

From the day the Jolly Pickwickians commenced their wanderings in search of adventure, and the delighted public had learned to expect, almost anything in the line of quaint humour from the original and irreverent "Comersal" to the last pen-stroke in "Edwin Drood," the popularity of Dickens was unquestioned.

Biographical details, in connection with a writer so generally known, are obviously unnecessary. Nevertheless with a reverence for *facts* worthy of the literal "grad grind," it may be well to touch upon a few details just now. We all know that Charles Dickens was born at Landport, a suburb of Portsmouth on the seventh of February 1812, and we all fear it is only too true, his father, John Dickens, was the exponent of that class of individuals whose principal object in life is to keep the generosity of friends in a healthy state of activity :—a class existing under protest and only consenting to exist at all on condition that they be allowed to breathe the transcendental atmosphere of poetical irresponsibility. Indeed, the father of Charles Dickens very likely is the prototype of the unsophisticated and *urbane* "Wilkins Micawber," the sanguinity of whose character enabled him to spend half his life in "waiting for something to turn up," and the other half in cultivating a tender, pathetic epistolary style, well-calculated to open the heart and purse of unsuspecting humanity. Poor "Mr. Jellyby's" sole claim to distinction, we must remember, was—in being the husband of the philanthropic "Mrs. Jellyby" So Mrs. Dickens seems to have courted celebrity—only as being the wife of the ostentatious Mr. D., and the possessor of a sample copy of the extraordinary, inverted church-steeple style of waist known as "wasp-like." It is doubtless to the poverty and general wretchedness of Dickens' early life, and to his familiarity with the shadowy side of London, that we are indebted for the most graphic description that has ever been given to the literary world. Possessed of an unusual faculty of observation, and a habit of noticing the most trifling objects of every-day life, nothing is deemed unworthy of consideration. Everything from a cob-web to a rusty nail becomes interesting when touched by his magic pen, but woe betide his imitators ! We wonder at his power when we find ourselves listening—almost against our will—with breathless