

that if she descended to this, she would be an accessory after the fact.

### III

Enough has been said to make plain the interest and the value of the *Princess of Cleves* in itself and to suggest its importance in the development of the art of fiction. All unconsciously and obeying only the promptings of her genius, Mme. de La Fayette broke new ground and enlarged the boundaries of the novel; she advanced its standards and set a profitable

example to those who followed where she had been the first to venture. The story she composed may now seem to some readers a little old-fashioned in the stiffness of its form; but it is very modern in its theme and in the permanent truthfulness of its characters. Perhaps it might be a little pedantic to proclaim that the *Princess of Cleves* is an epoch-making work; but there is no pedantry in insisting that it was the first novel in which sentiment was truthfully analysed and in which the central figure was a real woman.

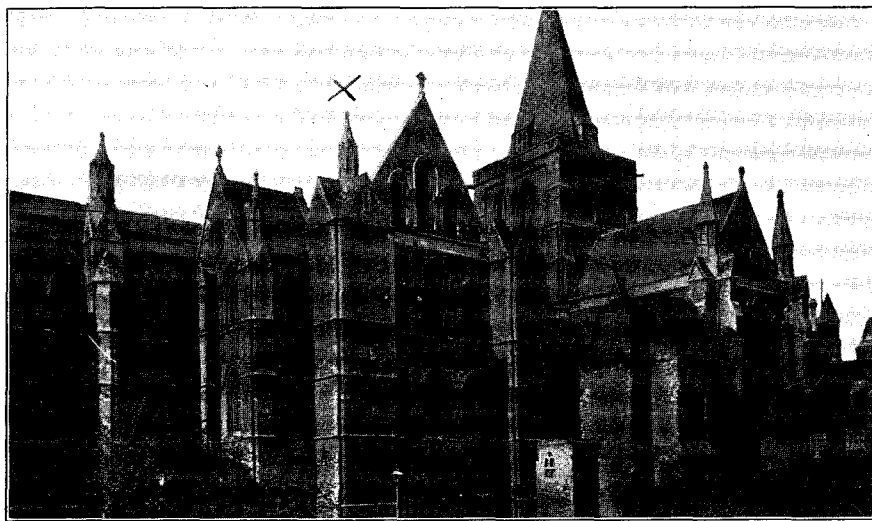
## THE CITY OF "EDWIN DROOD"

BY BURTON EGBERT STEVENSON

THE little old town of Rochester, snuggled up into the curving arm of the Medway on the Kentish border, must always be the chief place of pilgrimage for the Dickensian. It fairly reeks of Dickens; it was the scene of his first story and his last, and of many others in between. Hither Mr. Pickwick and his three companions journeyed on their first historic expedition out of London. They stopped at the Bull Hotel, still standing, practically unaltered, where their rooms may yet be seen—and even slept in! It was here that Mr. Alfred Jingle and Mr. Tracy Tupman attended a ball—in a room still used for balls—and had an altercation with Dr. Slammer of the Ninety-seventh, which involved the bewildered Mr. Winkle in a duel next day. It was in this same Bull Hotel, masquerading under the name of the Blue Boar, that Pip and Mrs. Gargery and Uncle Pumblechook and the Hubbles and Mr. Wopsle celebrated a windfall of twenty-five guineas—the price of Pip's freedom—by a great dinner, at which, rather late in the evening, Mr. Wopsle favoured with Collins's Ode, and threw his blood-stained sword in thunder down with such effect that

the commercials underneath sent a waiter up to protest.

It might be added that the Bull lives largely on its Pickwickian reputation. At either side of the wide entrance gateway is a board bearing Mr. Jingle's words, "Good house. Nice beds"; the words appear also on the bill of fare and the hotel stationery; and if one wishes to explore the place, a fee of sixpence must first be paid. One other title to fame has the Bull, and this, too, is proudly proclaimed by a board above the entrance, which informs the visitor that "Queen Victoria Stayed at This Hotel." Indeed, the inn is known officially as "The Bull and Royal Victoria Hotel," the latter part of the title having been added in 1836, when the Queen, then Princess Victoria, travelling to London with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, was overtaken by a terrific storm and forced to take refuge at the inn over night. Mr. Jingle's eulogium was pronounced by a man who had never stayed in the house, and Princess Victoria was forced to put up there against her will; so that the two principal items of its advertisement will not bear a critical examination. Never-



ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL. THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE IS IN THE CORNER TOWER MARKED WITH A CROSS

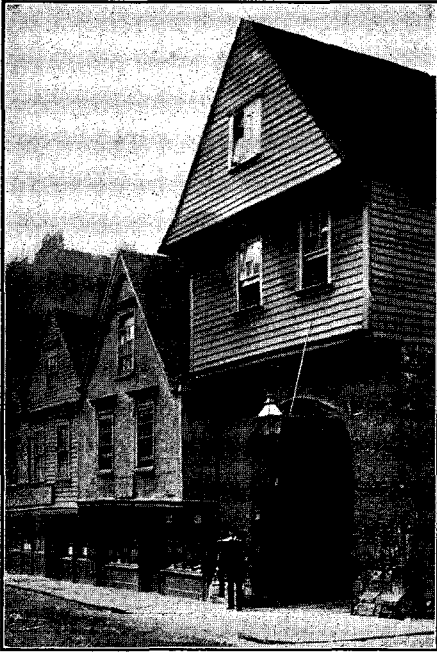
theless, it is a good house, with pleasant rooms and a beautiful stairway and a snug bar and a bright, clean coffee-room, where some of the old furniture from Gad's Hill Place has been installed, and a great yard such as one sees nowhere but in these old coaching taverns; and the pilgrim to Rochester will do well to stop there.

One must stop some days, if one wishes to exhaust the Dickens interest of the town and neighbourhood, for Dickens's tales are filled with references to Rochester under various disguises. Naturally enough, for he spent six impressionable years of childhood in the adjoining town of Chatham, and, nearly forty years later, realised a childhood dream by buying Gad's Hill Place, three miles out on the Gravesend road, where he lived until his death.

But this paper is concerned only with Rochester's connection with *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. To students of that unfinished tale—a mystery in a double sense—Rochester is exceedingly interesting, for, under the thin disguise of "Cloisterham," it is used as the scene of its principal events with remarkable exactness of detail. The action centres about the old cathedral,

itself one of the most picturesque in England, and it has always been the hope of the present writer that a careful examination of the ground might give some clue to the solution of the story which Dickens had in mind. It was his good fortune to have been able to make that examination last summer, and his further good fortune to have had as companion and guide Mr. Edwin Harris, perhaps the most famous Dickensian now living at Rochester, and the author of a number of monographs dealing with Dickens's connection with the town. If any results were to be obtained at all by a careful survey of the ground, they would have been obtained in such company; but it may as well be said at once that such results as were obtained were wholly negative. In a word, they showed that certain things could *not* have happened, but they pointed to no certain solution of the mystery.

The protagonist of *Edwin Drood*, it will be remembered, is John Jasper, choir-master of Cloisterham cathedral, and uncle of the fated Edwin. He is painted as a dark and sinister individual, addicted to opium and subject to fits—rather a stage villain, all in all,



JASPER'S GATEHOUSE

"The old gate still stands, a solid and handsome four-square piece of masonry. Above it is the little one-story-and-attic frame extension where Jasper dwelt."

scarcely convincing, and by no means so fearful as Dickens tried to make him. He lived in rooms over the old gate which shut the cathedral close from the High Street of the town. "One might fancy that the tide of life was stemmed by Mr. Jasper's own Gatehouse. The murmur of the tide is heard beyond, but no wave passes the archway, over which his lamp burns red behind the curtain, as if the building were a light-house."

This old gate still stands, a solid and handsome four-square piece of masonry, duly marked as "Jasper's Gatehouse" by a bronze plate put up by the Dickens Fellowship. Above it is the little one-story-and-attic frame extension where Jasper dwelt. It has been remodeled inside, so that the rooms no longer correspond with Dickens's description of them—perhaps they never did—but so far as the exterior goes, it has not changed since the day Dickens wrote of

it. The march of improvement, however, has swept back the houses from one side and cut a street through, so that one may now enter the close without going through the gate at all. In Dickens's day, the houses hugged it closely on both sides, and one had only to close and bar the postern gate, which still hangs on its ancient hinges, to shut off ingress effectually.

Just within the gate, on the left as one enters, is the door where Mr. Datchery was wont to sit, his white hair about his ears, to watch Jasper's comings and goings. This was the house of Mr. Tope, the verger, and one may enter it now, for a sign above the door proclaims it, in language somewhat too archaic, to be "Ye Olde Gate House Tea Shoppe." The room beyond is as quaint as could well be imagined, with its low, beamed ceiling, its uneven floor, and quite authentic air of antiquity. But if one is looking for lunch, a better one may be had at the frankly modern shop on the other side of the High Street.

A hundred paces or so beyond the gate is the old graveyard adjoining the cathedral, shut off from the street by a high iron fence. It was through this fence that "Stony" Durdles, weaving his devious way homeward with Deputy at his heels, was wont to gaze admiringly at his creations in the tombstone line—"surrounded by his works, like a popular author." "'Your own brother-in-law,'" as Durdles remarked one night to Jasper, "introducing a sarcophagus within the railing, white and cold in the moonlight. 'Mrs. Sapsea!' introducing the monument of that devoted wife. 'Late Incumbent;' introducing the Reverend Gentleman's broken column. 'Departed Assessed Taxes;' introducing a vase and towel, standing on what might represent the cake of soap. 'Former Pastrycook and Muffin-maker, much respected;' introducing gravestone. 'All safe and sound here, sir, and all Durdles's work. Of the common folk, that is merely bundled up in turf and brambles, the less said the better. A poor lot, soon forgot.'"

It is naturally for the Sapsea monu-



Photograph by the Author

## THE CRYPT

"Since then, the crypt has been swept and whitewashed, and the air of mystery quite banished"

ment that one looks. As described in the book, it must have been a sort of burial vault which one could enter, for Durdles asks Sapsea for the key, in order that he may be sure that it is shipshape inside as well as out. Many hints in the story point to the likelihood that this monument was to play a most important part; most commentators believe that it was hither Jasper dragged his nephew's body and buried it in a bed of quicklime; some believe that Edwin died there, or was already dead; others think that Durdles, on his trip of inspection, stumbled upon the still-living body, snatched it forth, and brought it back to life, to confront the would-be murderer at the end of the story. Whatever purpose it was to serve, it need only be noted here that no monument even remotely resembling that assigned to Mrs. Sapsea exists in the churchyard, or, apparently, ever has existed there. It seems to have been wholly a creature of Dickens's fancy—which, of course, only makes it the more important,

since he would scarcely have been at so much pains to imagine it in detail unless he had a very definite use for it.

Just beyond the graveyard is the west front of the cathedral, with its beautiful round-headed doorway—one of the finest Norman doorways to be seen anywhere. To gaze through it into the dim and picturesque interior is, indeed, as Mr. Grewgious declared, "like looking down the throat of Old Time"; but it is not the purpose here to deal with the architecture of this "venerable pile," except as it concerns *Edwin Drood*. From this point of view, the crypt is easily first in interest, for it was in the crypt that Durdles was constantly nosing about, turning up an "old un" now and then, or creeping into one of its dark corners to recover from the effects of a debauch; it was the crypt which Jasper carefully explored, with Durdles as guide, one moonlight night—an expedition about which Dickens sought to throw such an air of mystery and

which he called "unaccountable" so often that every one agrees it had some close connection with the plot, the most obvious explanation being that Jasper was seeking a suitable place in which to make away with his nephew and dispose of his body, and had about decided that the crypt would do.

Forty years ago, the crypt was a dark and gloomy place, half-filled with dirt and rubbish—stone fragments, old tombstones, and débris of every sort, the accumulation of centuries. The glass was broken from the narrow windows, which were yet wide enough for a small boy to squeeze through, and so the boys of the neighbourhood used the place as a kind of gang headquarters. There are many men in Rochester, now verging into the sixties, who were more familiar with it at that time than they have ever been since, and who remember distinctly its damp and earthy smell, its darkness and general air of neglect and decay. It was in this condition that it was familiar to Dickens, and it must have seemed to him a very fitting place for the commission of such a crime as the murder of Edwin Drood. Here, too, a body could have been concealed, or placed in a bed of quicklime, with very little danger of discovery except by Durdles, and every one seems to be agreed that it was by Durdles the discovery was to be made.

Since then, the crypt has been swept and whitewashed, the glass restored to the windows, and the air of mystery quite banished. Throngs of visitors, at sixpence a head, troop through it daily, under the guidance of a verger, and it would now be quite impossible to conceal anything there, as a glance at the accompanying photograph will show. So it takes some effort of the imagination to reconstruct the place as it appeared on the night of the "unaccountable expedition."

Dickens has described its progress with great detail, and one can follow it step by step. Jasper calls for Durdles at the hole in the city wall in which he lives, just back of the Travellers' Twopenny, and together they cross the Monks' Vine-

yard and come to Minor Canon Corner, and pause behind a "piece of old dwarf wall, breast high, the only remaining boundary of what was once a garden, but is now the thoroughfare," and which has long since been swept away. Then they walk on toward the cathedral along a narrow passage past the ruined cloisters which still exists, and enter the crypt by a small side door of which Durdles has the key. The door and the "rugged steps" which they descend are, of course, easily identified.

They walk up and down the crypt for some time, then mount the flight of steps leading into the nave of the cathedral, and pause while Durdles unlocks the heavy door at the top, "with the key he has already used." It is perhaps worth remarking that this door does not need a key to be opened from the inside. Indeed, a key cannot be used, as the bolt of the lock is controlled by a catch. The catch is a trick catch, as the present writer found, after he had been shut into the crypt by the verger, spent an interesting half hour there, and then tried to get out again, for it was some time before he mastered the trick and regained his liberty. The lock is very old, and the key which is needed to work it from the outside is a heavy iron one—perhaps the very one which Durdles is supposed to have carried and which Jasper examined so minutely.

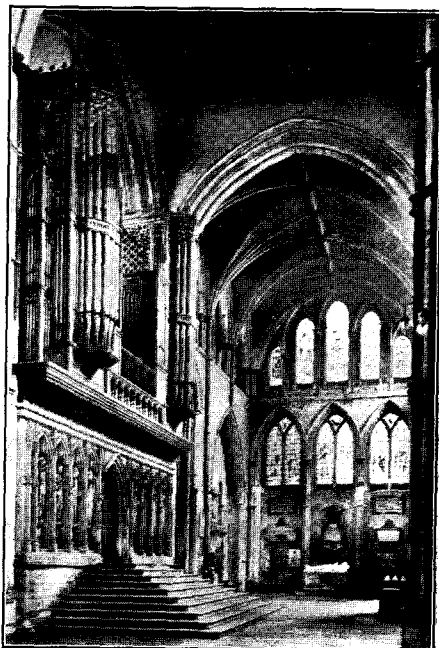
Another short flight of steps leads to the choir, which is a few feet higher than the nave, and here there is another gate, an iron one in the beautiful old choir-screen, which Durdles also unlocks. Once in the choir, they cross it diagonally to the far corner, pass through the door leading to the corner tower, and "go up the winding staircase, turning and turning, and lowering their heads to avoid the stairs above, or the rough stone pivot around which they twist. Twice or thrice," Dickens adds, "they emerge into low-arched galleries, whence they can look down into the moonlit nave." This is a curious mistake for Dickens, who had presumably been up this staircase many times, to make, for there is no open-



ing from the stairway into the triforium, nor any through which one can look down into the nave.

It has been the theory of many people that Jasper killed his nephew by pushing him from the top of this tower on the night of the great storm, after having inveigled him up there in a semi-intoxicated condition, and that he then descended and bundled the body into the crypt. A visit to the tower disproves this theory, because there is no way in which this could be done. There is no way to get out to the top of it, for it is covered by a solid four-square roof, and the single narrow door opens upon the gutter of the church-roof, which is guarded by a parapet some three or four feet high. Over the parapet at this point a body might, indeed, be thrown, and would fall a sheer hundred feet or more to the pavement below. If the body was thrown over at all, it must have been just here, for at every other point the gutters overlook the lower roofs of the aisles or of similar projections built against the main body of the church. There can be little doubt that it was from this point Jasper and Durdles looked down on Cloisterham, "fair to see in the moonlight."

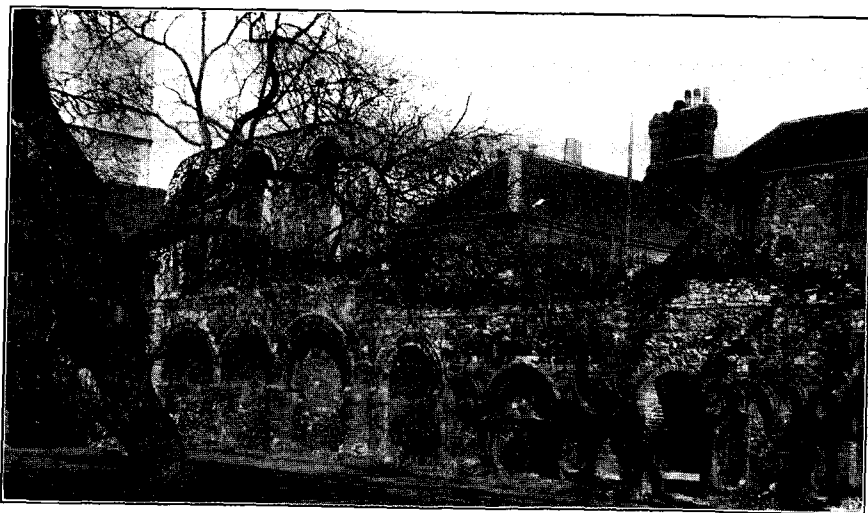
They seem to have descended without



THE CATHEDRAL TRANSEPT

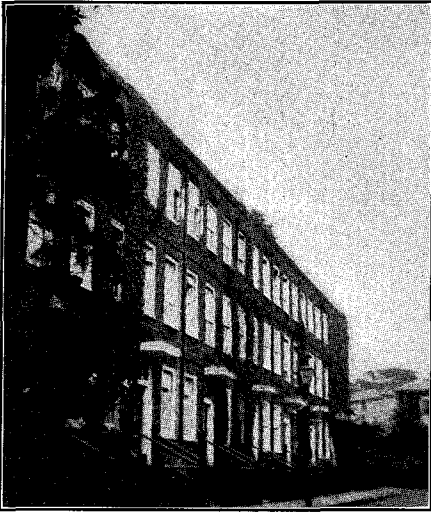
"Another short flight of steps leads to the choir, which is a few feet higher than the nave, and here there is another gate, an iron one, which Durdles also unlocks"

going any farther; but this is really only the beginning of a most interesting journey. Passing along this gutter, one en-



THE CATHEDRAL CLOSE

"They walk on toward the cathedral along a narrow passage past the ruined cloisters"



Photograph by the Author

MINOR CANON ROW

"A wonderfully quaint row of brick tenements, with odd little porches over the doors, like sounding-boards over old pulpits"

ters a little door leading into the great central tower of the church. There is a platform here, from which a long steep ladder leads to a trapdoor opening on the platform above the bells. On either side stretches a dim space, circumscribed above by the heavy timbers of the roof, and below by the rolling masses of the stone vaulting of the transepts. A narrow walk of planks spans this vaulting, and one creeps forward cautiously above the billows of stone, bending low under the great cross-timbers of the roof, and peering down into abysses masked in blackness.

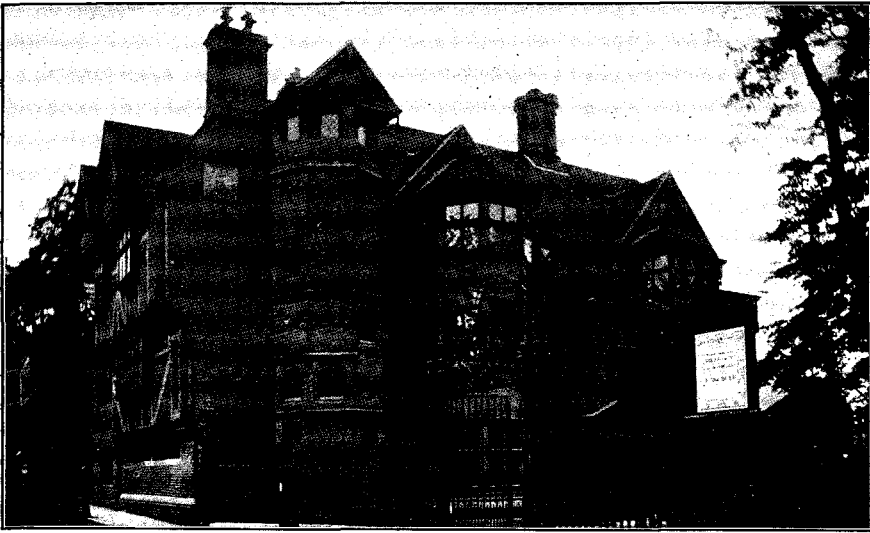
To the expert in architecture, this vaulting in reverse must be most interesting; to the student of *Edwin Drood* the thought occurs that this dark and eyrie place is more suggestive of tragedy than the crypt could ever have been, and one wonders if it was not in one of these black pits, whose depths are quite secure from any casual observation, and where even Durdles never came, that Edwin Drood's body was to be concealed, after he had been strangled with the long neckcloth. Dickens was, of course, familiar

with it, and the picture which appeared on the cover of the original issue of the story, drawn from directions given by Dickens himself, might be held to give some basis for the theory. For, at the right of the cover, is shown a spiral stair up which three men, obviously Tartar, Grewgious and Crisparkle, are hastening. It is undoubtedly the tower stair which is depicted, and the present writer has always believed that the three men were hastening in pursuit of the fleeing Jasper, who was to be captured by the agile Tartar after a fierce chase over the cathedral roof; but the cause of their haste may really be the chance discovery of the body somewhere in the dim recesses overhead. Or perhaps the conscience-stricken Jasper, drawn back to the body of his victim, as murderers so often are in fiction, and sometimes even in real life, may be all unconsciously leading them to it.

One point more. Andrew Lang hazarded the guess that Jasper might have killed his nephew by drugging him and then pushing him down the winding staircase of the tower. Any one who has been up that staircase will realise the absurdity of this, for it is so narrow and turns so sharply that no one could possibly fall down it more than a few steps.

The first turning beyond the cathedral, as one leaves it by the west door, is Minor Canon Corner, leading to Minor Canon Row, "a wonderfully quaint row of brick tenements, with odd little porches over the doors, like sounding-boards over old pulpits." In one of them—the second one from the far end, so Mr. Harris says—the athletic Crisparkle lived with his mother, and took the ill-fated Neville Landless to stay as a pupil. This row of houses is quite unchanged, as may be seen from the accompanying photograph, and is still, no doubt, inhabited by the minor canons of the cathedral.

A hundred yards farther on is a public park known as The Vines, which was once the vineyard belonging to the Priory of Saint Andrew, connected with the cathedral. That the good monks were fond of wine the size of the vineyard shows.



EASTGATE HOUSE

"It was here that Miss Twinkleton kept her Select Seminary for Young Ladies"

It is mentioned many times in *Edwin Drood*. Three days before his death, Dickens, who was finding the writing of the story unexpectedly difficult, walked over from Gad's Hill, and spent a long time in The Vines, leaning against the fence, apparently so deep in thought that he did not notice, as he certainly did not heed, the salutations of chance passers-by. That he was pondering his story cannot be doubted, for the Monks' Vineyard figures in the pages written a few hours before his death.

If one leaves The Vines by the gate in front of Restoration House and turns to the left along Crow Lane, one comes in a few minutes to the site of the "Travellers' Twopenny," as it is known in *Edwin Drood*. Its real name was "The White Duck," and Dickens certainly does not exaggerate its shady character, for its memory still survives in Rochester as a public house so disreputable that any girl seen coming out of it, or out of the alley leading to the rear entrance, lost her good name at once and forever. It was torn down many years ago.

The alley which runs back past the place leads to the fragment of the ancient

city wall, in which Stony Durdles had his abode. The yard in which his monuments were cut and polished was in front of it, and it will be remembered that, on the night Jasper paid the place a visit, he nearly stepped into a heap of quicklime.

"Ware that there mound by the yardgate, Mister Jarsper," says Durdles.

"I see it. What is it?"

"Lime."

"Mr. Jasper stops, and waits for him to come up, for he lags behind.

"What you call quicklime?"

"Ay!" says Durdles; 'quick enough to eat your boots. With a little handy stirring, quick enough to eat your bones.'"

That is all that is said about the quicklime, but the suggestion is obvious. The one thing which has puzzled the commentators is to explain how Jasper managed to get enough of the stuff to bury a body in inside the Sapsea vault, or into the crypt. Mr. Lang, or perhaps it is Mr. Proctor, suggests that Jasper spent a strenuous night wheeling it there in a barrow, and points out the emphasis which Dickens lays upon the fact that the close is absolutely silent and deserted after nightfall, so that Jasper would



stand in small danger of discovery. But to get to the close, he would have had to come out past the Travellers' Twopenny, the one place in Cloisterham where stragglers were almost certain to be encountered at any hour of the night. It is possible that Dickens may have had at the back of his mind when he began to tale some such development, but he must have abandoned it when he came to consider it more carefully.

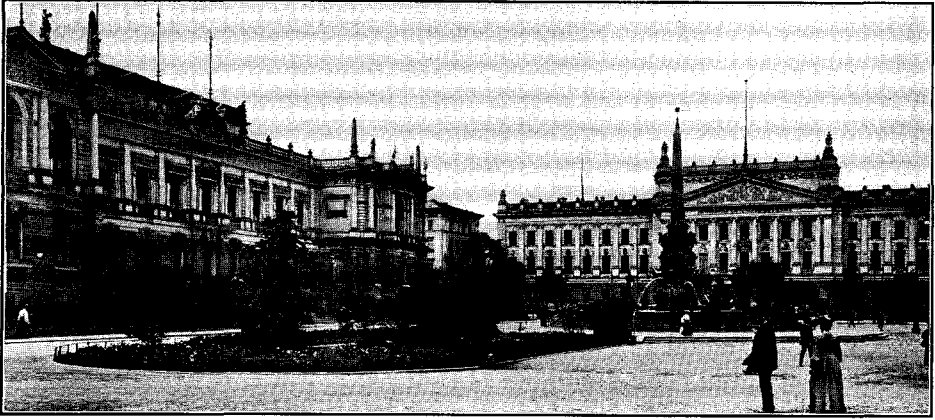
Returning to Crow Lane and proceeding on in the direction of the High Street, one presently finds one's self opposite a great, rambling, three-storied brick building, with many bays and dormers. It is known as the Eastgate House, and is now a museum owned by the town; but it is also both the Nuns' House of *Edwin Drood* and the Westgate House of the *Pickwick Papers*. It was here that Miss Twinkleton kept her Select Seminary for Young Ladies; it was here that Rosa Bud and Helena Landless went to school, and it was in the garden attached that Jasper made his violent and threatening declaration of love. It is a most interesting pile, dating from 1591; originally the mansion of a great gentleman, Sir Peter Bucke, it fell from that high estate, and for many years was really used as a school for girls. It is as a girls' school that it figures also in *Pickwick*, for it was here, one dark night, that Sam Weller boosted his portly employer over the wall, in the effort to prevent an elopement—an adventure which ended in Mr. Pickwick's discomfiture and confusion.

Just across the street is the three-storied house—each story overhanging the one below—where dwelt Mr. Sapsea,

auctioneer and mayor of Cloisterham. The date 1684 is on a shield between the gables; and, by a curious coincidence, the lower story is the office of a firm of auctioneers.

All of which shows how closely Dickens followed local topography, and how clearly he had it in mind, as he built up his tale. No doubt he fancied he could thus give an added verisimilitude to a plot sadly in need of it! Only when there was absolute necessity did he invent a detail—and its invention proves how necessary it was. For instance, there is not and never has been a weir in the river near Cloisterham. Dickens, to furnish an additional clue to the person he wished suspected of the murder, placed a weir about two miles above the town. As has been said already, there was no burial vault in the churchyard such as the one assigned to Sapsea. And the dark, mysterious, Wilkie Collinsey atmosphere which Dickens tried to throw about the cathedral precincts existed, of course, only in his imagination.

Some months ago, the present writer hazarded some conjectures, in *THE BOOKMAN*, as to the outcome of the story. The careful examination of its scene, as here outlined, has added nothing new to these, nor suggested any modification of them, except perhaps a more pronounced leaning toward the belief to which Andrew Lang, after long continued effort to find a reasonable solution, ultimately came: that Dickens himself did not see clearly how the story was to end, and had need to ride most carefully and adroitly to avoid a cropper at the last.



LEIPSIK, THE MUSEUM AND UNIVERSITY

## LITERARY LEIPSIK

BY AMELIA VON ENDE

It is curious how a slight touch of ridicule will cling and colour one's conceptions, how a word, the occasion for which has long been forgotten, may affect one's attitude after centuries have gone by. Luther was the first malefactor to cast a slur upon the good and worthy city of Leipsic, when in one of his irascible moods he tersely crystallised his impression of it in the phrase: *Lipsia lipsicit*. However little harm there was in the fact that Leipsic was wont in his time to go its own, perhaps narrow way, the phrase seemed ever after to reflect upon its character. The other malefactor was Goethe; for who does not feel the sting of satire in the words which he makes a drunken fellow say in *Faust*:

Mein Leipzig lob' ich mir,  
Es ist ein klein Paris und bildet seine Leute.  
(My Leipsic I must praise!  
It is a little Paris and educates its people.)

Somehow these two utterances, combined with the city's reputation for slowness—*Lipsia vult expectari*—at an age not yet possessed of the demon of speed, tended to solidify into a notion of a city obstinately and deliberately going its way

with an assumption of metropolitan airs—a provincial attempting the Parisian pose!

These preconceived and erroneous notions once corrected by better information and closer acquaintance, Leipsic emerges from the somewhat misleading mists of its reputation as a city with no little reason for local pride. For has it not been through its whole existence a centre of commerce and of knowledge? Leipsic without its "Messen,"—its fairs—Leipsic without its university, is a thing unthinkable. It is the fairs that have made Leipsic no less than the university, for those monster markets have given it that material prosperity which fosters intellectual ambitions and furnishes a solid foundation for ideal aspirations. Of these fairs with which Leipsic has become identified, there are three kinds: the weekly market which establishes the exchange of commodities between the city and the surrounding country and lasts only one day; the "Jahrmakrt" or annual market which lasts several days and assembles the representatives of the country's trade; and the "Messe" which attracts buyers and purchasers from far and