

*Household Words, Volume II*  
September 28, 1850 – March 22, 1851

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## Background

The responsibility of running a weekly magazine with dozens of contributors was still relatively new to Dickens as *Household Words* moved into its second semester of publication in late September 1850. However, this did not prevent him from remaining on an extended summer vacation with the family at Broadstairs, “living chiefly on sea weed and turtles’ eggs” (as he told the novelist Catherine Gore (*Letters* 6: 167) until well into the Autumn. In part, this late holiday was to accommodate his wife after the recent birth of Dora Annie Dickens, the last of the couple’s ten children, and their third daughter; in part also, it was to give the ever-restless writer a change of scene during the composition of the final monthly numbers of *David Copperfield*. He concluded *Copperfield* on 23 October with bittersweet emotions, sending forth “some part of myself into the Shadowy World(*Letters* 6: 195.)” and the family returned to town the same day.

Completing this ambitious and strongly autobiographical novel was an intense and draining experience for Dickens, so in order to compensate for the inevitable deflation of spirits it would bring, he had arranged to manage, direct and star in a number of elaborate private theatricals immediately afterwards. From 20-22 November he staged three performances of Ben Jonson’s *Every Man in his Humour* “in a whirl of triumph” at Knebworth, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton’s restyled Gothic mansion in Hertfordshire. Then in the New Year – after some delay – came the farces *Used Up*, *A Day After the Wedding* and *Animal Magnetism* at Rockingham Castle, the Northamptonshire home of the friends to whom *Copperfield* was to be dedicated, Richard and Lavinia Watson.<sup>1</sup> As Takao Saijo observes in a valuable recent distillation of Dickens’s lifelong involvement in amateur theatricals, “the union between writer and actor that we see in Dickens is found in no other writer” (141); it may also be the case that the relationship between actor-manager and contributing editor that we find in Dickens is similarly unusual and worthy of scrutiny.

Bulwer Lytton was not only hugely impressed by the way Dickens inspired his “Amateurs” to feats of dramatic artistry, but also by how on previous occasions similar troupes led by Dickens had been able to raise money for worthy causes, notably impoverished writers and their dependents. Out of his collaboration and growing friendship with Dickens at this time grew a major new charitable initiative eventually called ‘The Guild of Literature and Art.’ Its full story and somewhat unhappy ending would unfold over several years, but its origin was Bulwer Lytton’s offer to write a new five act comedy for Dickens’s troupe to perform, the proceeds of which would enable the

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<sup>1</sup> Slater (2011), 315–6; *Letters* 6: 216 (*To Lavinia Watson*, 23 November 1850).

establishment of an institution to provide support and accommodation for literary and graphic artists who had fallen on hard times. It would do so without the taint of patronage and condescension associated, in Dickens's view, with the extant organisation with a similar brief, the Royal Literary Fund.<sup>2</sup> "I do devoutly believe", Dickens wrote enthusiastically to Bulwer Lytton on 5 January 1851, "that this plan, carried, will entirely change the status of the Literary Man in England, and make a revolution in his position which no Government, no Power on earth, could ever effect." *Letters*, 6: 259).

At the close of the period covered by this volume Dickens gave his only public speech of the season, on the occasion of the "inevitable dinner" in honour of W. C. Macready's retirement from the stage, three nights after his farewell performance in the role of Macbeth at Drury Lane.<sup>3</sup> Well used himself to what he called the "enthooseymoosy" of such an occasion, Dickens cannot have been unmoved by the profundity of emotion demonstrated by the crowds at the theatre and the praise storm that greeted the 57-year-old actor as he bade them farewell. Over 600 hundred guests crammed into the vast and chilly neoclassical Hall of Commerce on Threadneedle Street, where guests enjoyed a cold dinner in some discomfort. Dickens's brief was not to toast Macready, but the Chairman, Bulwer Lytton, which naturally involved harnessing and redirecting the praise earned by Macready as dramatic artist, towards his friend as literary artist. It cannot have been too far a step from here to thinking about the kind of accolades he himself might garner on retiring as a writer; more certainly, it gave Dickens a further platform from which to speak grandiloquently about the Guild of Literature and Art, which aimed to

smooth the rugged way of young labourers, both in literature and the fine arts, and to soften [...] the declining years of meritorious age. [Cheers.] And if that project prosper [...] it will one day be an honour [...] originating in [our Chairman's] sympathies, being brought into operation by his activity, and endowed from the very cradle by his generosity. (*Speeches*, 117)

Part of the future problems of the Guild would lie in its own reliance on aristocratic patronage even as it sought to discredit such reliance in the Royal Literary Fund.<sup>4</sup>

These were all ambitious and time-consuming projects, yet somehow Dickens found energy and time to continue conducting *Household Words* from first violin as it were, contributing fourteen lengthy articles of his own and two instalments of his *Child's History of England* during the semester, as well as co-researching and writing five articles and a fledgling "Christmas Number" of his new journal (see below) with several co-writers.

In the meantime, *Household Words* continued to carve out a niche for itself and continued to justify Dickens's confidence shortly after the launch that the magazine would become "a good property." (*Letters* 6: 83) In July 1850, shortly before the start of the period under scrutiny here, Dickens wrote to his old friend James White that *Household Words*

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<sup>2</sup> Cross's introductory guide (1984) gives the factual background to the Fund's history and method of operation..

<sup>3</sup> See Trewin, 238.

<sup>4</sup> For an account of some of the material and conceptual problems dogging the project, see Hack, 691–713.

goes on *thoroughly well*. It is expensive of course, and demands a large circulation; but it is taking a great and steady stand, and I have no doubt already yields a good round profit. (*Letters* 6: 131)

Fortunately, signed receipts survive in the Philip H. and A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation Museum; these show the half-yearly division of profits from *Household Words* from its inception, and from these a table of income has been constructed.<sup>5</sup> This shows that the total profits distributed amongst the magazine's four partners for its first six months of publication amounted to £526 5s. 2d., or around £37,990 in terms of today's purchasing power.<sup>6</sup> A total income figure can be projected by factoring in an estimate for start-up costs, as well as fixed and variable costs for the first semester, which can then be converted into an average number of copies sold weekly over the 26 weeks of the first half year: in this case, 34,500.<sup>7</sup> The profits for this period, returned to the partners at the end of March 1851, came in at £1,188—over double what they had been at the end of the first semester. While there are some uncertainties involved in such calculations, it is clear that the circulation had increased significantly.<sup>8</sup>

Comparisons with other titles on the market put these figures in perspective: *The Times*, Britain's most prominent stamped daily newspaper, cost 7d. in 1850 and had a circulation of between 30,000 and 38,000.<sup>9</sup> The weekly *Examiner*, also stamped, cost 6d. and its circulation was somewhere between 6,000 (1843) and 4,900 (1855). The up-market unstamped monthly, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, which also offered original fiction, cost 2s 6d., and had a circulation of merely 5,750 in the period 1847-49. One of *Household Words*'s nearest rivals, and the magazine it sought to emulate by providing original rather than selected or reprinted matter, *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, cost 1½d. and had a stated circulation of 64,288 in 1849. A similarly 'respectable' contemporary title with a more markedly Chartist orientation, *Eliza Cook's Journal*, cost the same, and enjoyed a circulation of 50,000-60,000 in 1849. *Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper*, also established in 1850, with a decidedly sensational, republican and

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<sup>5</sup> See Patten, Appendix D.

<sup>6</sup> Figures calculated from *Inflation: the Value of the Pound, 1750-1998*, House of Commons Research paper 99/20 (23 February 1999). Available at <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons/lib/research/rp99/rp99-020.pdf> [accessed 21/09/2011]. According to the magazine's articles of agreement, Dickens received a half, Bradbury & Evans a quarter, and Forster and Wills, an eighth share respectively.

<sup>7</sup> The figure for startup costs (£950) is Dickens's stated figure for launching *All the Year Round* in 1859 (see *Letters* 9, p. 78); the figure for fixed and variable running costs (£6,000) is derived from Buckler, (1950), 197-203 (198-99n). Buckler imports the known costs of *Once a Week*, the weekly rival to *All the Year Round* launched by publishers Bradbury & Evans after Dickens dissolved *Household Words*. This gives a gross income of £7,476 for 26 issues of a 2d. magazine, hence weekly sales of in the region of 34-35,000: this is lower than some anecdotal estimates, but profits climbed steeply after the first semester, indicative either of rising sales or of higher actual start-up costs, or (most probably) both. See "Background" sections of later volume introductions.

<sup>8</sup> It is not clear whether this figure also includes a deduction for start-up costs (estimated at £950), spread over the first year, or whether these had already been paid.

<sup>9</sup> Since 1712, publications defined as newspapers were required by government legislation (known collectively as the Stamp Acts) to pay duty in the form of a stamp costing anything between 1d. and 4d. per copy at different times. The duty was not abolished until 1855; see later references.

diehard Chartist orientation, cost 4d. in 1850, with a stated circulation of 28,880.<sup>10</sup> Like *Household Words*, it would enjoy a rising circulation through the decade, while that of many other rival publications flat-lined or fell, but as new publications mushroomed after the abolition of the Stamp Duty in 1855, the battle for readers would become yet fiercer.

## Leading Articles

Of the twenty-six leading articles in the present volume, Dickens authored fourteen and co-authored a further four, and while these cover a remarkable range of contemporary subjects, a dozen or more of them can be classified as ‘cross-genre’ or hybrid-genre articles, which purposefully blend rhetorical and stylistic features and incorporate iconography from more than one pre-existent genre. This was rapidly becoming a characteristic of the *Household Words* house style, through which—to echo the terms of Dickens’s “Preliminary Word” to the first issue—“moody, brutal fact” is tempered by the “sympathies and graces of imagination”.<sup>11</sup> Other leader writers in the volume—R. H. Horne (three leaders), Frederick Knight Hunt (two), W. H. Wills (two) and Henry Morley—followed suit, Horne in particular using ingenious narrative strategies and unconventional perspectives to enliven his material.<sup>12</sup> Dickens’s solo efforts include some of his most celebrated essays. “A December Vision” (265)<sup>13</sup> and “The Last Words of the Old Year” (337) are in sombre, prophetic mode, with the “hypnotic rhythms” of the former giving “concentrated shape to many of Dickens’s most deeply held beliefs”.<sup>14</sup> The latter, with its withering remarks concerning the Court of Chancery and “the costly complications of the English law in general” (339), anticipates the thrust of *Bleak House*, the monthly serial on which Dickens would begin work in November. In contrasting tender, autobiographical mood is “A Christmas Tree” (289), in which the narrator invites his readers to follow the branches of “that pretty German toy,” configured as an imaginary tree of memory, as they lead the mind backwards, into scenes of childhood, and upwards, towards the star of Bethlehem. Less well known but absolutely confident in their method and parodic comedy are ‘talking head’ pieces, spoken by narrators admirable and objectionable by turns, such as “A Poor Man’s Tale of a Patent” (73), “Bill-Sticking” (601) “Lively Turtle” (97) and (with Henry Morley) “Mr. Bendigo Buster on our National Defences Against Education” (313). The synchronicity of these comic dramatic monologues with Robert Browning’s exploration of the genre in poetic form is noteworthy. In “Railway Strikes” (361), Dickens attempts, with less artistic success but considerable acumen, a duologue between two workmen, honest “John Safe” and convinced striker “Thomas Sparks,” who are debating the pros and cons of the recently

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<sup>10</sup> Circulation figures. derived from the *Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals 1800–1900* (<[www.victorianperiodicals.com](http://www.victorianperiodicals.com)>).

<sup>11</sup> *Household Words*, I, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Horne’s “The Cow with the Iron Tail” (145–51) is paragonal: an investigation of whether contemporary accounts of the adulteration of London’s milk supply is presented by means of an awkward conversation between a dairyman and his barber.

<sup>13</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all page references throughout are to *Household Words*, II, 28 September 1850 – 22 March 1851

<sup>14</sup> Philip and Neuburg, 19.

mooted industrial action by engine-drivers and firemen of the southern division of the London and North Western Railway (as reported in *The Times*) . Given such unpromising material, one is reminded of Dr Johnson’s qualified approval of the spectacle of a dog walking on its hind legs: “It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all.”<sup>15</sup>

The most plainly (and in some respects dully) written of Dickens’s leaders is the opening installment of *A Child’s History of England*, which opens with no editorial introduction of its intentions or signal of Dickens’s authorship; a single small advertisement the week before had trailed it as a serial “to be continued, at regular intervals, until the History is completed.”<sup>16</sup> In fact, it would appear intermittently in 39 installments over the next three years, taking its readers—not only children, but also adults unskilled in the basic shape of English history—from the pre-Roman times up to the Revolution of 1688, before leaving them somewhat unceremoniously there. Nevertheless, as David Paroissien observes, this initiative began for Dickens as “a personal project” to educate his eldest son not to believe in the prevalent myths of “merrie England” and the “good old days”, and was broadened over time “into a public mission to educate readers of *Household Words* with a ‘true’ history of England rather than one masked in genteel lies” .<sup>17</sup> In other words, the *Child’s History* argues the wider cause of Liberal progress and democratic reform espoused in the journal by undermining those powerful mid-century voices which re-invoked past times as both panacea and manifesto: the Young England movement in politics, Oxford’s Puseyites in religion, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in art, and the Gothic Revival in architecture. In this respect, though neither very original nor imaginative in execution, it does importantly connect the imaginative satirical campaigns against all these tendencies which run through the pages of *Household Words*, both in this and subsequent volumes.

## Short fiction

Although no fewer than 59 articles in the current volume have been indexed as ‘short fiction’ only 26 of them – roughly one per weekly number – are considered as pure ‘short fiction’ because in the majority of cases, fictive elements are seen to be working alongside other established conventions belonging to non-fiction genres such as ‘essay’, ‘report’, ‘sketch’, ‘travel-writing’ and so forth. Given that most of the authors of these pieces were recognized jobbing journalists and miscellaneous writers-- James Hannay, William Blanchard Jerrold, Samuel Sidney, William Moy Thomas among them, as well as staff writers Morley, Horne and Wills—the hybridity is hardly surprising. Indeed, 30 items of the 59 are also identified as ‘cross-genre’ pieces that deliberately combine

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<sup>15</sup> Given in Boswell’s *Life*, 2.ix.

<sup>16</sup> See II, 408b; notice of Dickens’s authorship of the serial was not given until 10 April 1852, in a final page advertisement for the first volume of the *Child’s History* reprinted from the pages of *Household Words* (V, No. 107, 92b). Viewed in this way, it is easier to see the *History* as one of a number of initiatives running as complements to the main journal: the similarly anonymous *Household Narrative of Current Events* in parts and volumes is also being advertised at the close of individual issues all through this period.

<sup>17</sup> “Our Island’s Story: Dickens’s Search for a National Identity” in Mackenzie and Winyard, 303 and passim.

different narrative strategies, including those familiar to short story readers, to engage and entertain. Even self-consciously narrated stories such as Mary Anne Hoare's "The Modern Haroun-Al-Raschid" (617) or "The Story of Fine-Ear" (383) appear to retail incidents in the lives of historical individuals rather than creating original situations and groups of characters. There are few invented tales comparable to William Howitt's "The Warilows of Welland" (12) or Elizabeth Gaskell's "The Heart of John Middleton" (325). Dickens nevertheless lavished attention—at least so far as the Gaskell tale was concerned—on this scarce commodity, writing to Wills that "[t]he story is very clever—I think the best thing of hers I have seen, not excepting *Mary Barton*—and if it had ended happily [...] would have been a great success. As it is, it [...] will not do much." Dickens worried that the dismal ending, in which John Middleton's spiritual education is completed only after the death of his much younger but wiser wife, Nelly, constituted "an unnecessary infliction of pain upon the reader" and would "link itself painfully" with others of Gaskell's he had published in Volume I of *Household Words*, like the one about

the girl who fell down at the well" ["The Well of Pen-Morfa"], "and the child who tumbled down stairs" ["Lizzie Leigh"]. I wish to Heaven, her people would keep a little firmer on their legs!

He thus later wrote to Gaskell at length explaining that he had gone so far as to dispatch Wills, wearing "a very uncomfortable looking hat with a very narrow brim", to the London address where she was staying temporarily with an amended proof copy in which Dickens had altered the last twenty lines of the story to give it a happier outcome. She being out, and not expected back for several days, the story was printed without Dickens's editorial intervention: his long and humorous letter of explanation seems to function as some kind of compensation mechanism (*Letters* 6: 238-39 and 231). Later readers have noted how in fact the "the death of Nelly keeps her image true to Wordsworth's Lucy" (the child of nature in the so-called "Lucy" poems of 1798–1801) in various ways.<sup>18</sup>

## Poetry

There is a generous selection of 39 poems in this volume, featuring submissions by established mid-century voices such as those of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Dora Greenwell, Coventry Patmore, John Critchley Prince, Mary Howitt, Mark Lemon and, of course, the self-styled "farthing poet", R. H. Horne, one of the journal's staff writers at this time.<sup>19</sup> Work by younger artists, then uncelebrated but now considered canonical,

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<sup>18</sup> See Wiltshire, 13–28; 24.

<sup>19</sup> Horne's poetic contributions comprise "Household Christmas Carols" (310); "The Church Poor-Box" (420); "The Smithfield Bull to His Cousin of Nineveh" (589) and "The Youth and the Sage" (262); he is also credited as co-author of Meredith's "The Two Blackbirds" (157). Greenwell contributed "The Broken Chain" (484) and "Likeness in Difference" (524); Patmore's contribution was "The Golden Age" (132); Mary Howitt's, "Thomas Harlowe" (397); Mark Lemon's were "Gentle Words" (4) and "The Emigrant's Bird" (12). Artisan poet John Critchley Prince of Manchester (1808-66), the so-called "Bard of Hyde," is

such as William Allingham and George Meredith, also featured.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, neither readers of Dickens's journal, nor the editorial team, could scarcely yet complain of a dearth of publishable submissions.<sup>21</sup>

Barrett Browning's rousing sonnet "Hiram Power's Greek Slave" (99), for example, celebrates American sculptor Hiram Powers's controversial 1844 marble statue of a naked but proud female Christian slave exposed for sale as a sexual commodity in a Turkish market. A number of copies of the statue had been displayed in prominent venues in Europe and the United States, garnering support from campaigners for women's rights as well as from abolitionists. It would shortly go on display in the main concourse at the 1851 Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. One recent critical appraisal outlines the ambivalent questions the statue and the poem mobilized about the role of race and gender in the viewing of art.<sup>22</sup> However this does not account for the experience of reading the poem itself as it first appeared in *Household Words*, where it was cramped into the bottom right hand corner of a page and in little danger of being (as the poem has it) "overthrown" by "thunders of white silence"—or at least, of white space.

The Office Book for the journal records a perhaps surprising number of contributors of poetry whose identities were (and have remained) obscure, indicating that their submissions were unsolicited and not deemed worthy of republication elsewhere under an author's name. Queries thus remain over the "Eliza Griffiths," "Miss Tomkins" "Mr Harper," "Mr Lawson," "Miss Siddons," "Mrs Bradburn" and "Evelyn" who between them have ten poems attributed to them in this volume.<sup>23</sup> "Mr Harper," indeed, went on to publish a further twenty-five poems in the next six volumes of the journal, which is more than any other poet, apart from Adelaide Ann Procter. Lohrli argues that "the contributor cannot be the Manchester poet William Harper [1806-1857], author of *The Genius and Other Poems* and *Cain and Abel*" but neither of the reasons given (that Harper is said to have only published in the Manchester *Courier*, and that his poetry was considered more "lofty" than the *Household Words* poems) is particularly convincing. Harper's contributions continued until within the last few years of William Harper's life, so the two cannot be definitively distinguished.

"A Lesson for Future Life" (65) had no name of any kind attached to it in the Office Book, but can now be safely attributed to a young clergyman with literary pretensions, Robert Alfred Vaughan (1823–57). A longer and superior version of the poem, was published in 1864 by Vaughan's devoted father, in thirteen stanzas and entitled "Lessons for Life from Science." It opens with the first four stanzas of the text as it appears in *Household Words* and closes with the final two, accompanied by his father's comment that they "were written by the invalid a little before" his early retirement from

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represented by no fewer than three poems in this volume - "The Two Trees" (108), "Mercy" (444), "The Waste of War" (540).

<sup>20</sup> For Meredith's contributions, see above; "New Year's Eve" (325); "The Congress of Nations" (572); for Allingham's, see "Wayconnell Tower" (181).

<sup>21</sup> See Dickens's frustrated plea to Wills of 2 Oct. 1858: "Pray, pray, *pray* don't have Poems unless they are good" (*Letters*, 8: 673-675).

<sup>22</sup> Prins : 52–62; <http://muse.jhu.edu/> [accessed 21 April 2014].

<sup>23</sup> Authors of, respectively, "The Dumb Child" (205); "The Mother's Test" (612); "Human Brotherhood" (229), "The Chords of Love" (334), "A Winter Sermon" (372) and "A World at Peace" (565); "The Forest Temple" (479); "The Burial of the Old Year" (348); "A Guernsey Tradition" (84); "A Christian Paynim. A Legend" (516).

ill-health in 1855, and were “expressive of his habit of looking on the relations of present and future.”<sup>24</sup>

Another anonymous poem, “Aspire!” (412) was mistakenly attributed to Dickens by B.W. Matz in *The Dickensian*, and footnoted “Identified and reprinted from *Household Words* 25 January 1851, for the first time”; Matz subsequently reprinted it in *Miscellaneous Papers* in the National Edition of Dickens’s works.<sup>25</sup> However, the attribution is based on the unwarranted assumption that a blank in the author-column of the Office Book indicates a repetition of the previous item’s author details, and as Dickens contributed no other verse to the journal it is on the face of it unlikely to be his.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, as no payment to an external contributor is recorded, the poem probably was supplied by a member of the in-house team. The most likely candidate is poet and miscellaneous writer R. H. Horne who was employed as assistant to Wills on a weekly wage, and who has “The Church Poor-Box” (420) in the same issue, as well as three other verse contributions in this volume.<sup>27</sup>

### **Current Affairs (social & cultural; domestic politics)**

The first Russell ministry (1846-52) was in power in Britain during the period covered by *Household Words* II, and Dickens dined with the Prime Minister and assorted members of the Commons and Lords on at least one occasion during the semester (16 January 1851). Dickens’s opinion over dinner, that the government “ought not to delay too long the shilling admissions” to the upcoming Great Exhibition, was vigorously seconded by Macaulay, and then promptly reported to the Home Secretary, Lord George Grey, by Earl Granville (Board of Trade).<sup>28</sup> The “Conductor” of *Household Words*’s opinion on the Exhibition was clearly felt of some worth. To judge by the journal’s leader on Paxton’s main exhibition space in Hyde Park two days later (“Private History of the Palace of Glass”, 385), admiration of the Exhibition and all it stood for was going to be the general line, reinforced in March by the young George Meredith’s sugary paean to “The Congress of Nations” (572). In later volumes, however, articles take a different turn, critiquing the showy consumerism of the Exhibition and the distraction from matters of pressing national concern that it represented. By comparison with the unstinting and unwavering warmth of other periodicals, *Household Words*’s take on the affair would turn out to be decidedly cool. In *Victorian Glassworlds*, Isobel Armstrong goes so far as to read the journal’s Exhibition articles (as well as the subtext of *Bleak House*) as characterized “[n]ot [by] transparency as a medium, but an opaque, humanly made

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<sup>24</sup> Vaughan, 203–4.

<sup>25</sup> See *The Dickensian* 3. iii (March 1907): 76, and Matz, xviii.

<sup>26</sup> See Lohrli, 39. He is credited in the Office Book as co-author for amending Adelaide Ann Procter’s poem “Hidden Light” (*Household Words*, X, 37) – but that is all.

<sup>27</sup> Of other unidentified poems in this volume, “A Memory” (112) still remains anonymous, but was reprinted without acknowledgement in the English-language pages of the bilingual *Courrier de la Louisiane* for 19 March 1851 (p. 4 col. a). “The Outcast Lady” (252) supplied by an unidentified friend of Mrs Gaskell’s, does not appear to have been subsequently reprinted.

<sup>28</sup> See documents from the Royal Archives quoted in Fay, Appendix II, 138.



atmosphere, fog, created by pollution, [which] dominates as trope and physical presence.” (246)

The Exhibition did not open its doors until 1 May; in fact when Parliament resumed business on 4 February (after a recess of well over five months), the most pressing political issue lay elsewhere, in the furore surrounding the re-establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in England. This had taken place at the end of the previous September under Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, but Parliament had had no opportunity to respond until the new session commenced. Therefore in her opening speech on 4 February 1851 the Queen reminded Parliament that the “recent Assumption of certain Ecclesiastical Titles conferred by a Foreign Power has excited strong Feelings in this Country,” “and large Bodies of my Subjects have presented Addresses to Me, expressing Attachment to the Throne, and praying that such Assumptions should be resisted.”<sup>29</sup> *Household Words* played an active role in the national resistance to what the press were calling “papal aggression.” It not only reprinted this entire section of the speech in Wills’s leader “Ten Minutes with Her Majesty” (531) (which gave an otherwise deferential account of the ceremony)‘, but also satirized those involved in the process in a range of other articles, in both this and later volumes. The most ferocious and witty of these was Dickens’s own “A Crisis in the Affairs of Mr John Bull”&c. (193), published on 23 November, which was a small masterpiece of political caricature and a kind of verbal equivalent to the savage comedy of the ‘large cut’ in which illustrated miscellanies like *Punch* specialized.<sup>30</sup> This strain of anti-Catholic nationalism in the journal was absolutely in line with Liberal thought (Lord John Russell himself had publicly attacked Wiseman’s “Pastoral Letter” on 4 November 1850), even as Liberal thought was departing from the tenets of true religious liberty.<sup>31</sup> Pointed extracts from the Queen’s Speech are at the heart of Wills’s leader, but it deflects attention from its sectarianism by moving in its peroration to celebrate the speed of the press, specifically the electric telegraph, which could transmit the officially-prepared version of the speech from the Treasury verbatim to Edinburgh in “no more than fifteen minutes” (532). In this way, the article forges open links with F. Knight Hunt’s earlier leader, “Wings of Wire” (241) while covertly supporting the anti-Catholic agenda of other contributions to the journal.<sup>32</sup>

The week before Dickens’s onslaught, readers of the journal had been treated to a much milder leader which readers would have been forgiven for thinking had originated from the editorial chair. Henry Morley’s “Views of the Country” had affably proposed to readers that they eschew violent criticism and calls for root-and-branch reform in politics, but rather “discuss [such] question[s] quietly, and with our feet upon the fender”. The ideas of public discussion and of the private consumption of the reader are ingeniously blended, as the article asserts—in thoroughly Habermassian terms—how “the freedom and the power of Opinion in England, have given an importance to the press which is

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<sup>29</sup> <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/sittings/1851/feb/04>>, *HL Deb 04 February 1851 vol 114 cc1-5* [Accessed 19 March 2014].

<sup>30</sup> See Leary, 35–56.

<sup>31</sup> See Slater’s headnote to “A Crisis”&c., in *Journalism 2* (1996), 297–99; repr. by permission at <http://www.djo.org.uk/indexes/articles/a-crisis-in-the-affairs-of-mr-john-bull-as-related-by-mrs-bull-to-the-children.html>.> On anti-Catholicism in *Household Words* more generally, and the antagonism it provoked, see Drew (2003), 125–26.

<sup>32</sup> for an account of Knight Hunt’s article in the context of *Household Words*’s wider attitude to new technology, Drew (2012), 40–55.

attached to it, as a direct agent in producing social reforms, in no other European country.” (170)<sup>33</sup> Again, the article moves in an unexpected direction, launching a gently worded attack on the laws of entail as a drawback in a land otherwise making steady improvements on many fronts; these laws would eventually be swept away by Lord Birkenhead’s reforms of English land law in 1925.<sup>34</sup> It is perhaps typical of the journal’s developing strategy for dealing with political controversies by overtly conducting such discussions in a courteous if not bland tone, whilst delivering *en passant* side-swipes and decidedly pointed attacks elsewhere in its pages. Certainly, in the years before the abolition of the Newspaper Stamp in 1855, a strategy of this sort was virtually a necessity if the journal was to avoid prosecution. *Household Words*’s sister publication, *The Household Narrative of Public Events*, was already subject to prosecution in the Court of Exchequer, and offered readers a running commentary on its progress.<sup>35</sup>

Calls for legal reform and criticism of local rather than national government were therefore the kinds of political matter that *Household Words* could most comfortably accommodate in its early years, and this volume furnishes a number of good examples. Most prominently, Dickens and Wills collaborated on a series of four linked articles entitled “The Doom of English Wills,” exposing what the journal considered to be the woeful state of preservation of the personal data archived up and down the land in ecclesiastical registries.<sup>36</sup> As Katherine M. Longley has observed, in these “attacks” Dickens was bringing some of his early experiences as a shorthand reporter in “Doctors’ Commons” to bear on a matter of considerable national interest. He also drew on and publicized the work of a frustrated antiquarian barrister, William Downing Bruce, who features as the indefatigable “Mr. William Wallace” as he makes a “suppositious excursion [...] at his own proper cost and charge, to search the registers in some Cathedral towns, for wills and records.” (2).<sup>37</sup> Legislation in 1838 had specifically provided for the establishment of a central records office, but it was not until 1856 that the first section of the new Gothic-style and heavily fireproofed Public Record Office on Fetter Lane actually began to accept documents.<sup>38</sup> Fees were still charged for access, however, and search rooms only opened to the public in 1866. The final article in “The Doom of English Wills” series holds up as a model for emulation the easy and cheap access to information and efficient systems already introduced at Chester Cathedral. It further speculates that the industrial and pragmatic character of the neighborhood must have exerted a wholesome influence on the lay authorities at Chester, who have introduced reforms “without that whining sophistication, that grim tenacity, with which

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<sup>33</sup> This argument anticipates Habermass’s now familiar outline of the operation of public opinion.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. the Law of Property Act, 1925 c. 20 (15 and 16 Geo. 5).

<sup>35</sup> See Introductions to *Household Words* III and IV (forthcoming), and for an overview of the case, Drew (2003), 185–86.

<sup>36</sup> See *Household Words*, II, Nos 27 and 28 (by Dickens and Wills), and 32 and 35 (by Wills alone), pp. 1, 25, 125 & 203.

<sup>37</sup> See Longley, 25–38, and Owens, 147–49. Bruce (1824–75) had first drawn attention to the crisis in record-keeping in his pamphlet on the *Condition and Unsafe State of Ancient Parochial Registers in England and the Colonies* (London, 1850); Dickens invited him to visit on 23 August 1850, where, over “a first rate dinner [...] and] Wines of every kind” he relayed evidence drawn upon in the articles to Wills, John Forster, John Leech, W. M. Thackeray and others (*Letters* 6: 154nn.).

<sup>38</sup> Designed by Sir James Pennethorne See “History of the Public Records Acts”

<<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/legislation/public-records-act/history-of-pra/>>.

abuses are excused and clung to, in exact proportion to their absurdity, profitableness, and injustice” (205). It is easy to place the series in the tradition of the campaigns for open government that culminated in the United Kingdom’s 2005 Freedom of Information Act.

The corruption and inefficiency of local government, in particular the Aldermen of the Court of Common Council, form the theme of “Lively Turtle,” while bureaucratic obfuscation and delay, in particular that of the Civil Service, is the burden of “Red Tape” (481)—both articles showing Dickens in fighting fettle as a satirist. The national disgrace of the cattle market and abattoirs at Smithfield—particularly when contrasted with the humane and hygienic equivalents outside Paris, which Dickens made a special journey to inspect—are the burden of “A Monument of French Folly” (553) and “The Smithfield Bull to his Cousin of Nineveh” (589). Taken together with the industrial unrest glanced at in “Railway Strikes,” it is not hard to draw from the volume a sense of a general unease concerning political mismanagement. This was more or less manifested in the ministerial crisis of February 1851, when Russell’s cabinet resigned, claiming it had lost the confidence of the House, but then re-appointed itself (“Every man jack of them,” in the Duke of Wellington’s words), without consulting the Commons, on 3 March. On 22<sup>nd</sup>, *The Spectator* opined that “the notion that no other Ministerial combination [is] possible has rendered the Russell Ministry froward and perverse” since its term began.<sup>39</sup> These epithets describe *Household Words*’s view of current affairs, local and national, during the six months under consideration reasonably well.

Little coverage is granted to international affairs, perhaps on the principle that the rest of the world was coming to London anyway. Something of an exception is Knight Hunt’s “Modern Robbers of the Rhine” (91), which offers animadversions on the backward state of Germany’s political development and attacks the corruption of “the reigning Dukes of Nassau, Homburg, and Baden,”. Adopting the diversionary strategy already identified, its contempt is balanced elsewhere by the colorful and appreciative anecdotes of German culture retold in Anna Mary Howitt’s four-part “Bits of Life in Munich” (33, 358, 395 and 535 respectively). Travelers’ tales, from Central and South America, and from South Africa, also make an intermittent showing in a volume otherwise preoccupied with the national scene.<sup>40</sup>

## Science and Medicine

As our Introduction to the first volume of *Household Words* observed, while dry papers of scientific explanation scarcely ever feature in the journal’s pages, the approach to storytelling and performance frequently adopted by Victorian scientists seeking to gain public support for their theories meant that *Household Words* and popular science were far from incompatible. Over a dozen items in this volume focus solidly on some aspect of applied science, medicine or technology, calling again on the services of Percival Leigh,

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<sup>39</sup> No. 1184, 8 March 1851, 217b.

<sup>40</sup> For example. Alfred Whaley Cole’s “How We Went Whaling off the Cape of Good Hope” (58), “‘Cape’ Sketches” (118 and 165) and “Life in an Estancia” (three parts – 190, 210 and 233 - attributed to a Mr. Harvey, cattle-rancher in Argentina)

Thomas Stone and Frederick Knight Hunt.<sup>41</sup> Prominent amongst these are Leigh's "The Mysteries of a Tea-Kettle" (176) and "The Chemistry of a Pint of Beer" (498), which continue his series of adaptations of the notes to Faraday's lectures at the Royal Institution, and Stone's "Hints on Emergencies" (47)<sup>42</sup> and "Physiology of Intemperance" (413). The last of these illustrates well the perils of attempting to dress science in the borrowed robes of fiction in its lumbering effort to construct a jocular postprandial conversation between a doctor, a clergyman, a "merry-faced guest" and "mine host of the Garter," concerning the deleterious effects of alcohol on the constitution. Knight Hunt's contributions distinguish themselves through a greater control of tone and their genuine contribution to the history of nineteenth-century medicine and the medical profession. "A Great Day for the Doctors" (137) describes the phenomenon of the October 1 lectures in the great London Medical schools, and gives some account of their character and status; "The Hunterian Museum" (277) offers a rare and atmospheric description of the East and West galleries of the museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields (completed in 1837), with extracts from a contemporary catalogue.

Over the course of the volume, Dickens can be seen finding topics and commissioning popular science pieces from the able pen of William Blanchard Jerrold (1826–84), eldest son of his friend and fellow satirist, Douglas Jerrold. Before he was twenty, the young Jerrold had been hired by Dickens to the reporting staff of the *Daily News*, and contributed a series of socially-aware articles on "The Literature of the Poor." After publishing a single piece by him in the first volume of *Household Words*, Dickens found room between September 1850 and February 1851 for a dozen of the fifty-five articles Jerrold junior would eventually contribute to *Household Words*, a number of which deploy the emerging techniques of social science to encourage readers to become more actively involved in the world around them.<sup>43</sup> "Protected Cradles" dispenses alarming figures about infant mortality and the quantity of drugs sold in industrial areas to unskilled nurses of the children of factory workers, so that "that the quiet homes of the poor reek with narcotics" (108). Jerrold's analysis is then tied to a rousing recommendation of the French system of day nurseries, as pioneered by philanthropist Jean Baptiste Marbeau, and a report on the progress of the first English "crèche" (*OED*, M19), which had opened on Nassau Street in London's West End in March 1850. The peroration, doubtless carefully overlooked by Dickens, has scarcely lost its force:

The question of Day-Nurseries—the question of Protection for the Cradle—has an intrinsic importance which reaches beyond the exigencies of the hour; it is one

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<sup>41</sup> See under "Science" in Drew, Mackenzie and Winyard, 50–67.

<sup>42</sup> Co-written with W. H. Wills (4–48); based on the recently-published second edition of John F. South's *Household Surgery: or, Hints on Emergencies* (London: C. Cox, 1850 [1847]); the article takes issue with the manual for encouraging readers to attempt advanced surgical techniques as well as for envisaging emergencies unlikely to occur in the average household. It concludes with something like a keynote for the medical articles in the volume: "It should always be remembered that Medicines differ from poisons only in their doses, in other words all medicine is poison if administered ignorantly and in excess" (47).

<sup>43</sup> Jerrold's frequency of contribution to *Household Words* declined after his father's death in 1857, when he and Dickens clashed over what Lorrhli calls the "officiousness" (325) of Dickens's behaviour in organising a string of high profile "benefit" performances for the family. This was in spite of the fact that "they were by no means destitute" (Slater [2011], 426), not least because of the income earned by the Blanchard, the eldest son, as *Household Words* contributor.

that concerns every man, and will interest every man who acknowledges that social duty, which has never been publicly derided even in the darkest passages of the world's history —the duty of the adult to the infant. (112).

A less somber perspective on the relationship between society and its patent drugs is offered in “The Methuselah Pill” (36), a witty exposé of the way quack medicines with no healing properties are devised and advertised in Britain by means of imaginative and wholly spurious narratives that would not be permitted in other jurisdictions. An earlier article, drawn from the detailed paper submitted by Dr William Scoresby to a Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, enlivens a mathematical attempt to calculate the height, width and speed of North Atlantic waves from the paddlebox of a transatlantic steamer with a comic sublime account of the difficulty and danger of the process. Given that Scoresby’s paper would not be formally published in the Association’s formal proceedings until 1851, there is evidence here that *Household Words* was working hard to source original scientific material for its readers ahead of its competitors, as well as give them an imaginative twist.<sup>44</sup> Jerrold was also asked to handle more pedestrian material in articles like “Spiders’ Silk” (65), which rehearses the somewhat musty argument for and against the production of silk by spiders. The original argument was conducted in the early eighteenth century by rival French naturalists René Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur (accent missing in the *Household Words* text) and François-Xavier Bon de St.-Hilaire, and here it is tacked rather cursorily onto contemporary concerns, with the rider that such arguments are suggestive and valuable because “[a]t the Great Industrial Show, we shall probably find some specimens of spider's silk.” (67)<sup>45</sup> Unlike the previous papers mentioned, it was not selected by Jerrold for anthologizing as one of the *Chronicles of The Crutch*, his bizarrely repackaged 1860 collection of papers from the journal which is set in a crumbling monastery where the brethren tell each other stories of the outside world to beguile a winter’s night.

## Editorial Issues

The discussion so far has highlighted a number of aspects of the journal’s coverage that from our vantage point it has been tempting to construe as evidence of an emerging editorial strategy in these areas. Nothing would be simpler than to rehearse these, and yet this would run the risk of representing as intentions and tendencies a selective interpretation of hints and synchronicities. Another trawl through the two hundred plus articles in the volume might well provide conflicting evidence of a different set of

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<sup>44</sup> See “Atlantic Waves” (22–24); see also “Dr W. Scoresby on Atlantic Waves, their Magnitude, Velocity, and Phaenomena,” in “Notices and Abstracts of Miscellaneous Communications to the Sections,” “Mathematics,” *Report of the Twentieth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* &c. (London: John Murray, 1851), II, 26 - 32. The opening description of the steamer making headway in tremendous seas bears comparison with Dickens’s account of transatlantic crossings in *American Notes* (1842).

<sup>45</sup> For a recent discussion of the learned debate, which places it in a rather richer context of European intellectual discovery, see chapter 1 of Nuttall, 13–17. It also features regularly in the considerable nineteenth-century literature of the silk industry, see for example, , chapter 8 of Porter.

principles at work. Perhaps the only certainty here is that *Household Words* was a miscellany, and its editorial team prized pluralism and polyphony as much as the imposition of any kind of centralized philosophy or normative voice.

This much can be seen and inferred from Dickens's numerous letters on editorial matters to Wills, and from the rare instances of the latter's responses which have survived. This is not table talk of the kind which Patrick Leary so convincingly suggests would fill in the gaps in our knowledge of how Victorian periodicals were launched and steered, but it is the next best thing. The written correspondence (richly annotated in the 'Pilgrim' edition of the *Letters*) shows how Dickens began to use his tremendous network of acquaintances and dining companions as a quarry to be mined for the raw material of numerous articles, and how willingly politicians, philanthropists, lawyers, doctors, academics and other professionals complied with requests to provide oral and written narratives that might find an outlet in *Household Words*.

By the same token, when articles touched on matters of interest to such cadres of reader, it is clear they provoked strong responses, proving the journal's perceived weight of influence. A characteristic example would be the exchange with the Lord Chief Justice Denman (1779–1854), the veteran abolitionist, who had written to Dickens before Christmas to express concern over recent articles in the journal that had represented the British blockade of the west coast of Africa as a well-meaning but ineffective and sometimes counterproductive measure to prevent the shipping of slaves.<sup>46</sup> Dickens's reply indicates not only that the journal had been following the matter closely by means of the available reports of a Parliamentary Select Committee enquiring into the blockade, but that Denman had forwarded new materials for the journal to consider. These evidently feed into the ensuing reference to the blockade in the concluding paragraph of Henry Morley's early January compilation of African anecdotes entitled "Our Phantom Ship. Negro Land" (400).<sup>47</sup>

It is also clear from his correspondence that Dickens's frequent absences from London, whether in Broadstairs, Hertfordshire, or in his private writer's world, posed technical difficulties for the smooth running of the editorial process, as Dickens's aforementioned abortive attempt to change the ending of Gaskell's "Heart of John Middleton" attests. But such absenteeism also caused personal tensions between Dickens

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<sup>46</sup> See Alfred Whaley Cole's "'Good Intentions' A Story of the African Blockade" (45) and "A Cape Coast Cargo" (252), by W. H. Wills and Franklin Fox. Fox (b. 1824) was the youngest son of Dickens's friend, Unitarian preacher, Free Trade orator and former *Daily News* colleague, W. J. Fox. The *Household Narrative* gave the Select Committee's discussion detailed coverage in its "Parliament and Politics" section, in March 1857 (56–57), in a scrupulously neutral manner; not so the scathing references to "our powerless blockade" and its "extravagance" in "The Three Kingdoms" editorial (possibly penned by John Forster) of June 1850 (145).

<sup>47</sup> Dickens's guidance over content and phrasing seems likely here, given the way the article rehearses material covered in Dickens's long review for *The Examiner* in August 1848 of an account of the 1841 Niger Expedition (*Journalism*, 2: 108–26). The materials forwarded by Denman derived from his second son Joseph, a naval captain commanding one of the African squadron cruisers in the 1840s; His pamphlet, *The African Squadron and Mr Hutt's Committee* (London: John Mortimer, [1850?]) vigorously defends the efficacy of the blockade, and criticises the *Times* and the *Daily News* for cherry-picking the committee's objections to it in the service of an amoral version of Free Trade that sets human rights at naught. The *Household Words* article's comment that "Merchant ships are the true African blockade" (407) and that extended commerce rather than naval firepower will prevail in discouraging the slave trade steers something of a middle course.

and Wills, who can both be observed still marking their territory even as they indulged in the pleasant banter of like-minded colleagues. Back in August, Dickens had written from Broadstairs to suggest to Wills that he change the order of the first two items in Wills's suggested number plan for the issue of 7 September: Knight Hunt's "Illustrations of Cheapness: the Steel Pen" therefore led, demoting the second installment of Wills's own "Two Chapters on Bank Note Forgeries," from the first rank. In the ten days following the release of the number, which evidently had not sold well, Wills reverted to the topic, suggesting his original ordering might have been better, prompting the following parry from his line manager:

My Dear Wills,/ I am extremely sorry to hear about your brain—but if you suppose that our Number went down, because the Illustration [of Cheapness] was first, and wouldn't have gone down if the Forgery had been first, I think the disease must be the gigantic strength of your imagination.

Touché, from the boss who had cheerfully described his deputy in the run-up to the journal's launch as someone who "has not the ghost of an idea in an imaginative way" – in contrast with the regular contributor and soon-to-be staff writer R. H. Horne, who, Dickens felt, "has been working out some suggestions of mine, admirably" (*Letters* 6: 69). Not surprisingly, a coolness and eventually a quarrel developed between Wills and Horne, ostensibly over the latter's failure to fulfill his quota of tasks in relation to his three-month contract as Wills's assistant (May–August 1850), which Wills had drawn to Dickens's attention. Between the lines, we may therefore suspect a jealousy over Dickens's esteem for their respective literary ability; in response to his accusations regarding Horne, Dickens prudently told Wills, "I will not enter on that question of comparison which you raise in your note because I do not think my doing so would at all facilitate or soften our business." Business relations with Horne would endure for several years, continuing, albeit unsatisfactorily, until well after his departure for Australia in 1852, and he would contribute nearly a hundred items to *Household Words* all told, but fault lines at the Wellington Street office are detectable even at this early juncture. Dickens seems to have acted fairly and firmly as an adjudicator, but there seems little doubt that his long absences from London in 1850 and early 1851 left Wills and Horne in a somewhat awkward position, 'acting up' as Editor and Sub, while their illustrious Conductor directed them from afar.<sup>48</sup>

Of course, contemporary readers had little opportunity of glimpsing such animosities, as the uniform anonymity of the journal gave no clue as to whose leaders had been preferred or demoted. Reviewers outside London, for example, gave the material in this volume detailed if superficial praise. Here, for example, the *Derby Mercury* speaks at large on the tonal success of the journal and its unaggressive, 'Horatian' approach to satire:

A peculiar charm in the publication [...] will be found in the unruffled good temper which pervades it [...]. In exposing popular error, and lending a hand in the destruction of popular fallacy, the object is [...] happily achieved by a raciness

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<sup>48</sup> See Dickens's response to Horne's tendering of his resignation on 18 March 1851 (*Letters* 6: 317&n). A nuanced consideration of Dickens's alternately hands-on/hands-off approach to editing is given in Lai.

of banter which keeps the reader in admirable good humour with himself, never hurting his self-esteem by declamation against his prejudices but felicitously laying bare the absurdities and improprieties by which numerous social abuses are fenced around [...]. The contents are varied, and in their variety, excellent. The mode in which the subjects are treated shows sound judgment and great tact.<sup>49</sup>

The reviewer for the *Aberdeen Journal* is considerably more *ad hominem*, and seems to speak with inside knowledge of Dickens's personal involvement in newsgathering for the journal (as discussed above) though perhaps exaggerating the arduousness of such fieldwork:

The mere *name* of [this periodical's] conductor was almost sufficient to give it a very advantageous start; but it is because Dickens has been really the conductor—has personally thrown himself amongst many strange phases of London life, on purpose to glean from its pages facts, which he has woven into pictures such as only he can paint—and has, in short, fully drawn on his wonderful resources to impart to it the charms of his inimitable pen—it is on this account chiefly that *Household Words* has already so far proved [itself].<sup>50</sup>

A year on from *Household Words*'s launch, it was perhaps inevitable that credit for its successes in reviews like these seems to build around Dickens's name rather than those of his contributors, given that few of the latter had yet had time to republish their contributions under their own name, and begin to acquire some measure of personal reputation as a result. Blanchard Jerrold's *Chronicles of the Crutch*, noted above, was one of the first. Dickens's willingness to accept unsolicited articles meant the pool of contributors was increasingly broad, but the chances of any one of them reaching permanent pre-eminence correspondingly lower. Later introductions will document how some managed to achieve this, just as this one has indicated how writers like Horne and Jerrold established an early niche.

Even then, a brilliant leading article was as likely to be attributed to the authority of the Conductor's baton rather than the soloist's genius. This was publicly performed, in effect, with Horne's powerful leader, "Gottfried Kinkel; A Life in Three Pictures" (121), on the incarceration of Prussian-born academic, journalist, poet and revolutionary Gottfried Kinkel (1815–82), which paints in the present historic a moving picture of his past achievements and current sufferings, and culminates in an appeal to "the literary men of England" to lobby the Prussian authorities for his release. But rather than do this, elder statesmen of England's literary men Walter Savage Landor seems to have considered that the best response would be to send an open letter in praise of Dickens to *The Examiner*. This was duly published by the paper's editor John Forster, in spite of the fact that Kinkel was already rumored to have made a spectacular escape. The letter's thundering hyperbole quite out-Boythorns anything Dickens would write in his affectionate portrait of Landor in *Bleak House*, and makes it perfectly apparent that *Household Words* and Dickens were to be considered synonymous:

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<sup>49</sup> *The Derby Mercury*, Wednesday, 9 April 1851, p. 4a.

<sup>50</sup> *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday, 9 April 1851, p. 6a.



My dear Dickens, [...] Firmly do I believe that your writings have been and will be the cause of removing a heavier and wider mass of evils from society, than nearly all the others that have issued from the press since its first invention. [...] You have hunted down the foxes that infested the vineyard of education and preyed on the unripe grapes; and you have thrown open schools where the children of the poorest may acquire what is best in learning, the habitude of industry and honesty. You have impelled the rulers of the land to care a little about the direction which the rising mind is to take [...]. To you mainly is owing the moral ventilation of Parliament: you have given it clearer light and purer warmth.

What induces me to write this letter may seem disconnected from our politics and our literature: but indeed it is not so [...]. Nobly has this part been performed by you in regard to Gottfried Kinkel <sup>51</sup>

The published response to this second volume of the periodical, then, goes some way to validating the accuracy of the quip attributed to Douglas Jerrold in declining to contribute to the journal: it would, Jerrold feared, be “*mononymous throughout*”.<sup>52</sup> Whether this was, or is, an editorial strength of the journal as a whole, or a weakness, depends on the extent to which readers prize individual writers and their merits above the collective entity that is *Household Words*.

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<sup>51</sup> Walter Savage Landor, “Professor Kinkel,” *The Examiner*, Saturday 30 November 1850, 765c–766a.

<sup>52</sup> Cited in Hanaford, 331.

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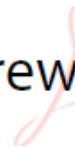
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