PLAYFORTH BENEVOLENCE.

A Page from Dickens's Novel.

Critics opine that, among all the world loses by the non-completion of "Edwin Drood," there is nothing that would have been in better vein than the delineation of mock-philanthropy in character and career of "Mr. Honeythunder."

It is thus, in the Seventeenth Chapter of the "Mystery," in the person of the amiable clergyman, Mr. Crisparkle, that the creator of Mesdames Jellyby and Pardiggle lashes the pretensions of that professional philanthropist:

AN ACCOUNT RENDERED OF A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND HONEYTHUNDER.

"Enough!" bellowed Mr. Honeythunder, with a sudden and severity that would have brought the house down at a meeting, "I—I—enough! My late wards being now of age, and I being released from a trust which I cannot contemplate without a thrill of horror, there are the accounts which you have undertaken to accept on their behalf, and there is a statement of the balance which you have undertaken to receive, and which you cannot receive too soon. And let me tell you, sir, I wish, that as a man and a Minor Canon, you were better employed," with a nod, "Better employed," with another nod, "than in accepting a proxy!" with another and the three nods added up.

Mr. Crisparkle rose, a little heated in the face, but with perfect command of himself.

"Mr. Honeythunder," he said, taking up the papers referred to, "my being better or worse employed than I am at present is a matter of taste and opinion. You might think me better employed in enrolling myself a member of your Society."

"A!—Indeed, sir!" retorted Mr. Honeythunder, shaking his head in a threatening manner. "It would have been better for you if you had done so, sir."

"I think otherwise."

"Oh!" said Mr. Honeythunder, shaking his head again, "I might think one of your profession better employed in devoling himself to the discovery and punishment of the assassin in leaving that duty to be undertaken by a lay man."

"I may regard my profession from a point of view which teaches me that its first duty is towards those who are the most in need of instruction, who are desolate and oppressed," said Mr. Crisparkle. "However, I will not quibble clearly satisfied myself that it is no part of my profession to make professions, I say no more of that. But I owe it to Mr. Neville, and to Mr. Neville's sister (and in a much lower degree to myself), to express my belief that he was in the full possession and understanding of Mr. Neville's mind and heart at the time of his encounter with the late deceased, and that the coloring or concealing what was to be deplored in him and required to be forgiven by him, is far from that his tale is true. Feeling that certainty, I befriend him. As long as that certainty shall last I will befriend him, and no consideration should shake me in this resolve, I should be so ashamed of myself in the sight of Heaven as to have myself in the sight of Heaven as to have myself in the sight of Heaven as to have