

in securing a position as reporter on the staff of the *Morning Chronicle*, of London. His work required him to travel all over England, collecting items of news and writing up such incidents as are now telegraphed to the papers daily by local reporters. As there were no railroads at this time, he went by stage-coach from place to place, and in this way he mingled with the people and saw every phase of life. While thus engaged he began to contribute original papers to the *Monthly Magazine*. These first sketches brought him no income, but they enabled him to arrange with the editor of the *Evening Chronicle* to write literary articles for that paper, while reporting for the *Morning Chronicle*. His contributions to the *Evening Chronicle* were signed "Boz," and they were afterwards collected and published as *Sketches by Boz*. In March, 1836, the first number of *Pickwick Papers* appeared. These articles brought him fame and fortune, and he soon became the most popular writer of English fiction.

The events and surroundings of Dickens' own early life, the people he met, and the places he visited as a reporter, constantly appear in his novels and stories. Camden Town, for instance, the home of the Cratchits in the *Christmas Carol*, was his own home, their poverty his own poverty, and their Christmas dinner was just such a one as the Christmas dinners of his childhood.

The most striking characteristic of Dickens is the skill with which he seizes upon some peculiar trait or quality in one of his characters, exaggerates it, and keeps it always before his readers until all other traits and qualities are forgotten, and that character becomes the very personification of that one peculiar quality. This is called caricaturing,