





RUTH PINCH MAKING THE PUDDING

*The Life
& Adventures of*
MARTIN
CHUZZLEWIT
BY
CHARLES DICKENS



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PREFAC

WHAT is exaggeration to one class of minds and perceptions, is plain truth to another. That which is commonly called a long-sight, perceives in a prospect innumerable features and bearings non-existent to a short-sighted person. I sometimes ask myself whether there may occasionally be a difference of this kind between some writers and some readers ; whether it is *always* the writer who colours highly, or whether it is now and then the reader whose eye for colour is a little dull ?

On this head of exaggeration I have a positive experience, more curious than the speculation I have just set down. It is this :—I have never touched a character precisely from the life, but some counterpart of that character has incredulously asked me : “ Now really, did I ever really, see one like it ? ”

All the Pecksniff family upon earth are quite agreed, I believe, that Mr. Pecksniff is an exaggeration, and that no such character ever existed. I will not offer any plea on his behalf to so powerful and genteel a body, but will make a remark on the character of Jonas Chuzzlewit.

I conceive that the sordid coarseness and brutality of Jonas would be unnatural, if there had been nothing in his early education, and in the precept and example always before him, to engender and develop the vices that make him odious. But so born and so bred ; admired for that which made him hateful, and justified from his cradle in cunning, treachery, and avarice ; I claim him as the legitimate issue of the father upon whom those vices are seen to recoil. And I submit that their recoil upon that old man, in his unhonoured age, is not a mere piece of poetical justice, but is the extreme exposition of a direct truth.

I make this comment and solicit the reader's attention to it in his or her consideration of this tale, because nothing is more common in real life than a want of profitable reflection on the causes of many vices and crimes that awaken general horror. What is substantially true of families in this respect, is true of a whole commonwealth. As we sow, we reap. Let the reader go into the children's side of any prison in England, or, I grieve to add, of many workhouses, and judge whether those are monsters who disgrace our streets, people our hulks and penitentiaries, and

overcrowd our penal colonies, or are creatures whom we have deliberately suffered to be bred for misery and ruin.

The American portion of this story is in no other respect a caricature, than as it is an exhibition, for the most part, (Mr. Bevan excepted) of a ludicrous side, *only*, of the American character—of that side which was, four-and-twenty years ago, from its nature, the most obtrusive, and the most likely to be seen by such travellers as Young Martin and Mark Tapley. As I had never, in writing fiction, had any disposition to soften what is ridiculous or wrong at home, so I then hoped that the good-humoured people of the United States would not be generally disposed to quarrel with me for carrying the same usage abroad. I am happy to believe that my confidence in that great nation was not misplaced.

When this book was first published, I was given to understand, by some authorities, that the Watertoast Association and eloquence were beyond all bounds of belief. Therefore I record the fact that all that portion of Martin Chuzzlewit's experiences is a literal paraphrase of some reports of public proceedings in the United States (especially of the proceedings of a certain Brandywine Association), which were printed in the Times Newspaper in June and July 1843, at about the time when I was engaged in writing those parts of the book; and which remain on the file of the Times Newspaper, of course.

In all my writings, I hope I have taken every available opportunity of showing the want of sanitary improvements in the neglected dwellings of the poor. Mrs. Sarah Gamp was, four-and-twenty years ago, a fair representation of the hired attendant on the poor in sickness. The Hospitals of London were, in many respects, noble Institutions; in others, very defective. I think it not the least among the instances of their mismanagement, that Mrs. Betsey Prig was a fair specimen of a Hospital Nurse; and that the Hospitals, with their means and funds, should have left it to private humanity and enterprise to enter on an attempt to improve that class of persons—since, greatly improved through the agency of good women.

CHARACTERS

- BAILBY JUNIOR, boots at Mrs. Todgers's Commercial Boarding-house, afterwards "tiger" to Tigg Montague.
- MR. BEVAN, a warm-hearted Massachusetts boarding-house keeper.
- JEFFERSON BRICK, war correspondent of *The New York Rowdy Journal*.
- MR. CHUFFEY, a weazen-faced old man; clerk to Anthony Chuzzlewit.
- GENERAL CYRUS CHOKE, an American militia officer.
- MAJOR HANNIBAL CHOLLOP, a "worshipper of Freedom."
- ANTHONY CHUZZLEWIT, father of Jonas, and brother of the elder Martin.
- JONAS CHUZZLEWIT, his son; a sly, cunning, scheming man.
- MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT, SENIOR, a rich and eccentric old gentleman.
- MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT, THE YOUNGER, the hero of the story; grandson of the preceding, by whom he is brought up.
- DAVID CRIMPLE, a pawnbroker; afterwards Secretary to the Anglo-Bengalee Assurance Company.
- COLONEL DIVER, editor of *The New York Rowdy Journal*.
- MR. FIPS, a lawyer.
- GENERAL FLADDOCK, a starched and punctilious American militia officer.
- DOCTOR JOHN JOBLING, medical officer to the Anglo-Bengalee Assurance Company.
- MR. LA FAYETTE KETTLE, an inquisitive, bombastic American.
- MR. LEWSOME, a degraded assistant to a London general medical practitioner.
- MR. AUGUSTUS MODDLE, the "youngest gentleman" at Mrs. Todgers's.
- MR. MOULD, an undertaker.
- MR. NADGETT, Tom Pinch's landlord, and a secret inquiry agent.
- SETH PECKSNIFF, a resident of Salisbury, ostensibly an architect and land surveyor, who receives Martin Chuzzlewit as a pupil.
- TOM PINCH, a timid and unpretentious, but high-souled man; assistant to Mr. Pecksniff.
- THE HONOURABLE ELIJAH POGRAM, a Member of Congress.
- ZEPHANIAH SCADDER, agent of the Eden Land Corporation.
- CHEVY SLYME, a poor and shiftless relative of old Martin Chuzzlewit.
- MR. SPOTTLETOE, a designing relative of old Martin Chuzzlewit.
- PAUL SWEEDLEPIPE ("Poll"), a bird-fancier and hairdresser.
- MARK TAPLEY, hostler at the Blue Dragon Inn; afterwards manservant to young Martin Chuzzlewit.

Characters

MONTAGUE TIGG. *alias* TIGG MONTAGUE, a needy sharper ; afterwards Chairman of the Anglo-Bengalee Assurance Company.

JOHN WESTLOCKE, a former pupil of Mr. Pecksniff's, and a warm friend of Tom Pinch.

MRS. JEFFERSON BRICK, an American "matron."

MRS. SAIREY GAMP, a professional nurse.

MARY GRAHAM, companion to old Martin Chuzzlewit, and betrothed to young Martin.

MRS. HOMINY, an American literary celebrity.

CHARITY PECKSNIFF ("Cherry"), Mr. Pecksniff's elder daughter ; a cold, spiteful, envious woman.

MRS. LUPIN, landlady of the Blue Dragon, a village inn near Salisbury.

MERCY PECKSNIFF ("Merry"), Mr. Pecksniff's younger daughter ; a giddy, vain, and thoughtless girl.

RUTH PINCH, a governess at Camberwell ; sister to Tom Pinch.

BETSEY PRIG, a nurse, and bosom-friend of Mrs. Gamp.

MRS. SPOTTLETOE, one of old Martin Chuzzlewit's expectant relatives.

MRS. TODGERS, keeper of a commercial boarding-house in London.