



BY DOUGLAS SLADEN.

THERE stands at the corner of the Marylebone Road, and the quaint winding old street known as High Street, Marylebone, what is probably the smallest terrace in England—Devonshire Terrace. It consists of three houses only, and one of these is notable as having been for ten years the home of Charles

Dickens, in which he wrote a large portion of "The Old Curiosity Shop"; "Barnaby Rudge," "A Christmas Carol," "American Notes," "Martin Chuzzlewit," "The Cricket on the Hearth," "The Battle of Life," "Dombey and Son," "The Haunted Man," and "David Copperfield."

The melancholy event of a few months ago has drawn attention to its second claim to



From a photo by

[Alfred Ellis.

THE GARDEN VIEW OF NO. 1 DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, WHERE DICKENS AND DU MAURIER LIVED,

interest, in that it was the first English home which received George Du Maurier. He was brought here when only five years old by his father, who enjoyed what seems to us a curious privilege. Even so late as his day glass-blowing in France was a profession confined to gentlemen of birth, who, I believe, practised it by royal patent only. Odd as it may seem to us now, the one who recently passed away with "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends," and prosperity beyond the dreams of avarice, lived there before the greatest of all humorous novelists,

to the clever picture in 1894 illustrating "A Certain Condescension in Foreigners." And the last autograph was reproduced from the sketch in *Punch* for September 26, 1896, which has the melancholy interest of being the last contribution by George Du Maurier published before his death. The title of the drawing was "Two Sides to a Question," and the legend ran as follows:—

"O Flora, let us be man and wife. You at least understand me—the only woman who ever did!"

"Oh yes, I understand *you* well enough,

Du Maurier

1890.

Du Maurier

1892.

Du Maurier

1892.

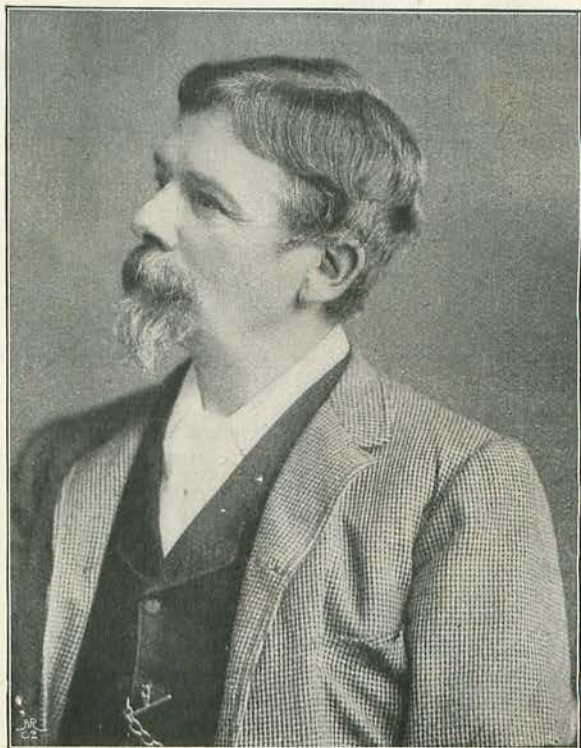
Du Maurier

1894.

Du Maurier

Sept. 26,
1896.

SIGNATURES BY GEORGE DU MAURIER
IN "PUNCH."



From a photo by]

[W. & D. Downey.

THE LATE GEORGE DU MAURIER.

and yet Dickens died twenty years before Du Maurier began to write.

Going back no farther than the nineties an extraordinary variety of signatures may be gleaned from the hundreds of pictures by Du Maurier in *Punch*. I have selected five at random. The first was attached to a sketch published in 1890. The second and the third, though differing so noticeably, appeared in the same issue in 1892, one being appended to a sketch in that memorable series, "Things One would rather have Left Unsaid." The fourth belongs

Sir Algernon. But how about your ever being able to understand *me*?"

Dickens was twenty-seven years old when, in the year 1839, he transferred his household gods from Doughty Street to Devonshire Terrace. When he had been living in Devonshire Terrace for five years, and was going to live there five years more, his appearance was thus described by Richard Hengist Horne, one of the brilliant little circle—Forster, Maclise, Macready, Tom Hood, Clarkson Stansfield, George Cattermole, George Cruikshank, Sir Edwin

Landseer, Harrison Ainsworth, the Tal-fours, and Bulwer Lytton—who surrounded Dickens at Devonshire Terrace. Horne, the author of the line "Tis always daylight somewhere in the world," and of the once famous epic "Orion," which he dedicated to the British nation, and published at a farthing as their estimation of the value of poetry, describes Dickens thus :—

DICKENS AS HE WAS AT DEVONSHIRE
TERRACE.

"Mr. Dickens is in private very much

His sympathies are of the broadest, and his literary tastes appreciate all excellence. He is a great admirer of the poetry of Tennyson. Mr. Dickens has singular personal activity and is fond of games of practical skill. He is also a great walker, and very much given to dancing "Sir Roger de Coverley." In private the general impression of him is that of a first-rate practical intellect, with no nonsense about him. Seldom, if ever, has any man been more beloved by contemporary authors and by the public of his time."

At the close of his Devonshire Terrace tenancy Mrs. Lippincott (Grace Greenwood),



From a photo by]

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE.

[Alfred Ellis.

what might be expected from his works—by no means an invariable coincidence. He talks much or little according to his sympathies. His conversation is genial. He hates argument—in fact he is unable to argue—a common case with impulsive characters who see the whole and feel it crowding and struggling at once for immediate utterance. He never talks for effect but for the truth, or for the fun of the thing. He tells a story admirably, and generally with humorous exaggerations.

an old American lady, who is, I believe, still alive, described him as—

"Rather slight, with a symmetrical head spiritedly borne, and eyes beaming alike with genius and humour. Yet for all the power and beauty of these eyes their changes seemed to me to be from light to light. I saw in them no profound pathetic depths, and there was around them no tragic shadowing. But I was foolish to look for these on such an occasion, when they were very properly left in the author's study with pens,

ink and blotting-paper, and the last written pages of 'Bleak House.' "

In Dickens' day the house was known as No. 1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate. It is now known as No. 1 Devonshire Terrace, Portland Place, not, as might be supposed, to gratify aristocratic leanings on the part of its two householders—No. 2 is empty—but because Portland Place, being scheduled as W., has more postal deliveries than York Gate, which is scheduled as N.W. Dickens used to laugh at himself because he lived at No. 1—which looked such a much larger house than it was—instead of at No. 2, which was such a much larger house than it looked.

There has been a good deal of passing allusion to the famous old house in the papers lately, but as far as I can make out none of the writers have had the privilege of going inside it. I myself, as a friend of the owner, have long been familiar with it, and have been encouraged rather than discouraged by these brief allusions to write this article, because I thought that they have probably only whetted the public appetite to hear something fresh about the house, on the principle that most river fish will take a bait more easily in a hole which has been 'fed.'

The writers are in error in supposing that the building operations recently undertaken were needed for repairs. The house was built with particular solidity; its walls are so strong that they were able to stand the addition of what practically forms a couple of extra stories without any strengthening being done to them. The owner is adding to the house simply because it is too small for him; for

he devotes all the ground floor, except the hall and a couple of rooms in the basement, to law offices, whereas Dickens used the whole of it as a dwelling-house. Apprehensions have been felt in a good many quarters that the extensions would rob the old house of its characteristics, but this is not the case. The owner, at a very large outlay, has, as it were, done his raising of the house, not at the top, but halfway up above the first story. One particular feature, for instance, was the curious way in which the roof, a sort of mansard, did not extend to the double bow-window, but left a broad double balcony. This feature has been faithfully preserved, though it is now a story higher in the air than it was in Dickens' day. Even in the upper part of the interior things are, as far as possible, just carried one story up. For example, the barred gate which blocked the staircase up from floor to ceiling, and which tradition says was kept locked to keep the young Dickenses from trooping downstairs and invading their father when he was at work, is to stand exactly over its old site.



From a photo by]

[Russell.

THE HOUSE IN OXFORD SQUARE WHERE GEORGE DU MAURIER DIED.

Dickens was very autocratic about his work. A friend of Tom Taylor's wrote to him of Dickens at Devonshire Terrace:—

DICKENS' RULES OF WORK AT DEVONSHIRE TERRACE.

"His hours and days were spent by rule. He rose at a certain time, he retired at another, and though no precisian it was not often that his arrangements varied. His hours for writing were between breakfast and

luncheon, and when there was any work to be done no temptation was sufficiently strong to cause it to be neglected. This order and regularity followed him through the day. His mind was essentially methodical, and in his long walks, in his recreations, in his labour, he was governed by rules laid down for himself, rules well studied beforehand and rarely departed from. The so-called men of business—the people whose own exclusive devotion to the science of profit and loss makes them regard doubtfully all to whom that same science is not the main object in life—would have been delighted and amazed at this side of Dickens' character."

The solicitor's practice, which necessitated the enlargement of the house, is a very old-established one. In Dickens' time it was at No. 2, and there it was kept up by its owner, Mr. Sharp, till 1854. Mr. Sharp having no children, and having amassed a sufficient fortune, said to a favourite clerk named Indermaur, "I don't want to leave my house, but if you care to take my neighbour Dickens' old house you can have all my papers and the use of the name of the firm." Mrs. Sharp lived on at No. 2 until the day of her death, five-and-twenty years afterwards. Mr. Indermaur has been long since dead and his practice sold, but it is still carried on in Dickens' house, and the office of the head of the firm is in the actual room which Dickens used as his study at Devonshire Terrace, and where he first indulged his passion for giving the private theatricals that were such a feature at Tavistock House, to which he went when he left Devonshire Terrace. The fact that an author was willing to give up his study for the theatricals speaks volumes for his passion. It was adapted for the purpose by having columns at each side where the room

narrows. These columns, which still exist, stood on each side of the drop scene. The curtain has been replaced by a permanent screen, to divide the office into two, and there is an excrescence obscuring one of the pillars which was not there in Dickens' time, but is the result of enlarging the clerks' office. The columns and the locked staircase gate are the most striking features which have been preserved of Dickens' private arrangements.



MACLISE'S APOTHEOSIS ON THE DEATH OF GRIP, THE RAVEN.

(Reproduced by kind permission of Messrs. Chapman & Hall.)

Formerly there was an old stump in the garden, close to the wall which divides it from the Marylebone Road, opposite the window of Dickens' study, which was the westernmost of the great bay-windowed rooms on the ground floor. Into this was driven, a little above the ground, an iron bar, about three feet long and as thick as a man's wrist, which was "Grip's" favourite perch—Grip, the raven of "Barnaby Rudge," having been an actual pet of the novelist's. The stump

has gone, but the bar is preserved. The death of Grip at Devonshire Terrace is thus described by Forster in his "Life of Dickens":—

THE DEATH OF GRIP, THE RAVEN, AT
DEVONSHIRE TERRACE.

"Unable from the state of his feelings to write two letters, he sent the narrative to Maclise, under an enormous black seal, for transmission to me, and thus it befell that this fortunate bird receives a double passport to fame, so great a humorist having celebrated his farewell to the present world, and so great a painter his welcome to another.



MACLISE'S PORTRAIT OF DICKENS IN 1839.

(Reproduced by kind permission of Messrs. Chapman & Hall.)

"'You will be greatly shocked' (the letter is dated Friday evening, March 12, 1841) 'and grieved to hear that the raven is no more. He expired to-day at a few minutes after twelve o'clock at noon. He had been ailing for a few days, but we anticipated no serious result, conjecturing that a portion of the white paint he swallowed last summer might be lingering about his vitals without having any serious effect upon his constitution. Yesterday afternoon he was taken so much worse that I sent an express for the medical gentleman (Mr. Herring), who promptly attended and administered a powerful dose of castor oil. . . . He partook plenti-

fully of some warm gruel, the flavour of which he appeared to relish. Towards eleven o'clock he was so much worse that it was found necessary to muffle the stable knocker. At half-past, or thereabouts, he was heard talking to himself about the horse and Topping's family, and to add some incoherent expressions which are supposed to have been either a foreboding of his approaching dissolution or some wishes relative to the disposal of his little property, consisting chiefly of halfpence which he had buried in different parts of the garden. On the clock striking twelve he appeared slightly agitated, but he soon recovered, walked twice or thrice along the coach-house, stopped to bark, staggered, exclaimed 'Halloa, old girl!' (his favourite expression), and died.

"'He behaved throughout with a decent fortitude, equanimity and self-possession which cannot be too much admired. I deeply regret that, being in ignorance of his danger, I did not attend to receive his last instructions. Something remarkable about his eyes occasioned Topping to run for the doctor at twelve. When they returned together our friend was gone. It was the medical gentleman who informed me of his decease. He did it with great caution and delicacy, preparing me by the remark that "a jolly queer start had taken place"; but the shock was very great notwithstanding. I am not wholly free from suspicions of poison. A malicious butcher has been heard to say that he would "do" for him; his plea was that he would not be molested in taking orders down the mews by any bird that wore a tail. Other persons have also been heard to threaten; among others, Charles Knight, who has just started a weekly publication, price fourpence, "Barnaby" being, as you know, threepence. I have directed a post-mortem examination, and the body has been removed to Mr. Herring's school of anatomy for that purpose.

"'I could wish, if you can take the trouble, that you could inclose this to Forster immediately after you have read it. I cannot discharge the painful task of communication more than once. Were they ravens who took manna to somebody in the wilderness? At times I hope they were, and at others I fear they were not, or they would certainly have stolen it by the way. In profound sorrow I am ever your bereaved friend,

C. D.

"'Kate is as well as can be expected, but terribly low as you may suppose. The

children seem rather glad of it. He bit their ankles. But that was play.'

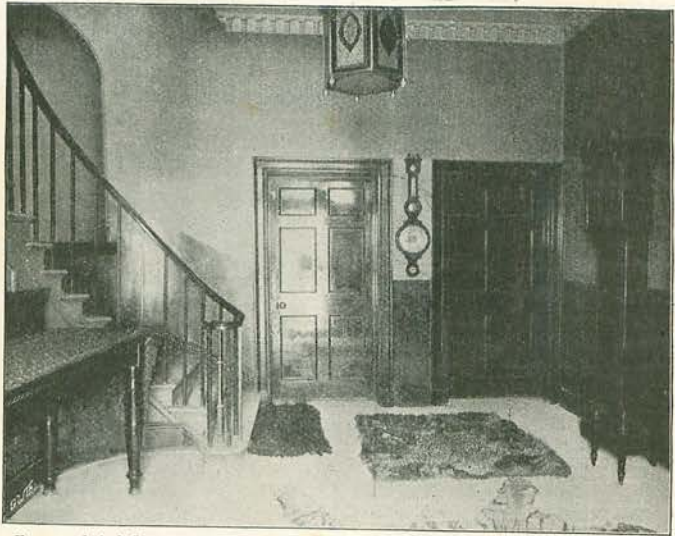
"Maclise's covering letter was an apotheosis, to be rendered only in facsimile. In what way the loss was replaced, so that Barnaby should have the fruit of continued study of the habits of the family of birds which Grip had so nobly represented, Dickens has told in the preface to the story; and another older and larger Grip, obtained through Mr. Smithson, was installed in the stable almost before the stuffed remains of his honoured predecessor had been sent home in a glass case, by way of ornament to his master's study."

The house, which stands in a very large garden enclosed by a high thick wall, like the garden of a Breton château, with the Marylebone Church peeping over its western side, is quite an imposing one to look at, covering a good deal more ground, and that exclusive of the garden, than most of the houses in Queen's Gate. In Dickens' day the garden contained, beside the stump of the tree alluded to above, a quantity of rose-trees and little flower-beds, the débris of which lingered on until the time of the present owner, who laid down the trim lawn whose stretch of turf is such an ornament to the garden front, which is the real front of the house. But as Dickens' witticism quoted above indicates, it is not so large in the matter of rooms as it looks, a great deal of space being wasted (most profitably) on the hall and landings and cupboards.

The hall, which is roughly circular, a handsome chamber with a floor of broad stone flags, has a staircase with a well, like so many of the good old Georgian houses in Mayfair, and the modern-looking coloured glass in the fanlight is said to have been there in Dickens' time.

Prominent features of the house—not in any way due to Dickens, but to the fact that the builder was the agent and architect of the estate and (to use the vulgar expression) knew "what was what"—are the noble double bay-windows which run from the basement to the balcony in front of the mansard roof already alluded to. They have

very bold curves and project a long way out, giving a stately appearance to all the rooms on the north side. The boldness of these bow-windows and the retreatingness of the roof give the house an appearance which would enable the thousands of Dickens' readers all over the world, who only know it from books, to recognise it at a glance if they were passing on an omnibus along the Marylebone Road, without any idea of its presence in that locality. They are separated from the road by the high-walled garden, which contains not only one full-sized tennis-court, but at a squeeze could almost take in two. Another feature of the house, by which it could easily be recognised from books, is undergoing slight alteration.



From a photo by]

[Alfred Ellis.

THE HALL AT DEVONSHIRE TERRACE.

I refer to the massive but not very beautiful rustica doorway opening on to a little flagged court separated from the High Street by iron railings, through which access has hitherto been gained to both house and office. A cross wall has now been built to separate these two; and because the house is naturally cold from the flagged floor of the hall, and from the fact that its front door is so large and opens due east, there is just a possibility of the owner adding a glass porch to keep the house warmer in winter. If he does he will take care that the features of the doorway through which so many great men have passed to hobnob with Dickens in his splendid prime are not in any way obscured. No injury will happen to the famous old house in his time; the Dickens

tradition is a creed with him, and he has excellent taste and judgment. The house has an unusually fine and well-lighted basement, and the room on the first floor, which Dickens used as the chief bedroom, and the present owner uses as his drawing-room, contained one of the large alcoves still used for beds in Breton houses. This alcove has been removed to enlarge the room, and a new alcove formed by taking in one of the numerous pleasant but extravagant landings.

The outside staircase leading down from the dining-room (also a bedroom in Dickens' time)—which is on the first floor, above a singularly lofty ground floor—to the garden, forms a picturesque feature of the exterior, but was not there in Dickens' time. There was of course no necessity for it, as there were only bedrooms above the ground floor.

I have described the house at considerable length because people will be interested to know how much of the

enlarged house belongs to the Dickens period.

Of his work at Devonshire Terrace some very interesting details have been preserved. We know, for instance, from a writer in some weekly journal, quoted by Tom Taylor, that "Martin Chuzzlewit" at all events developed itself like a series of articles.

THE WAY IN WHICH "MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT"
WAS WRITTEN AT DEVONSHIRE
TERRACE.

"I remember well one evening spent with him by appointment, not wasted by intrusion, when I found him, according to his own phrase, 'picking up the threads of "Martin Chuzzlewit"' from the printed sheets of the half volume that lay before him. This

accounts for the seeming incompleteness of some of his plots; in others the design was too strong, and sure to be influenced by any outer consideration. He was only confirmed and invigorated by the growing applause, and marched on like a successful general, with each victory made easier by the preceding one."

Dickens and his staff on "Household Words," which he founded in his last days in Devonshire Terrace, got to use blue ink instead of black, because he hated to have to blot his manuscripts while he was writing, and when he found that a certain kind of blue ink dried almost the moment that it left the pen he used that kind for ever after. It

is said that it was at Devonshire Terrace that he contracted the trick which gave his characters such uniquely appropriate names. He did this by carrying a notebook in which he took down, for copying into a small ledger, every striking name he saw. From these he would join part of



CHARLES DICKENS AS "CAPTAIN BOBADIL."
(From the picture by C. R. Leslie, R.A.)

one name to part of another to form with the mixture a sound which expressed the character.

In conclusion, it is not difficult to understand why Dickens had such a warm affection for his Devonshire Terrace home. He was passionately fond of long walks, and it lies right at the gate of Regent's Park, still handy for excursions into the country beyond. And it was essentially a gentleman's house. I am not insinuating that Dickens was a snob, but he had an eagle eye for shams, and a most appreciative regard for that which was genuine and solid, and dignified and refined. And it would be difficult to find anywhere in London a house which more exactly answered to these requirements.