

WILKINS MICAWBER.

AMONG the many charming writers of fiction, the name of Dickens stands pre-eminent on account of his sparkling humor. In none of his characters is this more faithfully embodied, than in the immortal Wilkins Micawber. From our first acquaintance in the counting-house of Murdstone and Grinby, he passes before us lightening up the gloomy shadows, through which we follow the checkered career of David Copperfield.

Micawber's personal appearance betokens what we are to expect in the man himself. He is sure to attract attention through several little peculiarities of dress, which are all his own. He is invariably clad in tights surmounted by an immense collar, which ever threatens his annihilation. An immaculate cravat encircles his throat, making a fitting background for a ruddy countenance. Then you must not fail to notice the single eyeglass screwed into his face, nor the cane which is always carried at such a genteel poise.

On addressing him, one of his most prominent traits manifests itself in his extreme verbosity. The most commonplace events are described in the most figurative language. The more unintelligible it may be to his hearers, the better suited it is to his fancy, even though he be compelled to descend to the ungarnished language of every-day life to make himself understood. We are always prepared for this fall by the explosive, "in short." The first intimation of this failing is when Micawber offers

his services as a guide through London. What can be more ridiculous than the lofty poetical flight essayed in the following passage, and the ignominious fall to unadorned prose? "Under the impression," said Mr. Micawber, "that your peregrinations in this metropolis have not as yet been extensive, and that you might have some difficulty in penetrating the arcana of the Modern Babylon in the direction of the City Road—in short," said Mr. Micawber in another burst of confidence, "that you might lose yourself—I shall be happy to call this evening and instal you in the knowledge of the nearest way."

Another marked peculiarity was his love of letter writing. On every conceivable pretext he wrote letters; and such letters. They contain the most over-wrought conceits, that ever emanated from the mind of man. In his writings he aspires to the sublime and in so doing, makes that proverbial step to the ridiculous. The crowning result of his epistolary powers was achieved in the document setting forth the true character of Uriah Heep. The introduction contains a sketch of the writer's troubles, which beset him in the forms of "Ignominy, Want, Despair, and Madness." Then follows an overwhelming array of charges against the accused, introduced by the formidable preliminaries; "To wit, in manner following, that is to say." Finally the author concludes with a magnificent peroration, of which the closing sentence is truly ludicrous. "Let it be in justice