

attention to the discourse of an argumentative tea-kettle and cricket ; all our sympathies being enlisted on the side of the cricket—the cheery little fairy of “ Dot’s ” hearthstone. Even an old mat becomes transformed into a thing of interest, when we are told that “ being too old for a *mat*, it had directed its industry into another channel and taken to tripping people up.” Such writing as that would have given the classics of Queen Anne’s time a fit,—ending possibly in the surrender of the ghost—but in Queen Victoria’s time, we not only endure such nonsense, but we love it (in Dickens), we put up with Dickens’ exaggerations, because they are not wilful, but rather the result of an over-rich fancy. If he has caricatured American spread-eagleism in “ General Choke,” he has burlesqued English brag in “ Podsnap,” and proved that for pure, unadulterated bombast the Englishman takes, not only the *cake* but the whole *bakery*. The truth of all this is an excuse for the slang, besides, the above assertion is not mine, I remember having heard a lecturer who hailed from *Boston* say that ;—said lecturer was of medium height, decidedly portly and undecidedly grey, spectacled as to eyes, and (will I say it ?) “ stiggins-like ” as to nose, he impressed me as being just the sort of person for the subject, but dear me, where am I ? I was speaking of Dickens’ exaggeration. This lecturer, by the way, did not think “ Do the boy’s Hall ” at all exaggerated, and even if it is a digression, I must put down here an anecdote of an impossible boy who, upon being asked to name the books of the Old Testament, answered : Genesis, Geometry, Numbers, Astronomy, Deuteronomy, Botany, Judges, Luke and Songs.” So there might be just such a boy in the wonderful school of Old Squeers. Another excuse for Dickens’ exaggeration may be found in his enthusiasm, which sometimes runs away with his judgment. Enthusiasm ! what would life be without it ? Saltless cold potato-ism. I think it is the vinegar and mustard of life. “ Hooroar ! ” for enthusiasm and enthusiasts, and down with the animated ciphers, who feel in exact measure, or in semi-tones ! But let me slide back to my first intent. Among the many truths Dickens teaches, none is more obvious than that there is something beautiful and something worthy of our kindly consideration underneath the most