

'Christmas Carol,' one of the sweetest prose poems we ever read—written with a truly charitable purpose—the proceeds we believe being devoted to his suffering brethren, its author excelled himself, and left us the simplest and withal the most touching lesson that has been heard below since the angels sung 'Peace on earth and good will towards men.' It spoke genuine, kindly charity for the poor and suffering, and the effort had its reward in the plaudits of an answering multitude. It was worthy of the season, and can we give it greater praise? But his other Christmas stories 'The Cricket on the Hearth,' 'The Battle of Life,' 'The Haunted Man,' and several others, what shall we say of them? It is indeed rank heterodoxy to fly in the face of a world's opinion and condemn these as peevish, fantastic and unmeaning, but we think so and honestly declare our opinion. They were unworthy of the author of 'Nicholas Nickleby' and the 'Christmas Carol.' Wild unmeaning conceits, with here and there a beautiful thought, frequently a droll comicality, at which we were forced to laugh, though compelled to wade through so much that was tedious to obtain it. There are pages in many of Dickens' works that would even do discredit to the composition of a child and yet there are found learned and sensible men and women who will and do admire them. Taste we are aware cannot be controlled, but we think there should be some rules to guide the judgment of the wise and reflective. We think Dickens must be ashamed if he ever peruses his own works to think that he has imposed upon the public such columns of tiresome nonsense.

Martin Chuzzlewit, Dombey and Son and David Copperfield are all subject to the same censure. Written without any definite aim, mere caricatures in general of low life and broad vulgarisms, they required some bold stroke of genius to make them reflect credit on the pen of any author. Dickens was either not willing or unable to embellish them with the necessary intellect, and though each differs in plot from the next, in language, character and detail, one is but the copy of the other. Each has the same revolting scenes, the same dark, low, unscrupulous villains, the same simple and confiding men and women, the same wild plots, eccentric extravagance and improbable issues. We pass over 'Martin Chuzzlewit' not caring to chronicle our opinion of it, to the merits of 'Dombey and Son' the best of the three we have enumerated. Little Paul is a bright image—a forerunner of Mrs. Stowe's 'Eva,' one that we know exists but in the ideal, but which has power to charm us from its very purity and beauty. Walter and Florence are rather commonplace, but old Captain Cuttle is 'the Kohinoor' caricatured, a very jewel among men. It is long since we read the book, and our impressions of its scenes and characters are becoming faint, but we still remember the cold, stony Dombey, and the still more unnatural Edith. Carker, too, with his diabolical villany and horrible end, still make one shudder in recollection, while Toots and Miss Nipper, even in memory, make one laugh. Bunsby and his 'opinions' were perfect in their