

Our Monthly Letter

We Are Fun, Friendship and Learning

Charles Dickens in His Third Century



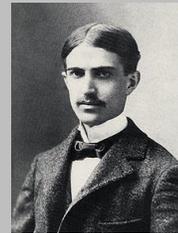
"That the bond, due today at twelve, is now waste paper. That your contemplated fraud shall be discovered yet. That your schemes are known to man, and overthrown by Heaven." Etching by *Phiz* (Hablot K. Browne) for Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*, August 1839. Source: J.A. Hammerton, *The Dickens Picture Book*, Image scan and text by Philip V. Allingham, Courtesy of *The Victorian Web*.

Our Monthly Quote

Tenth in a Series of Ten on
Outstanding American Writers

Stephen Crane

November 1, 1871 – June 5, 1900
American Novelist, Short Story
Writer, Poet and Journalist



"It was not well to drive men into final corners; at those moments they could all develop teeth and claws."

The Red Badge of Courage (1895)

OUR JUNE MEETING

Date and Time:

Saturday, June 6, 2015, 1:00pm-4:00pm

Location: NYPL Kips Bay Branch

446 Third Avenue at E. 31 Street,
New York, NY 10016

Program: *Nicholas Nickleby*

Chapters fifty-nine to sixty-five (end)

Moderator: Warren Wyss

Continued from Page 1

Those present at our May 2 meeting were: **Marilyn Baranoski, Irma Marie Cerne, Rob Clere, Joan Iris Eisenberg, Jerry and Loretta Frohnoefer, Gela Kline, Mary Jane Mallonee, Lynn Manuell, Mike Quinn, Mike Rosen, Dorothy Smith, Rosa L. Smith, Ken Wachtell and Warren Wyss.**

Sending regrets for having to miss the meeting were: **Leona Adams, James Armstrong, Kevin Quinn, Su Quinn, Ellen Spears and Bernice Stein.**

Bob Havlena, who was scheduled be our moderator, regretfully had to withdraw at the last minute due to emergency surgery. Therefore, we had to “wing it.”

Analyzing Mrs. Nickleby

We decided to play a game, seeing ourselves as a panel of psychologists whose job was to analyze Mrs. Nickleby's baffling personality as it is presented in chapter fifty-five.

Mike Rosen contributed the salty slang word “ditz,” meaning a silly person who doesn't think clearly.

Mrs. Nickleby's frequent forays into irrelevant and unimportant topics coupled with her obtuseness and failure to grasp what is actually happening in her world certainly lends credence to this analysis.

Jerry Frohnoefer contributed narcissist. She is always calling attention to herself, she is beset with fantasies of wealth and privilege yet often blind to the dangers faced by her own children in the real world.

Lynn Manuell, Gela Kline and Rosa Smith critiqued Mrs. Nickleby's tendency to hear only what fits the fantasy she's having at the moment. She doesn't actually listen to what Nicholas and Kate tell her about Madeline Bray's predicament.

When Madeline suffers a complete physical and mental breakdown after the sudden death of her father and after Nicholas and Kate thwart Gride's and Uncle Ralph's plan for her, Mrs. Nickleby suddenly drops all opposition and argues that rescuing Madeline from danger has been her idea from the very beginning. No! She isn't malicious, only wrapped up in herself.

We all agreed that Mrs. Nickleby's character adds tremendous comic relief to the novel and that many scenes would fall flat without her often senseless ramblings. **Yet, she is perceptive!** Despite her flights of fancy, she shocks Nicholas when she informs him that Frank Cheeryble has fallen in love with Kate. This is something that has completely eluded his attention.

Chapter fifty-five ends with

Nicholas removing Smike from their home to his childhood home in Devonshire in hopes of saving his life.

In chapter fifty-six Arthur Gride discovers that Peg Sliderskew has absconded with papers that could spell his ruin. He panics. The determined Uncle Ralph sends Squeers to find Sliderskew, retrieve the papers and destroy them. But Newman Noggs smells a rat.

In chapters fifty-seven and fifty-eight Squeers finds Sliderskew and the missing papers. While the illiterate Sliderskew doesn't understand their real value Squeers sees the possibility of making much more money from them and prepares to make off with them. But Noggs and Frank Cheeryble, have followed him. Newman knocks out Squeers with a bellows, retrieves the papers and thus saves the day, for the papers are actually the property of Madeline Bray.

Smike's health continues to decline. The many years of ill usage that he has endured have taken their toll. One day he is greatly alarmed by the sight of a man lurking nearby. This is Brooker. the man who many years ago took him from London to Yorkshire. He informs Nicholas. Smike then dies with a vision of Eden and Nicholas buries him.

Continued on page 3

Nicholas Nickleby chapters fifty-nine to sixty-five (End)

Chapter fifty-nine - Ralph answers a summons from the brothers Cheeryble. There he encounters Newman Noggs and learns what he had suspected, that Noggs has turned against him. Still undeterred, Ralph goes to see the imprisoned Squeers who tells him in detail that all their machinations have turned to nothing. The game is up.

Chapter sixty - At home, Ralph receives yet another summons to see the Cheerybles and hopes against hope that he will hear about the death of Nicholas. Instead the brothers confront him with Brooker who discloses that Smike was the child of none other than Ralph Nickleby.

Chapter sixty-one - Nicholas, upon his return from Devonshire, reports everything about Smike's last days. Furthermore, he tells the brothers that he and Kate have a further disclosure: that Kate has rejected Frank Cheeryble's marriage proposal and that he, Nicholas, will never ask Madeline Bray to marry him. This pact they have made out of respect for all that the Cheerybles have done for them. The brothers appear to accept his explanation but tell him they must hasten to see Ralph Nickleby.

Chapter sixty-two - Ralph had agreed to meet the Cheerybles but when they arrive at his house they discover that he has hanged himself in an attic room.

Chapter sixty-three - Later, there is a party at the Cheerybles house with all present. The brothers tell everyone about Madeline's inheritance from her maternal grand-father. She reveals that she loves Nicholas and would have him as her husband. Frank Cheeryble pairs with Kate and, lo and behold, Tim Linkinwater and little Miss LaCreevy have also found love.

Chapter sixty-four - Nicholas and Kate, out for a walk and seeking directions, walk in unexpectedly on Alfred Mantalini as he is being harangued by a laundress. Afterwards, Nicholas goes to Yorkshire where he visits bluff John Browdie and wife Tilda and gets a tongue lashing from Fanny Squeers. Dotheboys Hall, with all its unhappy children, breaks up.

Chapter sixty-four - Three happy couples: Nicholas and Madeline, Charles and Kate and Tim Linkinwater and Miss LaCreevy marry and all live happily ever after.

The Votes Are In

By a margin of 17 votes to 9 *Our Mutual Friend* has been selected as our novel for the 2015-2016 season. We have further decided to explore this novel, the last that Dickens would ever complete, in one year.

We will take orders for *Our Mutual Friend* at the June 6 meeting and expect to have the new copies available within a couple of weeks. Everyone will be notified and you will have them well before our new season starts in September.

Member Updates

Congratulations Jerry and Loretta Frohnhoefer upon the birth of your eighth grandchild, **MaryElla**, born May 1, 2015. Her proud parents are **Col. Thomas** and **Audrey Frohnhoefer**.

Congratulations also to Mike and Ruthy Rosen as you prepare to visit Los Angeles to attend the marriage of your daughter, **Jody Beth Rosen** to **Andre Fosse** on June 15. We wish them happiness and success throughout their married life and many blessings. We hope your trip to the City of the Angels and back to New York will be safe and comfortable.

Bravo! Danielle Cammarota upon your recent presentation of an illustrated paper, *Trash and Redemption: The Heroic Dustman in Nineteenth-Century London*, at the Northeast Modern Language Association Conference in Toronto. We're taking bets that your paper includes mention about an obscure Dickens novel titled *Our Mutual Friend*. We hope to hear about this when our new season begins in September, 2015.

Felicitations! Kevin Quinn and Lynn Manuell upon your recent visits to the UK where you were able to include a visit to the Dickens Museum in London and meet with its curator, Robert Moyer. Watch out! We're getting jealous.

iBuen Viaje! **Mike and Su Quinn**, as you take a vacation break to Spain. You'll visit Vigo, Santiago de Compostela, Valencia where you'll attend a wedding and Madrid where you'll see our own **Jennifer Heine** who's studying there and wish her greetings from all her friends in FODNY.

Agenda for our June 6 Annual Business Meeting

1. Reports from the Secretary and Treasurer.
2. Election of new officers, if necessary.
3. Confirm schedule for 2015-2016 season.
4. Any New Business
5. Program: *Nicholas Nickleby* chapters fifty-nine to sixty-five Moderator: Warren Wyss

The Friends Bulletin Board *Our June, July and August Birthdays*

We wish another year of *Fun, Friendship and Learning* to the following birthday celebrants: **Nat Gilbert** June 28, **Nancy Lind** June 30, **Dorothy Smith** July 2, **Mike J. Quinn** July 5, **RoseMary Uzzo** July 23, **Wanda R. Newsom-Bolden** August 24, **Rochelle Christopher** August 30 and **Jeannette Rosen** August 30.

NB: If you want *Our Monthly Letter* to print your Happy Birthday notice please email us at newsletter@thefriendsofdickens.org or call Mike at (718) 801-2694.

The Dickens Circle **John Leech**

August 29, 1817 – October 29, 1864
Leech was a highly talented artist and caricaturist who is most famous, perhaps, for the four charming color plates he made for *A Christmas Carol* of which, *Mr. Fezziwig's Ball*, is renowned the world over. He was born in London of an Irish father and English mother and showed great artistic talent from his earliest years. He attended the Charterhouse School where **William Makepeace Thackeray** was a fellow pupil. The two became life-long friends. His etchings for *The Comic History of England* (1847-1848) and his still finer illustrations for *The Comic History of Rome* (1852) are considered among his finest work. His cartoons for *Punch* enjoyed great success and over the years they became more clearly political. Of these his splendidly humorous cartoon titled *Disraeli Measuring the British Lion* (1849) appeared there. Leech vacationed often with Dickens and his family and was probably one of CD's inner circle.