disclosed by the text, their outcome is anticipated by the other pictures on the dining room wall. That he is to be tricked out of his dinner is made clear by a scene of Sancho Panza, bewildered as the enchanter's wand draws an empty circle where his plate should be (Don Quixote, XLVII) by the depiction of the fable of the Fox and the Stork; and by the theater bill advertising The Devil to Pay. The reader recalls this illustration when Davy, in his blacking house days, more successfully places his "magnificent order" for a drink, though he is scarcely larger than the infant Bacchus in the pub window (XI, facing p. 160).

More sober works of art appear in 'Changes at Home' (VIII, facing p. 108) (fig. 93). Like Florence Dombey, Davy tentatively enters the living room, cut off from his family by his parent's back and that of her chair. His unsettled stance and expression is at odds with his mother's composure, his awkwardness contrasting with the graceful curves of her head, the baby's clothes and draped bassinet, and the oval frames of the pictures behind and above the pair. Unlike Florence, but like his counterpart in the framed representation of the Prodigal Son's return, Davy will be warmly included into the group. But he, like Moses, the subject of the companion scene over the fireplace, will eventually be abandoned to the care of strangers. This idyllic but transitory domestic moment is recalled by 'The momentous interview' when it will be decided whether Davy remains with his aunt or returns with the dreaded Murdstones (XIV, facing p. 208) (fig. 94). Once more, the boy is isolated from his closest blood relation by chairbacks. And again, a Biblical picture, 'Joseph's Garment,' comments on his position, made perilous by his stepfather and ludicrous by his dress. The humor suffusing the illustration and its details, which parody those of the earlier scene, anticipates the happy outcome even before it is revealed in the text.

Browne uses all kinds of household appurtenances to characterize the experiences of the maturing hero, particularly the ones involving Dora. When David confers with
her aunts to win her hand, even the titles of the pictures on their walls—'The Last Appeal,' 'The Momentous Question,' and 'Arcadia'—comment on the nature of his errand, and books—*Loves of the Angels* and *Paradise Regained*—anticipate his success (XLI, facing p. 592) (fig. 95). Other objects strewn through 'Our Housekeeping,' succinctly summed up by the jar labeled 'PICKLES' prominently displayed among the scattered books on the drawing-room shelf, reveal the plight of their marriage (XLIV, facing p. 636) (fig. 96). The couple are as trapped by their own inexperience and immaturity as their caged birds. The disorder on the table sharply contrasts to the many orderly meals elsewhere in the narrative, even in David's bachelor quarters (XXVIII, facing p. 410) or the Micawbers' impoverished ones (XXXVI, facing p. 531). The cause of the chaos is Dora's dog, Jip, and, as Harvey has perceived, by dramatic analogy, its owner. By the dark glossiness of their hair, the softness of their bodies, and the curves of their limbs, Browne graphically equates Dora with her pet just as Dickens eventually does dramatically by having them die at the same time.
When David next appears in the same room (LIII, facing p. 762) (fig. 97), his impending bereavement is suggested by the dying dog and by many inanimate objects: the small, empty chair; the abandoned portfolio; the workless clock-case; the guttering candle; music from the Mozart "Requiem"; the broken-stringed guitar; and, in one variant of the plate, a butterfly on an inkwell. 

Behind David stands Agnes (on whom we focus because of the picture's title rather than its arrangement), with that air of decorum that will characterize their future home and life together. Dominating both at this moment, however, is the large portrait of Dora, who, significantly, resembles Clara Copperfield in childish looks and manner.

After Agnes and David are married, the same portrait, hanging between two sculptured angels, and next to it apparently a drawing of Em'ly before her Yarmouth boat home, recall the turbulent past that made the present idyllic scene possible (LXIII, facing p. 860) (fig. 98).

David is an innocent who only profits from bitter experience. Indeed, Somerset Maugham expressed surprise that David, even after living with the bankrupt Micawbers and drudging in the London warehouse, remained such a "ninny" as to be cheated out of his coach seat (XIX, facing p. 282). Certainly when David took tea at the Heeps', he failed to read the threat of duplicity so obvious in the arrangement of objects beside the legal almanac on their mantle—two cats, a mousetrap, a corkscrew, and a stuffed owl (XVII, facing p. 256). In this way Browne's illustrations often bridge the gap between the hero's naivété and the world's realities.

This is particularly true regarding matters of the flesh, where the artist could suggest sexual implications by postures, gestures, and lines as well as emblems, which would have offended Victorian sensibilities if put into words.

When David first meets Miss Mowcher, for example, he is oblivious to her probable relationship to Steerforth, but the careful viewer of the illustration perceives that she is his procurress (XXII, facing p. 324) (fig. 99). The dwarf dramatically stands on the table, with an expression and sidelong glance of amusement, similar to Steerforth's, at David's innocence. There is a clear analogy between Miss Mowcher and the subject of the framed scene over the fireplace: Gulliver performing on a table top for the bemused Brobdingnagians. Her hair and hat feather, functioning like Pecksniff's hair tuft, link her physically and hence morally to the more complex picture over her head, apparently that of Mephistopheles observing the tryst he has arranged between Faust and Gretchen. The turbulence of her hat also connects her with the picture of a storm-tossed ship behind David's head—which anticipates Em'ly's elopement, Steer-
forth and Ham's death in an ocean storm, and Em'ly's emigration to Australia with her uncle. The Faust picture, which Harvey notes is not included in Browne's original sketch, may have been requested by Dickens or added by Browne as a hint to the reader that Steerforth plans to seduce Em'ly with the assistance of Miss Mowcher as well as Littimer. The protests of Mrs. Seymour Hill—a woman who served as the physical model for the dwarf—forced Dickens to ameliorate her wickedness but Browne's unaltered plate makes clear her original function.

Martha, the subject of the very next plate, is one of Dickens's few fictional fallen women (XXII, facing p. 334) (fig. 100). The artist not only depicts her plight more explicitly in the illustration than the author does in the text, but anticipates Em'ly's similar fate and Dickens's philosophy toward both women. As viewers have noted, he arranges the characters to approximate the figures in the mantle scene of Christ blessing Mary Magdalen. The picture forms the top of a triangle linking Martha, who is identified with the Magdalen by her similar posture and isolation from the group, and Em'ly, whose contrasting purity is suggested by the whiteness of her skirt. To reinforce Dickens's implicit assertion of the need and authority for forgiveness, Browne makes the heads of his characters follow an ascending diagonal line to that of Christ's in the picture (as the heads of those surrounding the dying Barkis lead to Jesus in a print of Raphael's 'Transfiguration' over the bed) (XXX, facing p. 440). Hinting at yet another downfall is a scene of Eve's temptation, located significantly over and behind Em'ly's head, partly obscured by shadows and the door as the nature of her attraction to Steerforth is obscured in her mind and heart.

When David next sees Em'ly, her face is averted, her hair tangled and her body curved in shame like Martha's (L, facing p. 716) (fig. 101). In this scene, entitled with sad irony 'Mr. Peggotty's dream comes true,' Browne fills her shabby room with pictures alluding to her past—of small children, a fisherman, and a ship—and objects alluding to her lost virginity: the broken ewer, cracked mirror, smashed flower
pot, empty envelope, discarded dance program, single dancing slipper, and abandoned bonnet and purse (like Martha's in the earlier scene). But as Martha was redeemed by compassion, so Em'ly will be forgiven, without having to resort, as did her friend, to the dire alternative, so memorably suggested by the artist, 'The River' (XLVII, facing p. 674). David's horrified yet compassionate expression as he watches Peggotty comfort his niece suggests he may at last have gone beyond mere sight to insight.

Both Dickens and Browne stood at the height of their reputations at the completion of *David Copperfield*. Many readers regarded *David Copperfield* in the same way Dickens did—as their “favorite child.” The author found renewed inspiration as well as temporary catharsis in recreating the painful experiences of his youth. The artist not only satisfied the demands of the text and the memory that inspired it but, by means of his sensitively detailed illustrations, added incalculable psychological, emotional, and moral depth.

In *David Copperfield*, Dickens had begun to analyze himself. In his next novel, *Bleak House*, he began to analyze his society. Displaying none of the joyousness that suffused his fictional autobiography, Dickens grimly depicted a society built on a web-like foundation of exploitation, poverty, and misery, which inextricably bound together its inhabitants and their fortunes. Browne's talents were stretched to their limit as *Bleak House* took on more and more significance until it became a symbol of society as a whole. For the last time, the artist successfully met the challenge posed by the author's changing style and purpose. His illustrations complemented the text, not as much in specific or suggestive detail as in *Copperfield*, but in essential matters of artistic vision.

Dickens planned his most ambitious narrative, which even T. S. Eliot praised as his “finest piece of construction,” with unusual care. The new blue *Bleak House* wrapper, compared to the one for *Copperfield* in the usual green, shows that Browne was better apprised of the story's direction and spirit (xlii) (see F). Returning to a simpler paneled border of a kind he had not used since *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the artist picked actual characters and episodes from the narrative, which is structured by the inextricable lawsuit of Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce. Chancery clearly dominates the cover, as it does society, irresponsibly dwarfing individuals it supposedly services. Across the wrapper top, as Butt and Tillotson have described, Browne unfolds an allegorical game of blindman's buff in which the Lord Chancellor, judges, and lawyers, all blindfolded, pursue witnesses for fun and litigants for cost, tripping over the woollen sack and mace in the perverted process. In the lower corners, this kind of inhumane sport is further amplified by two scenes, one of a judge looking on bemused while two barristers play chess with clients as chessmen, and another of their colleagues opposite similarly misusing clients for their games of battledore and shuttlecock. A picture of *Bleak House* itself occupies the center panel, at the bottom of which stands John Jarndyce in despair, besieged by specious philanthropists. The acid satire and grim subjects of Browne's wrapper perfectly anticipate the tone and targets of the narrative to come.

Throughout *Copperfield*, Browne reflected Dickens's exuberance in an abundance of unsolicited graphic details; in *Bleak House*, his touches reflect the author's bitterness. But whereas the details for *Copperfield* usually lend range and depth to the first-person narrative, those for *Bleak House* often return to the more superficial satirical level of his work for earlier books. This time, however, in keeping with the narrative, they satirize institutions and their representatives rather than individuals and their actions. On the wall facing Jarndyce and his guests inside 'The little church in the park' (XVIII, facing p. 250), for example, the artist places a memorial to a judge as if to imply the futility of escape from Chancery even on the Sabbath or in death—though the bird perched irreverently on the magistrate's stone wig adds salutary humor. Elsewhere in the narrative, not only does religion prove indifferent to institutional evils, but clergy,
like Chadband, whose pose during his pitiless lecture to Jo caricatures that of the saint pictured behind them, perpetuate them (XXV, facing p. 356). Similarly, officers of the law pervert their function as the artifacts in Vholes's office repeatedly make clear (XXXIX, facing p. 543) (fig. 102). As the attorney enmeshes Richard more and more inescapably in the Jarndyce case, Browne's details—the legend of the fox and grapes carved in his mantle, the portrait of a nearsighted judge above, the wolves' heads below, the ironically labeled cartons stacked to the right, the butterfly net leaning against the wall, the spider web with trapped flies on the ceiling corner, the cat watching for the mouse behind the desk, the overturned wastebasket disclosing an advertisement for "fool's cap," the book opened to a plan of a maze, and the mass of tangled string next to it—all comment on his dubious brand of legal aid. As one admirer of this illustration remarked, "Who is the greater satirist of Chancery suits, 'Phiz' or 'Boz'?"

In one less sober print, Browne's unsolicited details contributed as much to Dickens's embarrassment as to his narrative satire. The author deluded only himself in thinking that Browne's picture of Harold Skimpole in 'Coavinses' was "singularly unlike" its original, Leigh Hunt, in all except superficialities (VI, facing p. 74) (fig. 103); as Macaulay observed, "surely it is by these light externals that the bulk of mankind will always recognize character." If Skimpole's portly figure and foolish face do not resemble the slender, sensitive Hunt, his identity is clearly betrayed by the idiosyncratic accessories in his room at Bleak House: the books and flowers; the scene of a child catching butterflies; and the sculptured "Three Graces," which suggest his three daughters as well as his tripartite credo that life should include only the beautiful, sentimental, or amusing. Such details as these, however, raised a basic problem in Bleak House. They proved best suited to comic scenes where they could lend point and even depth. But as the atmosphere in Bleak House grew more and more oppressive, they began to seem frivolous at worst, superfluous at best. The artist, perhaps perceiving this, used them less frequently in the latter portions of the narrative.

By this time, fortunately, he had found a more appropriate and effective graphic means with which to reinforce Dickens's sober portrayal of society—his so-called dark plates. Indeed, the suggestively sinister atmosphere of Bleak House is due as much to them as to Dickens's prose. The somber tones of these plates complement the action of the novel, which seems always under the shadow of impending or accomplished tragedy. The artist had already experimented with this process, which involved machine

---

**Fig. 102.** Hablot Browne, 'Attorney and Client, fortitude and impatience.' Bleak House, no. 13. Etching. 4⅜" × 5⅝" (10.5 × 12.9 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

**Fig. 103.** Hablot Browne, 'Coavinses.' Bleak House, no. 2. Etching. 4⅜" × 4⅝" (12.4 × 10.6 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.
ruling the entire plate with a series of fine parallel lines in addition to etching the design. Indeed, it is odd that in previous Dickens novels, Browne had singled out only Carker fleeing ‘On the dark Road’ in *Dombey* (LV, facing p. 772) and Martha standing in despair by ‘The River’ in *Copperfield* (XLVII, facing p. 674) as subjects that could benefit from the sense of ominous suspense easily provided by the technique that produced such striking contrasts of light and shadow. Perhaps, as the artist’s son suggests, the first dark plate in *Bleak House* may well have been Browne’s renewed protest against the publisher’s increased duplication of his plates by lithography, which not only decreased his earnings, as no duplicate plates were required, but also blurred his fine lines.²¹ By mechanically ruling a plate with close lines that would blotch if transferred to stone, Browne forced the printers to reproduce it by the usual copperplate press. Whether or not it originated as a reproof, the process perfectly conveyed the mysteriousness of ‘The Ghost’s Walk’ at Chesney Wold (XXXVI, facing p. 512) and the novel arched shape of the scene’s upper portion reinforced its gracefulness. Whatever Dickens’s reasons for disliking Browne’s earlier “shadow-plate” in *Dombey*, he must have realized how ideally suited its process would be to the grimmer subjects and more symbolic style of *Bleak House* and henceforth encouraged the artist’s initiative.²² In the remaining third of the story, most of the illustrations—some oblong, others arched, one even shaped like a pagoda—were executed in this manner.

At their best, Browne’s illustrations had always complemented Dickens’s texts. With apparently inexhaustible ingenuity, the artist continued correlating his visual structures and techniques with the author’s changing ones. The dark plates not only reflect the novel’s prevailing somber tone and atmosphere, but the oppressive dominance of the setting—both weather and structures—over the characters, an inordinate number of whom die in the story’s course. As both Steig and Harvey have pointed out, of the ten dark plates in *Bleak House*, six have no human figures at all; of the four that do, only one figure is clearly discernible; and, moreover, the absence of people is not an inevitable result of the technique or of Browne’s use of it, as is clear from the dark plates the artist executed for other authors.²³ The insignificance of the characters in the artist’s plates sensitively reflects their insignificance in the author’s narrative, which depicts a society whose institutions dwarf, isolate, and too often destroy members. As Dickens increasingly abandoned his usual satiric devices, finding them insufficient to portray his society, so Browne gradually had to dispense with the traditional methods and subjects of graphic satire. The dark plates, depicting the settings associated with the aristocratic Dedlocks, Tulkinghorn, their attorney, and the slum orphan, Jo, link these characters graphically as Dickens links them narratively. Utilizing light and shadow more conventionally than structure and artifact, Browne ingeniously relates Jo to all of society in his portrayal of Tom-all-Alone’s (XLVI, facing p. 624), whose name nearly supplied the book’s title (fig. 104).²⁴ A garbage-filled passage leads out past a sign for a pawnshop, which fails, however, to imply even the temporary relief afforded by those previously depicted by Cruikshank (*SBB*, S, XXIII, facing p. 190) (see fig. 69) or Browne (*MC*, XIII, facing p. 224) (see fig. 68), and ends abruptly in a graveyard, which promises the only escape. Little reassurance is implicit in

Fig. 104. Hablot Browne, ‘Tom all alone’s.’ *Bleak House*, no. 14. Etching. 5⅔ × 3⅔ (14.6 × 9.5 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.
the gray church tower which, like religion itself in *Bleak House*, coldly and impassively overlooks the environs, typical of impoverished London streets of the time (fig. 105).\(^{221}\) Browne had freely delineated church interiors with humorous details (*DC*, II, facing p. 14 and XLIII, facing p. 626; *BH*, XXV, facing p. 356) but he had never put sacred exteriors to such a grim use; this one recalls the similarly indifferent church in Hogarth's 'Gin Lane,' which Dickens so admired (*CP*, 1:159),\(^{222}\) not the structures that benignly rise above Pickwick in the pound (XIX, facing p. 258) or the children playing near their cousin's grave in *Nickleby* (LXV, facing p. 834). No people walk or play in this urban wasteland; their presence is merely hinted at by the clothes draped over the flagless pole and a skirted stuffed doll suspended from a low roof hook, an appropriate suggestion of the condition to which the unseen inhabitants (such as Lady Dedlock's late lover) are often reduced. Similarly portrayed in dark tones are the wooden supports, which, though they brace the deteriorating buildings and, as Steig has perceived, seem to uphold the very heavens,\(^{223}\) are themselves rooted in the earth, surrounded by piles of human waste. As Beatrix Potter concluded, after studying Browne's masterful design, "What a sermon that little drawing preaches."\(^{224}\)

Linked graphically as well as narratively to Tom-all-Alone's is remote Chesney Wold, whose aristocratic inhabitants and environs provide the subjects of over half the total number of dark plates. Browne's exploitation of the striking light and shadow contrasts of this technique deliberately parallel Dickens's verbal devices (including the titles of the illustrations) for portraying Chesney Wold and its owners, especially Lady Dedlock. Though Browne's means are conventional, his deployment of them is sophisticated. From the first, the author leans heavily on the symbolic potential of shadow to anticipate how Lady Dedlock's adultery will affect Chesney Wold and the declining way of life it represents. He describes her portrait, which Guppy's obsessive interest has fixed in the reader's mind (VII, 87–88), in these terms: "Athwart the picture of my lady, over the great chimney-piece, [the cold sunlight] throws a broad bend sinister of light that strikes down crookedly into the earth, and seems to rend it" (XII, 152). In his dark plate, entitled 'Sunset in the long Drawing-room at Chesney Wold,' as Harvey has discussed, Browne graphically reflects the theme of light and shadow, which is used to highlight the few permitted aesthetic objects that are dramatically as well as visually essential (XL, facing p. 562) (fig. 106).\(^{225}\) In the center of the room, in the darkest shadow relieved only by flecks of light, stands a sculptured maternal figure attending a small cherub. At the upper left corner, face averted from

---

The next dark plate that features Lady Dedlock—in person this time—is entitled 'Shadow' (LIII, facing p. 718) (fig. 107), and indeed Dickens uses more and more shadow in
describing her, so that she gradually becomes equated with it. The illustration does more than afford a technical and titular contrast with the preceding scene, ‘Light,’ in which Esther Summerson, Lady Dedlock’s selfless daughter, comforts the newly married Ada (LI, facing p. 694). In the dark plate, shadow acts as a protagonist in the implicit psychological drama, enveloping the entire staircase at Chesney Wold and all but the head and shoulders of Lady Dedlock as she mounts it. It almost blankets the maternal scene on the landing, from which her ladyship, as before, averts her head. In contrast to Edith Dombey’s encounter with Florence on the stairway (D&S, XLVII, facing p. 664) (see fig. 85), a scene that invites comparison with this one, there is no acknowledged responsibility to a child to give this woman pause. Her attention is drawn instead to the area of light near the “MURDER-REWARD” poster, a reference to the recent death of the family lawyer, Mr. Tulkinghorn, as blunt as that of the figure of Allegory in the preceding dark plate (XLVIII, facing p. 662).

The next two dark plates are more exciting and mysterious. Paired by title and original placement as well as by technique, as Harvey has shown, they capitalize on the confusion created by Lady Dedlock’s use of the brickmaker’s wife to conceal her movements. The fact that the figure in ‘The Night’ (LVII, facing p. 766) (fig. 108) does not turn out to be her ladyship increases the ambiguity surrounding the collapsed figure in ‘The Morning’ (LIX, facing p. 806) (fig. 109). Perhaps it is Jenny, as Esther initially believes;

Fig. 106. Hablot Browne, ‘Sunset in the long Drawing-room at Chesney Wold.’ Bleak House, no. 13.
Etching. 4" x 6½" (10.2 x 16.8 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 107. Hablot Browne, ‘Shadow.’ Bleak House, no. 1.
Etching. 5¾" x 3½" (14.3 x 10 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.
perhaps the woman is not dead, but merely ill or asleep. After the text reveals the secret, the plate, though losing its mystery (which the double meaning of its title had reinforced), remains a moving portrayal of the fate of Lady Dedlock, her face averted in death as it had been in life.  

The last dark plate, as is appropriate in a story in which nine deaths occur, is a picture of the Dedlock mausoleum (LXVI, facing p. 368). Esther's concluding epilogue only partly fulfills the implicit promise of the scene's brighter horizon. By adding irreverent demons to the margins of his sketch for this scene (fig. 110), Browne may have sought comic relief from Dickens's unabated pessimism through Bleak House.

Though he was at odds with his society, however, Dickens had no quarrel with his illustrator. The harmonious mood of Copperfield persisted through the rigorous collaboration of Bleak House. Not that the author did not have his difficulties: he was dictating A Child's History of England, running Household Words, supervising Miss Coutts's home for fallen women, and suffering from kidney troubles as well as working with Browne on this most ambitious of his novels. Dickens's retreat to Boulogne to recuperate, however, did not provoke misunderstandings of the kind that had plagued Dombey and Son when he was in Switzerland.

Fig. 108 (above). Hablot Browne. 'The Night.' Bleak House, no. 18. Etching. 3 1/4" × 6 1/4" (9.5 × 15.9 cm). Fig. 109 (left). Hablot Browne. 'The Morning.' Bleak House, no. 18. Etching. 5 1/4" × 3 1/4" (13.3 × 9.4 cm). Both by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.
Fig. 110. Hablot Browne, Unpublished Sketch for 'The Mausoleum at Chesney Wold.' Graphite, 5¼" × 5¼" (14.6 × 14 cm). From the Elkins Collection, by permission of the Rare Book Department of The Free Library of Philadelphia.
Despite the discouraging circumstances, the author amicably supplied the final subjects and approved without quibbles sketches for them, for the frontispiece—a view of Chesney Wold, the bleakest house of all, enveloped in shadow—and the title vignette, showing Jo outside Sol's Arms (facing p. xviii). He gaily issued invitations, as well as instructions, to the artist—often in pidgin French. Browne had hoped to participate, along with the publishers and other friends, in the cross-Channel celebration of the novel’s conclusion, but he must have been too preoccupied with his work or family, and could not go; a playful sketch registered his joy nevertheless at the completion of Bleak House, the most demanding of his many endeavors with Dickens. With this work, the two men reached the height—and the limits—of their collaboration.

Two years after Bleak House, Dickens and Browne worked together on Little Dorrit. In this book Ruskin once again perceived the “ominous pallsies” he felt had afflicted Dombey and Son. Indeed, the new novel, like Dombey, was written during one of Dickens’s restless periods. The author’s satisfaction with his analysis of self in Copperfield and of society in Bleak House (and in his next work, the unillustrated Hard Times) was dissipated by the realization that nothing had basically altered either in his life or in his society. Accordingly, lack of change became the besetting sin in Little Dorrit. For the characters, as for their creator, existence seems little more than confinement in a variety of real or self-imposed prisons. Some of Dickens’s frustration inevitably vented itself on his principal illustrator, whose work reflected not only his own diminished ingenuity, but what Forster called the “droop” in the author’s own invention. Matters went awry from the start. Traveling restlessly back and forth between London and France, Dickens began writing to Browne at length about his forthcoming narrative; hearing nothing about or from him, the anxious author demanded that Bradbury and Evans send Browne his Paris address and communicate with his partner, Mr. Young, about the artist’s whereabouts.

Contact was somehow reestablished, for the wrapper design for Little Dorrit indicates Browne’s familiarity with the predominant themes and major characters (facing xiii) (see F). His allegorical representations of institutional decay and individual indifference may have been inspired partly by the book’s original title, Nobody’s Fault—a title Dickens intended as an ironic comment on the state of England in the mid-1850’s. Butt and Tillotson have minutely described the complex wrapper:

Its two sides seem to typify society in decay, and images of doom are combined with complacency and self-absorption. On the left is part of a crumbling castle, on whose tottering top is seated a sleeping man in an arm chair with a handkerchief over his eyes and a newspaper on his knee. Against the castle lies a falling tree; the “supporters” of the coat of arms are rats. This is “the world” in its material aspect. Opposite stands part of a church, crowned by a raven, while a child plays leapfrog among the graves, and in a wheel-chair sits the life-in-death figure of Mrs. Clennam attended by Flintwinch. So much for “religion.” Overlapping these two scenes, and extending across the bottom of the design, is a motley crowd of travellers, each clinging to his belongings, all moving different ways, colliding, harassed, unhappy. Across the top of the design is what is virtually a political cartoon. Two aged figures, crippled and half blind, lead the procession, followed by a line of dotards and a dandy; Britannia in a bath-chair, asleep, is propelled by a line of men in fools’ caps, followed by a crowd of toadies, behind whom are women and children; all, save the last, are smiling insanely. The centre-piece is Little Dorrit herself, at the gate of the prison, in a shaft of sunlight. Browne’s wrapper design well conveys the story’s pessimistic mood, which connects these scenes that are not narratively related.

The reader who could continue to find that “Dickensy felicity of illustration” must have responded out of habit, and Browne must have found it harder to illustrate the text of Little Dorrit than of anything else he had done for Dickens. Institutions dominate individuals to an even greater extent than in Bleak House, as, indeed, the prison arch dwarfing the diminutive heroine on the wrapper anticipates (see F). The Marshalsea and the Circumlocution Office evoke vast symbols and concepts rather than concrete images. The major characters—except Mrs. Clennam, perhaps—are less vivid than the minor ones like Miss Wade or Henry Gowan, and as their psychological life becomes more complex, their number and variety are reduced and the range, scope, and interest of their external actions narrowed. The dispirited atmosphere of the story is not conducive to the use of comic detail nor even to dramatic contrasts of light and shadow.

Browne’s greatest problem was that by now Dickens usurped his very function. The author had always written—unusually pictorial prose. In Little Dorrit his writing became so graphically suggestive yet selective that it needed little visual help. In addition, the proportion of Dickens’s readers who were literate kept on increasing. Thus, for example, Browne’s opening illustration of the Marseilles prison cell could not (and did not) add much to Dickens’s description (I, I, facing p. 4) (fig. 111).

In one of its chambers . . . were two men. Besides the two men, a notched and disfigured bench, immovable from the wall, with a draught-board rudely hacked upon
it with a knife, a set of dominoes, two mats, and two or three wine bottles. That was all the chamber held, exclusive of rats and other unseen vermin, in addition to the seen vermin, the two men.

It received such light as it got, through a grating of iron bars, fashioned like a pretty large window. . . . There was a broad strong ledge of stone to this grating, where the bottom of it was let into the masonry, three or four feet above the ground. Upon it, one of the two men lolled, half sitting and half lying, with his knees drawn up, and his feet and shoulders planted against the opposite sides of the aperture (I, I, 4).

These are quibbles compared to Dickens's objection to Browne's sketch of Mr. Dorrit just before his unexpected after-dinner speech. The artist had made him "too comic," Dickens claimed. "He is described in the text as 'shedding tears' and what he imperatively wants is an expression doing less violence in the reader's mind to what is going to happen to him, and much more in accordance with that serious end which is so close before him. Pray do not neglect this change." Browne, of course, made the alteration, and in the final picture the former debtor, fatally strained by conflicting emotions and values, makes an extremely pathetic figure (II, XIX, facing p. 670). But not since 'Paul and Mrs. Pipchin' in Dombey had Browne so totally failed to realize Dickens's conception of a scene. In sharp contrast to his outrage about the early misrepresentation, Dickens lapsed into a critical calm—the retreat of an author who no longer expects much of his illustrator.

Browne's diminished vitality is evident technically as well as conceptually. The lines of his sketches, executed with too soft a pencil, lack precision; the designs themselves contain too many dramatically meaningless spaces, perhaps, as in the dark plates, left so the lines would not be blotched by the printer. The finished etchings, conventional and dark alike, are uninspired. In the etchings made in the usual manner there are too many areas composed of rouletted dots made by a wheel that an assistant could hold. Indeed, Johanssen is convinced that 'The Travellers' is entirely the work of some unskilled apprentice (II, I, facing p. 450) (fig. 112). Even the eight dark plates in Little Dorrit lack dramatic impact. The artist delineated the subordinate figures and details nicely enough (I, I, facing p. 4; I, XI, facing p. 138; I, XIV, facing p. 180; I, XXVIII, facing p. 348; II, XXX, facing p. 810) and fully exploited subtle contrasts of medium light and dark tones in scenes like 'The Ferry' (I, XVII, facing p. 208), but the machine ruling, usually done by an assistant, had become too indiscriminate. The figure of Arthur Clennam, for example, is scarcely differentiated from the door and walls of his father's study (I, V, facing p. 58) (fig. 113), nor are the various units of machinery at the rear of the Works readily distinguishable (I, XXIII, facing p. 275). Even the artist's errors, such as drawing Mrs. General twice in 'The family dignity is affronted' (II, III, facing p. 476), seem the result not of haste but of inattention. Browne provided less dramatic interplay among the plates than he had in any Dickens story since Nicholas Nickleby. The frontispiece (ii) (fig. 114) and the title page vignette (iii) (fig. 115), which faced one another in the final monthly part as well as in the bound edition, are exceptions, as Steig has observed, by depicting first Amy entering Merdle's house, and then Amy leaving the Marshalsea, they link the
Fig. 112. Hablot Browne, "The Travellers." *Little Dorrit*, no. 11. Etching. $4\frac{3}{8}'' \times 6\frac{3}{4}''$ (10.5 $\times$ 17.6 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 113. Hablot Browne, "The Room with the Portrait." *Little Dorrit*, no. 2. Etching. $3\frac{3}{4}'' \times 5''$ (9 $\times$ 12.7 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.
Some kind of drastic change was needed, not only in the world but in Dickens's own work and life. Thus, it was not wholly coincidental that his next work, A Tale of Two Cities, concerned revolution, nor that it accompanied striking alterations in his own affairs and ultimately in those of his principal illustrator. The new fiction provided the author with a suitable creative outlet for his frustration in the years 1858–59. Revolution, as Dickens depicted it in the Tale, was the inevitable result of past stagnation but held promise of future improvement. While the story was in progress, the forty-seven-year-old author had effected some radical departures from his own past: by the story’s end in 1859, he had separated from his wife of over two decades, his publishers of fifteen years, his London home, and many of his old friends. The Tale itself sharply departed from most of prison to society at large. But this final pair cannot dispel the general impression that the plates for Little Dorrit are, at best, no better than and little different from the less memorable ones in the earlier novels. Browne may not have been insensitive to the diminished quality of his work. As he grew older, and his commissions more numerous, he occasionally forgot to sign his plates, yet, as Kitton notes, perhaps it may be indicative of his total exhaustion that he did not append his name to a single plate in Little Dorrit.245

To some extent, this failure of creativity was occasioned by Browne’s usual empathy—this time with the author’s own lack of inspiration. Certainly readers were relatively unmoved by the narrative, whose rebellious political views would excite a later generation of readers like Shaw and Henry Green; Henry James’s comment that his own apolitical household “breathed heavily” through Little Dorrit was a characteristic contemporary response.246

Fig. 114. Hablot Browne, Frontispiece. Little Dorrit, nos. 19 and 20. Etching. 5½” × 4¾” (14 × 10.5 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 115. Hablot Browne, Title Page. Little Dorrit, nos. 19 and 20. Etching. 3¾” × 2¼” (9.2 × 6.7 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.
his previous fiction in its short length, simple construction, spare prose, and religious resonance. Nevertheless, nothing cataclysmic occurred between author and artist during the course of the story. The lack of usual correspondence about the illustrations, although it may have been destroyed, may also suggest that Browne was accorded an unprecedented independence due primarily to Dickens's other preoccupations and, perhaps, to a resigned acceptance of his artist's decline. For the illustrations to *A Tale of Two Cities* reveal, far more noticeably but less understandably than in those for *Little Dorrit*, that the artist utterly failed to find a graphic correlative for the author's next stage of growth. In retrospect, it is clear that Browne's days as Dickens's illustrator were, by this time, numbered.

Browne did not—or could not—follow Dickens's lead. To stimulate sales for his new unillustrated weekly, *All the Year Round*, the author published the *Tale* in it as well as in the usual illustrated monthly parts. This reversion back to the weekly and monthly format of *Master Humphrey's Clock* proved only a partial success. The weekly circulation rose enough to get Dickens's new periodical off the ground; but the monthly sales languished. In any case, the fiction was to run for only eight rather than the usual twenty monthly installments. To capture attention as quickly as possible, Dickens eliminated all that detracted from the exciting plot, easily recalled without graphic reminders. His few characters, expressed by their actions rather than by extensive dialogue, suggestive description, or idiosyncratic detail, could not be visually realized through Hogarthian or mechanical means. His style, as pictorial as always, was more declarative than evocative, making illustrations superfluous. What could the artist's talents add—by further distillation or reinforcement—to such a condensed narrative? A historically accurate or wholly naturalistic treatment, if either came to mind, were beyond Browne's capacity. Though previously resourceful in dealing with Dickens's challenges, this time he seemed stymied.

Dickens had planned the plot of *A Tale of Two Cities* enough in advance to reveal it in detail to Browne, whose wrapper design clearly depicts its main characters and incidents (facing p. xiv) (see F), but the artist failed to respond to the author's new interests as they were suggested on the wrapper and developed in the text. Though St. Paul's and Notre Dame, at the top and bottom respectively of the wrapper design, prove more consequential as symbols than actual locales in the narrative, they do reflect Dickens's intensified spirituality—a characteristic manifested in *The Life of Our Lord* written in 1846 for his children, but only intermittently in his fiction between the death of little Nell (*OCS*, LXXI, 576) and the marriage of Arthur Clennam to Little Dorrit (*LD*, II, XXXIV, 851). But Browne, perhaps uninspired by the less tangible emotions, or unable to portray them, provided nothing distinctive in his representations of Sydney Carton, who will be inspired to the "far, far better thing" he does in redeeming his wasted life by sacrificing it (III, XV, 363); indeed, as one viewer has observed, the artist was so indifferent to the scene as a whole that he showed Carton still wearing a wig while standing for comparison with Darnay in the crucial scene "The Likeness" (II, III, facing p. 70; cf. p. 71). Furthermore, Dickens utilized his knowledge of France in the *Tale* to a far greater extent than he had in *Little Dorrit*. But the artist, who had never visited the country, clearly did not bother with architectural or sartorial details of place and period. Finally, the author's fascination with the French Revolution (especially as portrayed by Carlyle), which also capitalized on contemporary anti-French sentiment, was not shared by the apolitical artist. To judge from his plates, he remained unmoved even by the rush of the narrative, which reflected Dickens's own tumultuous emotions at the time.

Consequently the spirit that fired the text of *A Tale of Two Cities* failed to animate the illustrations. Browne's indifferent work stuck out in a story so filled with exciting incidents. Perhaps the fact that his work was reproduced by lithography disheartened Browne from the first. The plates, with their thin, scratchy lines, seem hastily executed. There is little dramatic interplay among them or dramatic composition within them. The figures too often lack vitality as well as solidarity; the mob scenes, for example, (II, VII, facing p. 106; II, XIV, facing p. 150; II, XXI, facing p. 208) (fig. 116) recall the stiff portrayal of the unemployed rioters in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (XLV, 359) (fig. 117) rather than the tense crowds of *Barnaby Rudge* (XLIX, 398; LXIV, 528; LXVI, 548) (fig. 118). The smaller groups are more carefully modeled but the heroes—Darnay and the Manettes, for example—look too conventional to be memorable (III, VII, facing p. 283) and the villains, like the DeFarges, look too benign to be credible (II, XVI, facing p. 178). When they are suggested at all, backgrounds and interiors, previously a Browne strength, lack interest and atmosphere as well as authenticity (II, XII, facing p. 138; III, I, facing p. 244). The fact that all the illustrations are oblong, for the first time in a Dickens work, makes their superficiality more obvious. Since they contain neither draftsmanship to be admired nor detail to be studied, it is hardly worth interrupting the gripping narrative to turn the page around to view them. They are merely representations, not genuine illustrations as the artist had produced for Dickens so often in the past. The most partial admirer of Browne must concur with one of his severest critics that "the eye and the spirit are alike wearied and distressed by this exhibition of uninspiring mediocrity on the part of 'Phiz.'"
Fig. 116. Hablot Browne, 'The Sea Rises.' *A Tale of Two Cities*, no. 5. Etching. 3¾" × 7¾" (9.5 × 18.3 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 117. Hablot Browne, 'The rioters at Moorfields.' *Master Humphrey's Clock*, no. 30, p. 45. Wood engraving. 3¾" × 4¾" (8.9 × 11.6 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 118. Hablot Browne, 'Mr. Varden and the Mob.' *Master Humphrey's Clock*, no. 78, p. 309. Wood engraving, 3¾" × 4¾" (9.5 × 11.6 cm). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.
with this assessment, Browne did not sign a single one of the plates.250

The artist's lackluster performance has never been fully explained; nor does it entirely account for the fact that Browne never again collaborated with Dickens. As it turned out, A Tale of Two Cities was the last of Dickens's works to contain illustrations by Phiz. The twenty-three-year relationship between the two men—"as suited to each other, and to the combination of a unique thing as Gilbert and Sullivan," Chesterton remarked—was severed.251 Even if the artist's work on the Tale had been satisfactory, however, other circumstances were conspiring against their continued collaboration, and indeed the break between them never manifested itself abruptly or formally.

In marked contrast to his public statements about his marital separation, Dickens said nothing about the separation from his principal illustrator either in public or to Browne himself. The artist, on the other hand, speculated endlessly, particularly after Dickens's death, about the causes for his tacit dismissal. The most obvious cause, however, was the one he did not mention. The artist's creative degeneration, as Mrs. Leavis suggests, was probably caused by physical and mental exhaustion, the cumulative result of long years of overwork and little leisure now exacerbated by tighter deadlines for the larger editions now required for the increasing number of literate readers.252 This exhaustion not only impoverished his work for Dickens and other authors but doubtless made him more susceptible to his later paralysis, which crippled him physically and professionally. But Browne never offered these considerations as an excuse for his decline, at this or any later time.

Ignoring this weariness, which was so clearly reflected in the poor quality of his work for A Tale of Two Cities, the artist dwelt instead on other events that he felt had put Dickens out of temper at the time the Tale was appearing. It was the public notice of these parallels, Browne claimed, that caused Dickens to stop at the ninth number instead of at the eighteenth as usual; "All this put Dickens out of temper and he squabbled with me amongst others," the artist then concluded many years after the fact, "and I never drew another line for him."253 Dickens may well have been chagrined at the coincidence between his plot and that of Cruikshank's close friend and pupil, but there is no record that he quarreled about it with anyone except the playwright. Nor is there any external or internal evidence indicating an unpremeditated shortening of A Tale of Two Cities; the condensed narrative was concluded as planned by the author in the eighth, not the ninth number. Indeed, this is the least convincing of Browne's reasons for his own falling out with Dickens.

On the other hand, it is entirely likely that Dickens really was provoked at the time when Browne joined the staff of Once a Week, a rival periodical to his own All the Year Round, for whose opening numbers A Tale of Two Cities was written. All the Year Round resulted from a quarrel with Bradbury and Evans, the publishers and printers of Punch—which refused to publish Dickens's account of his marital arrangements—and Household Words.254 In 1859, after establishing a legal right to do so, Dickens ended Household Words, which he had edited for nine years. The furious publishers immediately started Once a Week and offered Browne a position on it. Despite the conflict of loyalties involved, Browne may have seen a chance to right an earlier wrong decision. In 1841 he had turned down a permanent position on Punch, later put to such successful use by two of Dickens's other illustrators, John Leech and John Tenniel, though he contributed to it occasionally.255 Once a Week was to be staffed by these two artists as well as by many of Punch's founders. Doubtless regretting that he had passed up the earlier opportunity, Browne could not now refuse their solicitation.256 Dickens, however, could not have been pleased to see his principal illustrator join the opposition periodical even before A Tale of Two Cities was published in volume form in December, 1859, and Browne's act surely weakened the ties of loyalty between the two men.

Browne's implicit declaration of independence coincided unluckily with the death of Frank Stone, one of Dickens's Christmas books illustrators as well as an old friend and neighbor. This left Stone's son Marcus, an artist like his father, openly dependent on Dickens. In the five years following the Tale, Dickens procured small jobs for the young man on various editions of his works. "Marcus is no doubt to do Dickens," Browne correctly guessed after seeing the announcement for Our Mutual Friend. "I have been a 'good boy,'" declared the veteran, hurt that his services had not been invited, but "Dickens probably thinks a new hand would give his old puppets a fresh look or perhaps he does not like my illustrating Trollope neck-and-neck with him—though, by Jingo, he need fear no rivalry there!"257

It is inconceivable, however, that Dickens seriously objected to Browne's illustrating novels by rival authors. The artist had long illustrated the works of Charles Lever as well as many by Dickens's closer friends, Ainsworth and Bulwer-Lytton, among many others.258 Had Dickens ob-
jected, he would not have remained silent. Indeed, it was probably the carelessness of Browne’s work for Trollope’s *Can You Forgive Her* in 1863 and 1864, rather than the fact that he did it, that reinforced Dickens’s decision not to retain his services. “I think you would possibly find no worse illustrator than H. Browne,” Trollope wrote his publisher. “He will take no pains to ascertain the thing to be illustrated. I cannot think that his work can add any value at all to any book.” To compound the insult, Trollope found Browne’s etchings for the first volume of his story so unsatisfactory that the second volume was turned over to other artists, including, perhaps, Marcus Stone.

Browne’s speculation that Dickens might want a “fresh look” in his illustrations is more compelling. The artist had been illustrating his writing for twenty-three years. Though Marcus Stone’s assertion that Dickens felt Browne’s work had not advanced in quality or character since *Pickwick* is completely unfounded, by the 1860’s, the artist definitely belonged to an “old school” of illustrators. Public tastes and artistic techniques had changed. Earlier preferences for the grotesque, the picturesque, and the emblematic, had yielded to ones for academic realism and narrative sentimentality. New methods of duplication, such as lithography, were widening the gap between the artist’s conception and the engraver’s execution of steel etchings. Partly for this reason, though mainly for economic ones, steel etching was being superseded by wood engraving—a medium in which Browne was less comfortable. Younger artists like Marcus Stone, more attuned to, though not enslaved by, the dictates of the new aestheticism, would certainly give Dickens’s illustrations a fresh appearance—probably one his readers would consider superior; and they could better keep pace with the grueling deadlines. For these reasons alone, the author may have decided to drop the aging Browne and his old-fashioned work even before thinking of a successor. For he must have recognized that the artist’s work, even at its best, as it was from *Master Humphrey’s Clock* through *Bleak House*, no longer added anything to his own ever-evolving prose.

Browne put forward personal as well as professional reasons for his dissociation from the author. “I was about the last of those who knew him in the early days with whom Dickens fell out,” noted the shy artist, “and considering the grand people he had around him, and the compliments he perpetually received, it is a wonder that we remained friends so long.” Yet the novelist had long associated with and been applauded by all levels of English society. There was no justification for Browne’s implication that Dickens had become a snob, just as there was none for Robert Buss’s statement that the hiring of Marcus Stone, like that of George Cattermole, was an attempt by fashionable society to “refine” the author by persuading him to banish Browne.

However, the possibility of personal friction between the two men on other grounds cannot be discounted entirely. Dickens was unusually overwrought during the time when he was writing *A Tale of Two Cities*. Browne, never very sociable, had grown more and more reserved—to the point of dreariness. Author and artist may well have quarreled, though whether about the *Tale* or *Once a Week* or something personal is anybody’s guess. For it was about this time that Browne felt compelled to excuse his inability to assist a group wanting to secure Dickens as a speaker on the grounds that “lately (Authors & Artists will sometimes squabble), I have not been on very good terms with him.”

It is unlikely, however, that Browne was dropped as illustrator because he did not take sides in Dickens’s domestic troubles, which culminated with his separation from his wife just before he began *A Tale of Two Cities*. It is more plausible, as Arthur Waugh has suggested, that the author “persuaded himself that, just as he had sought comfort at home in freedom from the shackles of matrimony, so in the partnership of literature, he stood in need of a new alliance to deliver him from the bondage of himself.” Dickens was forcing changes on almost every aspect of his life. He had supplanted Kate with Ellen Ternan; Bradbury and Evans with their predecessors, Chapman and Hall; the ailing Maclise and Stanfield with Wilkie Collins, Edmund Yates, and Percy Fitzgerald; and Tavistock House with Gad’s Hill. It seems almost inevitable that Browne should have been replaced as well. When Dickens moved from the city to Kent in 1860, he burned the accumulated letters and papers of twenty years. When Browne had moved from Croydon to the city the year before, he similarly stoked a bonfire. Thus many traces of the long relationship between the two men were obliterated.

“Confound all authors and publishers,” Browne wrote to his old friend and colleague, Robert Young, in a final flourish of irritation about his Dickens dissociation; “there is no pleasing the one or t’other. I wish I had never had anything to do with the lot.” Yet he moved back to London at the close of *A Tale of Two Cities* to be closer to authors and publishers as well as to spark his stagnant creativity. He had some success selling sporting prints, drawing on his recollected firsthand knowledge of rural recreations. But his other artistic efforts, still based on his memory rather than on models, did not suit current taste for photographic realism and academic naturalism. His imagination, which had become increasingly dependent on the kind of external stimulus Dickens had provided so well, was not roused by
other authors; and his increasing shyness further isolated him from other contacts who might have reinvigorated him. He became "a-weary of this illustrating business."\textsuperscript{271} His work reflected his fatigue. Commissions began to dwindle. Browne, though he had always lived modestly, had never bothered to put money aside, and he began to feel pinched financially. Ironically, his Dickens connection enabled him to survive the disastrous years ahead.

That later illustrators of Dickens's pre-1859 works inevitably based their conceptions on Browne's afforded scant practical or psychic compensation. In 1866, however, Frederic Cosens, a Dickens admirer and art patron, approached Browne to purchase his drawings for the author's works, but the shy artist explained that he had none, as they had been drawn directly on the plate.\textsuperscript{272} Cosens then asked him, as he had asked George Cruikshank, to make colored replicas of them all; despite his financial need, Browne named terms he thought would discourage Cosens, as he disliked the drudgery of reproduction as much as ever and, perhaps, did not want the contrast of the wretched present with the happier past. Cosens was not deterred; the two men came to terms. Shortly after accepting this commission, however, the artist was struck by paralysis, which, Micawber-like, he persisted in calling "rheumatics."\textsuperscript{273} Unable to make forefinger and thumb meet, and sometimes blind in one eye, he nevertheless labored on the replicas, drawing them with a clumsy sweeping motion of his whole arm. Whatever its signs of weakness and haste, that the commission was finished at all was not the least of Browne's Dickensian accomplishments.

The benefits of his past work for Dickens continued to alleviate Browne's misery in his final years. When the author died in 1870, the artist's bitterness yielded to regret at losing such a friend.\textsuperscript{274} In 1873, Chapman and Hall commissioned him to provide woodcuts for their Household Edition of Dickens. After executing fifty-seven designs, his pencil lashed to his half-paralyzed hand, Browne was unable to continue. Not only his ability to work, but also the demand for his work was altogether gone. At the suggestion of Luke Fildes, Dickens's last illustrator, Browne, now sixty-three years old, petitioned the government for a pension.\textsuperscript{275} When it was denied, he was left in complete despair. "I don't know where to turn or what to do. I have at last come to a full stop and don't see my way just yet to get on again. My occupation seems gone, extinct; I suppose I am thought to be used up, and I have been long enough before the public."\textsuperscript{276} Two self-caricatures, contrasting his mood in 1837 after 	extit{Pickwick} with his present outlook in 1879, poignantly comment on his wretchedness (fig. 119).

![Fig. 119. Hablot Browne, "L'Allegro," 1837 and "Il Penseroso," 1879.' Frederick G. Kitton, \textit{Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil} (London, 1890-92), 2, following p. 138. Etching. \(1\frac{1}{16}" \times 3\frac{3}{16}" (4 \times 9.2 \text{ cm}). From the author's library.]

Thanks to Fildes and other young artist friends, however, Browne received help from an unexpected quarter. The Royal Academy, which had not yet found Browne or any other black-and-white illustrator distinguished enough for a membership, awarded him the pension previously held by George Cruikshank, in recognition of his services to art.\textsuperscript{277} Thus comforted by the support and the thought that he was not totally forgotten, the artist died in 1882. "He is not dead!" \textit{Punch} insisted in its conventional verse eulogy; "there in the picture books/He lives with men and women/that he drew."\textsuperscript{278} Few nineteenth-century readers would have denied that Dickens's own immortality was due in part to the memorable way in which Hablot Browne had illustrated his masterpieces; nor would they have disputed Angus Wilson's recent assertion that "for better or worse, our conception of the Dickensian world is tied up with Phiz. Who can separate Phiz's vision of Pecksniff or Mrs. Gamp, of Mrs. Skewton, Major Bagstock, of Mr. Micawber, or of Steerforth defying Mr. Mell; or indeed, in more dramatic mood, of Mr. Carker in flight, or of Tom All Alone's from Dickens's text? Indeed, when we consider Dickens's close supervision of the illustrations, who would wish us to?"\textsuperscript{279}