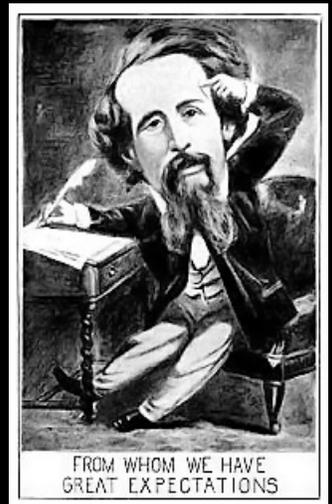


# A Tale of Two Desks



'I have often thought, that I should certainly have been as successful on the boards as I have been between them'

(Dickens, Letter to Forster, Dec 1844-Jan 1845)



was slowly opened, and the Dodge and  
Charles Dales entered and closed it behind  
them. "Where's the boy you young <sup>hounds</sup> ~~scoundrels~~?" said  
the furious Jew, rising with a menacing  
look "Where's the boy?"  
The <sup>young thieves</sup> ~~boys~~ regarded him, as if they were  
alarmed at his violence, and looked  
uneasily at each other, but made no  
reply. "What's become of the boy?" said  
the Jew, seizing the Dodge tightly by the  
arm, and threatening him with horrid  
imprecations "Speak out damn you,  
or I'll throttle you."  
The Jew looked so very much  
in earnest that Charles Dales who  
deemed it prudent <sup>in all cases</sup> to be on the safe  
side, and ~~thought it might~~ covered  
it by no means improbable that  
it might be his turn to be throttled  
second, dropped upon his knees and  
~~and~~ ~~what~~ raised a loud, well-  
sustained, and continuous wailing, something

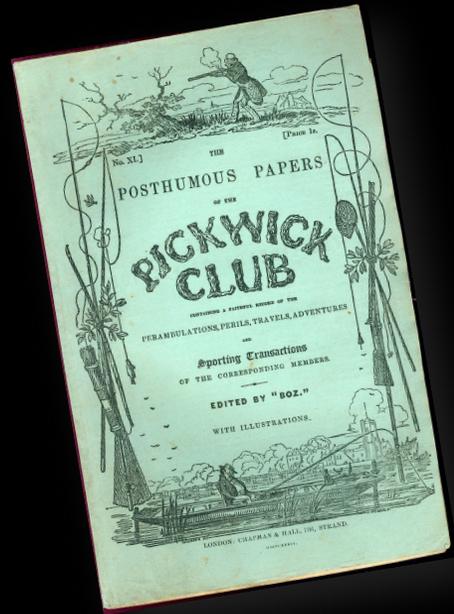




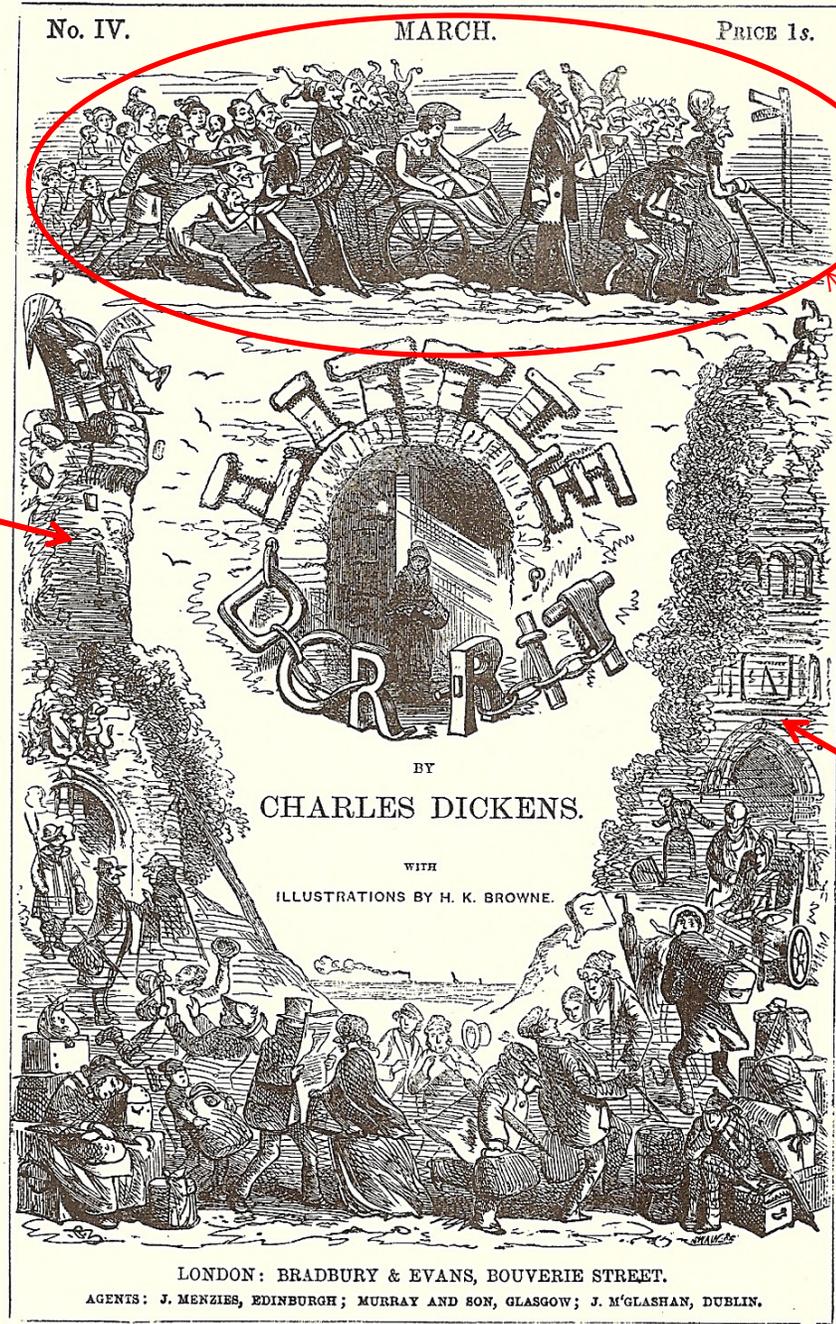
**Little Dorrit**  
Wrapper Design

State  
Institutions

Church  
Institutions



Monthly Wrapper  
for *Pickwick Papers*



Mag's Diversions:

<sup>of various diversions</sup>  
Being the personal history of  
<sup>David</sup> Mr Thomas Mag the younger,  
<sup>Copperfield</sup> of Blunderstone House.

Trotfield  
Trotbury  
Spangle

<sup>in that</sup>  
- And ~~and~~ it took the very large dimensions.  
and in short they all played mag's diversions.

David  
Nabam

Stone way  
Flower  
Brook  
Wale  
by  
fields

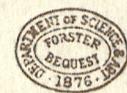
Wellbury  
Flowerbury  
Magbury  
Copperfield  
Copperstone  
Copperfield



Trial titles for David Copperfield

Let's see a glimpse  
The people living in the May.

Mr: Hardew  
Murderer, Murderer  
Murderer



The progress of his mother's second courtship  
Brooks of Sheffield  
- Gas W Peggotty

(Personal history and adventures of David Copperfield - No 1)

Chapter I.



I am born.  
Father dead - Transferred into idleness the household  
Young mother - Tendency towards melancholy and grief  
- Miss History - the old woman  
Why looking for you then?  
Diggory  
Ham Peggotty

Chapter II.

I observe.  
The things that come out of the mouth of his infamy are  
working back. - child at church  
The future father in law "at this moment I see him  
turn round in the garden with his damned black eyes" -

Chapter III.

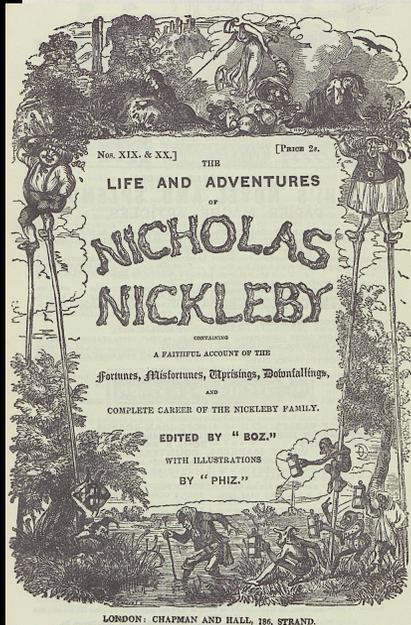
I have a change.  
The ~~best~~ stranded boat.  
- The life there.  
- comes home "father"  
- Black whiskers and black dog.

Number Plan for the opening 3 chapters of David Copperfield



feelings have prompted. As he has delivered himself with the freedom of intimacy and the cordiality of friendship, he will naturally look for the indulgence which those relations may claim; and when he bids his readers adieu, will hope, as well as feel, the regrets of an acquaintance, and the tenderness of a friend.”

With such feelings and such hopes the periodical essayist, the Author of these pages, now lays them before his readers in a completed form, flattering himself, like the writer just quoted, that on the first of next month they may miss his company at the accustomed time as something which used to be expected with pleasure; and think of the papers which on that day of so many past months they have read, as the correspondence of one who wished their happiness, and contributed to their amusement.



Final Monthly Number of *Nicholas Nickleby* (October 1839)

“The author of a periodical performance... commits to his readers the feelings of the day, in the language which those feelings have prompted. As he has delivered himself with the freedom of intimacy and the cordiality of friendship, he will naturally look for the indulgence which those relations may claim; and when he bids his readers adieu, will hope, as well as feel, the regrets of an acquaintance, and the tenderness of a friend.’

Henry Mackenzie, *The Lounger* 1785-7



Faithfully Yours  
Charles Dickens

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Charles Dickens, Preface to *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Frontispiece*

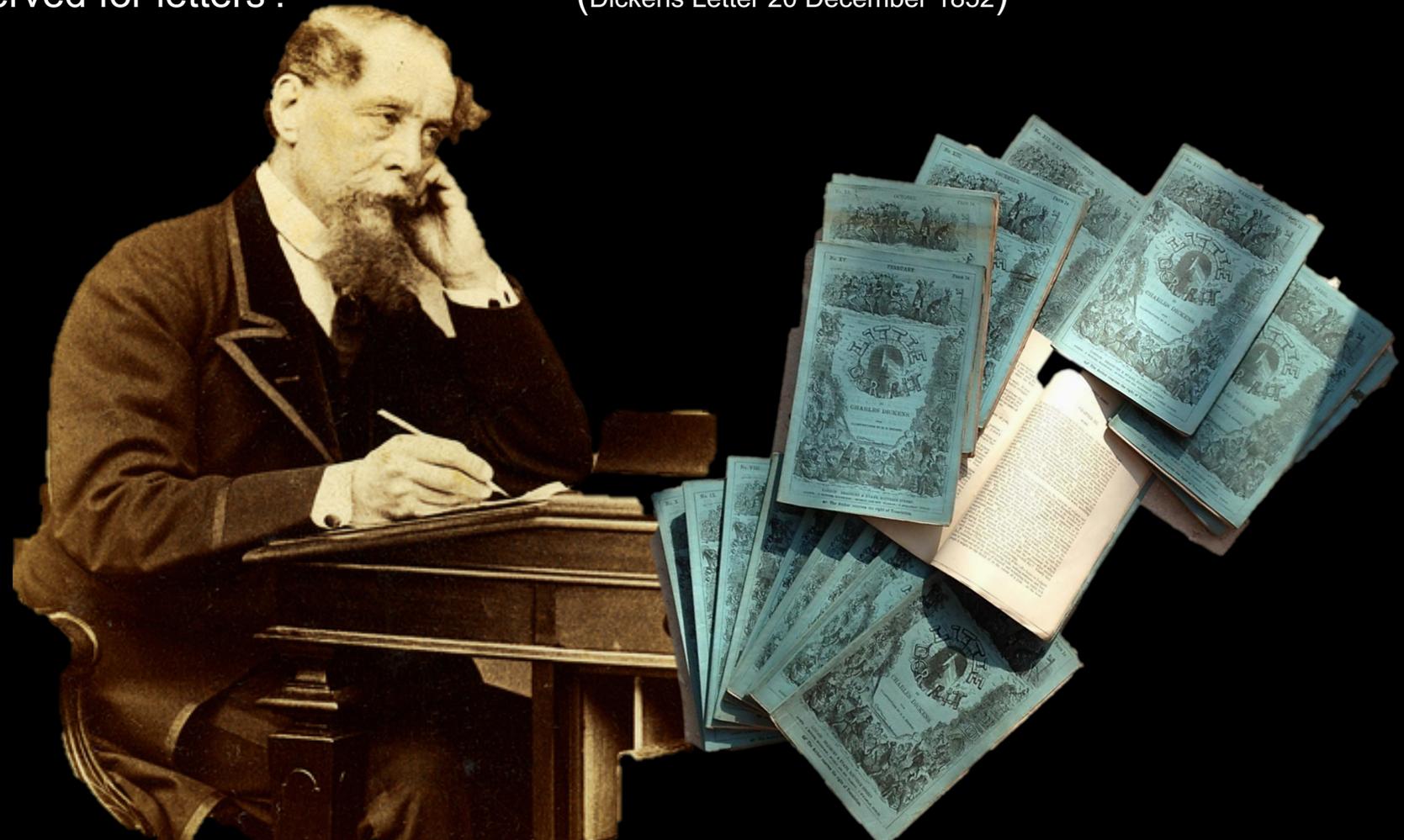
## Rapport with Public

‘I wish you would regard my Christmas Books, and Dombey's, and so forth,  
as letters to you...’

(Dickens Letter 27 November 1846)

‘I really think so often of my friends in writing my books, and have the happiness  
of knowing they think so much of reading them, that I have a sort of stupid sense  
as if they served for letters’.

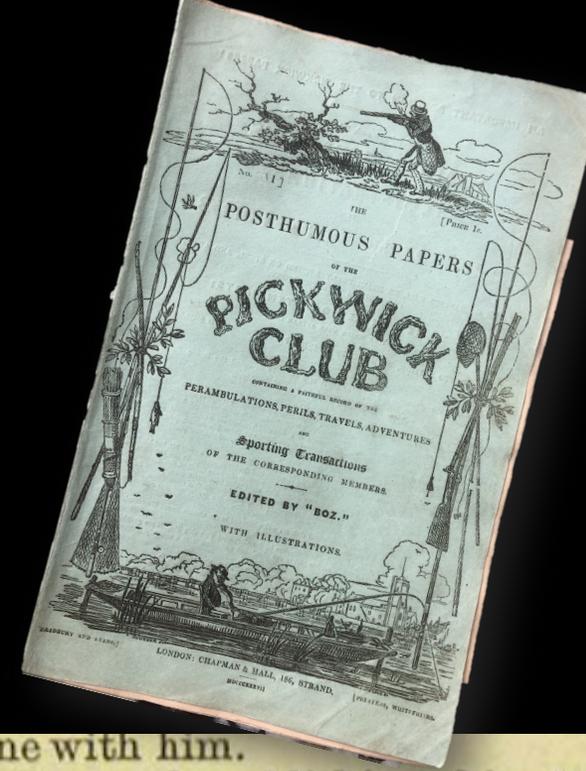
(Dickens Letter 20 December 1852)



“ That the said proposal has received the sanction and approval of this Association.

“ That the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club is therefore hereby constituted ; and that Samuel Pickwick, Esq. G.C. M.P.C., Tracy Tupman, Esq., M.P.C., Augustus Snodgrass, Esq., M.P.C., and Nathaniel Winkle, Esq., M.P.C., are hereby nominated and appointed members of the same : and that they be requested to forward, from time to time, authenticated accounts of their journeys and investigations ; of their observations of character and manners ; and of the whole of their adventures, together with all tales and papers, to which local scenery or associations may give rise, to the Pickwick Club, stationed in London.

“ That this association cordially recognises the principle of every member of the Corresponding Society defraying his own travelling expenses ; and that it sees no objection whatever to the members of the said society pursuing their inquiries for any length of time they please, upon the same terms.



*Pickwick Papers* (1836), Part I, p.2

‘The Late Charles Dickens’:  
Obituary, *Illustrated London News*,  
18 June 1870

alone with him.

His method of composing and publishing his tales in monthly parts, or sometimes in weekly parts, aided the experience of this immediate personal companionship between the writer and the reader. It was just as if we received a letter or a visit, at regular intervals, from a kindly observant gossip, who was in the habit of watching the domestic life of the Nicklebys or the Chuzzlewits, and who would let us know from time to time how they were going on. There was no assumption, in general, of having a complete and finished history to deliver ; he came at fixed periods merely to report what he had perceived since his last budget was opened for us. The course of his narrative seemed to run on, somehow, almost simultaneously with the real progress of events ; only keeping a little behind, so that he might have time to write down whatever happened, and to tell us. This periodical and piece-

## Immersion in Characters

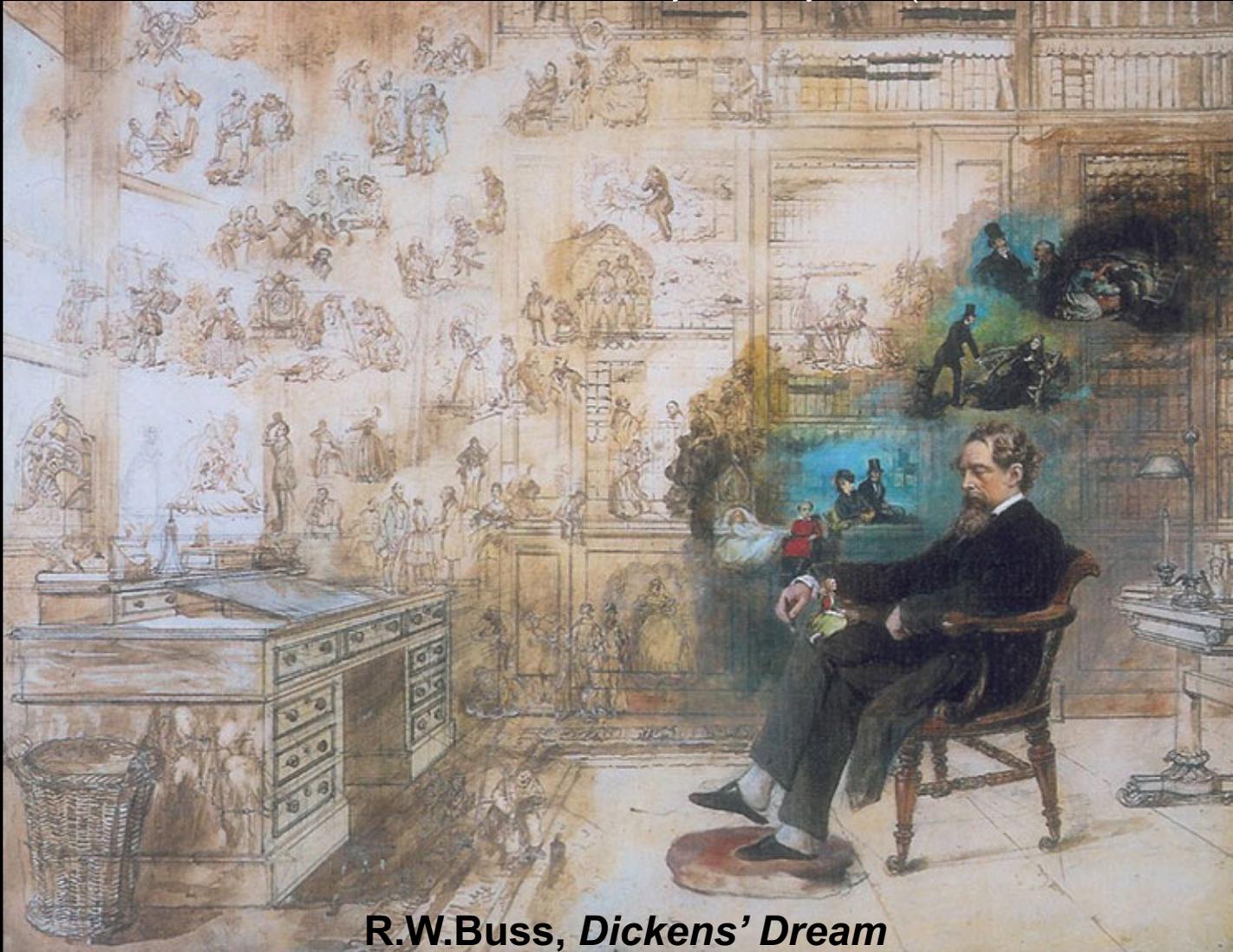


Dickens's eldest son Charley:  
"He lived, I am sure, two lives, one with us  
and one with his fictitious people, and I am  
equally certain that the children of his brain  
were much more real to him at times than we were"

(Charles Dickens Jr, 'Reminiscences of My Father', *Windsor Magazine* 1934)

## Immersion in Characters

'Dickens once declared to me that every word said by his characters was distinctly *heard* by him' (G.H.Lewes, *Fortnightly Review*, Feb 1872, xvii,)



**R.W.Buss, *Dickens' Dream***

'When ...I sit down to my book, some beneficent power shows it all to me, and tempts me to be interested, and I don't invent it – really do not – *but see it*, and write it down.'

(Letter to Forster, ?October 1841)

## Immersion in Characters

'He had the power of projecting himself into shapes and suggestions of his fancy which is one of the marvels of the creative imagination, and what he desired to express he became' (John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*)



Luke Fildes, 'Jasper's Sacrifices': Illustration to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870)

## Immersion in Characters



Augustus Egg, Dickens acting in the play *Used Up*

Dickens as Capt Bobadil, in Ben Jonson's *Everyman in his Humour* (1845)



Dickens as Wardour in *The Frozen Deep* (1857)



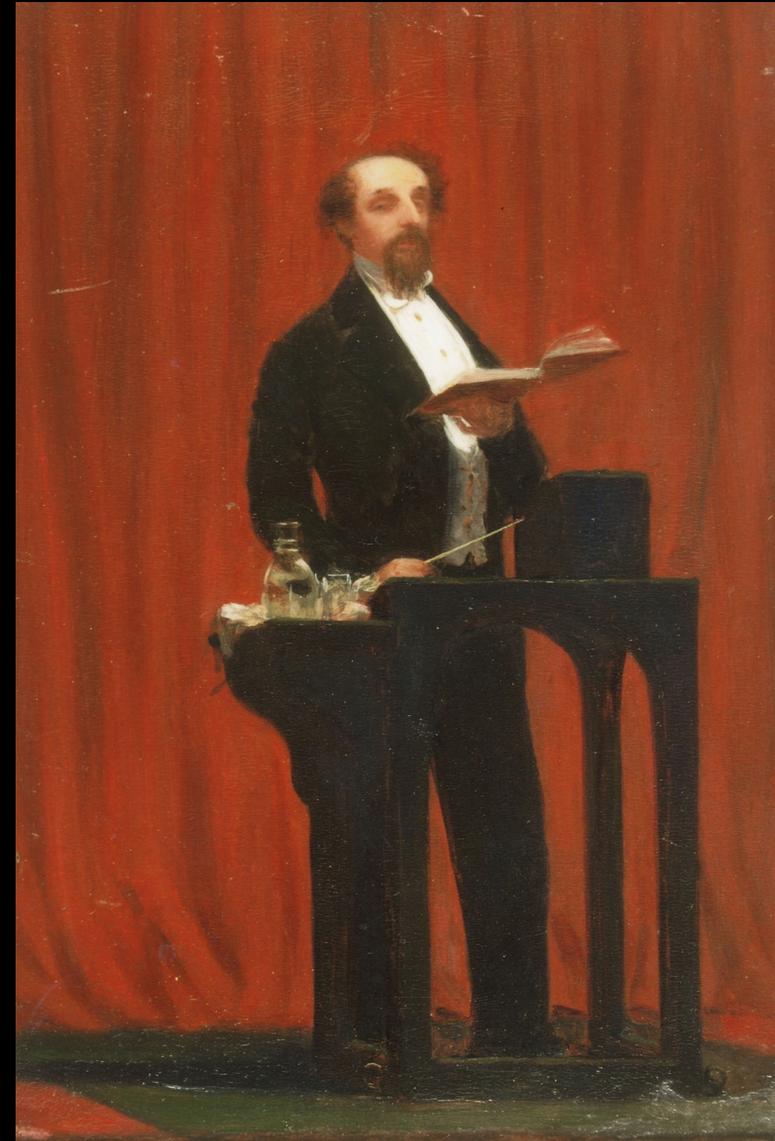
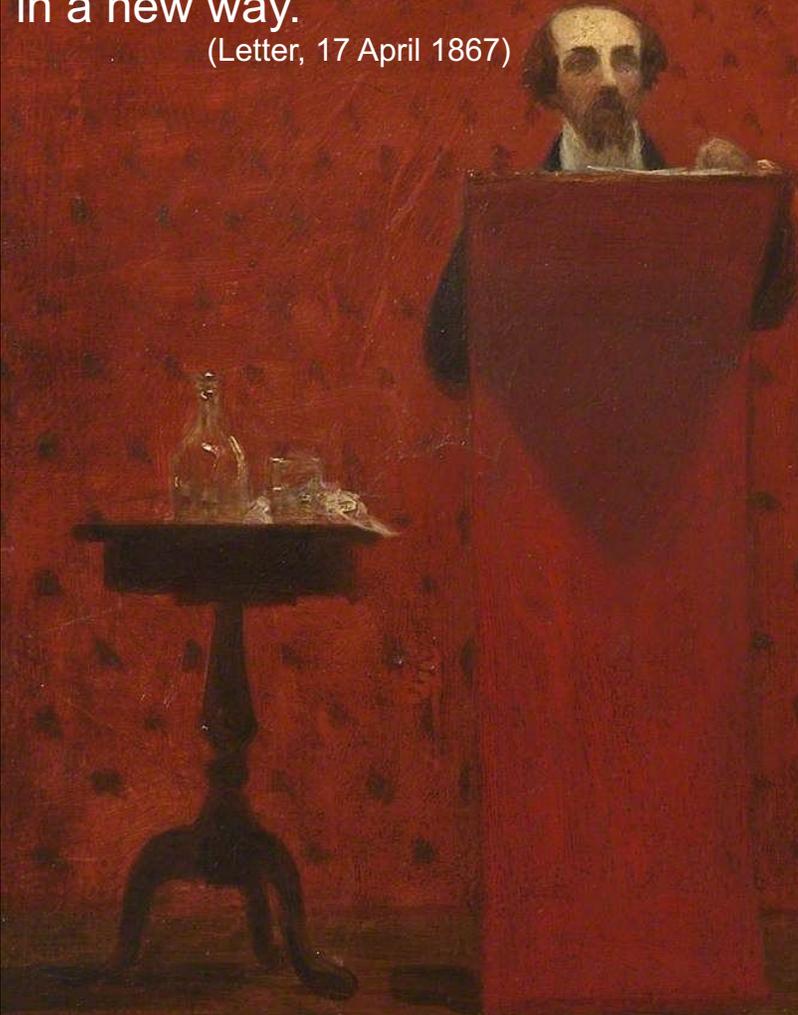
“As to the Play itself; when it is made as good as my care can make it, I derive a strange feeling out of it, like writing a book in company. A satisfaction of a most singular kind, which has no exact parallel in my life.”  
(Dickens, Letter 9/1/1857)

The Readings were to be, according to Dickens:  
'...a means of strengthening those relations – I may almost say of personal friendship – which it is my great privilege and pride, as it is my great responsibility, to hold with a multitude of persons who will never hear my voice nor see my face. Thus it is that I come, quite naturally, to be here among you at this time; and thus it is that I proceed to read this little book, quite as composedly as I might proceed to write it, or to publish it in any other way.' (Speech before 1st Reading for his own profit: St Martin's Hall, 29 April 1858)

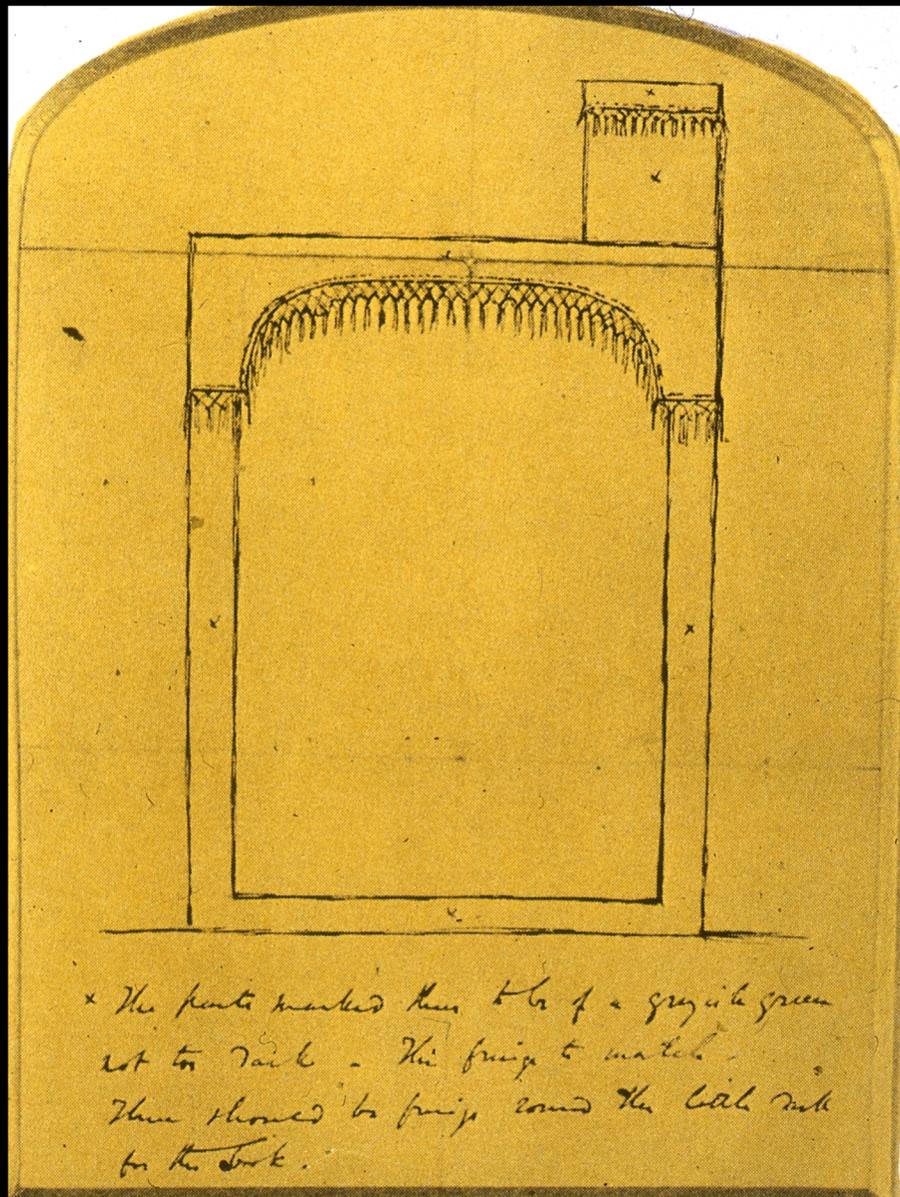


'When I first entered on this interpretation of myself...I was sustained by the hope that I could drop into some hearts, some new expression of the meaning of my books, that would touch them in a new way.'

(Letter, 17 April 1867)



Robert Hanna, Two Portraits of Dickens Reading (?1858)

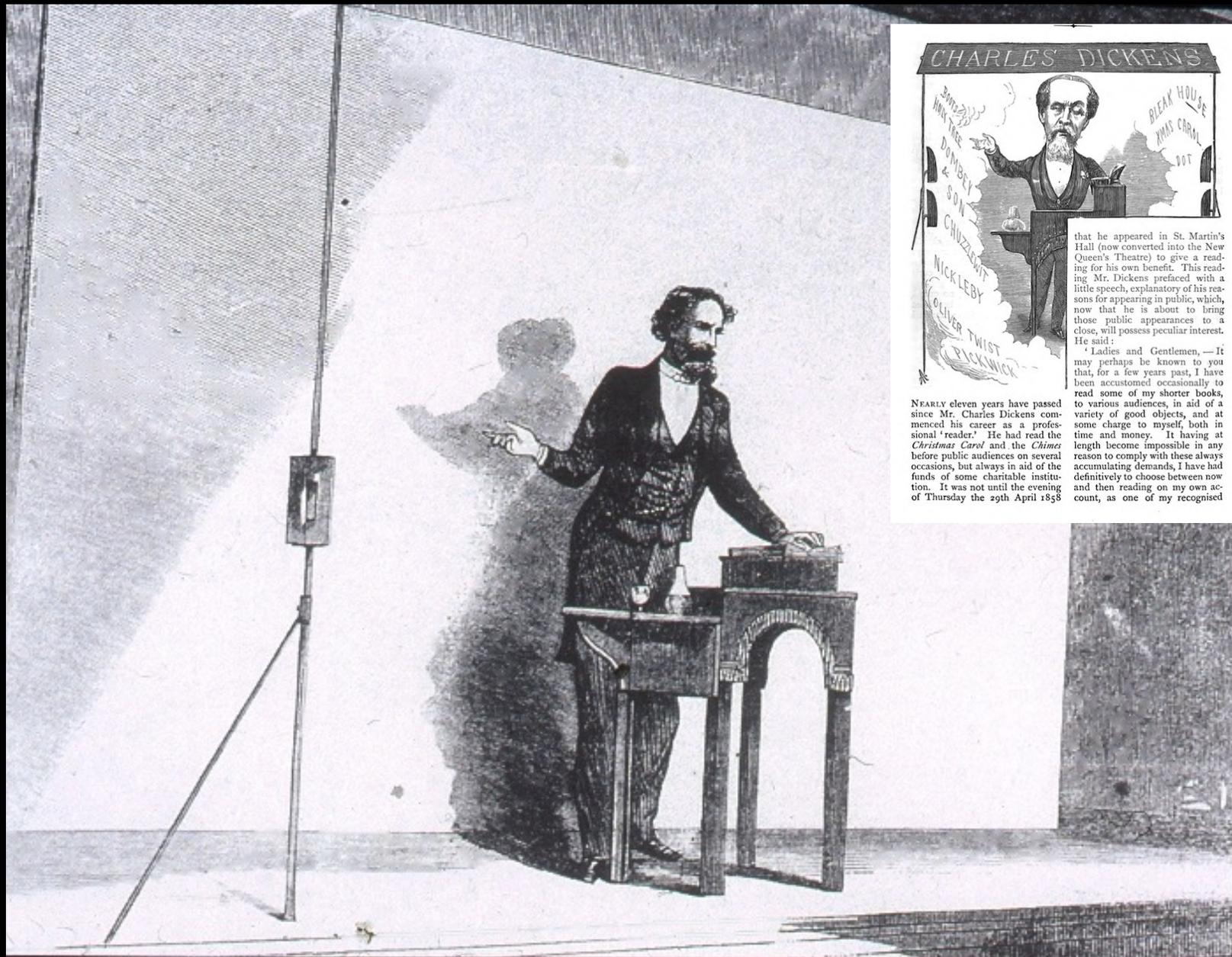


Dickens's design for his Reading Desk (?1858)

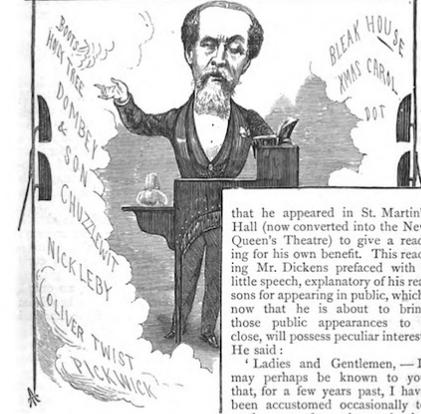


Dickens giving his last Reading: *Illustrated London News* 19 March 1870.

" X The parts marked thus to be of a greyish green not too dark. The fringe to match. There should be fringe round the little [rest] for the book."



CHARLES DICKENS



that he appeared in St. Martin's Hall (now converted into the New Queen's Theatre) to give a reading for his own benefit. This reading Mr. Dickens prefaced with a little speech, explanatory of his reasons for appearing in public, which, now that he is about to bring those public appearances to a close, will possess peculiar interest. He said:

'Ladies and Gentlemen,—It may perhaps be known to you that, for a few years past, I have been accustomed occasionally to read some of my shorter books, to various audiences, in aid of a variety of good objects, and at some charge to myself, both in time and money. It having at length become impossible in any reason to comply with these always accumulating demands, I have had definitively to choose between now and then reading on my own account, as one of my recognised

NEARLY eleven years have passed since Mr. Charles Dickens commenced his career as a professional 'reader.' He had read the *Christmas Carol* and the *Chimes* before public audiences on several occasions, but always in aid of the funds of some charitable institution. It was not until the evening of Thursday the 29th April 1858

The Set for Dickens's Readings (vertical batten for gas lighting on left).  
Top right: Cartoon image of Dickens reading (*Tinsley's Magazine*, vol.4, Feb – July 1869)

*you please*

and snow from off the dark leaves of the evergreens, like spray.

"Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered," said the Ghost. "But she had a large heart!"

*Soften very much*

"So she had," cried Scrooge. "You're right. will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!"

"She died a woman," said the Ghost, "and had, as I think, children."

"One child," Scrooge returned.

"True," said the Ghost. "Your nephew!"

Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, "Yes."

Although they had but that moment left the school behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, where shadowy passengers passed and repassed; where shadowy carts and coaches battled for the way, and all the strife and tumult of a real city were. It was made plain enough, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were lighted up.

The Ghost stopped at a certain warehouse door, and asked Scrooge if he knew it.

"Know it!" said Scrooge. "Was I apprenticed here!"

*Scrooge melted*

They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Welch wig, sitting behind such a high desk, that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, Scrooge cried, in great excitement:

Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!"

*Melted*

Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked up at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waist-coat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:

"Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!"

*Picture of  
align good making*

Scrooge's former self, ~~now grown~~ a young man, came briskly in, accompanied by his fellow-prentice.

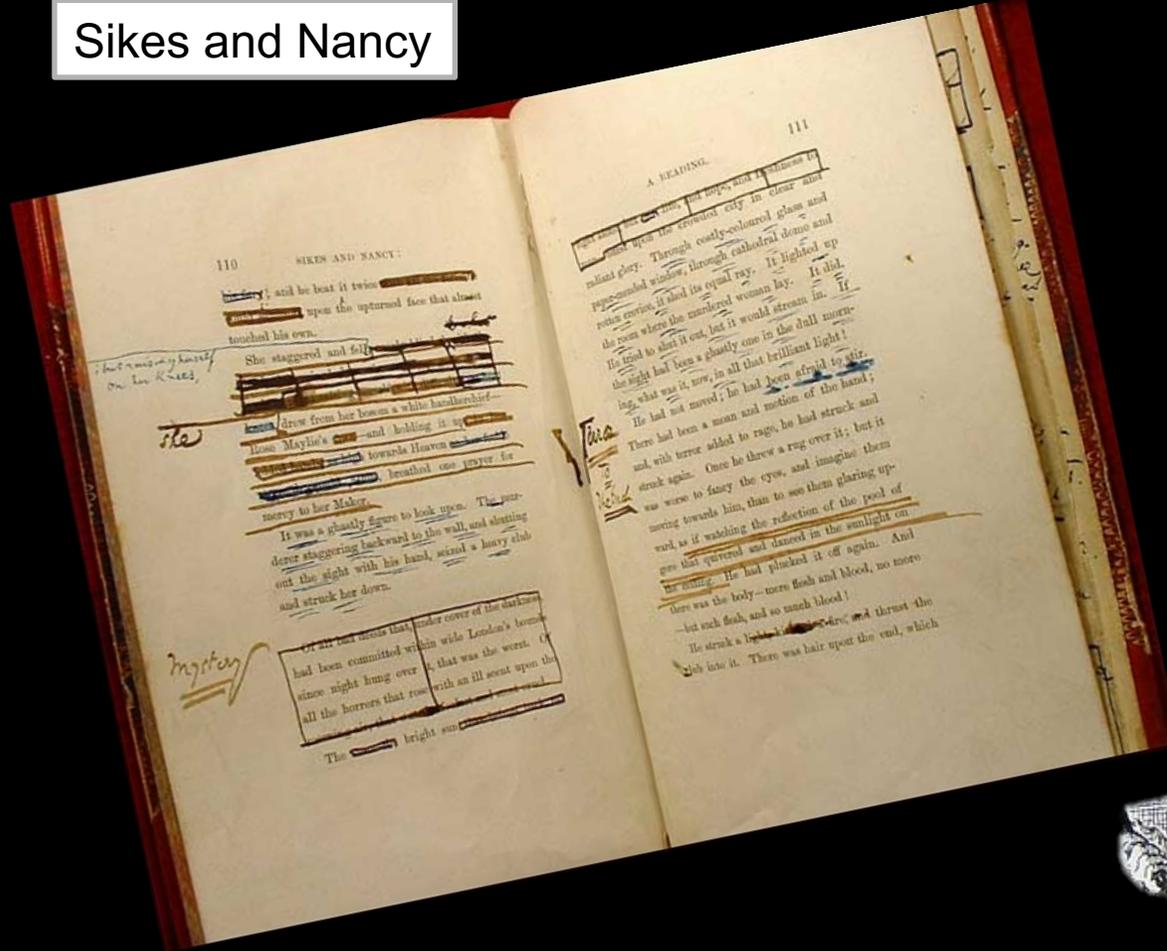
*Melted*

"Dick Wilkins, to be sure!" said Scrooge to the Ghost. "Bless me, yes. There he is. He

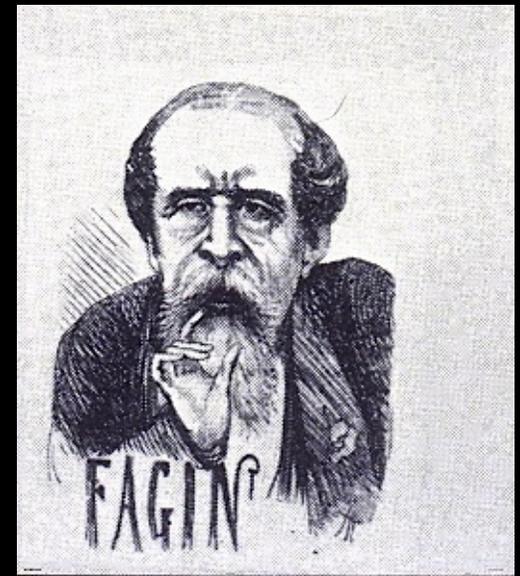
*my old fellow Prentice!*



# Sikes and Nancy



Dickens's prompt-copy for the Reading 'Sikes and Nancy'



Dickens as Fagin in 'Sikes and Nancy'



Fagin, as drawn by George Cruikshank, in *Oliver Twist*

Tuesday February 15<sup>th</sup> 1870.  
 Pulse before reading *Proctor at the Holly Tree* 70.  
 Nancy & Sikes (Murdson) 90. after 124. after  
 reading *Flam's* 110. 20 minutes after 70. -

Monday February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1870.  
 Pulse before reading *Richard Hebble* 84 after 106.  
 after reading *Chops* 112 after 15 minutes, 84. -

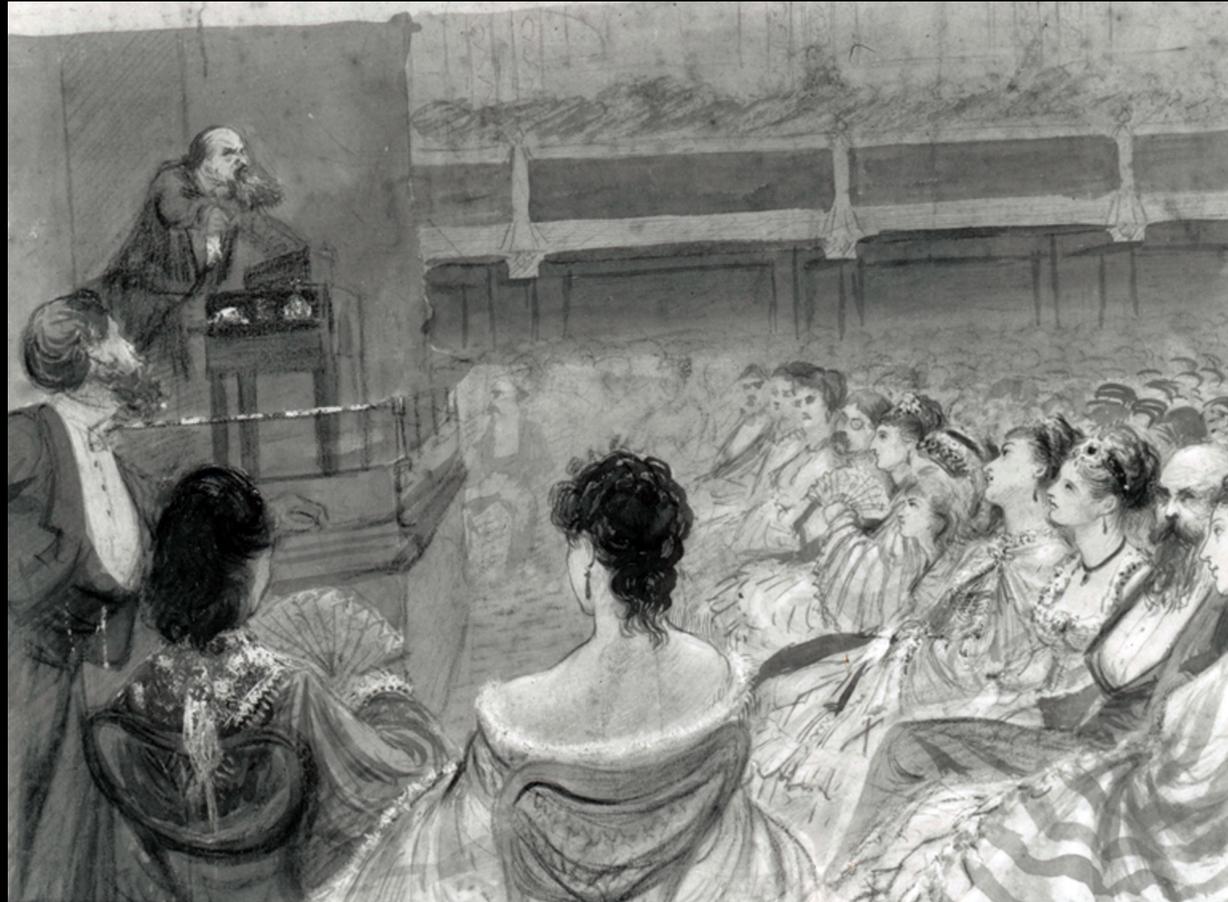
Thursday March 1<sup>st</sup> 1870. -  
 Pulse before reading *Caro's* 100  
 after 124. after deal from *Pulchra* 124  
 15 minutes after 80. -

Tuesday March 13<sup>th</sup> 1870.  
 Pulse before reading *Proctor at the Holly Tree*  
 94 after reading 112. after reading  
*Rowley & Sikes* 120. after  
 reading *Not Sany's* party 100. 15 minutes  
 after 82. -

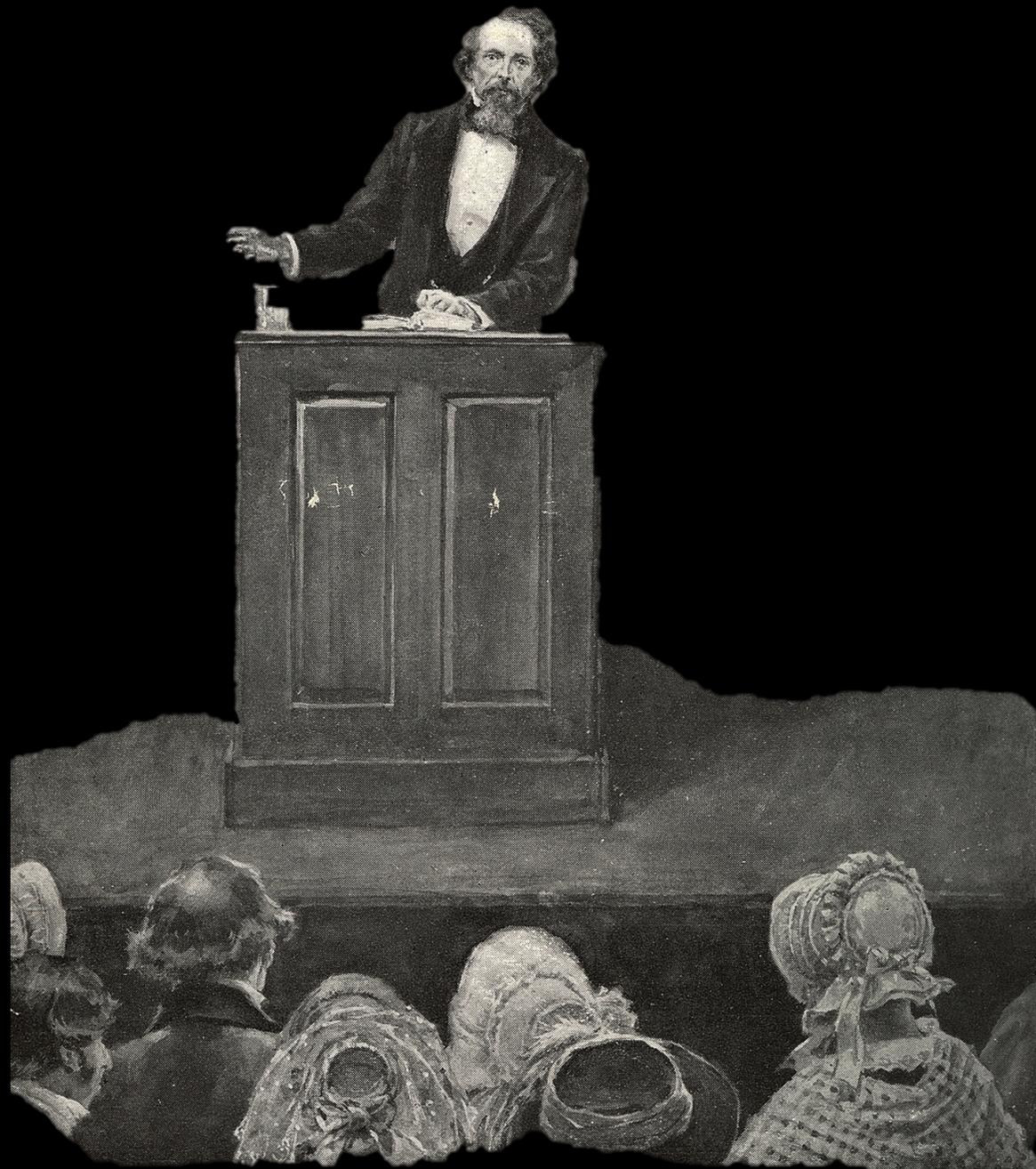
Tuesday March 15<sup>th</sup> 1870.  
 Pulse before reading *Christmas Carol* 100  
 after reading 110. after reading deal from *Pulchra* 110  
 15 minutes after 94. 15 minutes after  
 that 94. -

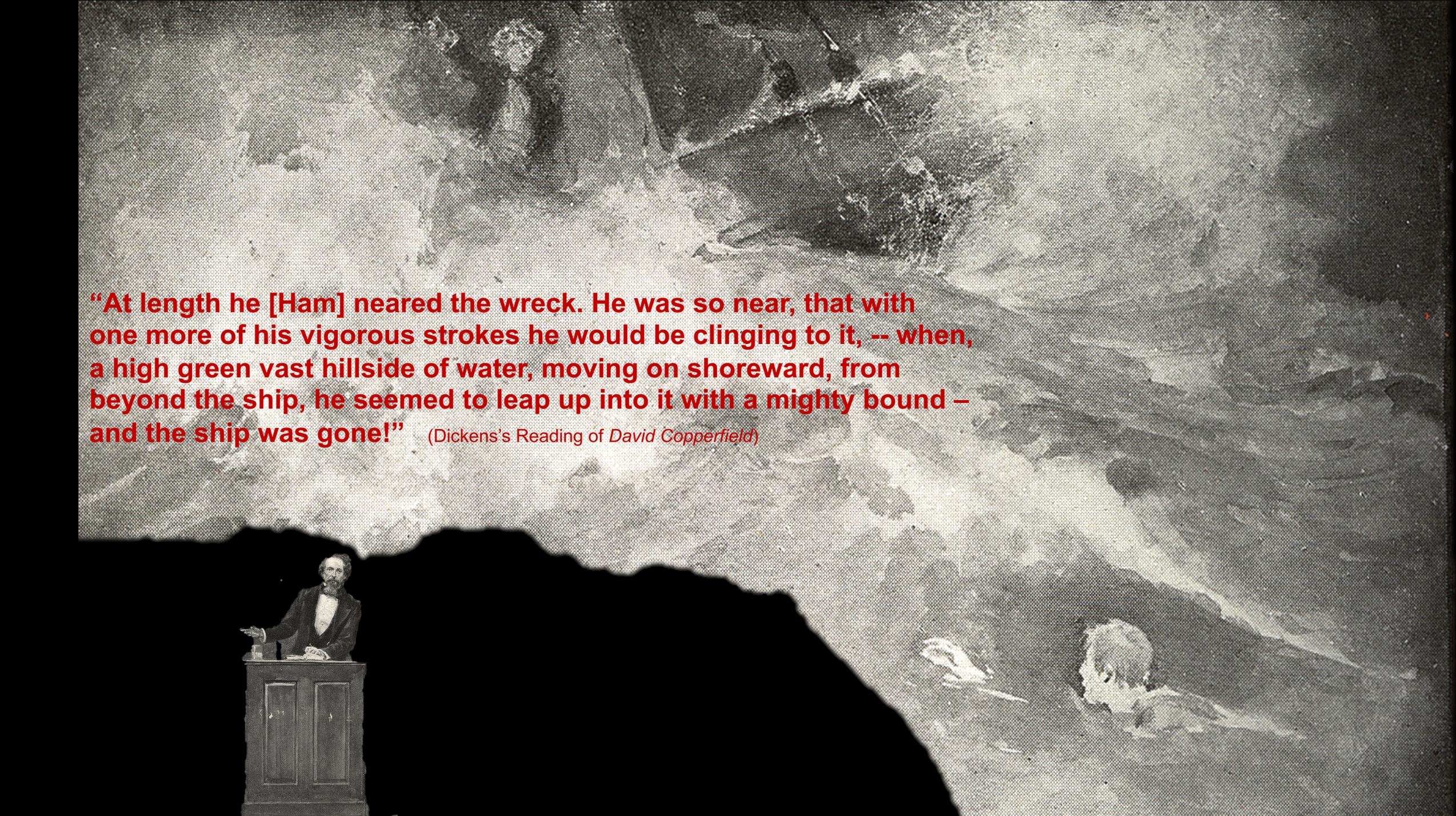
Dr Beard's Notes on Dickens's Pulse Rates

Dickens's normal pulse rate c.72; after reading 'Sikes and Nancy' that rose to 120



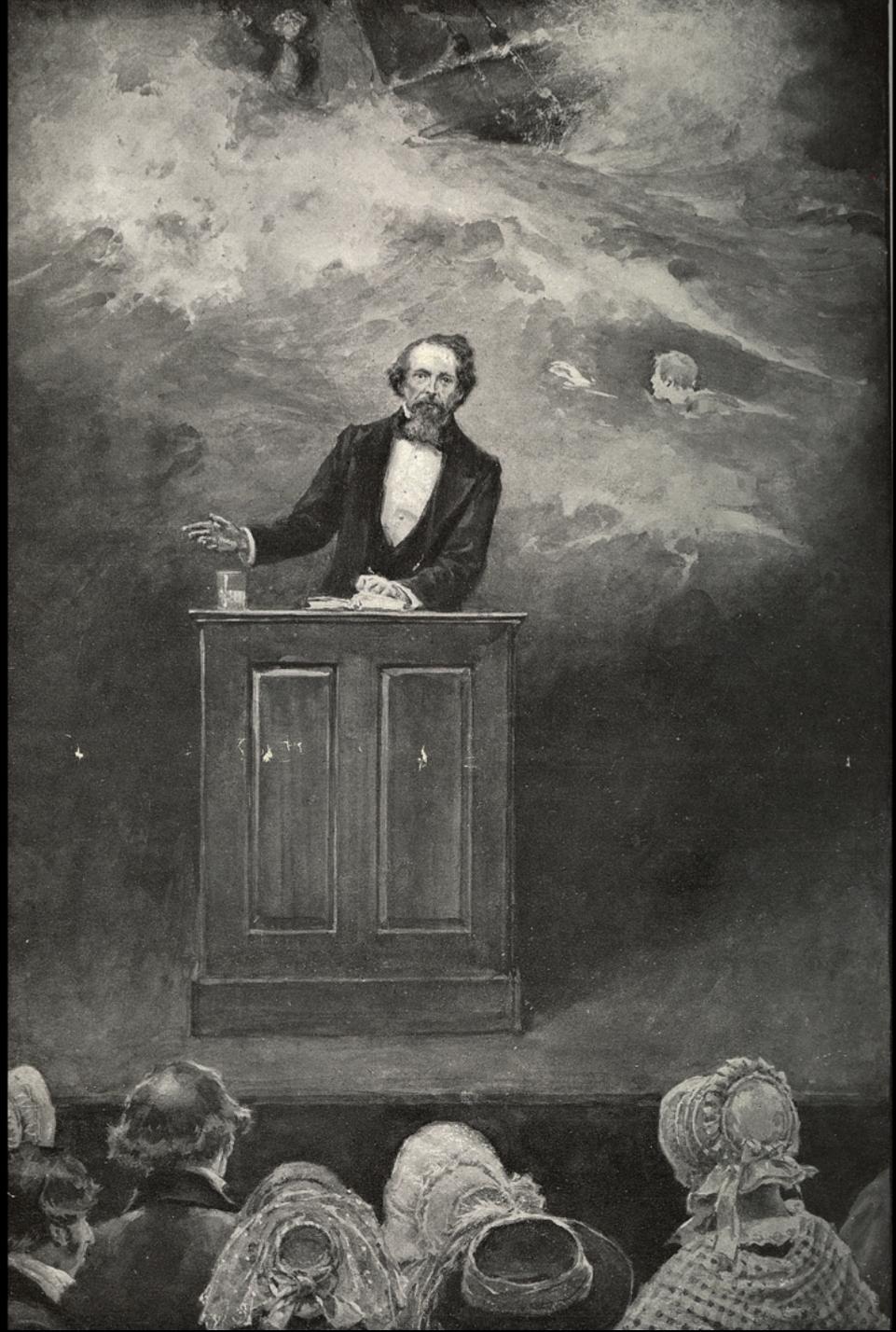
Dickens reading 'Sikes and Nancy', in St. James's Hall, London

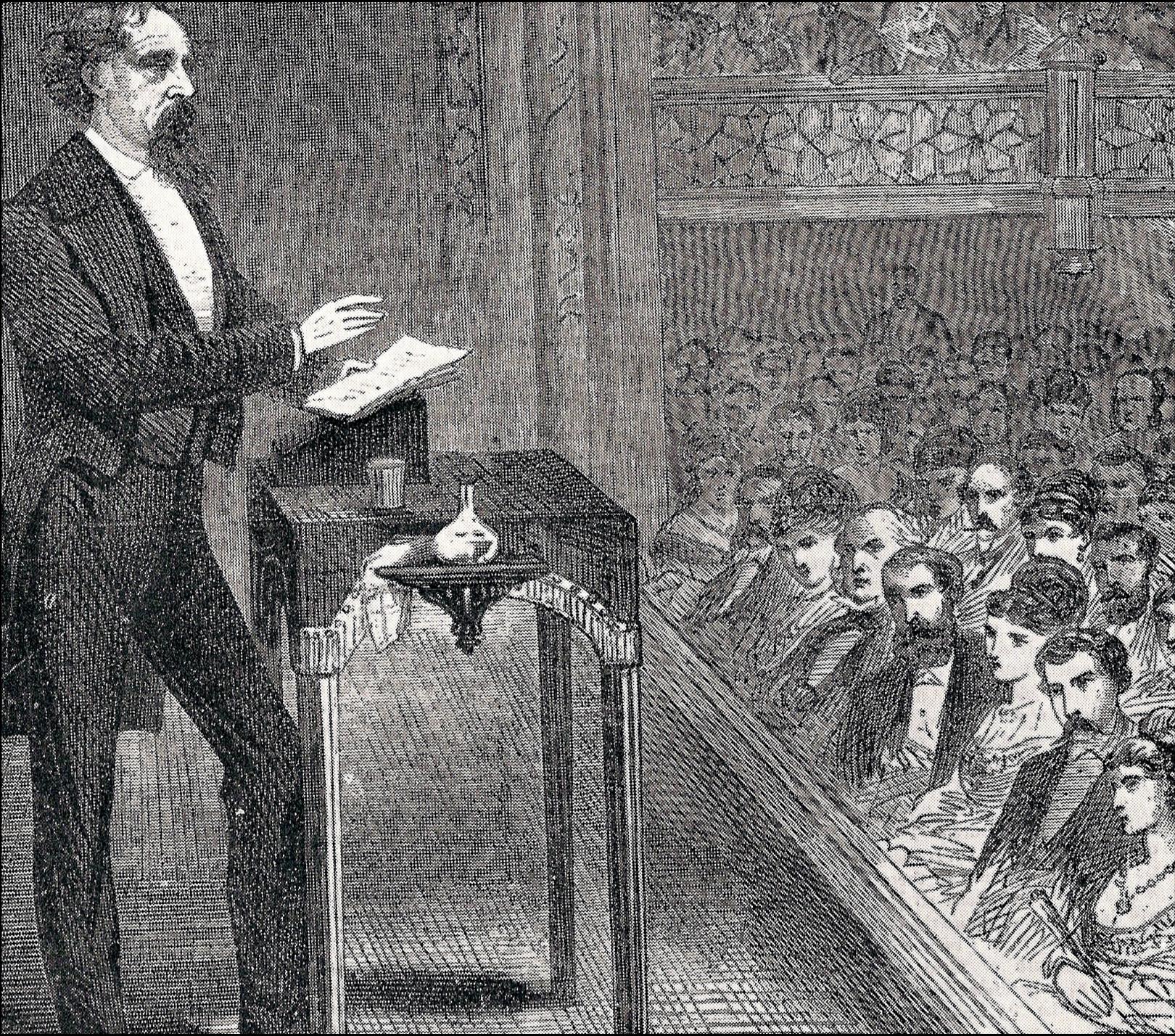




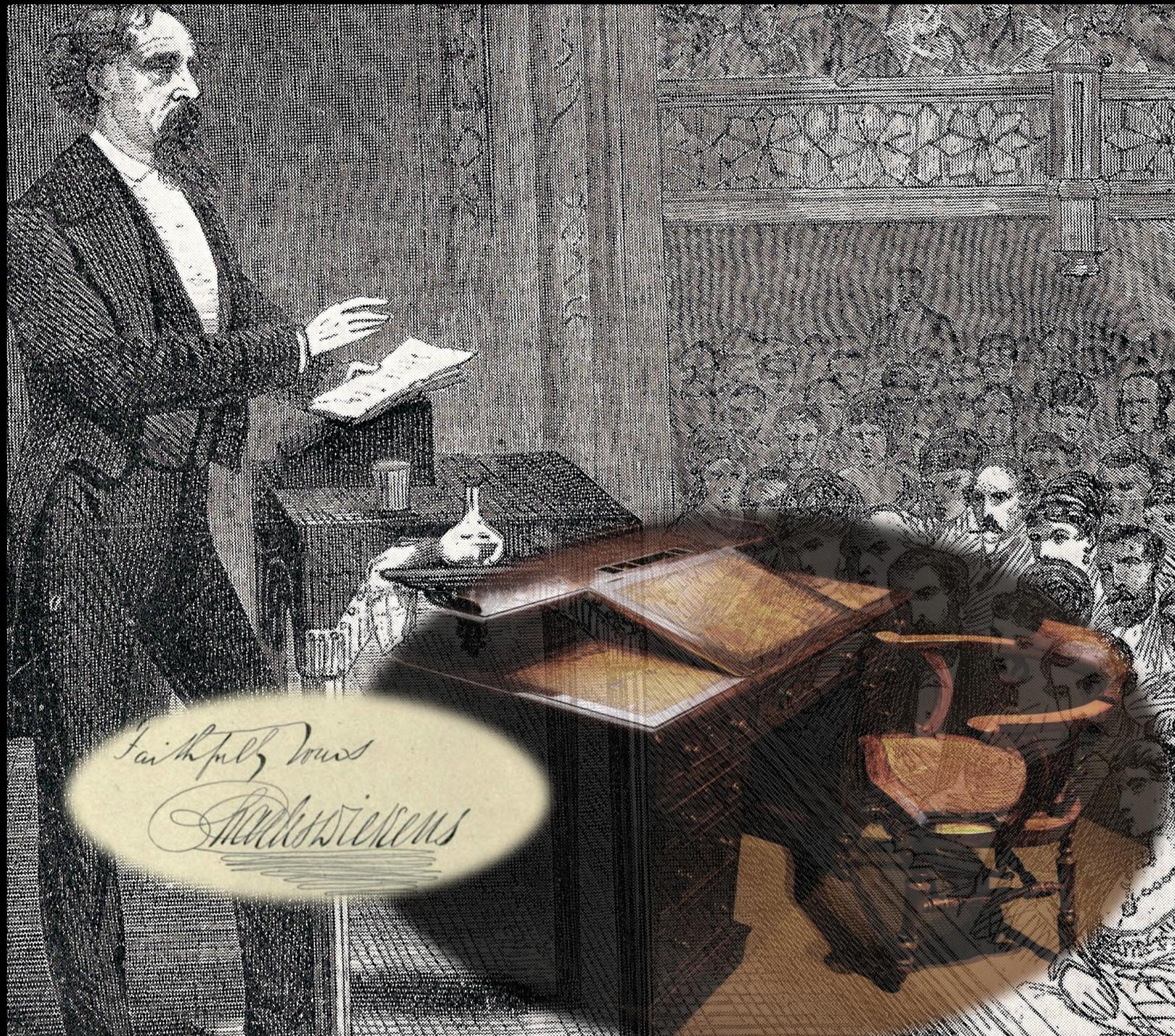
**“At length he [Ham] neared the wreck. He was so near, that with one more of his vigorous strokes he would be clinging to it, -- when, a high green vast hillside of water, moving on shoreward, from beyond the ship, he seemed to leap up into it with a mighty bound – and the ship was gone!”** (Dickens's Reading of *David Copperfield*)







"Ladies and gentleman, in but two short weeks from this time I hope that you may enter, in your own homes, on a new series of readings, at which my assistance will be indispensable; but from these garish lights I vanish now for evermore, with a heartfelt, grateful, respectful, and affectionate farewell." (Dickens's Farewell Speech, 15 March 1870)



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(Preface to *Nicholas Nickleby*)