MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT

Sylvère Monod

ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:
CHARLES DICKENS

ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:
CHARLES DICKENS

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT

Sylvère Monod

Volume 10

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1985

This edition first published in 2009 by
Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Transferred to Digital Printing 2009

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 10: 0-415-43595-1 (Set)
ISBN 10: 0-415-48255-0 (Volume 10)

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-43595-6 (Set)
ISBN 13: 978-0-415-48255-4 (Volume 10)

Publisher's Note
The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original copies may be apparent.

Disclaimer
The publisher has made every effort to trace copyright holders and would welcome correspondence from those they have been unable to trace.

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

Each volume in this series is devoted to a single major text. It is intended for serious students and teachers of literature, and for knowledgeable non-academic readers. It aims to provide a scholarly introduction and a stimulus to critical thought and discussion.

Individual volumes will naturally differ from one another in arrangement and emphasis, but each will normally begin with information on a work's literary and intellectual background, and other guidance designed to help the reader to an informed understanding. This is followed by an extended critical discussion of the work itself, and each contributor in the series has been encouraged to present in these sections his own reading of the work, whether or not this is controversial, rather than to attempt a mere consensus. Some volumes, including those on *Paradise Lost* and *Ulysses*, vary somewhat from the more usual pattern by entering into substantive critical discussion at the outset, and allowing the necessary background material to emerge at the points where it is felt to arise from the argument in the most useful and relevant way. Each volume also contains a historical survey of the work's critical reputation, including an account of the principal lines of approach and areas of controversy, and a selective (but detailed) bibliography.

The hope is that the volumes in this series will be among those which a university teacher would normally recommend for any serious study of a particular text, and that they will also be among the essential secondary texts to be consulted in some scholarly investigations. But the experienced and informed non-academic reader has also been in our minds, and one of our aims has been to provide him with reliable and stimulating works of reference and guidance, embodying the present state of knowledge and opinion in a conveniently accessible form.

C.J.R.
University of Warwick,
December 1979

CONTENTS

PREFACE

Martin Chuzzlewit is not one of the Dickens novels that everyone reads and that every Dickens critic writes about at great length. The *Chuzzlewit* literature cannot compare, in point of quality or in sheer bulk, with the studies devoted to old favourites like *David Copperfield* or *Great Expectations*, or to the later, darker masterpieces (*Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, *Our Mutual Friend*).

Yet *Martin Chuzzlewit* proves extremely interesting as well as agreeable to reread again and again, to examine and analyse. It offers an extraordinary variety of aspects, and raises fascinating critical problems, without ever being obscure or difficult.

As will appear throughout this book, I am immensely indebted to the Clarendon edition of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, which was published at the end of 1982, just in time to enable me to make use of its authoritative text and to refer to its valuable findings. It is a pleasure to express my gratitude to the editor, Margaret Cardwell, and to the general editor of the series, Professor Kathleen Tillotson.

For information, advice and help of various kinds, I also wish to thank Micheline Larès, Robert L. Patten, Robert M. Polhemus, Michael Slater, Olivier Cohen-Steiner and, above all, Claude Rawson, whose generous efforts on behalf of this book have far exceeded his duties as general editor of the series.

Because the Clarendon volume is unusually costly, all references to *Martin Chuzzlewit* are identified parenthetically by chapter-number, followed by page-number in both the Penguin English Library and the Clarendon editions, in that order (except in Chapter 2).

Paris, April 1984 S.M.

CHAPTER 1

Dickens's Pre-*Chuzzlewit* Days

A rough outline of Charles Dickens's childhood and youth following his birth on 7 February 1812, and of Boz's early career, may cast some light on the personality of the author who began to write *Martin Chuzzlewit* in 1843.

Recalling that the novel opens with an elaborately jocular genealogy, it may be useful to refer to Charles Dickens's ancestry, precisely because there is not very much – and nothing notable – to be said about it. When in later life the successful novelist adopted a 'crest', and had it reproduced on his bookplate and silverware, he was asked whether it had existed in the family. He replied, disingenuously, that he had never 'used any other armorial bearings than [his] father's crest', which was true in a literal sense, that is, he had never used any other; but John Dickens, Charles's father, had never used a crest at all, and the form of the statement was of course intended to suggest that John Dickens had indeed used *that* crest, and bypassed the question of his having had any right to it, or to any other.[1]

John Dickens, as an impecunious and moderately successful public servant in the Navy Pay Office, or later as a self-taught shorthand reporter, may have been a man of some talent and a boon companion, but being his son was nothing to boast of, and his own father and mother had been mere domestic servants (steward and housekeeper) in the house of a richer family.[2] John Dickens's wife Elizabeth, née Barrow, belonged to a family of higher civil servants, also connected with the Navy Pay Office, but whose reputation was somewhat tarnished by a case of embezzlement of funds.[3] Such data may not be the only source of chapter I of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The example of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* (book I, chapter II) almost certainly exerted an influence on the young novelist and reinforced his determination to deride genealogy.

The next point of interest to the student and reader of *Martin*

Chuzzlewit is the extent, or the limitations of the education received by its author. About the education at home, there can be no doubt that it was intellectually adequate and even stimulating. John Dickens was a man of real intelligence, and he was eminently literate and articulate, very much attracted by words and phrases. Elizabeth Dickens, though she is supposed to have sat, unwillingly and unconsciously, for the portrait of Mrs Nickleby, was certainly not a fool. At one time she wanted to eke out the family resources by taking in pupils. There is no evidence that a single pupil ever came to her, but neither is there evidence that she would have been incapable of coping with him or her if one had come. And young Charles must have been further helped by the continuous process of mutual education that goes on within large families (John and Elizabeth Dickens had eight children, only one of whom died in infancy, so that they actually brought up seven children). As to the moral and practical aspects of the guidance received in the home, they were of more questionable value. John and Elizabeth Dickens were improvident and tended to run into financial difficulties. It was mainly through a reaction against their example that the future novelist may be said to have been felicitously influenced by his parents.

Charles Dickens's formal education was consequently a haphazard affair. Its early stages, in Chatham, seem to have been sufficiently happy and efficient. However, there was a financial crisis when Charles, who had been left behind for a few months, joined his parents in London in 1823. He was not sent to school, but kept at home as a kind of unpaid household drudge, though he went on reading and thus to a certain extent teaching himself. But when the crisis came to a head, in the spring of 1824, Charles went out to work in a blacking factory run by a young cousin of his mother's, earning his livelihood at the unripe age of 12, while the rest of the family soon joined Mr Dickens in the Marshalsea, where he had been imprisoned for debt. It was only some time after John Dickens's release (after three months) that Charles was withdrawn from the factory and sent to school again. For three more years (1824–7) he attended an establishment called Wellington House Classical and Commercial Academy, which may not have justified its pompous name by real academic distinction. In 1827 he left school for good and, at the age of 15, became a paid office-boy.

Fortunately, Charles Dickens was an avid reader and a fiercely ambitious and energetic adolescent. He may be said to have taken his

own further education in hand at its decisive stage. He was never given a chance to go to one of the universities (an advantage of which he was later to underestimate the value), but he did the next best thing by obtaining a reader's ticket to the British Museum Library at the earliest possible date (the day after his eighteenth birthday) and reading assiduously and greedily. Of course, by such methods he never became a man of impressive culture, but neither was he the ignoramus, the purely instinctive writer, the 'Heaven-taught' penman that his more supercilious reviewers tended to see in him.

From his childhood and adolescence, Charles Dickens emerged with some first-hand knowledge of poverty, hunger and the streets of London, a good deal of variegated information gathered from books, a sense of his own gifts (for acting, singing, and even dancing, rather than for writing, so far) and an iron-hard resolution to rise in the world – to rise, if not to fame, at least above want.

It did not take him long, after he had finally left school in 1827, to work himself away from the low-level jobs in the world of lawyers and towards journalism. The way he chose was like David Copperfield's, and like his own father's before him, that of self-taught shorthand reporting, at which Charles Dickens seems to have become remarkably adept.

His career as a writer began in 1833 with the publication of his first story, 'A Dinner at Poplar Walk', in the *Monthy Magazine*. Unpaid, and seeing only the dubious light of print in an obscure and ephemeral periodical, this event was nevertheless regarded by the budding author as momentous. And of course he was proved right in the event, for in the course of the next few years he wrote more and more stories and sketches, for which he found a market without too much difficulty in various newspapers and journals. By the early weeks of 1836 there was enough material for two volumes of *Sketches by Boz* to appear (supplemented later in the year by a further volume). The year 1836 was in several respects Dickens's *annus mirabilis*, or perhaps it was Boz's rather than Dickens's. Charles Dickens it was who married Catherine Hogarth on 2 April 1836, but Boz was his signature on the title-page of his first book. And it was as Boz that Dickens simultaneously began to write *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*. He was so much bent on impressing the British reading public as Boz (or so ready to let the label stick to him) that the third, definitive and best illustrator of *Pickwick*, Hablot Knight Browne, felt compelled to hoist a similarly neat banner and called himself 'Phiz'.

The author of *Sketches* and *Pickwick* had thus been rushed by events into complete Bozification.

It would remain for him to de-Bozify himself. If Boz was in the main a writer of light comic tales, and quite content to be acclaimed as such, Charles Dickens could justifiably nourish higher ambitions. The story of the years between 1836 and 1842 in Dickens's literary career, or between *Sketches by Boz* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, is largely that of the emergence of the full-grown Dickens from the chrysalis Boz. Again it was a spectacularly fast process. Without going into all the details, and without counting *Sketches by Boz*, which was not essentially new work, it is striking to find that Dickens's first five novels (*Pickwick*, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*), making up one (large) third of his fifteen (or fourteen and a half) novels, were produced in under six years, between 1836 and late 1841. The other two-thirds (ten, or nine and a half, novels) were to take him twenty-nine years to write.

The outward form assumed by *Martin Chuzzlewit* and the method of its composition and publication were directly influenced, like a great part of Dickens's writing career, by what happened in the early weeks of 1836. When the young publishing firm of Chapman & Hall were approached by the artist Robert Seymour, who enjoyed a respectable reputation as the author and etcher of sporting sketches, he came to them with a proposal for a series of 'cockney sporting plates', to be 'accompanied by letterpress and published in monthly parts', and they set about finding some young writer who might be interested in providing the letterpress (and capable of doing so efficiently). They did not at once bethink themselves of the author of *Sketches by Boz*, but they soon had their eye on him among others and it was with him that they eventually came to an understanding. One significant feature of the transaction was the young writer's reservations about his proposed subservience to Seymour's invention. In spite of the gap in age and fame between the two men, these reservations were expressed so forcefully that the arrangement was radically altered – it was in fact reversed – by the time publication began. When the first number of *Pickwick Papers* appeared, there was no ambiguity as to who was illustrating whom. The 'Papers' were 'Edited by Boz', 'with Four Illustrations by Seymour'. Another important fact was connected with the original Seymour–Chapman plan for the work to be 'published in monthly parts'. It would be idle to try to imagine what turn Dickens's career as a novelist might have taken but for Seymour's initiative.

Seymour disappeared from Dickens's career at once; between the first and second numbers of *Pickwick* he had committed suicide. Chapman & Hall remained understandably attached to Dickens's literary fate throughout his life. Though the connection went through an eclipse in the 1840s and 1850s (beginning with – and brought about by – *Martin Chuzzlewit*, as will appear in the next chapter), it was never completely interrupted and was definitively resumed in 1859 with *A Tale of Two Cities*. But, apart from Charles Dickens himself, the most permanent member of the partnership turned out to be the monthly number. Boz rose to fame thanks to the monthly numbers of *Pickwick Papers*; when Dickens died thirty-four years later he was engaged in writing the monthly numbers of *Edwin Drood*. In the meantime he had hoped, and tried, more than once, to escape the drudgery of writing a set quantity of material at regular intervals. The launching of the weekly *Master Humphrey's Clock* in 1840 was the first of these attempts; *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* were originally published in *Master Humphrey's Clock*. But, as on all similar occasions later, Dickens returned to the form which was both his favourite and the one best suited to his talent and temperament. Nine of the fifteen novels appeared first in monthly numbers. And such was their success that other Victorian novelists had to emulate them. The choice had been in great part due to accident and circumstance. Dickens's persistence and his successful use of the form showed that the accident had been on the whole felicitous and the circumstance skilfully exploited.

In theory, however, publication, and especially composition, in small monthly doses is inartistic. This mode has been adversely criticized because it does not enable the novelist to modify the beginning of his work in the light of its later development. Even the staggered publication of a story written in its entirety before the first instalment is placed before the eyes of the public is open to objection, since it imposes upon the artist specific constraints: each part must form a tolerably coherent whole; the breaks must occur at regular intervals; the reader's interest must be kept alive throughout. But when a novelist agrees to do what Dickens did constantly, that is, invites inspection of the early chapters, makes them public, while the later incidents are not yet written out and may still be no more than hazily conceived in his own mind, he forgoes the power of altering his story by means of cancellations; additions and twists are the only weapons thus left as his disposal. George Eliot, for one, always refused

to adopt these procedures. Dickens, on the contrary, proclaimed that he held the advantages of the method to outweigh its disadvantages. This obstinate practical preference for the theoretically indefensible can be understood. There is no doubt that Charles Dickens worked better under the compulsion of immediate urgency: what the opening night of a play was to him as a producer of theatrical performances, the printer's deadline was to him as a novelist. It provided an inescapable stimulation and precluded dawdling, while not mobilizing his energies for too long at a time. Dickens adapted himself happily to the monthly rhythm (as he did, on the whole, to the daily organization of his work); a two-week stint of hard labour (carried out in the morning) would normally see him through. It is likely that, during that period of concentration, he would be supported by the prospect of a fortnight's relaxation, although in his case it is abundantly clear that relaxation would take the form not of idleness but of a change of absorbing occupations.

A second advantage of the periodical instalment was that it implied concentration and constriction and protected the writer from the temptation of letting himself go, of becoming long-winded. Experience taught Dickens that the weekly fragments were too demanding in that respect, while the monthly parts of thirty-two close pages (of fifty lines each) suited him very well; they gave him enough 'elbow-room' (to use one of his own favourite expressions), but not too much. Third, Dickens was in need of constant and almost physical contact with an audience. This requirement of his nature was to lead him to his theatrical activities (including, of course, his public readings of extracts from his works). Publication of a three-decker at one blow could not have satisfied his needs; when a novel was spread out over nineteen months, a number of reactions made the mode of the 'audience' perceptible to him. There were reviews of the separate parts, a few letters, the talk of the town, something in the atmosphere perhaps, and – most measurable of all – the sales figures supplied by the publishers. This had its dangers, for the reactions could be disappointing or even depressing, but Dickens was a man of real courage, he was a born fighter, he would strive hard to remedy his mistakes; in any case, he seems to have been unable to write in a vacuum. Finally, Dickens was also a man of habit and to a certain extent of superstition. One of his reasons for doing things the way he did them was simply that he did them that way, that he had fallen into the habit of doing them that way, and no other. Just as he had to have

a certain size and thickness of paper, or ink of a certain colour, or certain statuettes on his desk while he worked, he needed a regular schedule of writing. And so the form of publication that had raised him to the pinnacle of fame in a few weeks of 1836 had earned his grateful affection for ever. He felt safe with it. He remained faithful to it.

For *Pickwick* had been almost immediately taken to the hearts of the general public. Among the professional critics, the situation was less clear-cut. While no one could deny that a new genius had made his appearance on the literary scene, reservations and doubts could be, and were, voiced about the nature, profundity and permanence of Boz's genius. Because he wrote so fast in his early years, the notorious prophecy was made that, as he had risen like a rocket, he would come down like the stick.[4]

Signs of a rapid decline, however, failed to become visible. As novel followed novel in quick succession, it was open to anyone to decide that Boz was overwriting himself, and thus inevitably riding for a fall. Meanwhile, he did something genuinely new in each new novel. If *Barnaby Rudge* showed less gusto than *Pickwick* or *Nickleby*, it was a novel of such a different nature that comparison in those terms was inadequate, almost irrelevant. It would have been just as true to claim that *Barnaby Rudge* evinced more power (dramatic and historical) than *Pickwick*, or even than *Oliver Twist* which it resembled rather more. But that could not have proved that Dickens had made progress from 1836 to 1841. What was obvious was that he had been exploring his potentialities in various directions, and on the whole with remarkable success.

This diversity of the early batch of fast-produced novels is shown by the case of *Nicholas Nickleby*, in that it is the only one of the five that has anything to do with the most traditional form of the English novel, that belongs to the tradition of *Tom Jones* or *Roderick Random*, that is, the tradition of the loose sequence of adventures with a good-natured impetuous young man for its central (and eponymous) figure, leading to his love-marriage after many difficulties. By the same token, *Nickleby* is the only novel of Boz's early years that is in the least a forerunner of *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

After the two years of *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1840–1) and the intensive drudgery connected with it, Dickens treated himself to a half-year's holiday, which he spent energetically visiting the United States of America. It was after his return to England that he resumed

novel-writing and thought of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. It was after he had let off some of the steam accumulated during his journey by writing and publishing his *American Notes for General Circulation* that he felt ready to go into harness once again.

Because of this longer interval than usual between the new novel and its immediate predecessor, because of the way the intervening time had been spent, there was a real break, and *Martin Chuzzlewit* marks a turning-point in Dickens's career.

This can be shown on the evidence of the cover designs of the works published by Dickens up to and including *Dombey and Son*. *Sketches* had 'BOZ' in the title in gigantic letters. *Pickwick* and *Nickleby* advertised themselves as 'Edited by "Boz" '; *Master Humphrey's Clock* (paradoxically, since it had been intended to be a weekly publication including contributions by various hands, genuinely 'edited' by Dickens) was announced as 'By "Boz" '! *Chuzzlewit* reverted to the thin conventional disguise of editorship, but dropped the inverted commas around the name of Boz in 'Edited by Boz'. And that was Boz's last appearance on a title-page. *Chuzzlewit*'s successor, *Dombey and Son*, was to be simply 'by Charles Dickens', and so would all the later novels. *Chuzzlewit* is thus either the last novel of the first period or the earliest of the later novels.

NOTES: CHAPTER 1

1 See T. P. Cooper, 'Dickens's crest', *Dickensian*, vol. 27, no. 219 (1931), pp. 236–7.

2 The Crewes, that is, the family of John Crewe (later Lord Crewe) at Crewe Hall, Cheshire.

3 Mrs Dickens's father, Charles Barrow, was the culprit and absconded to escape imprisonment in 1810, a few months after the Dickenses' marriage. See Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* (London, 1953), Vol. 1, pp. 7–8.

4 Abraham Hayward in the *Quarterly Review*, October 1837. The reviewer had shrewdly observed a falling-off in the later numbers of *Pickwick*, in which he discerned that 'the particular vein of humour which has hitherto yielded so much attractive metal is worked out'; yet he was modest enough to claim no personal merit for his rocket-and-stick prophecy, for 'it requires no gift of prophecy to foretell [Boz's] fate'.

CHAPTER 2

The Text and its Variations

The textual history of a Dickens novel is not always particularly lively and interesting. It cannot compare, for instance, with the field offered by the works of Proust or, before him, of Balzac. On the other hand, the student of Dickens's text enjoys certain advantages: the materials required for that kind of examination are plentiful and accessible. And, because it was only after the Second World War that Dickens's work came to be regarded as real literature, these materials have, so to speak, just begun to be exploited. They had lain untapped for several decades after the novelist's death.

Martin Chuzzlewit first appeared in nineteen monthly instalments from January 1843 to July 1844. Nineteen may seem, and is, an odd number. But the reason is simple enough: the July 1844 part was, as in the case of the other 'monthly' novels written by Dickens, called by courtesy a 'double number'; it carried the superscription 'Numbers XIX and XX' and, as far as the text proper was concerned, was exactly 50 per cent longer than an ordinary instalment: forty-eight pages instead of the usual thirty-two. But it sold for double the usual price, two shillings instead of one; and, with half-title and verso, title-page and verso, dedication and verso, preface, contents, and even errata-slip and verso, the other sixteen pages were actually there, numbered in roman numerals. And the author must have received, if not earned, a double fee. The purchaser of a Victorian novel in nineteen/twenty monthly parts would thus have paid twenty shillings in all, or one pound.[1] This made his purchase easier than in the case of the more respectable three-decker, the novel in three volumes which dominated the book market during some seventy years, that is, throughout Queen Victoria's reign, with the support of the circulating libraries and of the magazine editors. The total price of the nineteen/twenty monthly parts was substantially lower than that of a novel in three volumes (which would be sold at half a guinea per

volume, or a guinea and a half – that is 31s 6d – for the set, so that the novel in parts was more than a third cheaper). Besides, the buyer of the novel in parts was more assured of getting his full money's worth of printed matter. Publishers of three-deckers would invariably sell you three volumes, but the size and typography varied considerably. And, above all, the fact that the twenty shillings would be staggered over a period of a year and a half made a real difference.

The documents available for the textual study of a Dickens novel published under such circumstances usually comprise: the complete manuscript, one or more sets of galley-proofs, the text as printed in nineteen monthly parts, and the parts later bound into one volume (in which form the text is normally identical with that of the separate parts); three other editions published in Dickens's lifetime – the Cheap, the Library and the Charles Dickens editions – described below.

For novels of later date than *Chuzzlewit*, there exists in addition one earlier stage, Dickens's working notes or number-plans or, as he came to call them himself, 'mems' (that is, memoranda, what he must bear in mind while writing his successive chapters). These 'mems' have been described and discussed.[2] Most of them have by now been published in their entirety as part of the apparatus of critical editions.[3]

No such helps to writing seem to have been used, or felt by Dickens to be necessary, in the early years of his career. None, at any rate, have been preserved. And it appears that his method originally consisted of spending some time in mental effort before he put pen to paper. What he called 'imaging forth' or 'thinking out' was thus a preliminary stage to be gone through.[4] After which Dickens could at once proceed to the actual writing of his novel in a form which was as a rule very nearly definitive; he did not allow himself much time for revision and improvement of his manuscript, which he never treated as a rough draft and of which he never made a fair copy.

The first appearance in a Dickens manuscript of anything resembling the systematic 'mems' of later years dates back to *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840). The novelist's notes in preparation for that story do not cover anything earlier than chapter LXV and consist only of a belated effort to disentangle the family history of Little Nell's grandfather, and of lists of characters and incidents jotted down in preparation for the end of the book.[5] Nothing of the kind subsists with the manuscript of *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), and there is little reason to suspect that in that single case 'mems' were used and then destroyed.

The first novel for which a complete set of 'mems' have been preserved is *Chuzzlewit*'s immediate successor, *Dombey and Son* (and from that point of view, again, *Martin Chuzzlewit* marks a transition or the end of a phase, the more or less happy-go-lucky phase of easy writing and flowing inspiration). The manuscript of *Chuzzlewit* itself contains only two sheets of crude 'mems' concerning numbers IV and V (chapters IX–XV).[6] There is no evidence that other sheets of 'mems' for *Chuzzlewit* ever existed, though it is not impossible, or even improbable, that they did. However, a letter Dickens wrote to his friend John Forster (10 November 1843), when he was at work on chapters XXX–XXXII, shows that his approach to the problems of literary composition still varied. To Forster he said on that occasion: 'I have been all day in *Chuzzlewit* agonies – conceiving only. I hope to bring forth to-morrow.'[7] *Martin Chuzzlewit* thus appears to have been prepared in part by the old method of hard thinking, in part by the new method of writing guidelines.[8]

The *Chuzzlewit* manuscript has one unusual characteristic: it contains a sizeable rejected fragment of chapter VI; nearly ten pages, close to the beginning of that chapter, were devoted to a quarrel between Charity Pecksniff and her sister, and their reconcilement through the good offices of their father and at the expense of Tom Pinch.[9] This passage was not salvaged for future use – as might have been done easily. It was sacrificed bodily and finally.

After the first edition in one volume, brought out by Chapman & Hall in 1844, with a short preface dated 25 June 1844 and a respectful dedication to Miss Burdett-Coutts, *Martin Chuzzlewit* was of course reprinted many times during its author's lifetime.

As will appear later, the novel had met with disappointing sales in monthly numbers, averaging 20,000 and never exceeding 23,000 parts per month, instead of the 40,000 to 70,000 for some of the previous works. Even such relatively low figures placed Dickens far ahead of all his serious competitors, but they created severe financial problems as well as friction between him and his publishers.[10] These disappointments were to exert considerable influence over Dickens's career. For instance, they encouraged him to write his 'Christmas Books', beginning with *A Christmas Carol* in 1843. That, in its turn, though remarkably popular, fast-selling, critically acclaimed and taken to the nation's heart, had failed to restore Dickens's solvency or to relieve him from the burden of his debts. This led him to move away from the friendly and accommodating publishers of his first books,

Chapman & Hall. His characteristically bold notion was, not to shift from one existing firm to another, but to create his own publisher or, more precisely, to set up Chapman & Hall's printers, Bradbury & Evans, as independent publishers. Because they were inexperienced and ill-equipped, Bradbury & Evans were understandably reluctant and they needed much goading. But goading was something that Dickens could and did provide, being himself urged by a mixture of business flair and emotional excitement. In the event, Bradbury & Evans did become publishers of books and journals, and were to be the publishers of Dickens's novels and magazines for some fifteen years, until another quarrel, in the late 1850s, though not connected with commercial interests, made the pendulum swing back and caused Dickens to return to Chapman & Hall for the remainder of his life.

The first edition of *Martin Chuzzlewit* in book form, brought out in 1844 under Chapman & Hall's imprint, eventually sold at least as well as Dickens's other novels.[11] It was kept constantly in print. The novel was included in the Cheap Edition in 1849, with a new preface dated November 1849. The Cheap Edition sold in three forms: as thirty-two weekly parts, as eight monthly parts, and as one volume. In 1858, *Chuzzlewit* appeared in two volumes in the Library Edition (which never quite took off) and finally, in 1867, in one volume again, as part of the Charles Dickens Edition, with a revised, undated preface by the author.[12] Besides, all post-1868 editions of both *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* include a 'Postscript' dated May 1868 and paying a tribute to the improvements the novelist had observed in America in the course of his second visit there.[13]

It is out of the question to go into the complete and detailed textual history of *Martin Chuzzlewit* here. That is the proper business of textual editors. The work has been done by Margaret Cardwell for the Clarendon Dickens, under the general editorship of Kathleen Tillotson and James Kinsley. The volume came out at the very end of 1982, just in time to become our edition of reference and to allow me to print in this place a summary of its characteristics.

Earlier and more amateurish sampling of the two most textually relevant versions of the novel – the first edition of 1844 and the Charles Dickens Edition of 1867 – had yielded unsensational but valuable results. The two editions had been compared with each other and with later reprints such as the Oxford Illustrated Dickens *Chuzzlewit* of 1951 (edited by Geoffrey Russell) and the Penguin English Library volume of 1968 (edited by P. N. Furbank). Writing