven from even this imaginary sphere and attributed his exile to Dickens.

Cruikshank no sooner had a forum of his own than he retaliated with his pen as well as his pencil. "A Letter from Hop-o'-My-Thumb to Charles Dickens, Esq." appeared in the second and final number of *George Cruikshank's Magazine* in February 1854. Speaking in the guise of his fairy character, the artist accused Dickens of having gone "a *leetle*" out of his way "to find fault with our mutual friend George Cruikshank, for the way in which he has edited" the *Fairy Library*.[230] The artist pointed out that not only had fairy tales been constantly altered in various countries and editions but that, far from being pleasing and edifying, they were lessons in deceit and bloodshed. The artist had wanted to make them fit "household words" by inculcating their readers with "A HORROR OF DRUNKENNESS, A DETESTATION OF GAMBLING, AND A LOVE OF ALL THAT

[225] Nonesuch *Letters*, II, 479, Wills, 27 July 1853.
[226] Dickens, Letter to Coutts, 18 September 1853, *Letters to Coutts*, p. 235.
[227] Ruskin, "The Elements of Drawing," *Works*, XV, 222.
[228] Ruskin, *Ibid.*, 223.
[229] Jerrold, p. 301.
[230] Cruikshank, "A Letter from Hop-o'-My Thumb to Charles Dickens, Esq.," *George Cruikshank's Magazine*, I (February 1854), 1.

IS VIRTUOUS AND GOOD." [231] Cruikshank's bitter conclusion, however, weakened the force of his argument. He railed against Dickens' use of the term "Whole Hogs" to describe his temperance colleagues; the slight allusions made to their principles in the *Fairy Library*, he insisted, were "*the whole and sole cause of offense.*" More humorously, the artist requested that Dickens restrain or send his hogs to some other "market" and pictorially seized the opportunity to drive them back to *Household Words* [see Plate XI].[232]

In subsequent years, as Dickens' celebrity grew, Cruikshank's declined. Sitwell perceived the parallel between the artist's situation and that of the prolific Franz Liszt. Cruikshank was also partly "in that position sometimes encountered by artists in which the extent of their activities has become so great, and their fame so universal, that it is taken for granted, and the support of the public is gradually withdrawn, as from something that is already so established that it is moribund." [233] Publishers ceased to employ him. The common reader forgot him or thought him dead. In the 1860's Dickens' novels and readings were in greater demand than he could supply. Cruikshank, in contrast, had so little work that by 1867 Ruskin felt it more imperative to contribute to schemes for helping the artist than see his beloved Alps or finish his latest essay.[234] The futility of Ruskin's efforts may not have tormented Cruikshank's vanity as much as the commission to make water-color copies of all his original illustrations for *Oliver*

[231] *Ibid.*, 4.

[232] *Ibid.*, 8.

[233] Sitwell, *Narrative Pictures*, p. 67.

[234] Ruskin, Diary Entry, for 11 April 1867, in "Time and Tide," *Works*, XVII, 414. Ruskin not only headed the small circle of admirers who started a subscription fund for the artist, which, as Everitt, p. 207, observes, failed as "hundreds" were received when "thousands were expected" but tried to give him work as well (*Works*, XVIII, xlix). He had Howell approach Cruikshank about illustrating a volume of fairy stories which Ruskin, aided by Burne-Jones and Rossetti, would collect and edit. The scheme failed when the artist sent some sample plates to Ruskin who reluctantly concluded that Cruikshank "can do fairy tales no more," see Letter to C. A. Howell [Sept.] 1866 in *Works*, XXXVI, 516; and preceding letters on 24 Feb., p. 502; 27 Mar., p. 503; 2 April, pp. 504–505; 9 April, pp. 505–506; 4 July [1866], p. 510. See also Diary Entry, 4 February 1867 in Ruskin, *The Diaries of John Ruskin, 1848–1873*, ed. Joan Evans and John Howard Whitehouse (Oxford, 1958), II, 610, in which the critic notes he "called on George Cruikshank and made him happy." See facsimiles of Cruikshank's watercolors of his illustrations for *Oliver Twist* for Cosens in Houghton Library and in *Cruikshank's Water-Colours*, ed. Joseph Grego (London, 1903), pp. 1–109.

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

ARTISTS' AMATEUR PERFORMANCE.

SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 18th, 1850.

The Performance will commence with the Drama of

THE RENT DAY.

Characters.

Grantley - Mr. W. WILSON. Old Crumbs - Mr. R. J. HAMERTON.
Martin Heywood - Mr. F. W. TOPHAM. Toby Heywood, Mr. T. W. ANGELL
Bullfrog - Mr. FRANK BOLL. Silver Jack - Mr. J. WILSON.
Hyssop - Mr. J. TENNIEL. Beanstalk - Mr. J. D. WINGFIELD.
Stephen - Mr. C. R. STANLEY. Farmer - Mr. F. W. ELEN.

Rachel Heywood - Miss COOPER. Polly Briggs - Miss TILLEY.

To conclude with the Comedy of

THE POOR GENTLEMAN.

Characters.

Lieut. Worthington - Mr. R. J. HAMERTON. Corporal Foss - Mr. M. WOOD.
Sir Charles Cropland - Mr T. W. ANGELL.
Sir Robert Bramble - Mr. G. CRUIKSHANK. Warner - Mr. J. D. WINGFIELD.
Humphry Dobbins - Mr. JOHN WILSON.
Farmer Harrowby - Mr. C. W. COPE. Stephen Harrowby - Mr. F. W. TOPHAM.
Ollapod - Mr. FRANK BOLL. Frederick - Mr. J. TENNIEL.
Valet - Mr. W. WILSON.

Emily Worthington Miss COOPER. Miss Lucretia Mac Tab Mrs. TAYLEURE.
Dame Harrowby - Mrs. GRIFFITHS. Mary - Miss TILLEY.

The Performance will commence at Seven o'Clock.

☞ Between the Pieces (by particular desire) the Ballad of "*Lord Bateman*" will be sung, by Mr. GEO. CRUIKSHANK, in Character.

PLATE IX
THEATRE PROGRAM
18 MAY 1850

CRUIKSHANK DRIVES WITH MRS. GAMP.

PLATE X

CRUIKSHANK AND MRS. GAMP

1847

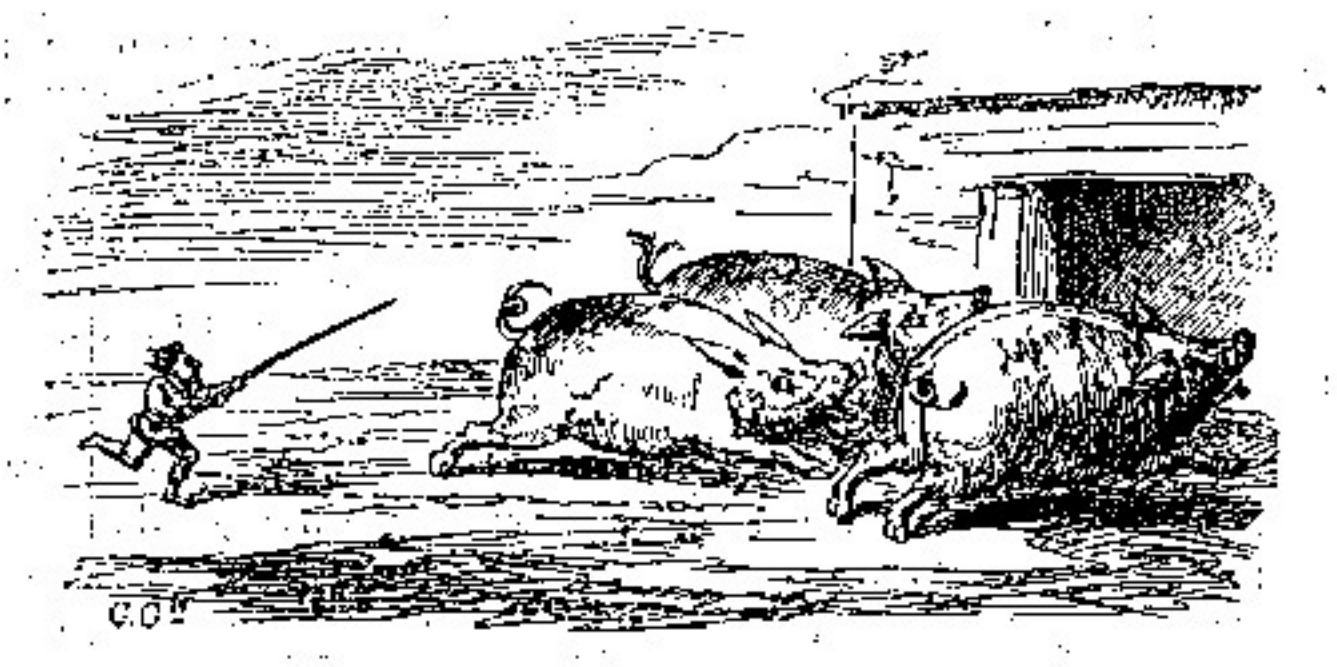

PLATE XI

CRUIKSHANK DRIVING "WHOLE HOGS"

BACK TO *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*

Short shanks . v. Long shanks —

Saline Shanks .o- Cheese cutters — Bandy Shanks

PLATE XII
FROM "MAKING FUN OF NOBODY"

Twist, except the "Fireside" plate, and a title-page embodying thirteen of them for his friend and patron, F. W. Cosens.[235]

While Cruikshank harped upon the author's transgressions against himself and his cause, Dickens sincerely referred to the artist as "my esteemed friend," an unintended irony in its context, a final refutation of Seymour's *Pickwick* claims (*Collected Pieces*, I, 109). Cruikshank dwelled on the reversal of their fortunes; Dickens preferred to recall the fruitful results of their earlier association. "I want you to make as good a drawing as Cruikshank's 'Fagin in the Condemned Cell,'" Dickens proposed to Luke Fildes, the illustrator of *Edwin Drood*, shortly before his death.[236] The author's passing did not modify the sentiments of his first illustrator. "Isn't this a frightful calamity?" Pailthorpe greeted Cruikshank the day after Dickens' death. "What! about Dickens?" the artist asked in surprise. "One of our greatest enemies gone," he exclaimed triumphantly.[237]

Cruikshank had started to wrench the realities of his relationship with Dickens long before the author's death. He now began to distort trivial aspects of their association as well. The temperance advocate suddenly objected to Maclise's famous portrait of him, not only as a poor likeness, but because of its now abhorrent accessories of taproom, beer barrel, pot and pipe. He also resented having been represented while making an impromptu sketch, which, he now maintained, "I never did in the whole course of my life."[238] Among other sketches, he completely repressed the memory of his noted one of Dickens at the Hook and Eye which he afterwards utilized for a figure in one of his illustrations for *Ainsworth's Magazine*.[239]

The artist even cast aspersions on his beloved "Lord Bateman." He protested that the sole reason he had acknowledged the author's contribution to the ballad for Reid's 1871 Cruikshank catalogue was because "the name of Charles Dickens would be of great commercial benefit." He had admitted to Pailthorpe three years before, however,

[235] *Oliver Twist*, ed. Tillotson, p. 394.

[236] Quoted in Kitton, *Dickens and His Illustrators*, p. 214.

[237] Quoted in Spencer, *Times Literary Supplement* (2 May 1935), 288 and Haight, n.p.n.

[238] Quoted in Kitton, *Dickens by Pen and Pencil*, I, 17 note.

[239] "Mayley's Visit to Howardson," *Ainsworth Magazine*, IV (July, 1843), fac. 12; NB. similarity of subject's name to family in *Oliver* which might have suggested to Cruikshank his sketch of Dickens at that time.

"I so hated the fellow that I had a great mind to re-write it." [240] Cruikshank executed his intention, to the detriment of the 1871 edition of the ballad. He revised verse XX, canceled Dickens' concluding verse, and added three others for a feeble ending in which even the Proud Porter "lives happily ever after." He elsewhere ambiguously asserted that Thackeray had "insisted" upon writing the preface to his adaptation.[241]

This minor rewriting perhaps resurrected Cruikshank's grander claims regarding his role in Dickens' works. Boz's piece for the maiden issue of *Bentley's Miscellany*, he informed McClellan five months after the author's death, was the artist's own design "which Mr. Dickens wrote up to." The "great part" of the Second Series of the *Sketches by Boz* was similarly written from Cruikshank's "hints and suggestions." [242] The artist inevitably claimed a greater part in Dickens' works.[243] When the family of Seymour claimed for him a disproportionate share in the invention of *The Pickwick Papers*, Dickens at least was alive to set this pretension at rest. "Cruikshank," Forster acidly noted, "is to be congratulated on the prudence of his rigid silence" respecting his importance to the author's works "as long as Mr. Dickens lived." [244]

Cruikshank then revived his claims on *Oliver Twist* in earnest, with "a particularity of detail," observed Forster, "that might have raised the reputation of Sir Benjamin Backbite himself." [245] Hotten quoted MacKenzie's 1847 account of the artist's assertions in his 1870 life of Dickens,[246] while MacKenzie elaborated upon it in his; [247] both

[240] Quoted in Spencer, *Times Literary Supplement* (2 May 1935), 288 and in Haight, n.p.n.

[241] Quoted in Pilgrim, I, 536 note 1.

[242] Letter to McClellan, 12 November 1870, quoted in Wilkins, *Dickensian*, XVI (April 1920), 81.

[243] Kitton, *Dickens and His Illustrators*, Plate VII, fac. p. 12 facsimiles some studies for *Sketches by Boz* in the center of which Cruikshank wrote, in ink conspicuously darker than the other notations on the page: "Some of these suggestions to Chas. Dickens, and which he wrote to in the second part of 'Sketches by Boz.'" Kitton, *Dickens by Pen and Pencil*, I, 17 notes that beneath one of his portraits of the author, the artist had written "Charles Dickens, Author of Sketches by Boz, The Pickwick Papers, &c., &c" which would seem to dispose of these claims — for, according to Kitton, Cruikshank also claimed a hand in *The Pickwick Papers*.

[244] Quoted in Waugh, "Dickens and His Illustrators," p. 27.

[245] Forster, p. 112.

[246] [John Camden Hotten], *Charles Dickens* (New York, 1870), p. 27.

[247] MacKenzie, pp. 164–165.

accounts were repudiated by Forster.[248] The artist also repeated his case to McClellan, concluding he was responsible "for the fact of *Oliver Twist* being very different from any" of Dickens' other novels.[249] In the following year, while MacKenzie supported Cruikshank's claims to both the *Sketches by Boz* and *Oliver Twist* in the American press,[250] the artist expanded his argument and his audience in a letter to *The Times*. It is possible that Cruikshank had wanted the hero of *Oliver Twist* to be a "pretty" little boy named "Frank Foundling or Frank Steadman," [251] had "*described*" and "*performed*" the character of Fagin before Dickens and Ainsworth visiting at his house,[252] and had insisted that either the Christian Sikes or the Jew receiver should be in the condemned cell.[253] But evidence contradicts the artist's assertion that he "never saw any manuscript of Mr. Dickens until the work was nearly finished." [254] According to Ainsworth, whose own novels were subjected to Cruikshank's similar claims, Dickens used to be so irritated by the artist's suggestions that he resolved to send him only printed proofs for illustration.[255]

Cruikshank perpetuated the controversy in his 1872 published "statement of facts." He maintained that while the novel was in preparation he always explained in private society that its "*original ideas* and *characters*" had come from him. He now pressed his claims publicly only to defend MacKenzie, whom Forster charged with

[248] Forster, pp. 112–113, 475–476.

[249] Quoted in Wilkins, *Dickensian*, XVI, 81.

[250] *Oliver Twist*, ed. Tillotson, p. 394 and note 4, cites MacKenzie's article in the Philadelphia *Press* (19 December 1871) which includes Cruikshank's letter to McClellan, 12 November 1870 and which notes, from two letters in the Arents Collection of the New York Public Library, that Cruikshank and MacKenzie were again in touch at this time.

[251] Cruikshank, "The Origin of 'Oliver Twist,'" *The Times*, No. 27,260 (30 December 1871), 9. See also "Charles Dickens and His Works" (Anon. rev.), *Fraser's Magazine* (April, 1840), 399–400, cited in footnote 210 above, which bolsters Cruikshank's later argument that he wanted a different kind of hero.

[252] On a sheet of pencil sketches by Cruikshank tipped in volume III of a copy of *Oliver Twist* (1838) in the Widener Collection, appears the following note in ink, in Cruikshank's hand: "Sketches for 'Oliver Twist' — suggestions to Mr. C. Dickens — the writer — George Cruikshank — " These are the drawings on which the artist based his claim that he was the originator of the novel.

[253] See *Oliver Twist*, ed. Tillotson, p. xxii, which notes the existence of several studies of Sikes in the condemned cell, indicating at least one change of plan on Dickens' part. See reproduction of one such sketch in *Strand Magazine*, XIV, 190.

[254] See footnotes 55–64 above.

[255] Jerrold, pp. 148–149.

perpetrating a "*falsehood*." Why had not Dickens or Forster denied his "*wonderful* story" which they must have heard when it first appeared in 1847? They "*did not deny*" it because they "*could not*," Cruikshank declared.[256] Once again, Dickens' letter about the "Fireside" plate "spared" Forster "the necessity of characterizing, by the only word which would have been applicable to it, a tale of such incredible and monstrous absurdity as that one of the masterpieces of its author's genius had been merely an illustration of etchings by Mr. Cruikshank!" [257]

In later years Cruikshank also discredited the story he had told Mayhew as to how he hit upon the figure of the condemned Fagin. When interrogated by Austin Dobson, who met the artist at Locker's house in 1877, Cruikshank declared Mayhew's story absurd, that he had never been perplexed about the illustration. He attributed the legend to the fact that, being uncertain whether the knuckles should be raised or depressed, he had merely made studies of his own hand in a mirror. While speaking to Dobson he illustrated his account by putting his hand to his mouth, looking so much like the character of whom he was speaking that afterwards Locker playfully addressed him as Mr. Fagin. Dobson perceived that the artist wished to impress upon him that the famous drawing was the result "not of a happy accident, but his own persistent and minute habit of realization." [258]

If the artist had once seemed "a live Caricature himself," he now, with his literary pickpocketing, began to resemble a sorry burlesque of his renowned villain. Despite the mounting evidence against him, Cruikshank, in whose art Chesterton discerned "a kind of cramped energy which is almost the definition of the criminal mind," [259] was excused as being in his dotage; his actions dismissed as foibles. None wished to maim further the twisted ego of the formerly "Illustrious George." He persisted in making his claims and charges but encountered no opposition. He had warned he would publish an explanation of the reason why he "did not illustrate the whole of Mr. Dickens' writings and the explanation will not at all redound to his credit." [260] When the promised explanation failed to appear, there were no public

[256] Cruikshank, *The Artist and the Author* (London, 1872), p. 4.
[257] Forster, pp. 113 and 475.
[258] Quoted from letter to Jerrold, 2 April 1878 in Jerrold, pp. 153–154.
[259] Chesterton, 112.
[260] Quoted in Wilkins, *Dickensian*, XVI, 81.

snickers. The artist had "Made Fun of Nobody" previously [see Plate XII];[261] no one presently made fun of Cruikshank, trying so desperately to remain a Somebody.

Near the end of his life, after delivering a temperance address in Manchester on 20 April 1874, Cruikshank plainly revealed the extent to which he had distorted his entire relationship to Dickens. Responding to a vote of thanks accorded him by the Mayor, who had referred to his work for Boz, Cruikshank intimated that the only book he had illustrated was the *Sketches*. "You forgot *Oliver Twist*," prompted His Worship. No, said Cruikshank. "That came out of my own brain. I wanted Dickens to write me a work but he did not do it in the way I wished." Indeed, continued the artist, "Dickens behaved in an extraordinary way to me, and I believe it had a little effect on his mind."[262] That Dickens "did not do" *Oliver Twist* in the way Cruikshank "wished" probably reflects the true extent of Cruikshank's participation in the novel. His reply to the Mayor sadly indicates that the artist not merely twisted but reversed intolerable reality in his final days. His fanatical adherence to teetotalism, while providing the frail veneer which barely concealed his mental derangement, had cost him not only his friendship with Dickens but his artistic reputation.

Yet Cruikshank's pre-temperance work earned him the praise of Whistler and Sickert as "the greatest English artist of the nineteenth century."[263] When the artist at Stanfield's suggestion[264] began painting "in oils the virtue of water,"[265] Ruskin was not alone in deploring the "utterly ghastly and lamentable manner" in which he had mis-

[261] Published in Cruikshank, *Scraps and Sketches* (London, 1838), Part III, n.p.n. The artist took the genus Nobody, upon whose members he bestowed variations of his own name: "Bandy Shanks," "Shortshanks," "Longshanks," etc., perhaps from an old tradition (see Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, III, ii, ll. 135–136 where Trincolo refers to "the picture of Nobody" and see play in *New Cambridge Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur Quiller-Couch and J. D. Wilson (London, 1921), p. 114 and *Variorum Shakespeare*, ed. Horace Howard Furness (New York, 1966), p. 170, n. 125).

[262] Quoted in Kitton, *Dickens and His Illustrators*, p. 23.

[263] Quoted in Sitwell, *Trio*, p. 247.

[264] McLean, p. 34.

[265] Quoted in Robert W. Buss, "My Connexion with *The Pickwick Papers*," Walter Dexter and J. W. T. Ley, *The Origin of Pickwick* (London, 1936), p. 151 from subscription below portrait of Cruikshank published in *The Hornet* (6 December 1871). The artist's most famous proseletyzing oil "The Triumph of Bacchus" caused at least one Victorian viewer to take the pledge (see Jerrold, p. 298) but in our century lies unviewed in the basement of the National Gallery in London (see Sitwell, *Narrative Pictures*, p. 34).

directed his proper talent." [266] "How much more," sighed Swinburne, "might and should have been!" [267] Most agreed with Baudelaire that Cruikshank was "plus crayonneur qu'artiste, enfin de ne pas toujours dessiner d'une manière assez consciencieuse." [268] But none disputed William Rossetti's contention that "a second Cruikshank is by no manner of means to be ordered of Dame Nature 'at sight.'" [269] W. S. Gilbert did not have to include the artist in his "Anglicised Utopia" where Dickens was firmly ensconced; [270] for, as Sitwell asserted, he was "and always must be immortal" as an original genius who need not claim what belonged to another.[271]

[266] Ruskin, "The Cestus of Aglaia," *Works*, XIX, 77.

[267] Swinburne, p. 15 and see similar sentiment in Ruskin, Letter XIII, 21 March 1867 in "Time and Tide," *Works*, XVII, 376.

[268] Charles Baudelaire, *Baudelaire Critique d'Art*, ed. Bernard Gheerbrant (Paris, 1956), p. 210.

[269] William Rossetti, *Fine Art Chiefly Contemporary* (London, 1867), p. 278.

[270] W. S. Gilbert, "Anglicised Utopia," in *The Bab Ballads* (London, 1964), pp. 497–498.

[271] Sitwell, *Narrative Pictures*, p. 7; and see Forster, p. 476.