How Dickens Did It.

SOME ENTERTAINING CORRESPONDENCE.—HOW SQUEERS GOT A THRESHING—THE FAMILIAR METHODS OF A GREAT AUTHOR ILLUSTRATED.

"You said you were Dickens' correspondent before his daughter was born. You must have been very young at the time."

"Yes, I was only five years old. It happened thus: I had, in a childish way, become deeply interested in the characters in 'Nicholas Nickleby,' which was then coming out in illustrated monthly numbers, the pictures of which my father showed me as he told me the story, and I told my father what I thought ought to be done to Squeers, Nicholas and the boys. He told me the author would do what I liked, if I wrote to him; and, accordingly, I dictated a letter to Dickens, with whom my father was slightly acquainted, and, to my great delight, a letter was soon brought to our house by the Rev. Thomas Barham, the author of the 'Ingoldsby Legends,' which shows Dickens' kindness of heart and sympathy with childhood. I have no copy of my letter, but here is Dickens' reply"—and Mr. Hughes handed the reporter a letter in Dicken's handwriting, which ran as follows:

DOUGATY ST., LONDON, Dec. 12, 1838.

RESPECTED SIR—I have given Squeers one cut on the neck and two on the head, at which he appeared very much surprised and began to cry, which, being a cowardly thing, is just what I should have expected from him—wouldn't you?

I have carefully done what you told me in your letter about the lamb and the two "sheeps" for the little boys. They have also had some good ale and porter and some wine. I am sorry you didn't say what wine you would like them to have. I gave them some sherry, which they liked very much, except one boy, who was a little sick, and choked a good deal. He was rather greedy, and that's the truth, and I believe it went the wrong way, which I say served him right, and I hope you will say so, too.

NICHOLAS AND SMIKE.

Nicholas had his roast lamb, as you said he was to, but he could not eat it all, and says if you do not mind his doing so he should like to have the rest hashed to-morrow with some greens, which he is very fond of, and so am I. He said he did not like to have his porter hot, for he thought it spoiled the flavor, so I let him have it cold. You should have seen him drink it. I thought he never would have left off. I also gave him three pounds of money, all in sixpences to make it seem more, and he said directly that he should give more than half to his mamma and sister and divide the rest with poor Smike. And I say he is a good fellow for saying so, and if anybody says he isn't I am ready to fight him whenever they like—there.

A DISAGREEABLE THING.

Fanny Squeers shall be attended to, depend upon it. Your drawing of her is very like her except that I don't think the hair is quite curly enough. The nose is particularly like hers—and so are the legs. She is a nasty disagreeable thing, and I know it will make her very cross when she sees it; and what I say is that I hope it may. You will say the same, I know.

I meant to have written you a long letter, but I cannot write very fast when I like the person I am writing to, because that makes me think about them, and I like you, and so I tell you. Besides, it is eight o'clock at night and I always go to bed at eight o'clock, except when it is my birthday, and then I sit up to supper. So I will not say anything more besides this—and that is my love to you and Neptune; and if you will drink my health every Christmas day I will drink yours—Come! I am respected sir, your affectionate friend.

CAARLES DICKENS.

LORD LYTTON spoke wisely when he said that the stomach is the seat of memory, for a man is not likely to forget that he's hungry.

SALVINI and Edwin Booth do not agree in their conceptions of King Lear, but they agree that maccaroni and ham hold the balance of power.

"Sixes" on a Battlefield.

"Actors often meet under very peculiar circumstances, and this meeting of the Grand Army of the Republic reminds me of one," remarked Deputy City Controller Rush to a reporter.

"It's dull day for items, Peter, so fire away with your fabrication!"

"Oh, no! This isn't one of that kind. This is a fact, and I've got the papers to prove it!"

"Never mind the documentary proof! If it's a good story, I'll take your word for it without affidavits, so go ahead!"

"I am not going to mention any names—"

"No importance. Brown and Jones will do."

"Nor where nor when the battle took place—"

"Immaterial. Was anybody hurt?"

"But it was a hot one, and when the two armies got into close quarters two actors who had often played together met face to face; one with a Union, the other with a secession sword in his hand. You know what a broad sword combat is?"

"Yes. Two misses to one hit."

"Not so bad as that. It's like a clockwork. Anyone who ever sat near the stage at a French Spy's performance has heard the Spy and Mohammed counting in a whisper. 'One, two, three, one, two, three, one, two, three (a pause); now four! one, two, three, four, five, six, and keep it up!'

"Just as these two actors crossed swords they recognized each other, and one of them, who was a quick witted fellow, sang out, 'Sixes, cully!' and at it they went with all their might, right in plain sight of both armies."

"Which got the best of it?"

"Both. Both of them were honorably mentioned in the dispatches for bravery upon the field, and both were promoted.

Not Very Badly Left.

There arrived in this city yesterday, half an hour after the west-bound train had departed, a young man who was in a terrible fix. He was on his way to a village in the interior to get married. The day and hour had been set, and here he was, 50 miles away and no show to get there unless he hired a locomotive. Acting upon the advice of the depot policeman, the young man had an interview with one of the chief officials of the road, who offered the use of a locomotive for $40.

"That's a heap of money," replied the young man, as his enthusiasm began to ooze away.

"Yes," said the indifferent official.

"I'll telegraph to her father and see what he says."

"Very well, let me know within an hour."

In about an hour the young man returned with a message in his hand, and he laid it before the official without a word. It read:

"Susan changed her mind yesterday and was married to Frank."

"Then you won't want the locomotive, of course?"

"Of course not. It was lucky I thought of telegraphing, for I'm just $40 ahead."

"And you don't feel bad on being left?"

"Well, I'd been engaged to Susan for thirteen years and when I opened that dispatch my knees wobbled a bit, but I guess it's all for the best. I'm also engaged to a Toledo milliner who does a business of $30,000 per year, and to a girl in Columbus who expects her aunt to leave her $90,000, and I'm in hopes of pulling through without going into a decline. Sorry to have troubled you sir, and I'll bid you good day."—*N. Y. Truth.*

A Bad Indictment.

A highly respected citizen was arraigned before court for shooting and killing a friend. The evidence was direct and after exhaustive arguments had been made the judge said:

"It is clearly proved that you are guilty as charged by the indictment."

"But I protest my innocence," replied the prisoner. "The indictment reads that I did shoot and kill the gentleman with powder and a leaden bullet. This is a mistake. I had no bullets at the time, so I loaded my gun with powder and a horseshoe nail."

"That, indeed, alters the case," said the judge. "The indictment said bullet when it should have said nail. You are discharged, sir."—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

Her Golden Hair.

Mr. Simkins was engaged to the lovely golden-haired Miss Wegg. One day an envious female told Mr. Simkins that his lady-love dyed her hair. That night Mr. Simkins said to Miss Wegg:

"Mamie, my own, some one told me to-day that your hair was dyed."

"It is false," retorted his sweetheart warmly.

They were married shortly afterwards, and when Mamie took off her wig and hung it over the back of the chair, Simkins expostulated and reminded her of their conversation.

"I said then it was false," said his spouse.

They will be divorced in autumn.

A Cranky Kicker.

"Please, sir," said the bell boy to a Market street hotel clerk, "No. 30 says there ain't no towel in his room."

"Tell him to use one of the window curtains."

"He says, too, there ain't no pillars."

"Tell him to put his vest under his head."

"And he wants a pitcher of water."

"Suffering Cyrus! But he's the worst kicker I ever struck in my life. Carry him up the horse pail."

"He wants to know if he can have a light."

"Here, confound him! Give him this lantern, and ask him if he wants the earth, and if he'll have it fried on only one side or turned over?"

Estimating Wealth.

"Ma, you know those Newcomers across the way that we have all been afraid to call on because their furniture arrived at night, and we couldn't tell whether it was nice or not?"

"Yes, and they always keep the curtains so near closed that not a soul has been able to get a glimpse of the rooms."

"None of the neighbors have called on them yet, have they?"

"No."

"Well, we better go over, because if we keep on snubbing them they may turn around and snub us."

"But why do you think so?"

"Their servant girl was in Cash & Co.'s tea store this morning. She bought a pound of tea, and when the clerk handed her a glorious chromo, she turned up her nose at it.—*Phila. Call.*

Appealing to George.

A young lady visiting Vallejo, Cal., is quite sweet on a certain young journalist. One morning the pair started out for a long ramble over the Contra Costa hills. Being gone all day, they were completely worn out and fatigued. The young lady and gentleman were met by a party of their friends soon after their return, and were asked what kind of a time they had. Now, the young lady has a very unhandy habit of proving any assertion she may make by appealing to any friend that she happens to have with her at the time. So, as usual, away she went, and answered the inquiry as follows: "Oh, we had a fine time. But climbing over rocks and bushes has made me black and blue all over, hasn't it, George?" (appealing to the young man who had gone out with her.) George said emphatically that he'd be hanged if he knew anything about it, and now that young couple get no rest from the chaffing of their friends.

Curious Verdicts.

For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain commend us to the petit juror. He is past all finding out. He is often more expeditious than wise. It is not an uncommon thing for him to arrive at a verdict that is decided by the cast of a die. In this blind way justice some times gets her just deserts. Many amusing incidents are told of odd verdicts brought in by the modern juror, who is wonderfully and fearfully made. Probably the most quaint specimen of agreement ever arrived at by twelve men was the verdict brought in by a jury at the city of Abeline, Kan., when that howling wildeaness was in its brightest bloom. It read: "Jerked to Jesus by a mule!"

Mr. Eli Perkins, who has given the verdict business careful study, culls the following queer specimens from his memorandum:

A Kansas jury gave the following verdict in a case where a man died in a state of intoxication: "Death by hanging—round a rum shop."

An Indiana jury recently returned a written verdict of: "Blode to peces bi the biler bustin'."

"Jury," said a western judge, "you kin go out and find a verdict. If you can't find one of your own, get the one the last jury used." The jury returned with a verdict of "Suicide in the ninth degree."

A Rhode Island jury were five days debating on a long case involving a hog worth $7, and then came in, found the hog not guilty, and recommended both the plaintiff and defendant to the mercy of the court.

A Pekin, Ill., coroner's jury rendered the very singular verdict, that a man whose body was found in the river came to his death by a blow on the head, "which was given either before or after the drowning."—*Chicago Eye.*

In a Leather Bag.

One of the gaily-painted mail wagons which ply between the post-office, and the various depots and which continually remind the pedestrian of the greatest show on earth, was down at the Union depot the other day, when a stranger looked it carefully over and inquired of a policeman:

Circus in town?

No, not exactly.

What sort of an animal have they got in there?

Can't you read?

I can, when I am to hum, but this snow kinder blinds me.

Well, it is a dodo, I believe.

And where are they going to take him?

Oh, up town a piece. If you follow the wagon you will be apt to see him unloaded.

I believe I will. I have not seen one of those animals since I was a boy, and if there are no charge for it I might as well take a squint.

He followed the wagon at a trot and was absent about half an hour. When he returned the officer asked:

Well, did you see the dodo?

No, not a hair of him, was the disgusted reply, I got all ready to, but be hanged if they didn't have him in a leather bag.

ALGERNON, I have a stitch in my side.

I am not surprised, my dear. You were hemmed in by the crowd at the party last night.

No; I think I got it while basting the turkey.

You tuck too much pains over it.

Algernon; why will you persist in ruffling my temper in this way?

Merely a biased notion of yours and fur-below my intentions.

Didn't Steal.

"Gentlemen," said an Arkansaw Calonel as he stood under the limb of a tree from which depended a rope, "I must protest my innocence. I did not steal the mule. I am above petty theft. I know that you all have the interest of the comunity at heart, and I don't blame you; but there are times when we are all liable to be too rash. If I had stolen the mule my guilt would oppress me until I would beg to be put out of the world in the most summary way."

"The mule was found in your possession," said the leader of the mob.

"Very true, my dear sir."

"Did he jump into your lot?

"No, sir; I conducted him to the confines of my premises."

"Did you buy the animal;

"No, sir."

"Did you trade for him?"

"I did not."

"Than you stole him. Let down the rope, boys."

"Gentleman, I hope you will give me a chance to explain. The mule in question was the property of our distinguished fellow citizen, Maj. Ruglesberry. Some time ago the Major and I exchanged a few words of uncomplimentary nature. I intimated that the Major's blood would be highly satisfactory to me, and the Major said that my gore would please him mightly Well we separated, thoroughly agreeing with each other. The next day the Major and I met. I got what is vulgarly called the drop on him, and relieved him of the top of his head. He was riding a mule at the time, and when he fell off I saw that he no longer had any practical use for the animal, so I took charge of him. Now, if I had dismounted in the way he did I should h e interposed no objection on the Major's taking my horse."

"I hope sir. that you will excuse us," replied the leader of the mob. "I thought that you stole the mule. Your explanation is most satisfactory, and I hope you'll excuse us. Let us all take a drink!"—*Arkansaw Traveler.*