MONTH has elapsed,—and we stand in the bed-chamber of Sir John Chester. Through the half-opened window, the Temple Garden looks green and pleasant, the placid river, gay with boat and barge, and dimpled with the plash of many an oar, sparkles in the distance; the sky is blue and clear; and the summer air steals gently in, filling the room with perfume. The very town, the smoky town, is radiant.

is struck by the initial design, an A, formed by an attractive woman, a man whose turned back prevents ready determination of his identity, and a small dog who watches a pot boiling over an outdoor fire. Gabriel Varden's presence by the bedside provides another jarring contrast. The locksmith's subsequent revelations, however, link the diner to the vagrants in the initial—Chester's gypsy mistress, who was hanged for a minor theft, their illegitimate son, Hugh, and Hugh's pet, dining on their usual harsh fare—and connect the entire scene with the first extended encounter between father and natural son. At the hands of Haredale, Sir John soon meets the violent end Hugh now wishes for him. In his tailpiece, the final illustration in the book, Cattermole follows the description of the climax of their duel quite literally (LXXXI, 677) (fig. 65), but is unable to capture the mannered malevolence that made Chester so distinctive in Browne's engravings and in Dickens's prose.

The three men received little gratitude from the cognoscenti for their superb coordination of graphic and textual characterization not only of Chester but of all the major figures. What contemporary praise there was of the illustrations was drowned out by the pained thunderings of Ruskin, who found the Barnaby engravings characteristic of the degraded state of popular art. According to him, Dickens's "monstrous" narrative inevitably inspired morally and aesthetically "ugly" illustrations, which appealed only to degraded readers.

The cheap popular art cannot draw for you beauty, sense, or honesty and for Dolly Varden or the locksmith, you will look through the vignettes in vain. But every species of distorted folly and vice—the idiot, the blackguard, the coxcomb, the paltry fool, the degraded woman—are pictured for your honourable pleasure in every page with clumsy caricature, struggling to render its dullness tolerable by insisting on defect,—if perchance a penny or two more may be coined out of the cockney reader's itch for loathsome: Ruskin was so blinded by his flat dislike of the book that he seems to have overlooked the frequency with which Dolly (XX, 166; XXI, 171; XXVII, 222; XXXI, 250; LIX, 492; LXXI, 592; LXXVIII, 649) and her father (III, 32; IV, 41; XI, 341; LXIV, 528; LXXV, 618) are depicted. Indeed, the pictures of Dolly won the heart of her generation; she was such a popular heroine that Browne featured her in a series of separately published plates in 1848, and many other Victorian artists portrayed her on canvas. Ruskin's impassioned fury is indeed surprising. Browne, whose relatives, the Bicknells, had been so kind to Ruskin, might have expected better treatment; and as for Dickens, he surely tried harder than any other writer ever had to expand the moral possibilities of popular graphic art.

The especially close relationship of print and picture ended with Barnaby Rudge and the conclusion of Master Humphrey's Clock, whose varied subjects had revealed Browne's versatility in ways a single narrative might not have done. On top of all the other pressures of his life, the
weekly enterprise exhausted Dickens. The overall strain, perhaps, accounts for his odd reaction to Browne's initial letter for the sixty-fifth chapter of Barnaby, a D formed by Barnaby and his father as they waited for rescue in a prison archway (LXV, 533). In a letter returning the sketch to Chapman, Dickens alluded not only to the drawing, in a series of postscripts, but he also warned the publisher against his approaching marriage:

P.S. PAUSE
PUT IT OFF
P.P.S. EMIGRATE
P.P.P.S. —AND LEAVE ME
THE BUSINESS—
I MEAN THE STRAND ONE. 103

It was not accidental that Browne's prison scene (one of so many in Barnaby Rudge—LVII, 481; LXII, 507; LXIII, 610; LXXIV, 613; LXXVI, 631) ignited an explosion in Dickens more amusing but no less hysterical than Ruskin's. Though remote in time and circumstance from the Marshalsea of his youth or the Newgate of his fiction, he probably was beginning to feel oppressed by two other prisons of his own creation: his marriage, increasingly unsatisfying since the death of his wife's sister, Mary Hogarth; and his work, overwhelming now that he was obligated to meet a weekly deadline and to sustain a growing reputation and family. It cannot be coincidental that Dickens's next tale of historical rebellion, A Tale of Two Cities, in 1859, was written just before he ended his marriage and curtailed the amount of his writing.

After concluding Barnaby in 1841, Dickens wound up Master Humphrey's Clock and partly followed his own advice to Chapman by planning a trip to America in 1842. Browne was not idle during Dickens's absence. His able association with the author had won him more commissions and fame in a few years than most of his colleagues acquired in a lifetime. With Dickens away, he found time to pursue other artistic interests. One of his paintings appeared in the 1841 Royal Academy exhibit; he submitted at least one historical cartoon to the Westminster Hall competition in 1843. He also strengthened his professional and personal ties with other writers—Harrison Ainsworth, whom he had met through Dickens during their work on Pickwick and, above all, with Charles Lever. Dickens had said nothing when Lever's publishers issued Harry Lorrequer in a style and format that closely imitated his own, right down to the fact that it came out in monthly numbers and included two illustrations by Phiz. Indeed, it was Lever who worried that Browne's delineations of his hero too closely resembled Nicholas Nickleby in appearance. 104 But needless to say, when Lever's publishers ran an advertisement, a copy of which appeared on the back cover of the November, 1841, issue of Master Humphrey's Clock, which quoted a reviewer's statement that he "would rather be the author of [Lorrequer] than of all the 'Pickwicks' and 'Nicklebys' in the world," Dickens was furious. When Lever invited Dickens to join Browne on a visit to Brussels, the author not only refused the invitation but protested the publishers' underhanded methods of competition. 105 Yet Dickens never protested when Browne worked for competitors. He probably was convinced—with considerable justification—that his own better material and closer supervision inspired Brown to produce illustrations superior to those he provided for Ainsworth and Lever.

Browne undeniably, however, was more comfortable working with authors who were more easily satisfied with his illustrations than Dickens. Certain professional and temperamental disparities, which subtly undermined Dickens's personal relationship with his principal illustrator, had revealed themselves even before the American trip. The author liked to base even his most fantastic creations on realistic figures and locales. Browne, on the other hand, relied increasingly on his memory and imagination, and only occasionally felt compelled to study anything. 106 Dickens scanned Browne's work from sketch to print with extraordinary care; the artist so lacked curiosity about the final appearance of his own work that finished numbers forwarded to him often remained uninspected for days. 107 To Dickens, obsessed as he was with the importance of illustrations to his work, Browne's attitude seemed overly casual. When asked later why he had burned most of his letters from Dickens, Browne's reply was characteristic: "As they were almost solely about illustrations, I did not at the time attach any importance to them, nor did I think any one else would." 108 Dickens was constantly preoccupied with making the best possible financial arrangements for himself. Browne not only rarely raised his fees, but considering his earnings sufficient for his simple rural life, despite his nine children, he often took less than he deserved. 109

Dickens saw far less of Browne socially in the 1840s after the artist married Susannah Reynolds and retreated increasingly further into the countryside on account of his wife's health, their growing family, and his own leisure interests. 110 Browne, like Seymour, loved fishing and hunting, recreations Dickens and his urban circle did not relish. Browne, like Charles Lamb, preferred reading plays to seeing his conception of them violated by a stage performance; hence, he was a notable exception among Dickens's friends in that he rarely joined Dickens's theater parties and never participated in his amateur theatricals. 111
Dickens liked to travel; Browne rarely left home, except on brief excursions to the Continent or Ireland and he rarely accepted the author's invitations to join him during summer holidays. Yet Browne, though often shy, was not antisocial. Charles Lever's brand of effervescence, for example, apparently better dispelled the artist's reserve than Charles Dickens's (fig. 66). When Lever invited him to Brussels for a boisterous round of parties as well as work on a new novel, at the time of the Lorrequer tension, Browne not only dared to ask Dickens for his Clock subject before the weekend, to get an early start for Belgium, but requested an extra week's holiday as well. After another such trip to the Continent, Browne captivated the urbane Mary Russell Mitford with his unflagging store of anecdotes about his visit. The artist never seems to have shown himself to such advantage in the company of Dickens or Forster (who always referred to him as "Mr. Browne" and whom Browne privately called "little Dr. Johnson") or any of their friends. Eventually, as he moved further away from London, and further into himself, he rarely showed himself at all in artistic circles.

Personal bonds between the two men accordingly weakened over the years. Browne's children, in contrast to those of many of Dickens's other illustrators, had no affectionate recollections of the famous author. Unlike "Uncle Bob" Young or Lever, Dickens only visited the Browne family on business; on such occasions, the artist's children caught only glimpses of an imposing figure, splendidly dressed compared to their father, who was utterly heedless of his appearance. Even from afar, they sensed the innate difference between their father and the hyperenergetic author.

Yet Browne was to go on illustrating Dickens's major novels for almost two more decades. Dickens's 1840 invitation to George Cattermole, his elegant friend and a relative by marriage, to help illustrate Master Humphrey's Clock had not been an attempt, contrary to Buss's assertion, to "refine" Boz or "slight" Phiz. In the years ahead, Dickens would solicit many other artists, most of them friends, to illustrate his Christmas books, arrangements perfectly consistent with that "regard" he felt "bound to pay to Mr. Browne." Indeed, the fact that Dickens did not begin to invite his more intimate and famous artist friends to collaborate with him at all until the mid-1840's, and then only on brief holiday or travel productions, suggests his high opinion of Browne's talents or at least an effort to conserve them. Certainly no one praised these holiday illustrations at Browne's expense; and doubtless more than one reader missed "the humour of the pencil of Phiz." Dickens's closer relationships with many of his temporary illustrators,
however, does confirm that Dickens and Browne were always friendly but not really friends. Fond of using nicknames with his intimates, Dickens called Macn產生 "Mac,” Stanfield “Stanny,” and even the aloof Cattermole “my dear Kittenmoles”; but he never called his principal artist anything but Browne. While Dickens was writing voluminous letters from America, Browne was apparently not one of the recipients. Nor was the artist present among those many friends who welcomed the author home in June, 1842. Browne remained at Croydon, confident he would be summoned when Dickens needed him.

The author’s account of his United States visit was eagerly awaited by readers on both sides of the ocean. The general expectation, according to Thomas Hood, “was that the Transatlantic Acquisitions of Boz would transpire in the shape of a Tale of American Life and Manners—and moreover that it would appear by monthly installments in green covers, and illustrated by some artist with the name of Phiz, or Whiz, or Quiz.” What appeared, however, was nonfiction—the journalistic American Notes—that did not contain any illustrations. Nevertheless, the piece provoked more outcry than all the earlier accounts of the New World contain any illustrations. Nevertheless, the piece provoked more outcry than all the earlier accounts of the New World, as if to compensate for their diminished number and remote placement, he tried to make the two monthly illustrations as meaningful as possible. Always sensitive even to Dickens’s tacit wishes, Browne, by making explicit what the text only implied or dealt with in general terms, began to endow each plate with a significance that transcended its specific local reference.

Dickens’s return to his old monthly format did not diminish his interest in the illustrations. The Clock had clearly demonstrated the advantages of more and better integrated plates. In Chuzzlewit, as if to compensate for their diminished number and remote placement, he tried to make the two monthly illustrations as meaningful as possible. Always sensitive even to Dickens’s tacit wishes, Browne, by making explicit what the text only implied or dealt with in general terms, began to endow each plate with a significance that transcended its specific local reference. Browne’s new approach is evident from his first design, the one for the wrapper (xv) (see F). Instead of the usual narrative vignettes or a mélange of eye-catching grotesques, he visually constructs, as Dickens does verbally, a scheme of Fortune based on simple but universal symbolic contrasts, as Butt and Tillotson have observed: roses are set against thorns, dreams against nightmares, “silver spoons” against the “wooden ladies” of the subtitle, and vain peacocks against wise owls. Browne keeps the wrapper in mind throughout Chuzzlewit. For example as Steig has

Pickwick and Nickleby. On rethinking the matter, Dickens must have concluded it was unwise to upset his principal artist or subject himself unnecessarily to any extra collaborative strains. In the years to come, the author would find ample work for Leech. In the meantime, Browne single-handedly provided the Chuzzlewit illustrations, which displayed a capacity for continued growth that approximated Dickens’s own. In other respects, the author still found monthly issues sufficiently challenging. Dickens had carefully planned and even researched the historical frame and content for Barnaby Rudge. Now, going a step further, he began to structure his narrative thematically. Throughout Chuzzlewit, action and character are determined by the theme of self-interest, with Pecksniff and Tom Pinch at opposite ends of that moral scale, acting as reference points for the individuals ranged between, as Steig has suggested. As if the tighter structure made him feel freer, Dickens wrote with greater simplicity yet suggestiveness. Browne, as before, attuned himself to Dickens’s altered approach, and reinforced it graphically. Apparently invigorated by his absence from the author and from etching for his novels, as well as his study of others’ techniques, as shall be seen, the artist executed more preliminary sketches than usual, a practice that resulted in more carefully conceived designs and sharper draftsmanship. His figures, like Dickens’s, were fewer in number, larger in scale, more naturalistic in appearance, yet more individualized. The superb quality of many of the individual etchings, whose titles were often more ironic than literal, partly compensated for their collective unevenness.

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noted, in his complex frontispiece—which comes first in the bound edition but is executed last in serial publication—the roses and thorns appear again, indicating symbolically the respective fates of Pinch and Pecksniff.  

Dickens's newly restrained style might have baffled a less sensitive illustrator. But by now Browne was able to realize his intentions with more detail than the text or even the instructions suggested. The author might, for example, as he later told Frith, have had “Pecksniff in [his] eye” quite clearly. But his readers could not visualize this central character very readily without Browne's help, for Dickens stresses the moral significance of Pecksniff's appearance but offers few palpable visual details. The artist, unexpectedly given a free hand, did not abuse the license by gross caricature. Seizing the ironic spirit of Dickens's description, Browne clearly established the moral impostor from the outset (II, facing p. 18) (fig. 67). He wisely changed Pecksniff's cravat from white—as specified by Dickens—to black for needed visual contrast as well as to indicate the fact that the man is a widower. His clasped hands are both obsequious and complacent; his hair carefully dressed, its tuft as upright as his public facade. The poor box, ostentatiously displayed on the mantle together with a pair of scales, suggests the calculating character of his generosity.  

His daughters, by affinities and contrasts to their father, extend our perception of Pecksniff's nature. In pose and expression, Charity bears a distinct resemblance to her father—a resemblance that later developments reveal to be moral as well. Browne set Mercy apart from the pair in looks and position, as well as by his more naturalistic treatment of her—all of which suggest her different moral fiber. Indeed, as if from compassion, the artist ceased caricaturing her altogether after her disastrous marriage to cousin Jonas (XXVI, facing p. 428), though Charity receives her satiric due right up through when she is jilted (LIV, facing p. 838). Pecksniff's parlor provides an appropriate setting for the self-server: its self-advertisements are recalled when it is reused later as the setting for Martin's exchange of confidences with his relative's moral opposite, Tom Pinch (VI, facing p. 94). Pecksniff's righteous expression (and hair tuft) are perfectly captured in both the portrait and bust of him, and the numerous drawings of classic structures, each bearing the signature “Pecksniff fecit” (possibly an aural pun), suggest the derivative nature of his professional talents. In his many subsequent appearances, Pecksniff is invariably posed near or under an art work that either reinforces his posturing (IV, facing p. 58; IX, facing p. 140; XXXI, facing p. 502; XLIII, facing p. 670) or mocks its collapse (XI, facing p. 214 and LI, facing p. 806). Near the end, however, these artifacts, like Pecksniff's pretensions, are sparser in number and more remotely placed. In such concrete ways, Browne sustained and clarified the character Dickens initially represented too abstractly. The artist deserves George du Maurier's tribute: “One may have forgotten what Mr. Pecksniff has thought, or said, or done in this world, but what he looked like, never!”  

As Chuzzlewit progressed, Browne often demonstrated such resourcefulness in illustrating Dickens's prose. For the first time, however, he also appears to have reinforced his own imagination with ideas from other artists, past and present. Whether this was a conscious or osmotic process cannot be proved, but the effect on his work is apparent. For example, as Steig has observed, many of his plates from Chuzzlewit on, not only the ones involving Pecksniff, testify to a more systematic and increasing application of lessons he probably absorbed from Hogarth and his heirs, most evident in his use of meaningful background detail. These "Hogarthian touches," as Victorians termed them, which are not specified by Dickens's text or his instructions, add relevant and succinct graphic commentary on the scenes at hand, and, in at least one instance, on the novel as a whole.
Posters—"Last Appearance/Every Man in his Humour" and "Lost, Stolen, Strayed/Reward"—comment crudely but humorously on Mark's reluctant departure from the locale of the Blue Dragon (VII, facing p. 118). The ace of hearts Jonas reveals during his card game with Charity suggests her mistaken interpretation of his intentions (XI, facing p. 186) and withered branches testify to the quality of his ultimate marriage to Mercy (XXVI, facing p. 428). The book titles in Muddle's room—Werther's Sorrow and Childe Harold—warn of that suitor's instability (XXXII, facing p. 514), which is substantiated by his jilting of Charity, in turn confirmed by the caption "Gone" on the framed scene of a fisherman losing his catch and the picture of Aesop's dog just before losing his bone (LIV, facing p. 838); and those volumes that fall with Pecksniff in the narrative's climax (LI, facing p. 806)—Paradise Lost and Tartuffe—sum up the moral action of Chuzzlewit. From the first page, Dickens had stressed that the Chuzzlewit family, like all men, were direct vice-ridden descendants of Adam and Eve. To be a Tartuffe as well, like Pecksniff, is to insure that paradise in this world is forever lost. Only by ridding oneself of pride and selfishness—as Tom Pinch already has, as young Martin does in his "fortunate fall" in the American Eden, as Charity never will—can one regain a paradise of earthly love and trust.

In manifesting his new independence of the letter, though never the spirit, of Dickens's text, Browne may have fortified his initiative not only with Hogarthian devices but those of contemporary artists like Cruikshank. It has long been noted, for example, that Browne's treatment of the pawnbroker's shop (ironically called "house"), where young Martin encounters Tigg after fleeing Pecksniff's hearth, is far more than a mere representation of Dickens's description (XII, facing p. 224) (fig. 68). The author had not referred to the dishevelled, tipsy laundress, probably pawning her iron to get more drink, nor the ragged musician, doubtless dependent on the violin he is about to pawn, nor the workman with the tattered hat just slipping in the door; nor had he included the Hogarthian wall decor—the pictures of a Bacchante squeezing grapes into a wine cup or a bailiff "Distraining for rent"—which suggest the common motivations of the shop's clientele. Though Browne clearly was not drawing on Dickens for these inspired details, as Steig suggests, he may well have tapped Cruikshank, who had portrayed a similar scene in the Sketches by Bos (S, XXIII, facing p. 190) (fig. 69) and included an illustrated verse "Distraining for Rent" in his Comic Almanac just three months prior to Browne's composition. Indeed, both artists' interiors have in common an open door with the traditional triple balls sign; a long counter and separate cubicles; a pair of clerks, one of whom writes in a large ledger; and two shabby customers—women leaning on their elbows and behatted workmen lingering on the periphery. But such similarities are inevitable if a typical shop is to be accurately portrayed. The differences between the two scenes are far more remarkable.

If Browne, in fact, studied Cruikshank's earlier composition, it evidently served only as a point of departure. He was just as aware, as was the veteran artist of the Sketches, of the disparate purposes Dickens would want the same setting to serve in Chuzzlewit. Cruikshank's design is properly static, suitable to the inherent tragic weariness of the three female customers, of different ages but similar appearance, which graphically underlines the author's point about perpetuated degradation in London life. Browne's composition, by contrast, is necessarily livelier. The implications of Martin's presence in the degraded shop are far less tragic—a temporary setback, not a permanent condition. The artist deepens the dramatic interest not only by providing contrasting poignant glimpses of the more regular customers, similar to their counterparts in the Sketches, but variety of movement as well—the proprietor tilting his chair, his partner bending, the baby feeding, Tigg peering, Martin shrinking—all of which are further vitalized by a dramatic play of light and shadow. Such visual stimulation, appropriate to this moment in Chuzzlewit, would have detracted from the different point of the episode in the Sketches. It seems therefore irrelevant to praise either of these illustrations at the expense of the other. Whatever Browne may have learned from Cruikshank or others' treatment of familiar materials, he could be ingenious at reshaping them to his and Dickens's purposes at hand.

The artist manifested this ability elsewhere in Chuzzlewit, as did Dickens himself, in his portrayals of Sairey Gamp, which were a crucial element in her notable success, which, in turn, sustained the novel's precarious popularity. The author relied almost entirely on the midwife's manner of speech to fix her in the reader's imagination, as had Cruikshank, to a partial extent, in his verbal characterization of Sarah Toddles in his Omnibus two years before. Indeed, as Jerrold suggests, it is likely that Dickens found this character's name and manner a source of inspiration. But Cruikshank's numerous portrayals of this diminutive creation, whose face is completely hidden by her oversized stiff-brimmed bonnet, could scarcely have helped Browne, (though he made certain that her umbrella and glass for spirits, the traditional accessories of her profession, were included in his famous 'Mrs. Gamp proposes a toast' [XLIX, facing p. 758]) (fig. 70). Lacking further physical details
from Dickens, the artist, as John Harvey has demonstrated, probably borrowed them from Daumier, whose finer irony Thackeray had, in 1839, publicly urged Browne to study. By the time of *Chuzzlewit* in 1843, the artist no doubt was more familiar with the work of the French caricaturist. In 1840 he had illustrated a novel whose roguish protagonist Daumier had used in a series of caricatures throughout the previous decade (and, indeed, Daumier's conception of this rascal may well have influenced Dickens's creation of Montague Tigg as well as Browne's portrayal of him). In 1842, four months after the final bow of Cruikshank's Sarah Toddles, but two years before the advent of Mrs. Gamp, the French artist had portrayed a memorable 'Garde-Malade' (fig. 71) that, as Harvey has shown, must have helped Browne delineate Sairey more than Dickens's generalized description of her appearance. Not only is Mrs. Gamp viewed from the same angle as Daumier's figure, but she is given from the first the same ample shape as well as a similar rugged, creased face with its shrewd expression and cleft chin (XXVI, facing p. 428 and XLIX, facing p. 758) (fig. 72). Browne was no second Daumier or Cruikshank, but from them, as from Hogarth, he displayed as great skill at adapting what he needed as did Dickens himself. Had he continued to do so as he grew older, rather than over-rely on his own or Dickens's imagination, his partnership with that author might have endured even longer than the fifteen years remaining to it.

At this stage of his career, however, the artist's imagination was fertile enough to carry on admirably when Dickens gave him minimal instructions and left him to his own devices. But the author, especially when anxious, did not perceive this yet. Readers of *Chuzzlewit*, disappointed at the lack of exciting characters and actions, and uncomfortable with the acid satire on domestic values, were falling away, and when the author decided to utilize more of his American experiences to spur sales, he unwisely invaded the artist's province. That Browne had never seen America should not have worried Dickens so much, as the artist's work was rarely based on strict reality. Yet the author was
wary of allowing Browne to trust his imagination to portray what Mark and young Martin supposed to be the "thriving metropolis" of Eden—a place that was neither a city nor a paradise—and issued unusually careful instructions. Yet, in the artist's very first illustration, which shows the adventurers studying the plan of Eden in the real estate office, Dickens failed to notice that the graceful plan itself lacked the inevitable grid structure of a new American town (XXI, facing p. 358) (fig. 73).

Browne, however, perfectly captured the spirit of the scene with details not even mentioned by the author. The viewer, unlike the two heroes, is not too absorbed by the plan to notice the office's torn plaster and mouse, which belie the speculator's claims to prosperity, and the spider web where trapped flies suggest the fate of naive buyers.

The next plate was to reveal Eden in all its squalor. Dickens described the scene at such length in his instructions that the artist was baffled. Dress, expressions, postures, actions, tools, buildings, signs, trees (both cut and uncut), the river—all were specified as if Dickens were describing the picture for the reader rather than giving instructions for it to the artist.142 "I can't get all this perspective in," Browne penciled under the précis, "unless you will allow of a long subject—something less than a mile."143 The artist's first sketch was returned not only with the usual suggestions for alterations but with ideas about how to compress the myriad details, as well as the lines indicating the scene's desired width.144 Nothing left to his imagination, Browne produced a dutiful but uninspired picture (XXIII, facing p. 386) (fig. 74).

Browne's complicated and widely praised frontispiece for the bound Chuzzlewit volumes also reveals what he could do with a minimum of authorial guidance. Dickens concluded his narrative with an apostrophe to Tom Pinch, who, playing the organ years after the action, expresses the characters' fates in his "sounds" (LIV, 840-42). He told Browne to show Tom, the highest if colorless moral touchstone of the story, pensively playing the organ with any visual suggestion of his past that the artist wished to include.145 The artist not only indicated Tom's history by applying the rose motif of the wrapper to indicate his good fortune, but he managed to include and individualize all the leading characters and scenes—over seventy in all—in a delicate oval pattern within the confines of the small allotted space. Still, Dickens was not convinced until well into their next collaboration, Dombey and Son, that he need only provide a general summary of what he wanted in a plate, trusting Browne to decide at least some details which so often made his work transcend mere representation.

Despite the harmony of Chuzzlewit's conclusion and of Dickens's collaboration with Browne throughout, Dickens's relations with his public and with his publishers were deteriorating. Browne had often surpassed himself; Dickens swore that Chuzzlewit was the best of his works so far, but
the fact remained that their audience had dwindled. At the first sign that it was defecting, Dickens had taken Mr. Weller's advice to Pickwick to "write about the 'Merrikins as'll pay all his expenses and more, if he blows 'em up enough" (PP, XLV, 635). But the author's first fictional descriptions of America, more acidly critical than American Notes, provoked more fury than profit on both sides of the Atlantic. That many American readers were incensed was only to be expected, but even Dickens's most loyal English admirers found his account biased. Worse, it increased sales only slightly. William Hall's tactless remark about invoking the repayment clause included in the Chuzzlewit contract if profits failed to meet expectation sent Dickens into a hurt rage and precipitated his subsequent departure from the firm. Even the appearance of Mrs. Gamp, a great favorite with everybody, failed to boost profits greatly or to efface the effect of the publisher's threat, made on the very eve of her appearance. Even A Christmas Carol, despite its unprecedented popularity, failed to recoup the financial loss. "Dickens's last book," intoned his rival, Lever, "has set the gravestone on his fame."146 His obituary, however, proved to be wishful thinking.

Dickens felt compelled to live abroad to cut down his expenses. Chagrined and concerned, he abandoned Chapman and Hall for Bradbury and Evans, and London for the Continent. In quiet Italian surroundings, however, he missed the vitality of London and the encouragement of old friends. The audience he hoped to regain seemed so remote to him that he was unable to compose even his Christmas books with his usual facility. The Chimes in 1844 and The Cricket on the Hearth in 1845 were popular but not critical successes. Dickens returned to London in the summer of 1845 to become the editor of the Daily News. His plan for the paper, as Browne wrote Lever, was that it should "extinguish, but at the same time enlighten the Times, spifflicate the Chronicle, pull down the Standard, strip the Herald, smash the Courier, gouge the Observer, and astonish John Bull."147 But after only seventeen numbers

Fig. 73. Hablot Browne, 'The thriving City of Eden as it appeared on paper.' Martin Chuzzlewit, no. 9. Etching. 4⅞" × 3⅞" (12.5 × 9.7 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 74. Hablot Browne, 'The thriving City of Eden as it appeared in fact.' Martin Chuzzlewit, no. 9. Etching. 3½" × 4¾" (8 × 11.3 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.
the enterprise proved too burdensome. Dickens's *Pictures from Italy*, serialized in the paper prior to its volume publication, was poorly received. Once again Dickens retreated to the Continent, this time to Switzerland.

Under these inauspicious circumstances, over the summer of 1846, Dickens began *Dombey and Son*. Much of Dickens's anxiety about the new full-length novel, his first in three years and his first for his new publishers, manifested itself in excessive concern about its illustrations and in unusual irascibility toward his illustrator. Transferring much of his own self-doubt to Browne, he questioned the ability of the comic artist to illustrate a serious narrative. The theme of pride was to be the basis for the structure of *Dombey and Son* even more completely than the theme of selfishness had been for *Chuzzlewit*. An intricate psychological situation involving a family, rather than a single charismatic hero, was to hold the reader's interest. Anxious about setting out on what might turn out to be a profitless path, Dickens particularly wanted the illustrations to enable his public to understand his more profound purposes. There was no doubt that Browne could memorably establish clear-cut characters and actions. But could he, Dickens asked, also portray the wider range of feeling and nuance that would be present in *Dombey*? Could he graphically summarize more complex themes and mental states? "The points for illustrations, and the enormous care required make me excessively anxious," Dickens admitted to Forster. Despite—or because of—the author's anxiety, however, Browne continued to keep abreast of Dickens's development. In *Dombey*, and in *David Copperfield* and *Bleak House* after it, they reached the height of their collaboration together.

The problem of distance compounded Dickens's concern about *Dombey*. The routine he evolved to enable him to supervise Browne from afar maximized the strain on all involved. The author wrote letters from Switzerland, which, among other things, indicated the subjects for illustration, to Forster, who forwarded them to Browne in the country. The artist then sent his final sketches to Lausanne for approval. Dickens invariably had corrections and suggestions. Delays and misunderstandings were inevitable. Nevertheless, he only allowed Browne to begin to etch the plate after he had unconditionally approved the sketches, entitled them, and returned them through Forster. The etching process was also complicated, as it had been ever since the artist moved from London in 1840. First, his London partner, Robert Young, prepared the ground and sent each plate to Browne in the country in a specially constructed box; then the artist etched it and forwarded it back to Young in the city who did the biting-in while another assistant did the lettering for the title. Neither Browne nor Forster, however, aware of the complex pressures bedeviling the author, complained about these tortuous procedures.

Without his on-the-spot supervision, Dickens feared Browne would not work hard enough on the *Dombey* illustrations or else would misunderstand his intentions; and he even contemplated having the artist come to Switzerland. He was consequently surprised when the first design, that for the wrapper, showed that Browne was "certainly interesting himself and taking pains." With an incredibly complex system of contrasts (similar in shape as well as in abstract ideas to his title page for Thomas Miller's *Godfrey Malvern* in 1842), Browne allegorically portrayed the "pride goeth before a fall" moral of the narrative on the wrapper (xiii) (see F). Linking contrasted vignettes, as Butt and Tillotson have observed, is a "line of prosperity and promise [that] runs upward from the left of the centre, through the precariously balanced ledgers, to where [Mr. Dombey] sits enthroned on an office chair, on the platform of a cash box, and down through the tumbling house of cards on the right. The allegorical scenes at the foot of the design emphasize the turn of Fortune's wheel." The wrapper design did not commit the author to a specific plan or disclose his secrets; Florence is barely discernible and Paul's death is not revealed at all. Yet Dickens thought the design had "a little too much in it," an "ungrateful objection," as he himself admitted, but certainly in keeping with his fault-finding mood at the time; he would later recommend it as a model for the opening illustrations for each part of his forthcoming Christmas book.

Never had Dickens been so concerned with the visual impact of an opening number. His countless directives from Lausanne reflected his fear that an undue application of graphic satire, even on comic subjects, would undermine his serious purpose. Finally settling on "Miss Tox introduces ‘the Party’" as the subject for the first illustration (II, facing p. 14), Dickens particularly urged that "the Toodle family should not be too much caricatured, because of Polly," the nurse who would act in loco parentis on Mrs. Dombey's death. Above all, there was to be no satirizing the looks of his merchant hero, who would make his debut en famille in the second plate. What Forster termed Dickens's "nervous dread of caricature" on this score led him to suggest for the first time since, perhaps, Squeers in *Nickleby* a living model for the city gentleman he wanted: "The man for Dombey, if Browne could see him, the class man to a T, is Sir A——E—— of D's," he wrote to Forster; "I do wish he could get a glimpse of A, for he is the very Dombey." The glimpse of "A" not being possible, Browne
forwarded a sketch that portrayed twenty-nine other actual as well as imagined heads, which included examples, he noted, of the “rather bold—rather red—handsome well-made—pompous stern—close shaved—close cut & stuffy-formal” (fig. 75). Both the effort and the humor of Browne’s response seemed lost on Dickens, who soberly checked the studies he preferred.\footnote{157} The artist then fashioned Dombey from a combination of the approved studies, particularly the checked specimen on the upper left, to the author’s satisfaction. But his many subsequent portrayals of the hero, viewed sequentially, betray a lingering graphic confusion.\footnote{158} If, in his first appearances, Dombey looks like a taller, thinner, Pecksniff without his hair tuft (III, facing p. 30; V, facing p. 54), his final ones make him resemble Trollope’s Plantagenet Palliser as recently portrayed on British television (I, facing p. 718; LIX, facing p. 840). That Dombey’s carefully chosen face is rendered with an inconsistency independent of dramatic considerations (II, facing p. 30; cf. XXI, facing p. 288; cf. I, facing p. 178, for examples) seems to have escaped Dickens, who rested content in the knowledge that his titular hero was solemnly respectable.

Browne, proceeding with the overcautiousness Dickens was demanding, forwarded two detailed sketches of Dombey with his family, asking “whether ‘twere better to have him standing thus, stiff as a poker, with a kind of side glance at his daughter (fig. 76), or sitting, as in the other?” (fig. 77); for he had illustrated two separate but consecutive moments in the text, similar in emotional tension, if not physical activity (III, 30–32).\footnote{159} They should have allayed Dickens’s fear that Browne could not shift from blunt caricature to subtle characterization. Mr. Dombey, stiffly standing to the right at Florence’s entrance, might have been more imposing, but Dickens wisely chose to have him stiffly sitting in the middle, and indeed the posture and position are more suggestive of the man and his awkward relationships with his children. The merchant occupies the central position in the published illustration as in the text (III, facing p. 30) (fig. 78). His impeccable dress, faultless grooming and genteel snuff box suggest his prosperity; his pursed lips, pinched nostrils, and rigid posture his cold pride. His figure is turned toward his favored infant son in Polly’s arms, who resembles him in solemn expression and upright posture. However, Dombey’s eyes, as do Polly’s, shift with reluctant uneasiness toward the older Florence. Halted in the tall, lighted doorway, Dombey’s daughter is as excluded from her father physically by his chair back and surrounding shadows as she is emotionally by his habitual indifference to her. Her bashful face and figure, aged by its mourning dress, conveys simultaneously her yearning to join her sole remaining parent and her fear of his rejection. Directly over the heads of Polly and the baby hangs a huge, bagged chandelier, far more threatening than when it had hung on Dombey’s right (see fig. 76). The fixture, earlier likened by Dickens’s text to a monstrous tear (III, 23), adds a final note of ominous sadness to the unnatural group. The memorable scene is recalled in the illustrations showing Florence again entering the same door, first to be introduced to her stepmother (XXVIII, facing p. 408), then to achieve a final reconciliation with her father (LIX, facing p. 840).\footnote{160} In that touching scene, Dombey is again cut off from his child by his chair back but his forlorn expression, together with the ray of sunlight linking them both, leaves no doubt about the warmth of her reception this time. ‘The Dombey Family’ not only perfectly illustrates the spirit of its texts but also provides points of departure and return for the developing narrative.

Readers were attracted by what they read and saw in the opening number. Florence, an appealing and sophisticated successor to little Nell, particularly engaged their affections. Dickens was elated about the favorable response. As he confided to Mitton, even Browne, “who is generally the most indifferent fellow in the world, couldn’t help writing... a long letter about it, and saying how pleased he was,” though to Forster, Dickens only remarked with condensation that “Browne seems to be getting on well.”\footnote{161} Both men, however, well knew how much the artist had contributed to Dombey’s initial success.

In the second number Dickens relaxed his vigilant surveillance, and then regretted that he had. He did not conceal his disappointment over ‘The Christening Party’ (V, facing p. 54) and ‘Polly rescues the Charitable Grinder’ (VI, facing p. 70), perhaps because both were throwbacks to Browne’s (and his own) earlier comic style. The plates were so “dreadfully bad,” he said, that they made him “curl his legs up” in frustration and distaste.\footnote{162} They also made him unusually apprehensive about a special illustration on which he set “much store” for the subsequent issue of Dombey. The best subject for the third number, Dickens had decided, was a “quiet odd thing, Paul, Mrs. Pipchin, and the Cat, by the fire.”\footnote{163} Unaware perhaps that Browne usually made two or three sketches for each one that he sent to Lausanne, Dickens earnestly but unfairly implored the artist to think this subject worth extra effort. Shortness of time probably forced Dickens to forward the relevant text directly to the artist this once and prevented him from seeing Browne’s drawing before it was etched. His reaction to the published plate (VIII, facing p. 106) (fig. 79), which he called “frightfully and wildly wide of the mark,” reveals more about Dickens’s hysterical mental state than about Browne’s
Fig. 75. Hablot Browne, Studies for Mr. Dombey. Pencil. 9" × 7½" (22.9 × 18.7 cm). From the Forster Collection (Library), by permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.
Fig. 76. Hablot Browne, Sketch for 'The Dombey Family.' Blue ink and pencil. 8" × 6½" (20.3 × 16.2 cm) [sight]. From the Dexter Collection, Department of Prints and Drawings, by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.
misinterpretation. “Good Heaven!” he exploded to Forster, in the commonest and most literal construction of the text, it is all wrong. She is described as an old lady, and Paul’s “miniature armchair” is mentioned more than once. He ought to be sitting in a little arm-chair down in a corner of the fireplace, staring up at her. I can’t say what pain and vexation it is to be so utterly misrepresented. I would cheerfully have given a hundred pounds to have kept this illustration out of the book. He never could have got that idea of Mrs. Pipchin if he had attended to the text. Indeed I think he does better without the text; for then the notion is made easy to him in short description, and he can’t help taking it in.

‘Paul and Mrs. Pipchin’ was vulnerable to criticism, but not on the grounds advanced by Dickens. Mrs. Pipchin’s tall, gaunt frame does make her appear younger than she was, but seems appropriate to one of her energy and appetite. Had Paul been placed in the fireplace corner, with his face shadowed by the black drapery as the text specified, the problems of composition and light would have been almost insuperable. Dickens might have complained with more justification that Browne stressed the “quiet” features of the scene at the expense of the “odd.” In fact, Mrs. Pipchin is too benign, her sinister parlor too cheerful, her witch’s cat too tame, and her plants not animalistic enough. The effect on Paul, whom Browne elevates to a cozy intimacy with the ogress, is hardly the weird one Dickens detailed in his text.

That the author quickly veered to generalities to convey his distress, however, suggests that something other than his judgment was offended. Indeed, it was his memory that was pained and vexed. But he had not yet confided, even to Forster, the extent to which the scene was based on his recollection of his own miserable boarding experience with Mrs. Roylance, who “unconsciously began to sit for Mrs. Pipchin.” Browne, never privy to this revelation, could hardly have avoided misrepresenting Dickens’s indelible memory of it. Forster mentioned Dickens’s outburst in his Life, not to point up Browne’s failings but the author’s unstable mood at the time. Indeed, twenty years later, after the catharsis of writing the partly autobiographical David Copperfield and Great Expectations, the author selected for the frontispiece this very illustration, one out of only eight used in the 1867 Charles Dickens Edition of Dombey.

There would have been many such outbursts had Dickens remained abroad, lonely and anxious. Fortunately, the
tension was dispelled by Dickens's proposed visit to London the following month. The mere anticipation of his December holiday facilitated his writing, and this, in turn, disposed him more graciously toward his illustrator. Meanwhile, lacking time or, perhaps, beginning to perceive that Browne did better without the text, Dickens tested him by supplying only a short precis and a few explicit instructions for the scene of Doctor Blimber's students supposedly enjoying themselves on a walk. Freed from excessive instructions, Browne not only portrayed Blimber's traditional pedagogy in action, he incorporated a criticism of its whole mean spirit—a more difficult achievement than depicting the vicious Yorkshire school in *Nickleby* (VIII, facing p. 90) or the lax rural schoolroom in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (XXV, facing p. 199). The artist contrasts the unnatural enervation of Paul and his schoolmates with the spirited urchins somersaulting contemptuously in front of their genteel peers, and gaily flying kites and riding donkeys along the sea cliffs in the background (XII, facing p. 160). That Browne introduced seventeen scholars instead of the ten he had explicitly requested did not bother Dickens, for he was now back in London, happily preoccupied with old friends and new ventures. He simply altered his text to read "a limited number" instead of "ten" students, and wrote his wife that "Browne's plates are much better than usual." After he returned to the Continent, Dickens maintained his better humor, if not his writing facility. The subsequent *Dombey* numbers, however, continued to fascinate his readers. "There's no writing against such power as this—one has no chance!" cried Thackeray, throwing the number describing Paul's death onto the desk of the editor of *Punch.* The author had no time to savor such praise. He was suddenly recalled to London by his eldest son's attack of scarlet fever at boarding school. Once his child was out of danger, Dickens relished being back in London, despite the unavailability of Devonshire Terrace, which had been rented for the year, and other disruptions arising from his unexpected return. Forster and Browne, able once again to deal directly with the author, particularly appreciated his proximity and happier spirits.

Back on his native ground, Dickens tried to compensate for the irritability he had shown toward Browne. He acted far more appreciative of Browne's efforts and even abashed when his delays might inconvenience the artist. Despite his extreme busyness, Dickens's lengthy directive concerning Major Bagstock's introduction of Dombey to Edith Granger and her mother, for example, was a model of delicacy. Still wary of being misrepresented, but careful not to offend, he stressed the importance of the sketch to the narrative and his wish to inspect it, "if possible." Within the week, the artist had dispatched his sketch and received Dickens's tactful comments. The author first gently corrected two details, though admitting they were "capital in themselves"; he "grieved" that the native who pushes Mrs. Skewton around in a Bath chair (a tableau young Swinburne loved to reenact) must be in European, not native, dress; and insisted the Major must have an older, larger face. Otherwise, the sketch was "admirable"; the women, especially Edith, he said, were "quite perfect"; and if, for future purposes, the artist could not find the sketch of the Leamington Pump Room he had made on their Midlands trip during *Nickleby* almost a decade earlier, Dickens added, they might visit the spa again.

Browne altered the sketch (XII, facing p. 288) (fig. 80) but the proposed Leamington excursion was never undertaken. Yet the fact that it was even suggested reveals the extent to which the author's disposition, rather than the
The death of William Hall, which brought happy Pickwick days with Browne to mind rather than the painful Chuzzlewit remark, mellowed Dickens further with nostalgia. Absorbed by personal, professional, and charitable obligations, he wasted no time being querulous. In Forster's view, the artist certainly redeemed his earlier "errors" in the latter part of Dombey and Son. It is even clearer that as Dickens's instructions to Browne became more suggestive and less imperative, the artist responded with increased creativity.

With the introduction of Edith Granger, the most fascinating of the story's unusual number of women, Dickens began to expand the psychological scope and depth of Dombey. Some, like Mesdames Skewton, Chick, Pipchin, and MacStinger, invited caricature—indeed the only caricature Dickens permitted in this book. Most, however—Polly Toodles, Susan Nipper, Alice Brown, Florence, and, especially, Edith—all beauties of various kinds, required and received varied treatments. Beatrix Potter could not have been thinking of his Dombey work when she wondered "why Phiz made such a mess of some of his ladies," not the young girls but the superficially well-bred women like Edith. For Browne, like Dickens, now relied less and less on superficial ugliness or beauty to establish character, turning to other devices to differentiate the ladies morally and psychologically. Throughout the remaining part of the narrative, particularly in his portrayals of Edith and her comic counterpart, Mrs. MacStinger, Browne employed all kinds of Hogarthian artifacts—portraits, sculptures, posters—in a much more systematic manner than he had in his earlier illustrations for Dickens.

Although she is the most complicated of the women Dickens had yet created, Edith must still be portrayed partly in terms of her external characteristics by the author as well as by the artist. But surrounding Edith with meaningful artifacts was an especially suitable technique for adding perspective to her character, for she is herself regarded as an artifact by her mother (as is Alice, her counterpart in so many ways [XL, facing p. 576]) as well as by her suitors, Dombey and his associate Carker. Dickens, more sensitive to the character-revealing potential of art since his tours on the Continent, uses artistic analogies himself to describe situations in which Edith is involved: for example, he has Carker say to Mrs. Skewton, pointing to Dombey and her daughter standing together in mutual isolation, "if you speak of pictures, there's a composition!" (XXVII, 389). An illustration here would be superfluous.

Nevertheless, whereas Dickens's crude anticipation of Jamesian techniques remains random, Browne employs their graphic equivalents constantly.

Dickens, himself at first uncertain what Edith's precise function would turn out to be, merely wished the artist to convey to the reader a sense of her importance. Thus, after her introduction to Dombey by the Major (XXI, facing p. 288) (fig. 80), Browne is temporarily limited: he can comment only on the situations in which Edith finds herself, but not on her actual character. For instance, when Edith is introduced to Florence by Dombey (at his most Pecksniffian, complete with pompous bust overhead) (XXVIII, facing p. 408) (fig. 81), the fact that she will become the girl's stepmother is suggested by the portrait, possibly of the first Mrs. Dombey, that peers out from behind its drapery, as will similar portraits at other crucial moments in Dombey's life (LI, facing p. 718; LIX, facing p. 840). An ominous funeral hearse suggests past as well as future events attendant on Edith's marriage to Dombey, while the Punch and Judy performance in the background parodies its quality in a picture whose special importance is signified by the fact that it is in oblong form—the first of the many that would appear in Dickens's subsequent novels (XXXI, facing p. 448) (fig. 82). Edith's own significance is evident by the time she haughtily appears in 'Mrs. Dombey at Home' (XXXVI, facing p. 518) (fig. 83), again, as at her wedding, slightly off-center, the vacant space in the middle suggesting the emptiness at the core of her existence. But Dickens had still not determined her ultimate fate in the story beyond her indifference to Dombey and hatred for Carker.

By the time the two villains confer in secret, however, Dickens had decided how the three would be linked, and signaled his intention in terms so graphic that Browne's accompanying illustration was superfluous (XLII, facing p. 598) (fig. 84)—a kind of redundancy that became increasingly common in future works. Using Carker's "voluptuous" portrait that resembles Edith, the author makes clear Carker's intention to pursue her and deceive Dombey: "Blended with the look that Carker bent upon [Dombey] was a devilish look at the picture over his head, that struck upon it like a flash of lightning (XLII, 597). . . . then it shot a strange triumphant look at the picture, as appealing to it to bear witness how he led him on again, and what was coming" (XLII, 599). Since this description leaves Browne very little graphic leeway, it is hardly surprising that it is more dramatic than the illustration, in which he includes the commonplace sexual symbols.
Fig. 80. Hablot Browne, 'Major Bagstock is delighted to have that opportunity.' *Dombey and Son*, no. 7. Etching. 5½" × 4⅞" (13 × 12 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 81. Hablot Browne, 'Mr. Dombey introduces his daughter Florence.' *Dombey and Son*, no. 9. Etching. 4⅞" × 4¾" (11.8 × 10.8 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 82. Hablot Browne, 'Coming home from Church.' *Dombey and Son*, no. 10. Etching. 4¾" × 6⅛" (12.1 × 17.1 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.
Fig. 83. (above). Hablot Browne, 'Mrs. Dombey at Home.' *Dombey and Son*, no. 12. Etching. $4\frac{3}{16}\times 7\frac{5}{16}$ (11 x 19 cm). Fig. 84 (right). Hablot Browne, 'Mr. Dombey and his "confidential agent."' *Dombey and Son*, no. 14. Etching. $5\frac{5}{16}\times 3\frac{5}{16}$ (13.2 x 8.1 cm). Both by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 85. Hablot Browne, 'Florence and Edith on the Staircase.' *Dombey and Son*, no. 15. Etching. $5\frac{1}{2}\times 4\frac{5}{6}$ (14 x 10.7 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 86. Hablot Browne, 'Mr. Carker in his hour of triumph.' *Dombey and Son*, no. 17. Etching. $5\frac{5}{6}\times 4\frac{3}{4}$ (14.3 x 10.8 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.
of the pierced meat and the caged bird, as he will again in 'Secret intelligence' (LII, facing p. 726). Subsequently, however, the author allows the artist to supply more clues to Edith's course of action. In her encounter with Florence on the staircase prior to her flight with Carker, for example, a series of elegant artifacts suggest Edith's conflicting feelings (XLVII, facing p. 664) (fig. 85). An oval portrait of a girl fondling a dove and a pair of plaques, each with a maternal angel and child, suggest her capacity and desire to be a loving stepmother to Florence. In contrast, three pieces of sculpture—a fearless Amazon (perhaps Atalanta), riding sidesaddle, a man sacrificing a woman (perhaps Agamemnon and Iphigenia), and another semimude protectively holding a small figure or objects to her body—suggest that Edith must save herself before she can save Florence lest she become another of Dombey's works of art.

Another careful Browne study, ironically entitled 'Mr. Carker in his hour of Triumph,' reveals that she will never submit to Carker (LIV, facing p. 762) (fig. 86). It is clearer from Browne's plate than from Dickens's prose that Edith has simply used Carker to escape her marriage to Dombey. The romantic objects on and above the fireplace mantel—the flickering candles, the two pairs of amorous figurines, the clock ornamented with cupids—are at ironic odds with the unromantic events played out here. For Edith's untouched dishes further indicate, as Mrs. Leavis suggests, she has no thought of becoming Carker's mistress in the hotel room or anywhere else. Her outflung arm is not merely a theatrical gesture, but rather an expression of her dearly bought freedom in its release from its previous cramped position (see figs. 80–83). The pictures of Judith beheading Holofernes and the statue of an Amazon riding over a prostrate male comment on her brave if unfeminine behavior as she undeceives Carker. Yet the sword in the picture and the raised lance in the sculpture, though they complement Edith's threatening—even castrating—gesture toward Carker, point toward her, reinforcing the fact that she pursues a self-destructive course. These ambiguous touches perfectly convey the moral complexity of her action. Dickens's unwillingness to pass final judgment on Edith may be suggested by the fact that she does not die after all, contrary to the author's original intention and to the usual fate of such women in Victorian fiction.

After coping graphically with such complex dramatic situations, Browne must have welcomed the relief of a straightforward comic situation featuring Mrs. MacStinger. In his portrayal of this humorous harridan, especially her pursuit and capture of Bunsby, the artist appropriately reverts to more common and less serious artifacts. The ironic title of the scene in which both protagonists first appear, 'The Midshipman is boarded by the enemy' (XXXIX, facing p. 558), is sharpened by the popular scenes on the wall; one, entitled 'Medusa,' shows a ship foundering in a storm (doubtless after Gericault's famed 'The Raft of the Medusa,' which toured England in 1820); the other depicts two ships in battle. 'Another wedding,' the concluding illustration in the book (whose title, oblong form, and design invite comparison to Edith's wedding) (see fig. 81), contains even more blunt comments by the artist, by means of tattered, crudely lettered theatrical posters on the background wall advertising plays like She Stoops to Conquer and La Mariage Forcé (LX, facing p. 856) (fig. 87). In the MacStinger-Bunsby nuptials, Browne also exploits the simple poster to dramatize Dickens's portrayal of love throughout Dombey as a perpetual contest, as Steig has suggested, in which the woman—not just Mrs. MacStinger and Edith, but also Florence, Polly, Susan, Mrs. Chick, and even Mrs. Pipchin, Miss Tax, and Alice—usually wins.

Dickens clearly appreciated the ways in which Browne had met his challenges—so well, in fact, that Henry James would refer to the narrative as "Phiz's Dombey and Son." Considering their inauspicious start, author and artist reached the conclusion of Dombey in remarkable accord. During the publication of the novel, Browne had been publishing independent, extra engravings of the main characters with permission of the author, whose criticisms he both solicited and adopted. After Dombey's conclusion, he sent Dickens some of his original sketches (whether for the novel or the separate sketches is unclear). The author vowed to treasure them as heirlooms. Browne had retained one of Paul, Dickens's favorite character, to color. Dickens, eager to have this sketch as well, added a mock-macabre warning to his note of thanks for the others, as revealing in its oblique way as the hysterical note he had sent his publisher near the end of Barnaby Rudge.

This afternoon, or Thursday, I shall be near the whereabouts of the boy in the flannel gown, and will pay him an affectionate visit. But I warn you, now and beforehand (and this is final you'll observe) that you are not a-going to back out of the pigmental finishing of the said boy, for if ever I had a boy of my own that boy is MINE!

And, as the Demon says at the Surrey,

I claim my victim

Ha! Ha! Ha!

At which you will imagine my going down a sulphurous trap, with the boy in my grasp—and will you please not imagine him merely in my grasp, but to hand him over.

His fascination with Paul is only one indication of his efforts to retrieve, from the disturbing depths of his memory, the
youngster he himself had been. In confiding details of his own childhood first to Forster and then to fiction, Dickens did not descend into any trap. Among other effects of this introspection, painfully begun during *Dombey and Son* and continued in *David Copperfield*, was Dickens's renewed creativity, and a resurgence of confidence in himself that, happily, spilled over to his principal illustrator.

When Dickens was writing *David Copperfield*, only Forster knew how closely Copperfield's childhood resembled that of his creator. Dickens never took Browne into his confidence, but the illustrations to this text are nevertheless unusually sensitive. As the wrapper design suggests (xiv) (see F), the artist did not know when he began what directions the story would take. Lacking specific information about characters or incidents, Browne wisely placed a sprightly figure of Fortune overlooking a series of scenes applicable to every man from cradle to grave, placed, like those on the *Nickleby* and *Dombey* covers, in a clockwise cycle. The undefined hero is portrayed as an infant in his mother's lap, a child toddling between his mother and his nurse, a schoolboy, a suitor, a parent, a prosperous gentleman, and, though the text does not finally follow David that far, an old man beckoned to his grave. The artist could not portray the Murdstones, Micawbers, Wickfields, Spenlows, and Heeps, who stimulate David's inner growth, because Dickens had not yet committed them to paper, but such a generalized cover was not likely to contradict Dickens's narrative in any important way.

If conceived in distress, Dickens's "favorite child" developed in an unusually congenial atmosphere. Not only was David better known to him, but he was far more appealing to his audience than the adults who had dominated his fiction since *Oliver Twist*. Browne, though not personally acquainted with the autobiographical realities dominating
The author's greater realism, looser structure; simpler style, and mellow tone, appropriate to a Bildungsroman, permitted a wider range of character and emotion than the objective content and the moral themes of *Chuzzlewit* and *Dombey*. With his usual sensitivity, Brown responded with suitably varied graphic reinforcement. 180

The first-person narrative, another departure for Dickens, proved visually challenging for the author as well as for the artist. It took unusual empathy between the two men to portray David's memories, and, at the same time, to suggest the development of his perceptions as he tells the story. Self-contained recollections as well as resonant ones are treated with delicate economy. Browne etches David's early memory of Mr. Mell's mother listening to her son, the assistant master of Salem House, playing the flute before "she fades in her turn, and he fades, and all fades" (V, 74–75). In 'I return to the Doctor's after the party' both Dickens and Browne depict Annie prostrate at Dr. Strong's feet (XVI, facing p. 244); but the authorial insistence on the "great impression" this scene made on David suggests that the reader may wish to refer back to the picture, as David repeatedly refers back to his memory of it, gradually perceiving its problems, implications (XIX, 279), and eventual resolution (XXXV, 531). 184 Even the transience of memorable moments, such as when the Peggotty clan celebrates Em'ly's engagement to Ham, functions dramatically. Browne fixes David's and Steerforth's "glimpse" of the happy group (XXI, facing p. 308), while Dickens notes the effect of their entrance: "The little picture was so instantaneously dissolved by our going in, that one might have doubted whether it had even been" (XXI, 308). Dickens can obliterate the fleeting moment with words (Steerforth will do so by his actions), knowing that Browne has given it permanence. 185

Browne proved remarkably faithful to Dickens's real memories, albeit unwittingly. Considering how precise his own conceptions must have been, as they were of Mrs. Pipchin in *Dombey*, it will be recalled, Dickens had surprisingly few objections to Browne's sketches. He did prefer that the hero be dressed in a short jacket rather than a long coat for his first dinner out (V, facing p. 66), but only, he said, if this change could be accomplished "without altering him in any other respect." 186 Browne, though unaware that the grandiloquent but improvident Micawber had been inspired by Dickens's father, nevertheless portrayed him in a manner the son deemed "uncommonly characteristic and capital." 197

Not since *Pickwick* had Dickens been so openly appreciative of Browne's efforts. Never again would he be so pleased with the artist or with himself. The artist did labor unusually hard to capture the spirit as well as the letter of scenes and individuals. For the plate of Davy's making himself "known" to his Aunt Betsey, for example, he showed Dickens several sketches before he achieved a satisfactory balance between pathos and humor. The first two sketches showed Miss Trotwood, the most memorable of the hero's many surrogate parents, sitting flat down on the garden path in an accurate if comically undignified pose (figs. 88 and 89). The third showed the Aunt standing erect with surprise facing her nephew. "So?" Browne queried (fig. 90). Or, "So?" he asked again in yet another version—more a caricature, which showed less of the Aunt's face but more of the boy's (fig. 90). The artist ultimately fused the designs, taking the more pathetic figure of Davy from the first two, that of the Aunt from the second pair, and a combination of details from all for the background to create a sensitive representation of the text (XIII, facing p. 190) (fig. 91). 198

As Browne seemed to be taking special pains to please, Dickens was less prone to criticize him. Even when the artist turned Peggotty's boat home upside down, in contradiction of the text (III, facing p. 30), though not reality, the author said nothing. 199 Dickens's affability extended to social as well as professional occasions; Browne was included in the small party instigated by Dickens to celebrate the novel's debut, and even seems to have been prevailed upon to spend a holiday at Bonchurch. 200 In contrast to the stress surrounding their initial work on *Dombey*, all went smoothly on *David Copperfield* from the beginning.

Stimulated by Dickens's approval, Browne, more consistently and often more profoundly than in *Dombey*, includes meaningful details in his illustrations, which comment on individuals and episodes with which the hero becomes involved. 201 In keeping with David's maturing perceptions, Browne used simple graphic accessories in the earlier scenes and more sophisticated ones in later scenes. David's aristocratic trust in people, along with other qualities, may enable him to "scramble through on hands and knees," in the grudging words of Robert Louis Stevenson, as Dickens's first real gentleman. 202 But even a gentleman must learn to make proper judgments and discriminations about people and events, and to penetrate deceptive appearances. The artist, more directly than the author, enables the reader to assess David's progress in this crucial sphere.

Simple pictorial objects comment on Davy's childhood experiences, particularly those involving meals. Prints rather than parents overlook the boy's first meal at an inn (V, facing p. 66) (fig. 92). The large map on the wall, which recalls the globe on the monthly wrapper (facing p. xiv) and anticipates the map hanging behind Mr. Peggotty at the end of his search for Em'ly (XL, facing p. 578), suggests the great world that David is now encountering for the first time. Before the machinations of the "friendly" waiter are
Fig. 88. Hablot Browne, Sketch for 'I make myself known to my Aunt.' Pencil. 6\(\frac{1}{2}\)" x 5\(\frac{1}{2}\)" (15.5 x 16.5 cm). From the Elkins Collection, by permission of the Rare Book Department of The Free Library of Philadelphia.

Fig. 89. Hablot Browne, Sketch for 'I make myself known to my Aunt.' Pencil. 6\(\frac{3}{4}\)" x 4\(\frac{1}{2}\)" (15.5 x 11.5 cm). From the Elkins Collection, by permission of the Rare Book Department of The Free Library of Philadelphia.

Fig. 90. Hablot Browne, Sketches for 'I make myself known to my Aunt.' Pencil. 7\(\frac{1}{4}\)" x 5\(\frac{1}{2}\)" (8.1 x 14 cm). From the Elkins Collection, by permission of the Rare Book Department of The Free Library of Philadelphia.

Fig. 91. Hablot Browne, 'I make myself known to my Aunt.' David Copperfield, no. 5. Etching. 5\(\frac{3}{8}\)" x 4\(\frac{1}{4}\)" (13.5 x 10.8 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.