

MR. WINKLE.



AMONG the three followers and would-be staunch friends of Mr. Pickwick, the one that attracts from readers the majority of notice, is undoubtedly Mr. Nathaniel Winkle. This personage, with the brilliant qualities which characterize him, can be ranked, without difficulty, among the best productions of Dickens' imaginative genius. Without this individual's invigorating presence, many chapters of *Pickwick Papers*, in which he appears, would inevitably fall into insignificance; and chapters are not few in which he figures as the hero.

The distinguishing peculiarities of this conspicuous character can be comprised in a very few words: *He could do anything*. This, you will admit, is an extraordinary summing up of a man's propensities and powers, but, in the present case, it is involving of all correctness. To the questions, "Mr. Winkle, can you do this? can you do that?" he always had the self-same answer, "Why, of course I can." Generally, through his would-be knowledge, he brings himself into aggravating scrapes, the effects of which, either physically or morally, last for a few subsequent weeks.

On one occasion, Mr. Pickwick and his three friends, contemplating a journey, hired a vehicle. It so happened, however, that said vehicle could accommodate only three persons. Therefore, an extra horse was hired, and Mr. Winkle was formally demanded if he could ride. This worthy had some doubts about his equestrian skill, for, as the reader may readily conceive, he had never been on horseback in his life. Not wishing, however, to pass as an ignoramus on this scale, he replied with great hardihood: "Certainly, I would enjoy it above all things." Thereupon he deliberately began to climb the horse on the wrong side, much to the amusement of the proximate postboys.

"T'other side sir, if you please," exclaimed the hostler.

When mounted, which position he reached with as much difficulty as he might have experienced in getting up the side of a first-rate man-of-war, he started off with his hat over his ears and shaking as if he would fall to pieces, from the violence of the exercise. As the party proceeded, Mr. Pickwick having dropped his whip, Mr.