

similar pastime upon Cornhill nowadays, he would be promptly stopped by a policeman, and probably locked up; but Bob Cratchit is so potent a reality that no transitory policeman born of woman has power to check his happy outlawry and take him off that slide.

Surely here be truths sufficient to justify the making of this volume. Why should we differentiate between people who were once clay and are now dreams, and people who have never had to pass through that gross period of probation but have been dreams from the beginning? Many books have been written about London's associations with men and women of the more solid kind, who had to pay rent for their houses; I have written two myself; there have been books about Dickens's London and Thackeray's London, but I do not think there has been a book on a large scale devoted to London's associations with the imaginary folk of the novelists and dramatists—with those familiar citizens who are literally free of the city and live where they will in it unfretted by landlords or tax-collectors, and who having once walked into one or another of its streets through certain books are walking in it always for whoever actually knows London. For you know very little of London if you do not know more than you can see of it. So I hope to be forgiven for making this humble and perhaps inadequate