INHOUDSOPGAVE

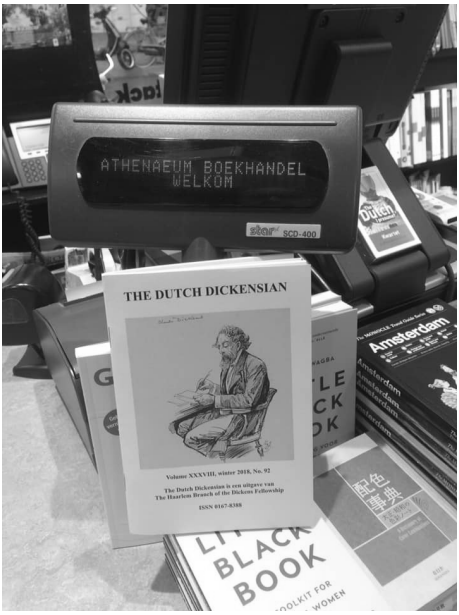
volume XXXIX, zomer 2019, No. 93

VAN DE REDACTIE

Iedere redactie wordt van tijd tot tijd geplaagd door de existentiële vraag of het blad wel gelezen wordt. Familie en vrienden willen nog wel eens een auteur complimenteren, redacties blijven gemeenlijk verstoken van zulke lof. Bescheidenheid dwingt ons verre te blijven van loftuitingen, maar toch.

In uitgeverskringen overheerst veeltijds de cynische opvatting dat slechts kopers tellen, niet lezers. Daarop valt niet veel meer af te dingen dan dat een uitgever parasiteert op de creativiteit van de schrijver. Deze riposte latend voor wat het wat het is, kan met gepaste trots gemeld worden dat de The Dutch Dickensian goed scoort in de vrije verkoop. Sinds enige tijd is onze uitgave verkrijgbaar in de gegoede boekhandel in Haarlem en Amsterdam en de verkoop draagt al bij in de exploitatiekosten.

Maar twijfel blijft of kopers ook lezers zijn. En veel hoeven het er niet te zijn. Al valt het zaad maar bij één in vruchtbare aarde. De redactie put daarbij moed uit de ontstaansgeschiedenis van de Haarlem Branch. Want was het niet Nico Andriessen, die een uitgave van The Dickensian doorbladerend op de lijst met branches stuitte en zo op de gedachte kwam van een eigen Haarlemse Branch. Deze gedachte delend met Godfried Bomans leidde dat in december 1956 tot de erkenning van de Haarlem Branch door de Fellowship.



Dus troost de redactie zich met de gedachte dat het nu voorliggende nummer een schat aan inzichten en diepgravende kennis in zich bergt, die zo niet velen dan toch in ieder geval één lezer zal aanzetten de pen ter hand te nemen en met ons lezers te delen wat al zo lang in hart en hoofd verborgen ligt.

SOCIETY OF THE 'SPECTRACLE': A STUDY OF DICKENS' GHOSTS — *Part 1: Urban Sanitation and Mental Health*

Roselinde Bouman

Introduction

Victorian society is sometimes referred to as the 'Society of the Spectacle'. It relished in the delights of Gothic spectacle, including magic lantern shows, séances and the vivid ghost stories of Charles Dickens, rendering it, perhaps, more of a Society of the 'Spectracle'. It is no secret that Dickens himself was something of a ghost enthusiast. Not only was he an avid reader of ghost stories who often included spectres in his writing, he was also an active practitioner of mesmerism and member of the London Ghost Club. At the same time, he was, like many of his contemporaries, deeply sceptical of spirituality and determined to find natural explanations for supernatural phenomena. This begs the question: to what extent did Dickens take ghosts seriously and what moved him to include them in so many of his works?

I argue that Dickens uses ghosts to assuage anxiety. After all, his ghosts often take the shape of a mentor or friend who serves as a source of comfort and absolution through moral transformation. In a series of three articles, I

Cemetery at Bunhill Fields, Finbury London 1866

will indicate various sources of anxiety in Victorian society and discuss how Dickens uses spectres to address and relieve them. This first article examines the role of these 'mentor ghosts' in relation to two main sources of Victorian anxiety: urban sanitation and mental health.

'More of gravy than of grave': the Miasma Theory

Throughout his work, Dickens campaigns for numerous social causes, including stricter laws regarding public education (e.g. *Nicholas Nickleby*, 1838), a thorough reorganisation of the bureaucratic justice system (e.g. *Bleak House*, 1853) and, in nearly all his works, better working and living conditions for the poor. He proves himself very much concerned with the urban squalor in London, describing the metropolis' poor areas in depth in both his novels and his Christmas books. *A Christmas Carol, The Chimes* and *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain* all feature expeditions to the London slums in an attempt to raise awareness to the inhumane conditions in which London's poorest citizens were living.

Dickens associated with several members of the *Board of Health* and eagerly took part in discussions regarding the influence of natural forces on the human body. It is, therefore, no coincidence that Scrooge initially tries to do away with his spiritual encounter by claiming there is *'more of gravy than of grave about [it]'*[1] Scrooge acknowledges that the senses are easily affected by bodily disorders, be they mental or physical.

The *Industrial Revolution*, with its rapid urbanisation and low wages, resulted in atrocious living standards for the poor. The London slums had much the appearance of a public sewage, as organic matter was left to accumulate in the streets, causing public space to become a breeding-ground for bacteria and disease. Furthermore, these conditions led to low life expectancy and full graveyards, causing the dead to be buried so close the surface that the decaying corpses were barely covered. The combination of organic waste in the streets and saturated graveyards gave rise to the miasma theory: the notion that decomposing organic matter produced and emitted poisonous gas, or miasma, that infected the living, causing them to fall ill and possibly die.[2] Victorian sanitarians believed this gas to be dispersed through both the air and water supplies. The idea that people were quite literally

1. Dickens, C. A Christmas Carol. London: Chapman and Hall, 1843: 44.
2. Henson, L. '"Phantoms Arising from the Scenes of Our Too-Long Neglect": Charles Dickens, Victorian Chemistry, and the Folklore of the Ghost.' Victorian Review 26.1 (2000): 6-23: 9.

'consuming' their dead neighbours, either by air or water, was both horrific and enthralling, in the sense that it led to a surge in stories of ghost-sightings near graveyards and wells. Many scientists concluded that the poisonous miasma infected people's minds, causing them to see spirits in those places where the miasma was strongest. In addition, some regarded the decomposition of the dead body into new forms of life as a scientific affirmation of an existence beyond death, and subsequently as a metaphor for the afterlife and eternal spirit.[3]

Dickens considered ghost-sightings intrinsically linked to the miasma theory. As a call for improvement of public hygiene, he published multiple essays and articles on the miasma theory in *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. An example is an article written for the All the Year Round column *'The Uncommercial Traveller'* in 1860. Dickens writes:

> *Not only in the damp February day, do we cough and sneeze dead citizens . . . but dead citizens have got into the very bellows of the organ, and half choked the same. We stamp our feet to warm them, and dead citizens arise in heavy clouds. Dead citizens stick upon the walls, and lie pulverised on the sounding-board over the clergyman's head, and, when a gust of air comes, tumble down upon him.*[4]

In this article, Dickens emphasises the impure air as a source of infectious organic matter. The water source is addressed in an anonymous article published in ATYR in that same year. Here, the author claims that '*the true ghost's walk is . . . in the basement; amongst and through foetid drains and foul sewers, the ghost's reception-chambers are the ancient cesspools, the ghost's nectar is drawn from tainted wells and neglected water cisterns'*.[5] The article poignantly concludes that the ghost-seers' *'only exorcist is the sanitary engineer'*.[6]

In the *Christmas books*, too, Dickens hints at the miasma theory as the cause of the characters' ghostly encounters. In the opening scene of *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain*, Redlaw is surrounded by *'phantoms (the reflection of glass vessels that held liquids), trembling at heart like things*

3. Idem: 8.
4. Dickens, C. 'Visit to the City Churches.' All the Year Round 5 May 1860: 85-89: 86.
5. Anonymous. 'Sanitary Science.' All the Year Round 20 Oct. 1860: 29-31: 31.
6. Idem.

that knew his power to uncombine them, and to give back their component parts to fire and vapour'.[7] The *'phantoms'* in this scene are mere reflections on the wall, but Dickens describes the chemist's liquids as if they were alive. Like the decomposing bodies that bring forth poisonous gas, the uncombining of these chemical potions will release vapours that might be hazardous to one's health. Later on in the story, Redlaw 'contracts' a curse from a ghost, which he subsequently passes on through the air to those who come near him.

In Dickens' short story *'The Signal-Man'*, the narrator remarks on the dismal working space of the titular character, claiming that *'it had an earthy, deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushed through it, that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world'*.[8] The smell in the air is *'deadly'* and the wind is so cold and strong that breathing in the air might be enough to bring one a step closer to death. In the *Carol*, Dickens again plays with the connection between vapours and phantoms when he writes:

The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.[9]

In this passage, Dickens depicts the fog as an animate object, actively attempting to infiltrate the home in its pouring, drooping and brewing. Especially this last word is telling: the air is 'brewing' with putrefying elements, successfully obscured, like its surroundings. It is no coincidence that this scene takes place in a court that is 'of the narrowest', for it was in the densely populated areas that disease was most likely to spread.

The image of wind as an animate being actively trying to get in is repeated in The Chimes, where Dickens claims:

For the night-wind has a dismal trick of wandering round and round a building of that sort [a church], and moaning as it goes; and of trying, with its unseen hand, the windows and the doors; and seeking out some crevices by

7. Dickens, C. The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain. London: Chapman and Hall, 1848: 3.
8. Dickens, C. 'No. 1 Branch Line: The Signal-Man.' 1866. Christmas Stories. London: Chapman and Hall, 1894: 28.
9. Dickens, C. A Christmas Carol: 10.

which to enter . . . Anon, it comes up stealthily, and creeps along the walls, seeming to read, in whispers, the Inscriptions sacred to the Dead. At some of these, it breaks out shrilly, as with laughter; and at others, moans and cries as if it were lamenting. It has a ghostly sound too, lingering within the altar; where it seems to chaunt, in its wild way, of Wrong and Murder done, and

The Chimes

false Gods worshipped.[10]

Again, the wind, fog or air, argua-bly rising from the grave-yard, pene-trates the building and in this case, is endowed with a voice to whisper, laugh and chaunt with, thus em-ha-sising its anima-tion. Dickens al-most immediately connects the wind to the dead, by letting it creep into the church vaults and read out the inscriptions found therein. Like traditional ghosts, the wind has a message: it comes to lament on murder and wrongdoings, as if it has 'unfinished business'.

Arguably, Dickens' interest in ghostly phenomena was intimately bound up with his social activism. In drawing attention to the miasma theory in his ghost stories and journalism, he advocated for sanitary reform and improved living standards for the London poor.

10. Dickens, C. The Chimes. London: Chapman and Hall, 1844: 3.

'It's all in your mind': Ghosts and Psychology

Chemistry was not the only scientific explanation for supernatural occurrences. Victorian psychologists and mental philosophers interpreted ghost-sightings as manifestations of mental illness. The new approach was inspired by the miasma theory. After all, psychologists reasoned, the poisonous vapours that people constantly breathed in were likely to affect the mind. This theory did not dismiss supernatural phenomena as illusion or deceit, but regarded them as manifestations of the victim's state of mind.

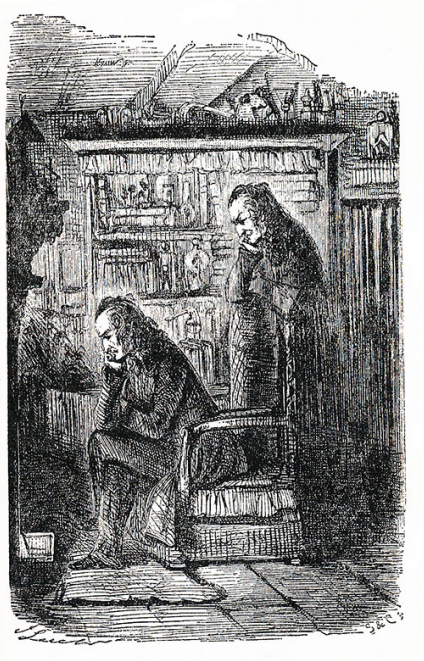
Dickens' fiction is saturated with psychological or 'didactic' ghosts. Didactic ghosts are spiritual mentors that help people like Scrooge assuage their mental distress. *'Woe is me!'* Marley's ghost laments.[11] It is not only his woeful afterlife that he refers to, but Scrooge's state of mind: Marley is the embodiment of Scrooge's woe. It is no coincidence that the apparition takes the shape of his deceased friend Jacob Marley. To a large extent, Scrooge and Marley can be considered the same person. Scrooge is Marley's *'sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner'*.[12] They were 'kindred spirits' who shared a business and when Marley passed away Scrooge moved into his apartments.[13] Seven years after his death, Marley's name still stands above the door of their counting house and Scrooge is often mistaken for him and *'answered to both names. It was all the same to him'*.[14] In my view, Scrooge's mental distress is a direct cause of his unconscious desire for moral transformation. To alleviate his dread of confronting this desire, Scrooge's mind gives the apparition the shape of his sole friend, the man most like himself. This friend, the manifestation of Scrooge's unconscious, will act as a mentor to point Scrooge into the right direction.

In contrast, Scrooge's mind has much more difficulty in letting the three unfamiliar Christmas spirits manifest. When the first spirit visits him, Scrooge does not know what to imagine, and sees *'a strange figure—like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man . . . now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body'*.[15] The second ghost takes the familiar shape of father

11.Dickens, C. A Christmas Carol: 18.
12. Idem: 9.
13. Idem: 12.
14. Idem: 9.
15. Idem: 24.

Christmas and the third ghost, who prefigures Scrooge's death, is conveniently shaped like the Grim Reaper. When their object is fulfilled and Scrooge has successfully transformed, there is *'an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost'*.[16] Scrooge has acknowledged his unconscious desires and is no longer in need of his mentor-ghosts, which consequently cease to be manifested.

We see the same concept at work in *The Chimes* and *The Haunted Man*. These three stories present us with ghosts that take familiar shapes: the self, a trusted friend or, in Scrooge's case, something in between. The familiarity gives rise to uncanny feelings, but nevertheless have a comforting effect that makes the characters more inclined to trust and follow their example. In *The Chimes*, Veck is reproached by the very bells who have often kept him company during his lonely work hours. In fact, Veck admits that *'perhaps he was the more curious about these Bells, because there were points of resemblance between themselves and him'*.[17] Veck drives at the fact that, like him, the bells are out in all weathers and remain in the same place whilst other people walk by. Yet, there might be more to this statement: a subtle allusion to the connection between the physical bells and the spiritual bells in his mind.



The Haunted Man and The Ghost's Bargain

In *The Haunted Man*, Redlaw is not visited by a friend, but by a double; *'an awful likening of himself'*.[18] The phantom Redlaw encounters is a manifestation of his soul or unconscious. As Redlaw's thoughts darken, the spirit grows clearer, and it is when Redlaw is alone and completely lost in thought that the phantom manifests. Despite his

16. Idem: 62.
17. Dickens, C. The Chimes: 5.
18. Idem: 12.
19. Idem: 51.

terrifying appearance, the double is a didactic ghost, causing Redlaw to refer to him as his *'terrible instructor'*.[19] Redlaw hears the ghost whisper and realises it is the echo of his own thoughts.[20] Once he has been redeemed, his neighbours discuss the authenticity of his ghostly visit, some claiming that *'the Ghost was but the representation of his gloomy thoughts'*.[21] Dickens closes the paragraph with the tantalising comment : *'I say nothing'*.[22] He has a habit of leaving the reader guessing as to whether the ghostly encounters are dream or reality.

Let there be Light

The final point I wish to make regards Dickens' use of light as a metaphor for the characters' enlightenment. When Scrooge sees Marley's apparition in the doorknob, the face has 'a dismal light around it' and the Ghost of Christmas Past has 'a bright clear jet of light' shining from the crown of its head. Later, Scrooge gets cold feet and tries to block the spirits out by extinguishing this light. Dickens writes:

'Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!' In the struggle, if that can be called a struggle in which the Ghost with no visible resistance on its own part was undisturbed by any effort of its adversary, Scrooge observed that its light was burning high and bright; and dimly connecting that with its influence over him, he seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head. The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, ***he could not hide the light****: which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground. He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness.*[23]

Scrooge connects the light with the ghost's influence over him, realising that the light stands for his own acceptance to let the ghosts manifests as advocates for his transformation. When he tries to shut his eyes to his new-found knowledge, he tries to extinguish the light, but, having already seen and realised too much, finds himself incapable of doing so. The ghost, a token of

20. Idem: 15.
21. Idem: 67.
22. Idem.
23. Dickens, C. A Christmas Carol: 34, emphasis mine.
24. The light metaphor reoccurs in The Chimes, when Veck sees 'the darkness of the night-black steeple changed to shining light; when and how the solitary tower was peopled with a myriad figures' (page 34). The 'myriad figures' being the spirits of the tower bells.

Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present

his willingness to change, is covered by the extinguisher, a metaphor for Scrooge's doubts and fear, but the light cannot be stopped.[24] The effort leaves Scrooge severely fatigued, even though the ghost did not resist, for he was in fact fighting himself; his own unconscious mind. When Scrooge fully realises the benefit of adhering to the ghosts' lesson, *'he resolved to treasure up every word he heard, and everything he saw; and especially to observe the **shadow of himself** when it appeared'*.[25] The 'shadow' that Dickens mentions here might be a play on words: it can refer to the dark side of Scrooge's character, that he is aiming to overcome, or to the actual shadow, or phantom, standing next to him: the em-bodiment of his thoughts.

To conclude

This article has aimed to shown how Dickens uses didactical ghosts to address and alleviate anxieties related to urban sanitation and mental health. In writing, the author himself takes on the role of guide and mentor to us, the reader. As he writes in *A Christmas Carol*: Scrooge is *'as close to it [the ghost] as I [Dickens] am now to you, and I am standing in the **spirit** at your elbow'*.[26] His ghost stories are a vehicle to advocate for a cause close to his heart: better living conditions for his fellow men, both in body and in mind.

25. Dickens, C. A Christmas Carol: 54, emphasis mine.
26. Dickens, C. A Christmas Carol. London: Chapman and Hall, 1843: 24. Emphasis mine.

DICKENS'S VIEWS ON UNORTHODOX MEDICINE (PART 1) — *A voyage between John Elliotson and Thomas Wakley*

Ernst van der Wall

SUMMARY

Both in his personal and in his imaginary life, Charles Dickens showed a strong tendency towards unorthodox non-regular medicine. In Dickens's time, the mainstay of regular treatment consisted of an uncritical approach of bleeding, purging, vomiting and the intake of useless potions. Consequently, there was much in every-day 19th century medicine to generate a healthy skepticism, reason why many individuals sought their salvation in unorthodox medicine. Many medical practitioners shared Dickens's distrust of current remedies and were sympathetic to his enquiring mind and reforming zeal. As a consequence, Dickens felt more attracted by the eccentric unorthodox physician John Elliotson than by the dogmatic orthodox physician Thomas Wakley. Of course, Dickens also adhered to regular medicine and its advances, mainly when these developments contributed to the social well-being of the general population. In that sense he followed the track of Thomas Wakley. Since Dickens was friends with both Wakley and Elliotson, he navigated between customary traditional and nonconformist untraditional medicine.

Because of Dickens's great affinity for unconventional medical practices, the focus of the current essay was on the nonconformist approaches of the 19th century such as phrenology, mesmerism, hydropathy, homeopathy, and galvanism. Apart from that, attention was paid to the customary practice of bloodletting and to the phenomenon of spontaneous human combustion, as these were medical occurrences that Dickens used to address in his novels. In particular spontaneous human combustion was given attention, being an eccentric magical curiosity to which Dickens felt a great attraction. In the present essay each approach was presented by four different paragraphs. First, a general overview of the explicit approach was given, unfolding the state-of-the-art knowledge and its application in Dickens's time. Secondly, Dickens's view on and/or experience with the specific medical practice was reported. Thirdly, the way Dickens incorporated and elaborated these alternative medi-

cal approaches in his novels - and, if appropriate, in his weekly magazines - were extensively described. Lastly, the history and course of these presumed remedies in the post-Dickens era till present time were evaluated.

It turned out that Dickens was very much fascinated by the unorthodox medical practices of his time. He strongly believed in these approaches which he largely employed and applied in his own life. Apart from his personal experiences, Dickens extensively incorporated these practices in his novels. Of interest, although many of the nonconformist approaches were already considered as pseudoscience in Dickens's time, it was rather striking to ascertain that most of these practices are still very much alive in the 21th century.

To summarize, on one hand, Dickens followed the orthodox Wakley primarily in his endeavors to establish medical, humanitarian, and social welfare. On the other hand, Dickens clearly stuck to the beliefs of the nonconformist Elliotson to ingest the magical aura of 'fringe' medicine in his novels.

N.B. Due to space limitations, the manuscript has been divided into two parts.

In Part 1, after a general introduction and a description of medical science in Dickens's era and his personal interests, attention is paid to the every-day 19th century medical practice of bloodletting, and to the unorthodox medical approaches of phrenology and mesmerism. In the last chapter of Part 1, the medical curiosity of spontaneous human combustion is dealt with.

In Part 2, the untraditional approaches of homeopathy, hydropathy, and galvanism are discussed. At the end of Part 2, an elaborate general discussion is provided, dwelling on and speculating about Dickens's perceptions and interpretations of the medical approaches in his time.

Introduction

Both in his private life and in his novels, Charles Dickens showed a strong tendency towards unorthodox or 'fringe' medicine. In particular in the first half of the 19th century, this tendency was largely based on the lack of scientifically proven remedies and the inherent wish for new medical approaches. At that time, the mainstay of regular treatment consisted of an uncritical approach of bleeding, purging, vomiting and the intake of useless potions (1). Consequently, there was certainly much in orthodox medicine to generate a healthy skepticism. Many medical practitioners shared Dickens's distrust of

current remedies and were sympathetic to his enquiring mind and reforming zeal (2). The starting points for new orthodox medical and public health approaches - such as applying anesthetics and antiseptics, combating cholera and tuberculosis, stimulating smallpox vaccination, and improving sanitation - only took place in the late 1840s and the decades thereafter. Most of these advances were encountered with the necessary reluctance and were therefore introduced at a slow pace. In fact, the great explosive period of medical advances was to occur after Dickens's death in 1870. It is therefore not surprising that the medical practices which initially attracted his medical interest were of unorthodox nature. Evidently, both in his personal and fictional life, Dickens had a great desire for novel adventurous medical practices. Out of all the unorthodox approaches, he showed great affinity for mesmerism and spontaneous human combustion. In Dickens's standard biographies most attention is paid to mesmerism and his own mesmeric practices (3-9).

Particular consideration to Dickens's compassion with unorthodox approaches is given by Joanne Eysell[1] in her comprehensive and impressive PhD thesis from 2005 entitled 'A Medical Companion to Dickens's Fiction' (10). In one of her chapters (Ch. 8), Eysell devotes three distinct paragraphs to homeopathy, mesmerism, and phrenology, respectively; Chapter 9 is fully dedicated to Dickens's fascination with spontaneous human combustion.

In this survey, I will 1) predominantly focus on the so-called unorthodox approaches of the 19th century, 2) show Dickens's affinity for these novel non-traditional practices in his personal life, 3) demonstrate the way Dickens elaborated these approaches in his novels and, if appropriate, in his weekly magazines, and 4) evaluate the history and course of these presumed cures in the post-Dickens era till present time. Prior to this evaluation, a short overview is given of the status of health and medicine in Dickens's time.

Medical Science in Dickens's Era

At the turn of the 19th century, quite a few important medical discoveries had already been made. The anatomical structure of the human body was almost completely understood thanks to post-mortem studies by the Italian artist, scientist, and inventor Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), and to microscopy developed by the Dutch scientist Anthony van Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723). The

1. Joanne Eysell, PhD. Scholar in English Literature at the Open University in England. Eysell works as a medical translator.

Scottish physician John Hunter (1728–1793) - one of the most distinguished anatomists and surgeons of his time - was an early advocate of careful observation and scientific methods in medicine (11). Much more interesting than purely anatomical knowledge was the growing understanding of physiological processes within the human body. The English physician William Harvey (1578-1657) was the first to in detail describe the systemic circulation and the properties of blood being pumped to the brain and body by the heart. The Dutch physician Herman Boerhaave (1668–1738) introduced the quantitative approach being the first physician to put thermometer measurements to clinical practice. The so-called *"Dutch Hippocrates*" is usually regarded as the founder of clinical teaching and often referred to as *"the Father of Physiology",* his motto being *'simplex sigillum veri'* (i.e. the simple is the sign of the true).

In the late 1700s, several potentially new medical treatments had been put forward. In 1785, the English botanist and physician William Withering (1741-1799) published *"An Account of the Foxglove*", the first systematic description of digitalis in treating dropsy (i.e. accumulation of water in the lower limbs due to heart failure). In 1790, the German physician Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843) fulminated against the prevalent practice of bloodletting as a universal cure and launched homeopathy in 1796, the same year in which the English physician Edward Jenner (1749-1823) developed a smallpox vaccination method, which became compulsory in England and Wales in 1853.

In spite of these promising developments, there were still a lot of traditional ideas about the human body at the beginning of the 19th century (1). Women were regarded as smaller versions of men, and *'turned outside in*', i.e. with internal rather than external sexual organs. Male sexual *'excess*' was said to result in debility, and female reproductive health was considered to be damaged by intellectual study. The ideas of many medical practitioners had not altered much since the time of Hippocrates. For instance, there was still a strong belief in humourism (*sive* humouralism) which had been initiated by Hippocrates (460-370 BC) and further propagated by the Greek-Roman physician Galenus (129-210). Humourism was based on the concept that the health of a patient was dependent on an adequate balance between the four existing internal humours i.e. blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile (*vide infra*). When these were out of balance the patients could best be treated by bloodletting, cupping or direct application of leeches (see also Chapter on

Bloodletting). Apart from the long-existing 'treatment' by bloodletting, new unorthodox medical practices saw the light in the 19th century, such as phrenology (craniometry, physiognomy), mesmerism (magnetism, hypno-tism), homeopathy, hydropathy (hydrotherapy, balneotherapy), spontaneous human combustion, and galvanism (electrotherapy). Yet, the Victorian prescription for many ailments often and simply remained: 'to the coast and rest'.

Dickens's Interest in Medical Science

Dickens appears to have been quite interested in medical science and its achievements, and he carefully followed its evolution (10). He was aware of the work of William Harvey as testified by the following passage derived from his novel *Hard Times (*1854): when the schoolmaster Gradgrind asks his student Bitzer *"whether he has a heart"*, Bitzer replies: *"'No man, sir, acquainted with the facts established by Harvey relating to the circulation of the blood, can doubt that I have a heart.*" *'Is it accessible,' cried Mr. Gradgrind, 'to any compassionate influence?' 'It is accessible to Reason, sir,' returned the excellent young man. 'And to nothing else'".*(Ch. 8, 'Philosophical'). Dickens was also acquainted with the medical achievements of the anatomist John Hunter. In 1850 two articles appeared in Dickens's weekly magazine *Household Words* following visits to the *Royal College of Surgeons* in Lincolns Inn Fields, London. The first article on 10 August 1850 was entitled: *'What there is in the roof of the College of Surgeons'*,[2] which was based on the work of John Hunter, providing intimate details of how the various anatomical specimens were prepared in the attic of the College prior to moving them down to the Hunterian Museum on the ground floor.[3] The second article in *Household Words*, entitled *'The Hunterian Museum'*,[4] published on 14 December 1850, described the sight that welcomed visitors immediately entering the museum – *'the relics of the huge monsters who roved in the primeval wilds*

2. *Household Words.* 10 August 1850. What there is in the roof of the College of Surgeons. Volume I, pages 464-477.The article was written by Frederick Knight Hunt (1814–1854). English journalist and author, who wrote 20 articles for *Household Words*, contributing in particular on anatomical exhibitions. Hunt's only important writing is The Fourth Estate: Contributions towards a History of Newspapers, from 1850.

3. The Hunterian Museum belonged to the Royal College of Surgeons. From 1849-1856 the famous anatomist Sir Richard Owen (1804-1892), a great friend of Dickens, was conservator of the Hunterian Museum. Apart from their common interest in anatomy, they shared their interest in public health of the city of London.

4. Household Words. 14 December 1850. The Hunterian Museum. Volume II, pages 277-282. Article written by Frederick Knight Hunt.

of our earth long before the Flood'. Dickens had knowledge of the medical textbook composed by the Scottish physician William Buchan (1729–1805), entitled *"Domestic Medicine: or, a Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases by Regimen and Simple Medicines*". This educational book from 1769 (second edition 1828) provided laymen with detailed descriptions of the causes and prevention of diseases. In *Little Dorrit* (1857) we meet Mrs. Tickit, cook and housekeeper to the Meagles family, who, after the family has left the house, *"established herself in the breakfast room, put her spectacles between two particular leaves of Doctor Buchan's Domestic Medicine and sat looking over the blind all day until they came back again. It was supposed that no persuasion could be invented which would induce Mrs. Tickit to abandon her post at the blind, however long their absence, or to dispense with the attendance of Dr. Buchan; the lucubrations of which learned practitioner, Mr. Meagles implicitly believed she had never yet consulted to the extent of one word in her life."* (Ch. 16, 'Nobody's weakness').

Not only in his novels but also in Dickens's weekly magazine *Household Words* quite a few articles referred to the increasing knowledge of anatomy and physiology at Dickens's time. The *'Laboratory In The Chest'*[6] discussed the respiration and circulation in the human body, *'Man Magnified'*[7]described the microscopic evaluation of hairs, teeth, skin, fat, and blood, while the article entitled *'Our Own Temperature'*[8] studied the temperature of the human body, stating - amongst others - that *"Original writing or study, or any intellectual effort, raises the temperature of the body even more decidedly than bodily exertion"!*

Dickens's scientific interests went further than only his concerns with

5. Adrienne Elizabeth Gavin. Doctor of Philosophy. *The anatomy of Charles Dickens: a study of bodily vulnerability in his novels.* PhD Thesis. University of British Columbia, April 1994.

6. *Household Words*. 7 September 1850. The Laboratory In The Chest. Volume I, pages 565-569. Article written by Percival Leigh (1813-1898), medical student at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, who abandoned the medical profession for writing. Leigh contributed altogether 11 articles to Dickens's *Household Words.*

7. Household Words. 27 September 1851. Man Magnified. Volume IV, pages 13-15. Article written by Frederick Knight Hunt (see footnote 2).

8. Household Words. 18 September 1852. Our Own Temperature. Volume VI, pages 11-12. Article written by Henry Morley (1822-1878), English academic, one of the earliest professors of English literature in Great Britain. He was asked by Dickens to contribute to his weekly magazine (1851-1859) who gave him a staff post. Morley, who had studied medicine at King's College, London, mainly wrote on medical subjects. He published 410 articles in Household Words (4 in All the Year Round), more than any other writer, including Dickens.

medical advances; he was very much interested in optics, astronomy, visualization by a kaleidoscope, a magic lantern, and an early Victorian telescope, similar to the one he owned. Dickens was fascinated by Michael Faraday's[9] theory on electromagnetic currents and he valued the evolutionary theory propagated by Darwin in his book *On the Origin of Species* from 1859 (12).

In the 1830s Dickens became familiar with the radical Londoner surgeon Mr. Thomas Wakley (1795-1862) (Figure 1),[10] who in 1823 became the founding Editor of *The Lancet* (13), still today one of the most prestigious medical journals worldwide.

In his maiden editorial in *The Lancet* of 5 October 1823, Wakley marked *"We hope the age of 'Mental Delusion' has passed, and that mystery and concealment will no longer be encouraged. Indeed, we trust that mystery and ignorance will shortly be considered synonymous. Ceremonies and signs, have now lost their charms; hieroglyphics, and gilded serpents, their power to deceive"*. This clearly shows Wakley's aversion to un-orthodox, non-regular and pseudo-scientific medical practices (14). Dickens knew Wakley quite well and he regularly visited his house where he was often entertained by Wakley (15). They shared their views on social evils, injustice and hypocrisy in Victorian England; both criticized the London medical establishment plagued by corruption and incompetence (16). In his role as *'Her Majesty's Coroner'*, Wakley worked closely together with Dickens, who acted as a socially engaged jury member in several questionable mortality cases (17). In January 1840 Dickens served as juryman at an inquest at Marylebone Workhouse on a case of a

Figure 1. Mr. Thomas Wakley (1795-1862)

9. Michael Faraday (1791-1867). English scientist and chemist who contributed to the study of electromagnetism and electrochemistry. Faraday's main discoveries include the principles underlying electromagnetic induction, diamagnetism and electrolysis.
10. Portrait of Thomas Wakley. www.ph.ucla.edu

young mother suspected of infanticide, who fortunately was exonerated after Dickens's plea. It seems plausible to assume that Dickens took regular notice of *The Lancet* (18). He financially supported the Lancet Sanitary Commission of 1866,[11] a specially appointed committee investigating the miserable circumstances in the London Working Houses. Actually, the best testimony for the novelist's interest in everyday-medicine is his keen observation of diseased or disabled human beings. There is virtually no other author of the 19th century, who described the physical deformities and mental illnesses of his characters with such a meticulous precision and compassion as Dickens did, which has emphatically been pointed out by the well-known British neurologist Lord Walter Russell Brain (1895–1966) (19).

On the reverse side of the medical coin, Dickens maintained a healthy skepticism towards orthodox doctors and their conventional daily-practice medicine. For the most part, this skeptical attitude was based on the acquaintance in 1838 with his future family physician and friend Dr. John Elliotson (1791-1868), working at St. Thomas Hospital in London, who in the early decades of the 19th century introduced many of the afore-mentioned unorthodox non-traditional approaches (Figure 2).

The charismatic and ambitious Elliotson was most anxious to tackle the old-fashioned way in which medicine was performed in those days. Initially, he found a close partner in Thomas Wakley, who also wanted to fight corruption and malpractice in hospitals and medical schools. However, Elliotson's strong belief in unorthodox medicine as new promising panaceas, such as phre-nology and mesmerism, became fiercely opposed by the conventional practitioners. The noncon-formist views of Elliotson divided the medical pro-

11. On 4 November 1865, Ernest Hart, co-editor of The Lancet, had dedicated a specific Lancet-Editorial to Dickens's engagement with the sick and the poor, entitled "Our Mutual Friend". Hart cites from a piece of Dickens' own testimony in Our Mutual Friend (1865, Ch. 18), which was published as a Postscript instead of a Foreword."The records in our newspapers, the late exposure by THE LANCET, and the common sense and senses of common people, furnish too abundant evidence against both defenses. But, that my view of the Poor Law may not be mistaken or misrepresented, I will state it. I believe there has been in England, since the days of the STUARTS, no law so often infamously administered, no law so often openly violated, no law habitually so ill-supervised. In the majority of the shameful cases of disease and death from destitution, that shock the public and disgrace the country, the illegality is quite equal to the inhumanity— and known language could say no more of their lawlessness.". The quotation was preceded by the following comments of Hart: 'We are especially glad to find at our side Charles Dickens, the earnest and warm-hearted opponent of social tyranny, one of the truest and most powerful friends of the oppressed, whether in the middle or lower ranks of life…"

fession into 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' medicine, which allowed his medical opponents, of whom Thomas Wakley became one of the most critical ones, to severely attack him. Because of these divergent views, embodied by Wakley and Elliotson – both highly respected by Dickens - Dickens navigated between the Scylla of 'orthodox' classical medicine and the Charybdis of 'unorthodox' medical practices.

Figure 2. Dr. John Elliotson (1791-1868)12

Bloodletting

Let's first address the phenomenon of bloodletting, which was common practice in Dickens's days. As indicated before, Hippocrates postulated that the human body consisted of four humours: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. If any of these four humours were out of balance, serious illness would result. To restore the balance, bloodletting - as a byproduct of humourism - became the treatment of choice (Figure 3). The bleeding practice - by direct phlebotomy (venesection), cupping, or by application of leeches (blood-sucking segmented worms) - was recommended by John Hunter who considered bleeding to be beneficial in smallpox and gonorrhea. In case of doubt, Hunter recommended the use of leeches to the scrotum for swelling of the testicles due to gonorrhea. However, the procedure lacked any scientific background and bloodletting did even result in serious fatalities.

The first American President George Washington (1732-1799) died one day after taking half of his blood volume (no less than 3.75 liter) because of a

12. Portrait of John Elliotson. www.en.wikipedia.org

sore throat. Also the early deaths of Russian Tsar Alexander I (1777-1825) and the British poet Lord Byron (1788-1824) were due to bloodletting. Nevertheless, it remained a widely applied medical practice even throughout the 19th century. In the 1830s, the French imported about forty million leeches a year for medical purposes and in the next decade, England imported six million leeches a year from France alone (1).

Figure 3. Bloodletting in 1860. One of only three known photographs of the procedure
Illustration from Burns Archive. www.burnsarchive.com

Dickens's Experience with Bloodletting

As bloodletting was a widely accepted procedure, Dickens himself underwent

this approach at several moments in his life. He writes in several letters of having been or having to be bled. Around 30 November 1835, he wrote to his future wife Catherine Hogarth *"My dearest Katie, I was very unwell all last night (...) Should I not be quite well tomorrow, I think I will make up my mind to be bled without delay"* (20)[13]. On 4 July 1849, Dickens wrote to his publisher and friend Frederick Evans when lying on his sofa *"I got an awkward fall on Sunday on my weak side (the only "weak side" I have, is the left, where there is an inflamed kidney sometimes) and yesterday I was obliged to be cupped and lose a good deal of blood, and today – for a change – I am being blistered*" (20)[14].

Bloodletting in Dickens's Novels

Given the description of bloodletting practices in his novels, Dickens had not a very high opinion of the procedure, or at least he gave a Dickensian twist to the procedure, presenting the bloodletting approach in a satiric way, or rather, as a black medical humor. This is nicely shown by the "bleeding" case that Dr. Kutankumagen presented at the first meeting of the Mudfog Association of the Section of Anatomy and Medicine (*Mudfog and other Sketches*, 1837-1838)[15]. This pseudoscientific association was based on the *British Association for the Advancement of Science,* founded in York in 1831, and heartily parodied by Dickens. The Mudfog Association has two separate Sections: Section A is dedicated to Zoology and Botany, and Section B to Anatomy and Medicine. In Section B, there are doctors with beautiful and bizarre names such Mr. Knight Bell, Professors Muff and Nogo, Dr. Toorell, Dr. Grummidge, Dr. Soemup, Mr. Pipkin, Dr. Neeshawts, and Dr. Kutankumagen from Moscow[16] (Figure 4).

Dr. Kutankumagen presented a case of a patient who was *"stout and muscular*" with *"his cheeks plump and red, his voice loud, his appetite good, his pulse full and round. He laughed constantly, and in so hearty a manner that it was terrible to hear him."* The attendant doctor treated him *"by dint of powerful medicine, low diet, and bleeding,"* with the result that within a month he needed to be *"carried downstairs by two nurses, and to enjoy an ai-*

13. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume One 1820-1839, page 99.
14. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Five 1847-1849, page 563.
15. The Mudfog and other Sketches were published from 1837 to 1838 in the monthly literary journal Bentley's Miscellany, edited by Dickens. In 1880, the Mudfog Papers were published as a book under the title The Mudfog Papers and Other Sketches.
16. See also Chapter on Mesmerism.

ring in a closed carriage, supported by soft pillows," and *"he ate little, drank little, slept little, and was never heard to laugh by any accident whatever."* Other members congratulated the speaker *"upon the triumphant cure",* and Dr. Neeshawts commented: *" 'If the patient had not submitted to be bled with great readiness and perseverance, so extraordinary a cure could never, in fact, have been accomplished.' Dr. Kutankumagen rejoined 'Certainly not'."*[17]

In *Pickwick Papers (1837)*, there are two hilarious scenes addressing the 'beneficial' effects of bleeding. The first scene describes an unfortunate clash on the ice of Mr. Wardle's frozen pond between Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Winkle *"at the very moment when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they both fell heavily down. Mr. Pickwick ran to the spot. Bob Sawyer had risen to his feet, but Mr. Winkle was far too wise to do anything of the*

Figure 4. Automaton Police Officer and the Real Offenders. "Full Report of the Second Meeting of the Mudfog Association — From the model exhibited before Section B of the Mudfog Association" in Bentley's Miscellany, Volume 4, September 1838. Original illustration by George Cruikshank (Ref: SC 04906). Palace Green Library, Durham University www.dur.ac.uk

17. Mudfog and other Sketches (1837-1838). Full Report of the First Meeting of The Mudfog Association for The Advancement of Everything. Section B. Anatomy and Medicine. Coach House, Pig and Tinder-Box. President – Dr. Toorell. Vice-Presidents – Professors Muff and Nogo.

kind, in skates. He was seated on the ice, making spasmodic efforts to smile; but anguish was depicted on every lineament of his countenance. 'Are you hurt?' inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety. 'Not much,' said Mr. Winkle, rubbing his back very hard. 'I wish you'd let me bleed you,' said Mr. Benjamin, with great eagerness" (Figure 5, Ch. 30).

In a next scene, Mr. Pickwick falls through the ice when skating on the frozen pond as a result of which Mr. Bob Sawyer advises all the attendants to be bled. *"It was at this moment, when old Wardle and Sam Weller were approaching the hole with cautious steps, and Mr. Benjamin Allen was holding a hurried consultation with Mr. Bob Sawyer on the advisability of bleeding the company generally, as an improving little bit of professional practice — it was at this very moment, that a face, head, and shoulders, emerged from beneath*

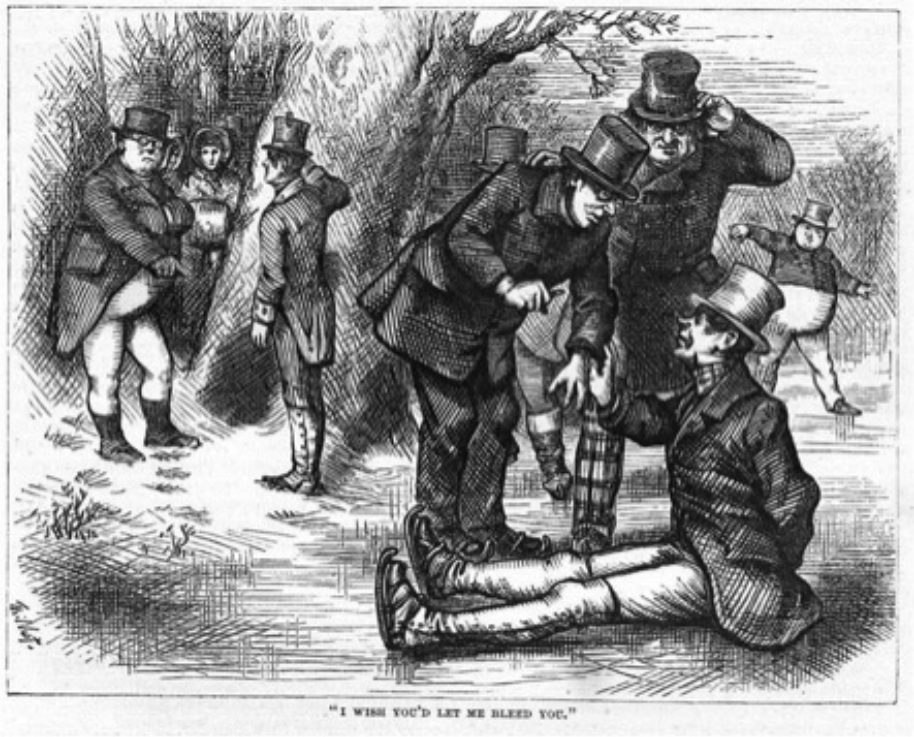


Figure 5. "I wish you'd let me bleed you", Pickwick Papers (Chapter 30). In the foreground one sees the fallen Winkle, while Pickwick and the Fat Boy watch from a distance. Illustration by Thomas Nast. http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/nast/pickwick.html Scanned image and text by Philip V. Allingham. Formatting by George P. Landow.

the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr. Pickwick" (Ch. 30).

The consequences of bleeding (or being bled) are also greatly described in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), a historical novel on the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots in London in 1780. The Roman-Catholic bachelor Mr. Geoffrey Haredale, whose house is burnt by Protestant rioters, feels devastated and the story tells that *"his brain was affected by the agitation and suffering through which he had passed" and that "he had a fear of going mad"*. A surgeon was found *"who took from him a large quantity of blood"*. Not coincidently, after the treatment, Mr. Haredale was *"for the time, too weak to walk, they had no difficulty in persuading him to remain there all night, and got him to bed without loss of a minute. That done, they gave him cordial and some toast, and presently a pretty strong composing-draught, under the influence of which he soon fell into a lethargy, and, for a time, forgot his troubles*" (Ch. 66).

In the last chapter of the novel (Ch. 82), Mr. John Willet, *"a burly, large-headed man with a fat face"*, proprietor of the burnt Maypole Inn, *"never recovered from the surprise the rioters had given him, and he remained in the same mental condition down to the last moment of his life"*. However, this situation suddenly changed by the first sight of his first grandchild, the new condition thought to be an alarming miracle. *"Being promptly blooded, however, by a skillful surgeon, he rallied; and although the doctors all agreed that he ought to die (...) he remained alive for nearly seven years more, when he was one morning found speechless in bed. He lay in this state, free from all tokens of uneasiness, for a whole week, when he was suddenly restored to consciousness by hearing the nurse whisper in his son's ear that he was going. 'I'm a-going, Joseph,' said Mr Willet, turning round upon the instant, 'to the Salwanners'--and immediately gave up the ghost"*.

Bloodletting during and in the post-Dickens era

Already in 1835 the French physician Pierre Charles Alexandre Louis (1787-1872) from Paris had demonstrated that bloodletting was not an optimal form of treatment for pneumonia (21, 22). His study was designed in accordance with the primary principles of epidemiology. In the Netherlands, the 'delicate question' of using bloodletting in patients with fever was considered an anachronism in 1857 (23). In Scotland, bloodletting was abandoned in the 1860s by virtue of the physician-physiologist John Hughes Bennett (1812-1875), who denied any benefit of the procedure (24, 25). In an impressive statistical

analysis of survival rates following pneumonia in European and American hospitals, Bennett concluded that bloodletting did not improve survival (26). In England, contrariwise, bloodletting persisted into the 20th century and was even recommended by the Canadian physician Sir William Osler (1849-1919) in his illustrious textbook 'The Principles and Practice of Medicine' from 1892, still advocating the use of bloodletting in a subsequent edition from 1923.

Over the years, however, it has been well established that bloodletting is usually deleterious since it weakens the condition of patients and facilitates infections. Today, bloodletting is only used in the treatment of well-defined hematological diseases such as hemochromatosis and polycythemia, consisting of an unwanted accumulation of iron and red blood cells, respectively (27). Interestingly, the therapeutic use of leeches (*hirudo medicinalis*) has recently gained renewed medical interest because of the anti-inflammatory and anticoagulant actions of leeches (28). Leech saliva contains a number of different substances, including hirudin, calin, anaesthetic compounds, and antihistamine vasodilators. Hirudin is a potent anticoagulant that inhibits the conversion of fibrinogen to fibrin — preventing blood from clotting. Medicinal leech therapy or *hirudotherapy* can be used in osteoarthritis (29) and after different surgeries; it should not be considered as an alternative to existing therapies, but rather as a complementary and/or integrative choice. Consequently, the application of epidemiological principles, together with the rise of Virchow's cellular pathology,[18] contributed to the disappearance of bloodletting. The use of leeches still has obtained a place in the medicine of the 21st century in the form of enzymes from the saliva of the leech. However, *'hirudotherapy'* is presently also offered as *"Helping Nature Heal - Holistic Healing, not Medical Treatment"*, which closely approximates quackery (30).

PHRENOLOGY

An important phenomenon attracting Dickens's interest was phrenology, in 1796 propagated by the German Physician Franz Jozeph Gall (1758-1828).

18. Rudolf Ludwig Carl Virchow (1821-1902). German physician, anthropologist, pathologist, prehistorian, and biologist. In 1856, Virchow elucidated the etiology of pulmonary embolism, whereby thrombi occurring within the veins, become dislodged and migrate to the pulmonary vasculature. Virchow's triad was named after him, and describes the three categories of factors that contribute to thrombosis: Hypercoagulability, Hemodynamic changes (stasis, turbulence), and Endothelial injury/dysfunction. Virchow became known as "the father of modern pathology" because his work discredited humourism, and brought more science to medicine.

Figure 6. Phrenology. Diagram showing the 27 different brain areas ('faculties').
www.rampages.us
http://thegraphicsfairy.com/wp-content/uploads/blogger

This discipline is based on the concept that certain brain areas have localized, specific functions or modules. Character, thoughts, and emotions are located in 27 specific areas ('faculties') of the brain which determine individual personality (Figure 6).

In 1819 Gall published his signature work entitled *"The Anatomy and Physiology of the Nervous System in General and of the Brain in Particular, with Observations on the Possibility of Ascertaining the Several Intellectual and Dispositions of Men and Animal by the Configuration of Their Heads"*. Historically, phrenology has its roots in craniometry, which claims to determine character, personality traits, and criminality based on the shape of the skull (Figure 7). Whereas *'phrenologists'* studied the individual skulls to determine the relative size of the mental organs, they were often ridiculed as *'craniologists'* who believed the shape of the skull itself to be a determinant of character. Craniology allows, for example, the identification of temperamental characteristics such as aggres-sion or lust ('amativeness') by means of lumps and bumps on the individual skull. The Dutch physician and anato-mist Petrus Camper (1722–1789), one of the creators of craniometry, invented the "facial angle", a measure to determine intelligence among various species (Figure 8).

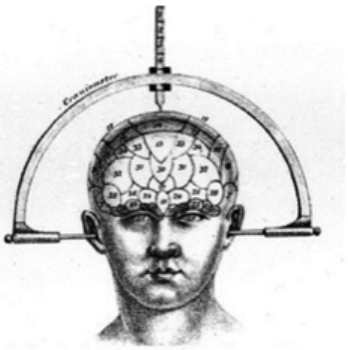


Figure 7. Craniometry in the 19th century using calipers.
www.globedia.com

According to this technique, a facial angle

was formed by drawing two lines: one horizontally from the nostril to the ear; and the other perpendicularly from the advancing part of the upper jawbone to the most prominent part of the forehead. Camper claimed that antique statues presented a facial angle of 90°, Europeans of 80°, black people of 70° and the orangutan of 58°, thus displaying a hierarchic view of mankind based on a decadent conception of history (Figure 9).

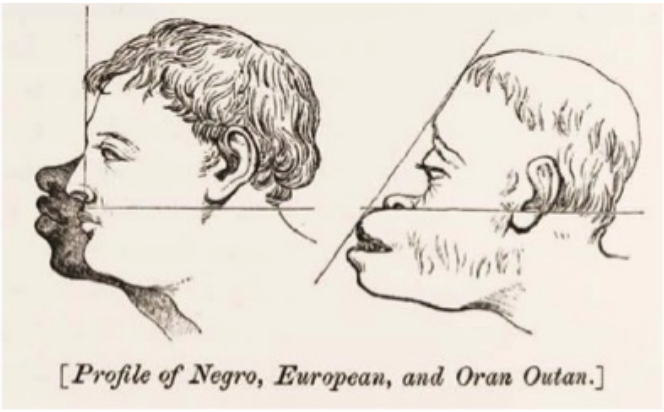


Figure 8. Background of Craniometry. Measurement based on 'Facial Angle' as propagated by Petrus Camper. Drawing from Robert Knox's The Races of Men (1850). www.scalar.usc.edu

According to Camper, the African race was most distant from the classical sense of ideal beauty, a view which was later characterized as scientific racism. Camper's percep-tion was supported by the American physician Samuel George Morton (1799-1855), the so-called *'Father of American physical anthropology'*, who claimed that care-

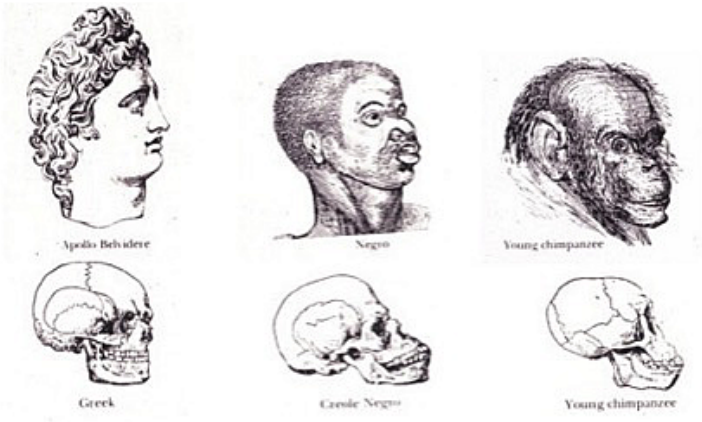


Figure 9. Anthropometry, Craniometry and the Mismeasure of Man. Differences in skull appearances between Antique Greeks, Creole Blacks, and Young Chimpansees. Josiah Clark Nott and George Robins Gliddon. Illustration from Indigenous Races of the Earth, 1857. www.oppressionhumannature.weebly.com

ful measurement of skull capacity proved that whites had larger brains and thus higher intellects than both African and native Americans, confirming the notion that physical (not cultural) anthropology provided a 'fertile' breeding ground for racial theories. Initially labeled as *'cranioscopy'* by Franz Gall, his medical student and follower Johann Caspar Spurzheim (1776–1832) renamed cranioscopy into phrenology, this change of name being disapproved of by Gall (31). Spurzheim, called *"Gall's chief apostle and rival"*, felt he could point out a significant bump on the heads of all painters or could recognize all musicians by the shape of their heads or could tell which head foretold unique intellectual powers. In his works, Spurzheim included more faculties/organs of the brain than the 27 declared by Franz Gall. Furthermore, Spurzheim omitted the "bad" faculties assumed by Gall which led to Gall being openly critical of Spurzheim's work as he defended his own life's research. The partnership of Gall and Spurzheim finally dissolved at the beginning of the 19th century. In 1813, Spurzheim gave his first lecture without Gall in London, and in 1832 he moved to Boston, USA, where he died in the same year (32).

Phrenology was not accepted by the Roman Catholic Church which regarded the new discipline as materialistic and atheistic. Napoleon despised Gall's theory, especially because the interpretation of his skull in 1808 "missed" some noble and heroic qualities he thought he possessed himself, upon which the Emperor discouraged the use of phrenology in the French Empire (33). As a result, phrenology was not very much adhered to in the Roman Catholic and Mediterranean countries. The German anthropologist and anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) nicely stated that phrenology contained *"much which is new and much which is true, but the new is not true and the true is not new"* (34).

Phrenology in England and Scotland

In contrast to the rejection of phrenology in the Roman Catholic countries, phrenology became very popular in the United Kingdom, and even more so in America. The Scottish lawyer George Combe (1788-1858) became leader of the phrenological movement in Edinburgh (35), and founded the Edinburgh Phrenological Society in 1820 (Figure 10).[19] In London, Dr. John Elliotson expressed great interest in phrenology. In 1823 he was one of the founders of

19. In 1828 George Combe published The Constitution of Man, which was probably the most influential phrenological work of the nineteenth century.

the London Phrenological Society and in 1837 he became President. At the first meeting of the Society on 6 November 1837, Elliotson read the paper entitled: *'On the ignorance of the discoveries of Gall'* and wondered *"how anyone, who has studied Gall, and examined for himself into the facts of the coincidence of development of character, can doubt the truth of phrenology?"*(36). Other simultaneous publications in the *Lancet* supported and defended phrenology as a science of observation *"To observation alone are we indebted for the establishment of a science (...) which is destined to effect a moral revolution in society"* (37, 38). Phrenology became one of the most popular movements of the Victorian Era; by the 1840s there were more than 28 phrenological societies in London with over 1000 members. Phrenology

Figure 10. Demonstration of Phrenology by the Scottish lawyer George Combe to a large mixed audience in his Edinburgh home in 1826. www.wellcomeimages.org

was not limited to the *'lower classes'*; Queen Victoria and Prince Albert invited George Combe to read the heads of their children.

However, in the 1850's phrenology came to be increasingly discredited as a scientific theory, thereby losing most of its credibility, at least in England. On 14 December 1864, William Orlando Markham (1818-1891), Editor of *The British Medical Journal* from 1861-1866, wrote in the journal *"We must beg our phrenological friends not to prosecute this subject further. People have all*

made up their minds about phrenology. A few believe in it, and most think it no 'logos' of the mind at all. And both the few and the most will only be more firmly convinced of the correctness of their opposite conclusions by further discussion".

Craniometry, however, remained to have a strong interest in the medical and scientific community, not in the least because it reinforced racist ideology. In 1865, the English physicians Joseph Barnard Davis (1801-1881) and John Thurnam (1810-1873) published *Crania Britannica*, an exhaustive work on anthropological skull determination. Davis and Thurnam were both believers in polygenism, signifying that human races are of different origin versus the modern current theory of monogenism. Joseph Davis became widely known as *'The Skull Collector'*.

The popularity of phrenology in the Victorian period should in part be attributed to the popularity of physiognomy which, thanks in large part to Johann Christian Lavater (1741–1801)[20], has been thoroughly embedded in Western culture since the end of the eighteenth century. So, next to phrenology and craniometry, a third subset of these physical anthropological disciplines aroused attention, called physiognomy, which claimed to demonstrate correlations between facial features and character traits. Physiognomy was made famous by the Italian psychiatrist Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909), the founder of anthropological criminology. The English statistician and anthropologist Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), a relative of Darwin, also advocated facial measurements to determine criminal traits. Galton developed the science of eugenics which was to have a significant influence on Nazi racial policies.

Dickens's View on Phrenology

Several authors in Dickens's time such as Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1866) and Thomas Hood (1799–1845) initially satirized phrenology, as did playwright and composer William S. Gilbert (1836–1911). On the other hand, novelists such as Dickens, Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855), George Eliot (1819–1880), and the poet and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) not only accepted the principles of this brain-based personality theory but exploited it in their characters (39).

20. Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801). Swiss writer from Zürich, protestant pastor, and founder of physiognomics.

Dickens, who had met Elliotson in 1838, followed him in his interest for phrenology, a belief that persisted for a long time and gave him ample publicity. He shared Elliotson's conviction that phrenology, by examining the shape of the skull, could predict which head possessed unique intellectual powers. For instance, on 13 June 1843 Dickens wrote of Shakespeare *"If he had had a Boswell*[21]*, society wouldn't have respected his grave, but would calmly have had his skull in the phrenological shop-windows"*[22]. On the other side of the spectrum, Dickens believed that phrenology enabled the discovery and treatment of criminal dispositions (Figure 11). However, Dickens

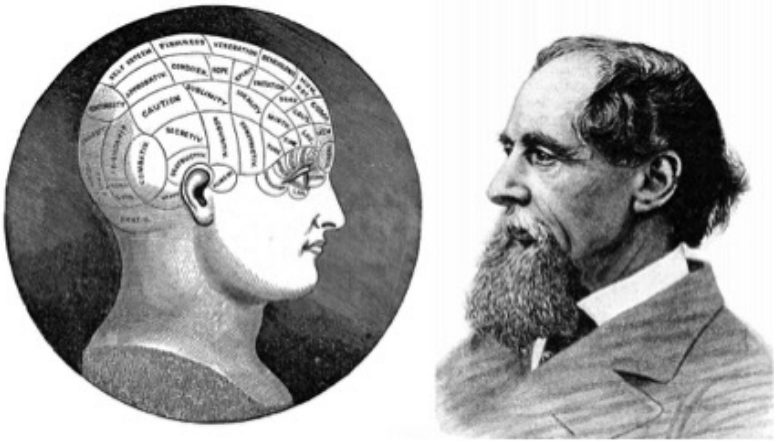


Figure 11. Charles Dickens' belief in phrenology. Gresham College.
https://www.flickr.com/photos/greshamcollege/12972415445

demonstrated his awareness of the uncertain status of phrenology on a number of occasions, often in relation to his American experiences (7).

At the arrival of Dickens (nickname Boz) and his wife Catherine in Boston on Saturday, 22 January 1842 - Dickens's first American Visit - they were offered an amusing entertainment, composed by the comedian Joe Field, entitled *"Boz, a Masque Phrenologic"* (40). The performance introduced the leading characters of all of Dickens's novels that had then made their appearance, showing how well Dickens at that time was perceived. On 4

21. Named after James Boswell (1740-1795). Scottish biographer and diarist, born in Edinburgh. Boswell was considered one of the best biographers of his time (e.g. The Life of Samuel Johnson). As a result, Boswell became a household name for a constant companion and meticulous observer.

22. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Three 1842-1843, page 512.

February 1842, Dickens underwent a phrenological examination by the New York phrenologist Lorenzo Fowler (1811–1896) at the Worcester residence of the Hon. John Davis (1787-1854), Governor of Massachusetts (7). He was credited with *"having a large brain, great energy, a combative nature and a very high sense of humour"!* [23] [24](41).

However, during his American visit Dickens became painfully aware that black people were publicly humiliated by the white American population and used as slaves in the Southern states, such as extensively described in his

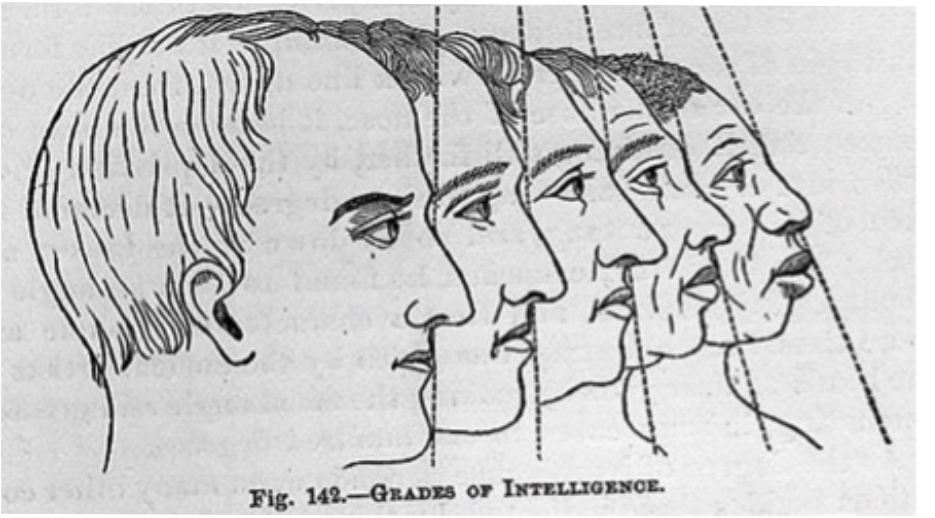


Figure 12. Phrenology of the Fine. Image from S. Wells. New Physiognomy, or Signs of Character. New York, 1871. www.rampages.us

travelogue *American Notes* (1842) and by his American biographer George Washington Putnam (1812-1896) (42). Although craniometry *per se* is not explicitly mentioned in his travelogue, Dickens must have known that the disgrace of the black population was, amongst others, based on measurements

23. This event is mentioned by Dickens's connoisseur Paul Schlicke (7), and in *A Christmas Carol* and other Christmas Books. Curiously, there is no report of this event in his American Notes, nor in Dickens' account of the 1842 American visit 'Four Months with Charles Dickens' (42) recorded by his traveling secretary, George Washington Putnam (1812-1896).

24. By contrast, when George Combe met Dickens on 28 December 1847 at the Glasgow Athenaeum he noted on Dickens that *"his head and manifestations gave me the impression of his being a clever but not great-minded man"* (Charles Gibbon. The Life of George Combe, 1878).

of the skull with the aim to identify slaves and therewith to justify slavery (Figure 12).

Whatever the outspoken opinion of Dickens on these abhorrent phrenological approaches might have been, he was quite upset by the pernicious American views on black American citizens and became an even more energetic abolitionist.[25] According to his personal biographer and contemporary John Forster (1812–1876), Dickens exclaimed: *"When we reach Baltimore, we are in the regions of slavery. It exists there, in its least shocking and most mitigated form; but there it is. They whisper, here (they dare only whisper, you know, and that below their breaths), that on that place, and all through the South, there is a dull gloomy cloud on which the very word seems written. I shall be able to say, one of these days, that I accepted no public mark of respect in any place where slavery was;—and that's something"* (43)[26]. On 22 March 1842, when in Baltimore, he wrote in a personal letter to his friend, the Shakespearean actor William Macready (1793-1873) *"this is not the republic I came to see; this is not the republic of my imagination"(*20)[27].

When on his way to Canada, Dickens meets in Belleville, Illinois, USA, a Scottish phrenologist by the name of *'Dr. Crocus*', a quack doctor giving presentations on phrenology to the credulous Belleville population and selling fake medicines. Dickens unmistakably satirizes the Scottish phrenologist and his practices: *"A tall fine-looking Scotchman, but rather fierce and warlike for a professor of the peaceful art of healing"*. Dickens asks him *"if he thinks of returning to the old country"*. The Scotsman, playing to the crowd, shows that rather than learning to think for himself as a result of his voyages, has learned merely to echo: *"Not yet awhile, sir, not yet"* (Ch. 13). Later on it turns out that there might be criminal charges against *'Dr. Crocus'* based on his malpractice in *'the old country'* (44).

Dickens might have referred to his belief in phrenology, when he in 1847

25. In 1834, slavery had been abolished throughout the British Empire by virtue of The Slavery Abolition Act 1833

26. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Three 1842-1843, pages 81-90.

27. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Three 1842-1843, pages 155-160.

refused to admit one woman as an inmate to his reformatory at Urania Cottage on the grounds of her 'facial phenotype'. In a letter of 3 November 1847 to Angela Burdett-Coutts[28], Dickens stated of the woman that: *"she had a singularly bad head, and looked discouragingly secret and moody"*[29].

In January 1868, during Dickens's second American visit, he still noticed in Baltimore *"how the Ghost of Slavery haunts the town"*[30]. Alluding to the then-uneducated condition of the black population in America - Dickens railed against *"the melancholy absurdity of giving these people votes"*, which *"at any rate at present, would glare out of every roll of their eyes, chuckle in their mouths, and bump in their heads"*[31].

Phrenology in Dickens's Novels

Dickens believed phrenology worthy of serious consideration from his first till his last novel. In his first novel *(Sketches by Boz*, *1836*), Dickens sarcastically addressed the phrenological phenomenon in order to mock and scold those phrenologists who promote their trade as a public service while the profits from their trade are added to the phrenologist's personal wealth. *"Some **phrenologists** affirm, that the agitation of a man's brain by different passions, produces corresponding developments in the form of his skull. Do not let us be understood as pushing our theory to the full length of asserting, that any alteration in a man's disposition would produce a visible effect on the feature of his knocker. Our position merely is, that in such a case, the magnetism which must exist between a man and his knocker, would induce the man to remove, and seek some knocker more congenial to his altered feelings. If you ever find a man changing his habitation without any reasonable pretext, depend upon it, that, although he may not be aware of the fact himself, it is because he and his knocker are at variance. This is a new theory, but we venture to launch it, nevertheless, as being quite as ingenious and infallible as many thousands of the learned speculations which are daily broached for*

28. Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts (1814-1906) was widely known as "the richest heiress in England". She spent the majority of her wealth on philanthropic causes, such as the founding, together with Dickens, of "a home for homeless women" called Urania Cottage, which became effective in 1847.

29. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition. Volume Five 1847-1849, pages 181-188.

30. Letter to John Forster, 30 January 1868. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Twelve 1868-1870, pages 27-28.

31.The word bump might have here a different connotation than a specific phrenological/ craniometric meaning.

public good and private fortune-making". (Ch. 7, *'Our Next-Door Neighbor'*).

In *Martin Chuzzlewit (1844)*, we meet the hypocrite architect Seth Pecksniff *"who has never designed or built anything"*. In an effort to gain the money of his cousin, old Martin Chuzzlewit, Pecksniff throws out the old man's grandson, young Martin Chuzzlewit. When long time servant Tom Pinch learns of Pecksniff's treachery he is also thrown out. Pecksniff's self-serving designs are eventually exposed by Old Martin who reconciles with his grandson, young Martin. When the hypocrite Seth Pecksniff is unmasked by

Figure 13. Phrenology in Martin Chuzzlewit (1844). The Fall of Pecksniff resulting in "The development of an entirely new organ, unknown to phrenologists, on the back of his head" (Ch. 2). Illustration by Phiz. www.alamy.com

old Martin, the fall of Pecksniff led to *"the development of an entirely new organ, unknown to* ***phrenologists,*** *on the back of his head"*(Figure 13) (Ch. 2). When young Martin visits America, Captain Kedgick organizes a Great Meeting of the Watertoast Sympathisers in a National Hotel for young Martin whereby his skull was examined, *"Amateurs in the physiognomical and phrenological sciences roved about him [Martin] with watchful eyes and*

itching fingers, and sometimes one, more daring than the rest, made a mad grasp at the back of his head, and vanished in the crowd", showing the American frenzy for phrenology (Ch. 22).

In *David Copperfield (1850)*, there are two references to phrenology. In Chapter 28, entitled 'Mr. Micawber's Gauntlet', David invites the Micawber's at his house for a dinner but the meal turns out to be awful presumably because his brandy-loving landlady Mrs. Crupp, *"after frying the soles, was taken ill (...). The pigeon-pie was not bad, but it was a delusive pie: the crust being like a disappointing head, phrenologically speaking: full of lumps and bumps, with nothing particular underneath. In short, the banquet was such a failure that I should have been quite unhappy - about the failure, I mean, for I was always unhappy about Dora - if I had not been relieved by the great good humour of my company, and by a bright suggestion from Mr. Micawber. 'My dear friend Copperfield,' said Mr. Micawber, 'accidents will occur in the best-regulated families'.*

In Chapter 59, 'Return', the friendly family doctor Mr. Chillip observes the *"strong phrenological development of the organ of firmness, in Mr. Murdstone and his sister"*.

In *Great Expectations (1853)*, the prisoner Abel Magwitch, the good-hearted father of Estella, tells his life-story to Pip and his friend Herbert: *"Dear boy and Pip's comrade. I am not a-going fur to tell you my life, like a song or a story-book. But to give it you short and handy, I'll put it at once into a mouthful of English. In jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail. There, you got it. That's my life pretty much, down to such times as I got shipped off, arter Pip stood my friend"*. During his stay in jail, Magwitch describes the phrenological examination of his skull by *'prison wisitors'*: *"Then they looked at me, and I looked at them, and they measured my head, some on 'em – they had better a-measured my stomach"* (Ch. 42), uttering his hungry feelings.

In *Little Dorrit (1857)*, the character of the pseudo-benevolent landlord Christopher Casby, 'The Patriarch'), is portrayed as a believer in bumps, lumps, and the organ of benevolence: *"He might have taken any time to think about it, for Mr. Casby, well accustomed to get on anywhere by leaving everything to his bumps and his white hair, knew his strength to lie in silence. So there Casby sat, twirling and twirling, and making his polished head and forehead look largely benevolent in every knob"* (Ch. 9, 'Appearance and

Disappearance'). In Chapter 13, 'Patriarchal', Dickens further describes Casby as "*so grey, so slow, so quiet, so impassionate, so very bumpy in the head"*. After having his hair cut off, Casby's polished marble head shows his true nature of *"a screwer by deputy, a wringer, and squeezer, and shaver by substitute. (...) A philanthropic sneak, a shabby deceiver! "* (Ch. 32, 'Going').

To Dickens, phrenology was *"an essential part of the truth of physiognomy"* (45), an attitude that he puts forward in *The Uncommercial Traveller (1869)*[32]. Dickens takes his friend Bullfinch out for a *'Little dinner in an hour'* at the Temeraire restaurant in fictitious seaside resort called Namelesston. The narrator of the story states *"I hold* ***phrenology,*** *within certain limits, to be true; I am much of the same mind as to the subtler expressions of the hand; I hold* ***physiognomy*** *to be infallible; though all these sciences demand rare qualities in the student. But I also hold that there is no more certain index to personal character than the condition of a set of casters is to the character of any hotel. Knowing, and having often tested this theory of mine, Bullfinch resigned himself to the worst, when, laying aside any remaining veil of disguise, I held up before him in succession the cloudy oil and furry vinegar, the clogged cayenne, the dirty salt, the obscene dregs of soy, and the anchovy sauce in a flannel waistcoat of decomposition"*.

Physiognomy is also addressed in *No Thoroughfare (1867),* a Christmas tale Dickens wrote together with his friend Wilkie Collins[33]. When George Vendale, new partner of the wine merchant Walter Wilding, asks him, *"is your approving knowledge of my interesting face mainly founded (however various the momentary expressions it may include) on my face when I am silent? I think it is" said Wilding (...) "this proposition in* ***Physiognomy*** *being new to him"* (Act 1, Ch. 5).

In Dickens's last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870)*, the athletic Reverend Septimus Crisparkle, minor canon of Cloisterham Cathedral, observes that *"the Professors of Noble Art (the Pugilists) are much nobler than the Professors of Philanthropy",* the latter group being *"remarkably favoured"* by *"the phrenological formation of the backs of their heads"* (Ch. 17).

32. All the Year Round. 2 January 1869. New Uncommercial Samples: A Little Dinner in an Hour [xxxii]. Volume I "New Series", pages 108-111.

33. William Wilkie Collins (1824-1889). English novelist, playwright, and short story writer. In 1851, Collins and Dickens became lifelong friends and close collaborators. Collins published regularly in Dickens's weekly magazines Household Words (1850-1859) and All the Year Round (1859-1870).

Phrenology in the post-Dickens era

Although phrenology, including craniometry and physiognomy, are presently considered pseudo-sciences, it is hard to find a time in history when phrenology was not seriously criticized. Even in 1815, the year that Spurzheim published his influential book on Gall's method, phrenology was dismissed as "*a piece of thorough quackery from beginning to end"* (39, 46). The use of palpation as an indirect method for measuring the brain and its mental faculties was seriously opposed to, but it was also objected to the idea the brain might be composed of multiple specialised components. Despite these objections, in the 19th century phrenology was considered by many individuals a vast improvement over that era's prevailing views of personality. Phrenology for the first time recognized the brain as the *"organ of the mind"*. The British Phrenological Society - in 1881 founded by the New York practitioner Lorenzo Fowler (1811–1896) - continued to spread phrenological doctrines until its formal dissolution in 1967. Even in 1961 phrenology was still advocated in a Special Article in *The Lancet* as a valid medico-psychological approach: *"The intellectual abilities identified by contemporary studies are perhaps a little less picturesque than the faculties proposed by the earlier phrenologists (...) but we should at least acknowledge the success of their intuition, and their status as pioneers"*(47). In a recent study, using anatomical brain magnetic resonance imaging data from almost 6000 subjects in the United Kingdom, it was persuasively shown that local scalp curvature cannot be used to infer brain function in the healthy population, underscoring the pseudo-scientific nature of phrenology (48).

Presently, phrenology is often remembered for its dark history, being misused in its later days to endorse racist stereotypes, and its links with the obnoxious Nazi *'eugenic'* theories. As an example, craniometry was used in the overture to World War II by the Dutch neurologist and anatomist Cornelius Ariens Kappers (1877-1946) to demonstrate that the skulls of Sephardic (Portuguese) Jews were not significantly different from the skulls of the neighboring Mediterranean population (49). In this way, Ariens Kappers tried to save them from deportation to the Nazi-concentration camps. Nowadays, craniometry mainly serves evolutional, archeological and forensic purposes.

Although clearly considered as pseudoscience, phrenological thinking played an important part in the growth of clinical neurology in the second half of the nineteenth century (50). Phrenology may have laid the basis for current

neuroscience which over time convincingly showed that different parts of the brain have different functions (51, 52). In 1909 the German neurologist Korbinian Brodmann (1868–1918) defined the cerebral cortex into 52 distinct regions based on their histological characteristics, postulating that these *'Brodmann areas'* with separate structures performed different functions (53). In 1937, the Canadian-American neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield (1891–1976) was one of the first to describe *"a visual image of the size and the sequence of the cortical areas"*, which he called the *'homunculus'* (little man), being a topographical map of the brain dedicated to show functions for various parts of the body (54). In 2016, 97 new cortical areas were discovered, testifying the growth of this field (55). Since the 1990s, brain mapping has been significantly improved by imaging techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging, accurately showing the location, intensity and extent of cerebral responses during internal cognitive processes and following external stimuli (56).

MESMERISM

Of all the prevailing unorthodox practices, Dickens was predominantly fascinated by mesmerism. Several present-day authors have paid considerable attention to Dickens's extra-ordinary appeal for this discipline. In 2015, Fred Kaplan, one of Dickens's biographers, published a book entitled *'Dickens and Mesmerism, The Hidden Springs of Fiction'*, reporting Dickens's fascination with mesmeric powers (57). In 2016, the English author Trevor Dawson composed a biography entitled *'Charles Dickens: Conjurer, Mesmerist and Showman',* describing the conjuring ability of Dickens, his intrigue with hypnotism and its medical powers (58).

Mesmerism, previously known as animal magnetism (*'magnetisonum animale'*), was named after the German physician Franz Friedrich Anton Mesmer (1734-1815). In the second half of the 18th century Mesmer hypothesized that there is a natural energetic transference that occurs between all animated and inanimate objects (*'Lebensmagnetismus'*). The young Mesmer's doctoral thesis from 1766, entitled *"Dissertatio physicomedice de planetarum influxu"* dealt with the effects of gravitational fields and cycles on human health and was extensively influenced by the writings of the Swiss-Austrian physician and theologian Paracelsus (1493-1541). Mesmer argued that the normal functioning of the human organism was guaranteed by a

harmonious flow of fluid flowing through it, a fluid that was identified with magnetic force. Diseases and disorders would be caused by blockages or obstructions sliding in this fluid. Mesmer believed that the magnetic force could have physical effects, including healing, his so-called 'vitalist' theory. Early in 1788, when Mesmer visited Paris, he began to promulgate his vitalist theory which almost immediately seized the imagination of the general population. Of interest, Mesmer - who was a friend of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) - conducted the first mesmeric experiments through the use of music which Mozart directly addressed in his comic opera *Cosi fan Tutte* from 1790, where the chambermaid Despina (disguised as a doctor) uses a mesmeric stone to save the life of two *'poisoned'* officers because of the rejection by their beloved ones[34] (59, 60). In France it was Jules Denis Baron du Potet (1796-1881) who became a notorious practitioner of mesmerism, where he operated a free school of magnetism in Paris from 1826 on till 1837 when he moved to London.

In his book from 1986, entitled *'Mesmerism and the end of the Enlightenment in France'*(61), the American historian Robert Darnton[35] describes the effects of Mesmer's theory upon social and political thinkers during the two decades preceding the French Revolution, showing the various psychological factors that made mesmerism a widely accepted attitude. Overall, mesmerism attracted numerous followers in Europe and in the United States and was popular into the 19th century.

Mesmerism in England

In the early 1820s, Dr. John Elliotson - whom we already have met as the unorthodox 'progressive' physician who had introduced phrenology – also introduced mesmerism in London. Elliotson was called *'The doctor who put London in a trance'* based on the recent work (2017) of the English historian

34. In the last scene of the First Act of Cosi fan Tutte, Despina rescues the lives of the two 'self-poisoned' officers Ferrrando and Guglielmo using a mesmeric stone. The soprano Despina touches lightly the head and caresses the body of the two officers with the magnetic stone and sings in Italian: Questo e el pezzo, Di calamita, Pietra mesmerica, Chébbe l'origine Nell'Alemagna, Che poi si celebre, La in Francia fu. The officers directly wake up and immediately continue their declarations of passion to the two sisters Dorabella and Fiordiligi.

35. Robert Choate Darnton (1939). American cultural historian and academic librarian, specialized in 18th-century France.

36. Wendy Moore (1958). English journalist, author, and historian. Moore has produced works on the English nobility and the history of medicine, and has published several articles on Charles Dickens in The Lancet.

and journalist Wendy Moore[36] entitled: *'The Mesmerist: The Society Doctor Who Held Victorian London Spellbound'* (62). Her publication addresses the fascination of John Elliotson for mesmerism and the influence on his contemporaries including Dickens (Figure 14). Elliotson believed that mesmerism could be harnessed in order to perform painless surgical operations, being extremely important in a time when patients had to suffer major operations, such as amputations, without any anaesthetic[37]. Initially, Thomas Wakley suppor-ted Elliotson in his views and gave him free pu-blicity in *The Lancet* in the late 1820s and in the 1830s.

Figure 14. A practitioner of Mesmerism using Animal Magnetism in the 19th century. www.welcomeimages.org

However, the definite turning point in the relation between Elliot-son and Wakley came when Elliotson experi-mented with the Okey sisters, Elizabeth (17 years old) and Jane (15 years old), who had in 1837 been admitted to his hospital because of epileptic seizures. Using mesmerism, Elliotson reported that he was able to treat both sisters. Unfortunately, in 1838 the Okey sisters were exposed as fraudulent mediums by Thomas Wakley. In his own house, Wakley conducted a series of experiments on the Okey sisters in front of several witnesses, whereby he investigated whether the ladies could tell 'mesmerised' from 'unmesmerised' water. Because they failed to do this consistently, Wakley proclaimed mesmerism to be a complete delusion, the final outcome being a complete breach with Elliotson to such an extent that in 1838 Elliotson was forced to resign from London University College Hospital. Despite this humiliating resignation, Elliotson continued to give demonstrations of mesmerism in his own house, for which Dickens was regularly invited. *The Lancet*, mainly through Wakley's attacks, openly started

37. In 1843, Elliotson published his book "Numerous cases of operations without pain in the mesmeric state". Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard.

with anti-propaganda (Figure 15). On 4 January 1845, the Table of Contents of the Lancet contained the following message: *"The Lancet will contain a complete critical history, commencing in January, of the rise, progress, and mock marvels of that hallucinating fraud, known by the term 'Mesmerism'"*. In a recent Lancet article from 2017 by Wendy Moore entitled *John Elliotson, Thomas Wakley, and the mesmerism feud*, the background of the opposing views between the two medical practitioners are clearly outlined (63).

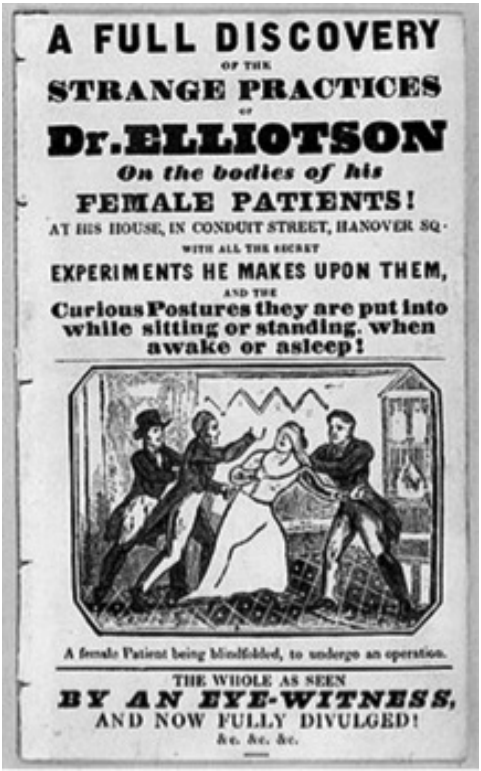


Figure 15. Anti-mesmerism propaganda. Anonymous anti-Elliotson pamphlet from 1842. www.welcomeimages.org

In 1846, Elliotson was given the opportunity to deliver the Harveian Oration[38] to the Royal College of Physicians of London - being the youngest fellow of the College - despite fierce opposition of many of its members. As soon as it was known that he had accepted the office, he was attacked in the most savage manner in order to prevent his appearing. For example, The Lancet (read Wakley!) called him a professional pariah, stated that his oration would strike a vital blow at legitimate medicine, and would be a black infamy degrading the arms of the College.

In his Harveian oration[39], Elliotson stated that all greatest discoveries and most important improvements in medical science had been opposed by the pro-fession itself in the most violent and dishonest manner. As examples of scientific discoveries which had initially been furiously opposed by the medical profession,

38. The Harveian Oration is a yearly lecture held at the Royal College of Physicians of London, in 1656 instituted by William Harvey, discoverer of the systemic circulation.
39. Elliotson, John (1 January 1846). The Harveian Oration on Hypnosis: Delivered Before the Royal College of Physicians, London, June 27th, 1846". H. Baillière.

Elliotson referred to the circulation of the blood and vessels (discovered by William Harvey), the inoculation and vaccination for small-pox (discovered by Edward Jenner), and the sounds of the chest and their relation to the diseases of the heart observed by the stethoscope. In 1816 the stethoscope had been invented by the Parisian Rene Laennec (1781-1826), but its introduction in England had to wait till the 1840s after Elliotson introduced the instrument in London which at that time was encountered with a lot of skepticism by his Londoner colleagues (64)[40].

According to Elliotson, the same would ultimately hold true for mesmerism, an approach waiting for acceptance by the scientific community. Nonetheless, the views expressed in his speech did not help to restore his credibility. In 1849, he founded the London Mesmeric Infirmary without becoming a great success. From 1843-1856, Elliotson was editor of the journal *The Zoist*: *A Journal of Cerebral Physiology & Mesmerism, and Their Applications to Human Welfare*, which published details of thousands of operations performed under mesmerism. The medical journals almost entirely ignored the surgical and therapeutic claims of mesmerism, and usually only referred to it in order to assail its followers with the most violent abuse. In *The Lancet* of 31 July 1847, the following editorial statement appeared - probably made by Wakley - *"Of course the parties concerned in the infamous publication (the Zoist) are in a state of perpetual mortification at their fallen and degraded position, and therefore they bite and rail; the leper [sic] must be taken with his spots"*. In addition, mesmerism became obsolete primarily due to the introduction of anaesthetics in 1846 by the American dentist William Morton (1819-1868), and their acceptance in Scotland and England in the

40. To underscore Elliotson's point of view, in 1826 - ten years after invention of the stethoscope - The Lancet poetically satirized the introduction of new medical advances. One poem published on March 25, 1826, titled "Sound Chirurgical Knowledge" railed against the elaborate and expensive medical education of surgical celebrities like Astley Cooper and William Blizzard. The poem's first six lines run as follows:
Away with all your stethoscopes, your stomach-pumps and tractors;
Away, ye little mountebanks, make room for greater actors!
Here come Sir Astley Cooper, Bart., Bill Buzzard, and Old Luddy,
With bellies big, and purses deep, and brains cold, soft, and muddy,
With seven other learned pigs from London's Royal College,—
Who come to tell us when and where to purchase good "sound knowledge".

years to follow. The reputation of Elliotson rapidly declined, his once lucrative practice disappeared, and he died in 1868 in London under poor circumstances, unmarried, and on the verge of dementia (65).

Dickens's View on Mesmerism

In the late 1830s and early 1840s, Dickens attended several demonstrations of magnetism and mesmerism performed by Elliotson, with whom he became close friends. Elliotson even became the godfather to Charles Dickens's second son, Walter, the fourth child of Catherine and Charles. On 9 August 1840, Dickens dined at the house of Elliotson where he met the poet and clergyman Reverend Chauncey Hare Townshend[41], who shared Dickens's interest in mesmerism. Townshend was anxious to hypnotize Dickens, but Dickens refused to undergo the procedure himself.

Many of Dickens's letters did show his firm belief in mesmerism. On 12 May 1841, Dickens met '*the Magnetic Boy'*, Alexis Didier, a young Belgian medium, at Townshend's house and describes him as *'marvellous'* in his letter of 2 June 1841 to the Irish novelist Marguerite Gardiner, Countess of Blessington (1789-1849)(20)[42]. On 27 January 1842, during his first American visit, Dickens wrote from the Tremont House in Boston to Robert Hanham Collyer[43], an English-born American physician an mesmerist, living in Boston: *"With regard to my opinion on the subject of mesmerism, I have no hesitation in saying that I have closely watched Dr. Elliotson's experiments from the first – that he is one of my most intimate and valued friends – that I have the utmost reliance on his honour, character, and ability, and would trust my life in his hands at any time – and that after what I have seen with my own senses, I should be untrue both to him and myself, if I should shrink for a moment*

41. Chauncey Hare Townshend (1798-1868). English poet, clergyman, and mesmerist. In 1840, Townshend published his book Facts in Mesmerism, with Reasons for a Dispassionate Inquiry into It., which he dedicated to Elliotson. Dickens always kept a close friendship with Townshend, to whom he dedicated his novel Great Expectations (1853).

42. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Two 1840-1841, pages 290-292.

43. Robert Hanman Collyer (1823–1891?). Physician and mesmerist, who studied under Elliotson at London 1833-1835, and settled in America in 1836. Collyer edited the Mesmeric Magazine, Boston, in 1842, and contributed to The Lancet, and Elliotson's journal Zoist. Thomas Wakley wrote in The Lancet about Collyer "Dr. Collyer should produce something like proof of his liberality…As yet, nothing of this kind has been supplied, and until it is (he) must be content to belong to the class of jump-up-behinders." –Lancet Opinion 1: 163, 6 February 1847.

44. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Three 1842-1843, page 22-23.

from saying that I am a believer, and that I became so against all my preconceived opinions" (20)[44].

Prominent amongst the list of books in Charles Dickens's library were two of Elliotson's most influential works on mesmerism, his textbook on *Human Physiology and Numerous Cases of Surgical Operations Without Pain in the Mesmeric State.* The latter contained a hand-inscribed dedication, *"To Charles Dickens, from his sincere friend, John Elliotson"* (66).

Dickens took stand against the orthodox conservative medical profession and the government supporting it. He publicly defended Elliotson, illustrated by four satirical sentences from the poem published on 7 August 1841 in the weekly journal *The Examiner*[45], entitled *"The Quack Doctor's Proclamation*":

He's a magnetic doctor and knows how to keep,
The whole government snoring asleep
He's a clairvoyant subject and readily reads,
His countrymen's wishes, conditions, and needs

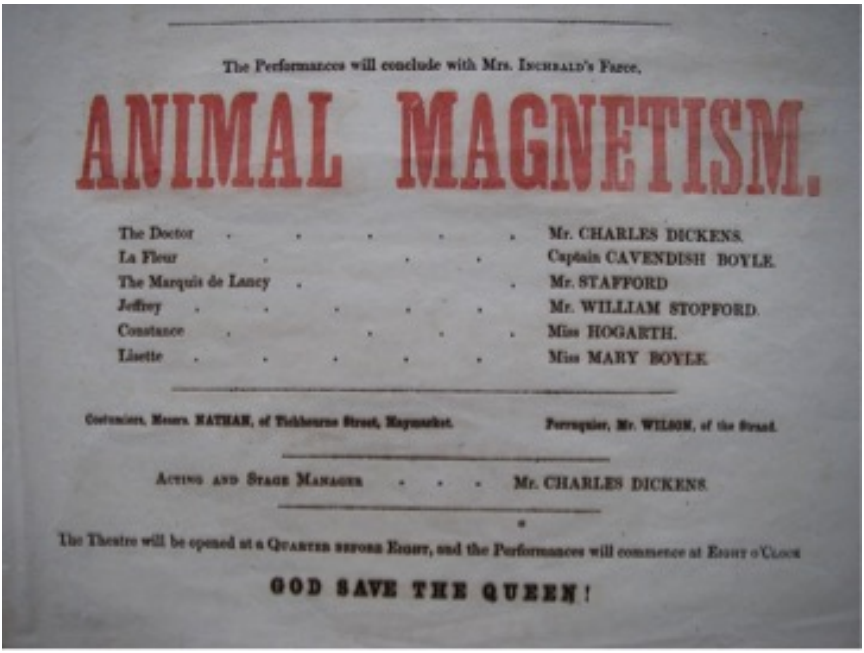
In the fall of 1850, Dickens played in *"Animal Magnetism"* (Figure 16), a farce written in 1788 by the English novelist and actress Mrs. Elizabeth Inchbald (1753-1828). The play was performed at Rockingham Castle ('Chesney World' in *Bleak House, 1853*) with Dickens as *"Doctor in black, with red stockings"* and his admirer the noble Miss Mary Louisa Boyle (1810-1890) as Lisette, the waiting-maid, with whom he had a *"burlesque love affair"* (40). On 16 September 1850 Dickens wrote to Mary Boyle that he had *"seen people laugh at the piece, until they hung over the front of the boxes, like ripe fruit".*

Dickens's Personal Experience with Mesmerism

Dickens became very enthusiastic about the mesmeric practices demonstrated by John Elliotson, so much so that he started himself to actively mesmerize. At the end of March 1842, during a four-day stopover in Pittsburg during his first American visit, he successfully exerted his magnetic powers on

45. The Examiner was a weekly paper in 1808 founded by the brothers Leigh Hunt and John Hunt. Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) was a poet and essayist, and John Hunt (1775–1848) a political writer and publisher. Main contributors to The Examiner were John Stuart Mill, John Forster, William Makepeace Thackeray, and most notably Dickens. The magazine ceased publication in 1886.

his wife Catherine in front of his American 'biographer' George Putnam (42). His lifetime biographer John Forster notices: *"Kate sat down, laughing, for me to try my hand upon her.(...) In six minutes. I magnetized her into hysterics, and then into the magnetic sleep. I tried again next night, and she fell into the slumber in little more than two minutes. . . . I can wake her with perfect ease; but I confess (not being prepared for anything so sudden and complete) I was on the first occasion rather alarmed..."* (43)[46]. Such was the success of his demonstrations that he continued to work with a wider circle of friends and family primarily for the purposes of entertainment.



The Performances will conclude with Mrs. Inchbald's Farce,

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

The Doctor	Mr. CHARLES DICKENS.
La Fleur	Captain CAVENDISH BOYLE.
The Marquis de Lancy	Mr. STAFFORD
Jeffrey	Mr. WILLIAM STOPFORD.
Constance	Miss HOGARTH.
Lisette	Miss MARY BOYLE.

Costumier, Messrs. NATHAN, of Tichbourne Street, Haymarket. Perruquier, Mr. WILSON, of the Strand.

Acting and Stage Manager . . . Mr. CHARLES DICKENS.

The Theatre will be opened at a Quarter before Eight, and the Performances will commence at Eight o'Clock

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

Figure 16. Playbill of the Performance 'Animal Magnetism' (Mrs. Inchbald's Farce) with Dickens as *'The Doctor'*. www.artsindustry.co.uk

In the years 1844 and 1845, Madame Augusta De La Rue, the attractive wife of Monsieur Emile De La Rue, a Swiss banker who lived in Genoa, Italy, became a willing 'victim' of Dickens's mesmeric practices during his visits to Italy. Dickens showed an insatiable need for mesmerizing her because of her *'nervous headaches and painful indispositions'* (57). His mesmeric practices

46. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Three 1842-1843. Still in the same Boat. April the Second, 1842, page 180.

were highly disapproved of by Catherine, who suspected Dickens of secretly having falling in love with Madame De la Rue.

On 24 September 1849, Dickens mesmerized his friend and *'A Christmas Carol'*-illustrator John Leech (1817-1864). When swimming in the sea near Bonchurch on the Isle of Wight, Leech was dashed against the rocks knocking him unconscious. The local doctor advised the application of no less than 20 leeches (namesakes!), but Dickens 'saved' his friend Leech using his mesmeric approach (43)[47].

Mesmerism in Dickens's Novels

According to Eyssel (10), Dickens's biographer Kaplan claims that many of Dickens's characters showed mesmeric powers, a view that she did question. In her opinion, only Dickens's last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870)* points to mesmerism. In my view, one should also mention *'animal magnetism'* as satirically described by Dickens in Mudfog and other Sketches (1837-1838) dealing with the *'Mudfog Association For the Advancement of Everything'*, based on the British Association for the Advancement of Science, founded in 1831. The pseudo-scientific Mudfog Association has a Section B dedicated to Anatomy and Medicine. At the first meeting of Section B, the physician *"Professor Nogo called the attention of the section to a very extraordinary case of animal magnetism. A private watchman, being merely looked at by the operator of the opposite side of a wide street, was at once observed to be in a very drowsy and languid state. He was followed to his box, and being once slightly rubbed on the palms of his hands, fell into a sound sleep, in which he continued without intermission for ten hours"*.

In *The Haunted Man And The Ghost's Bargain (1848)*, the fifth and last of Dickens's Christmas novellas, Dickens refers to the presence of mesmeric influences by Mr. Tetterby, who has become under the spell of Mr. Redlaw. Mr. Redlaw is a lonely professor of chemistry who is visited by a phantom on Christmas Eve and given the gift of forgetting painful memories, which at the same time leads to a universal bitterness that he cannot explain. The gift turns out to be a curse as it is passed on to those individuals who are touched by Redlaw. In particular, this concerns the poor family Tetterby, consisting of Master Adolphus, a newsman, his wife Sophia ('his little woman'), Adolphus

47. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Five 1847-1849, pages 614-615.

Jr ('Dolphus'), a newspaper boy at the railway station, Johnny, who cares for the baby, Sally, called little Moloch. Caught by the curse, Master Adolphus gets angry over his son Johnny. *"You bad boy!" said Mr. Tetterby, "haven't you any feeling for your poor father after the fatigues and anxieties of a hard winter's day (...) must you make a wilderness of home, and maniacs of your parents? Must you, Johnny? Hey?" "Oh, father!" whimpered Johnny, "when I wasn't doing anything, I'm sure, but taking such care of Sally, and getting her to sleep. Oh, father!. (...) Mr. Tetterby (...) succeeded in capturing this infant, whom he condignly punished, and bore to bed. This example had a powerful, and apparently,* ***mesmeric*** *influence on him of the boots, who instantly fell into a deep sleep, though he had been, but a moment before, broad awake, and in the highest possible feather* (Ch. 2. 'The Gift Diffused'). Fortunately, everything ends well when Redlaw gets his memory back.

In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870)*, the last – unfinished - novel of Dickens, Dickens obviously refers to mesmerism in two instances. In Chapter 3, 'The Nun's House', Dickens describes the dual mental states of Miss Twinkleton, who is the principal of a school for girls at Nun's House in Cloisterham (*'Seminary for Young Ladies. Miss Twinkleton'*), where Rosa Bud and Helena Landless attend, and Miss Twinkleton is assisted by Mrs. Tisher. *"As, in some cases of drunkenness, and in others of animal magnetism, there are two states of consciousness which never clash, but each of which pursues its separate course as though it were continuous instead of broken (...) so Miss Twinkleton has two distinct and separate phases of being. Every night, the moment the young ladies have retired to rest, does Miss Twinkleton smarten up her curls a little, brighten up her eyes a little, and become a sprightlier Miss Twinkleton than the young ladies have ever seen. Every night, at the same hour, does Miss Twinkleton resume the topics of the previous night, comprehending the tenderer scandal of Cloisterham, of which she has no knowledge whatever by day, and references to a certain season at Tunbridge Wells (...) notably the season wherein a certain finished gentleman (...) revealed a homage of the heart, whereof Miss Twinkleton, in her scholastic state of existence, is as ignorant as a granite pillar. Miss Twinkleton's companion in both states of existence, and equally adaptable to either, is one Mrs. Tisher: a deferential widow with a weak back, a chronic sigh, and a suppressed voice, who looks after the young ladies' wardrobes, and leads them to infer that she has seen better day".*

In Chapter 7 of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, entitled *'More Confidences than One'*, the drug-addicted music master John Jasper uses mesmerism to impose his sexual desire on Rose Bud, the fiancée of his nephew Edwin: *"He has made a slave of me with his looks. He has forced me to understand him, without his saying a word; and he has forced me to keep silence, without his uttering a threat. When I play, he never moves his eyes from my hands. When I sing, he never moves his eyes from my lips. When he corrects me, and strikes a note, or a chord, or plays a passage, he himself is in the sounds, whispering that he pursues me as a lover, and commanding me to keep his secret. I avoid his eyes, but he forces me to see them without looking at them. Even when a glaze comes over them (which is sometimes the case), and he seems to wander away into a frightful sort of dream in which he threatens most, he obliges me*

Figure 17. Mesmerism in The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870). The music master John Jasper uses mesmerism to impose his sexual desire on Rose Bud, the fiancée of his nephew Edwin: "He has made a slave of me with his looks…I avoid his eyes but he forces me to see them without looking at them". Original illustration by Luke Fildes. David Perdue's Charles Dickens Page. www.charlesdickenspage.com

t o know it, and to know that he is sitting close at my side, more terrible to me than ever" (Figure 17). Edwin disappears and the story ends prematurely with Dickens's death and many Dickensians believe that it was the jealous Jasper who had killed Edwin Drood.

Mesmerism in the post-Dickens era

Although mesmerism lacked scientific proof, many books were written on the subject till the early decades of the 20th century (67, 68). Mesmerism as a magnetic procedure is still practiced as a form of alternative medicine in several countries, but magnetic practices are not recognized as part of orthodox medical science, and are considered to act by self-suggestion (69-71). Already in 1845, James Braid, a Manchester surgeon, had changed the name mesmerism into hypnosis, which was first coined as neurypnology (71). According to the Scottish-American Paul Schlicke[48], there are striking parallels between Dickens's use of mesmerism to treat Madame Augusta De La Rue in the 1840s and Sigmund Freud's early hypnotism in the 1890s (8). In today clinical practice, hypnosis is effectively being used for treatment of anxiety syndromes, functional neurological disorders, and for relief of pain in surgical procedures (72-75).

SPONTANEOUS HUMAN COMBUSTION

Although not a medical cure *sensu stricto* but rather a medical curiosity, the subject of spontaneous human combustion belongs to the domain of unorthodox medicine which has intrigued the attention of both the medical profession and the laity. Spontaneous human combustion is defined as combustion of a living human body without an apparent external source of ignition, whereby the fire is believed to start within the body of the victim. Since ages spontaneous human combustion has been considered an extraordinary and magical phenomenon. The idea *"spontaneous human combustion"* was first proposed in 1746 by Paul Rolli in an article published in the *Philosophical Transactions*.[49] Most victims have the following characteristics: they are in the direct surrounding of a fire, they are usually elderly solitary women, and they are addicted to alcohol. In 1793, the Frenchman Jonas Dupont published a reliable collection of evidence on

48. Paul Schlicke. Retired Honorary Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Aberdeen, and one of Dickens's authorities.

49. Paul Rolli. *"An Extract, by Mr. Paul Rolli, F.R.S. of an Italian Treatise, written by the Reverend Joseph Bianchini, a Prebend in the City of Verona; upon the Death of the Countess Cornelia Zangari & Bandi, of Cesena".* Philosophical Transactions. Royal Society 1746;(476): 447.

50. 'De Incendiis Corporis Humani Spontaneis' was the first doctoral thesis on Spontaneous Human Combustion, written by Jonas Dupont, who in 1793 defended his PhD thesis at the University of Leyden, The Netherlands.

spontaneous human combustion entitled *'De Incendiis Corporis Humani Spontaneis'*[50]. Dupont became interested in spontaneous human combustion after coming across the case of Mme. Nicole Millet, who was believed to be murdered in 1725 by her husband, a Parisian innkeeper. On appeal, Mr. Millet defended himself by pointing to *'spontaneous human combustion'* as the primary cause of death, and he was subsequently acquitted by the jury. In chapter I of Jacob Faithful[51], published in 1842, the author Captain Frederick Marryat gives a vivid account of the spontaneous combustion of the hero's mother: *"She perished from what is termed* ***spontaneous combustion****, an inflammation of the gases generated from the spirits absorbed into the system"*. Evidently there were doubts as to the origin of the fire, for *"after much examination, much arguing, and much disagreement, the verdict was brought in that 'she died by the visitation of God' "*. Around 1850, there were about 30 documented cases of spontaneous human combustion worldwide (76).

Dickens Personal View on Spontaneous Human Combustion

The unorthodox phenomenon spontaneous human combustion had a great appeal for Dickens, mainly because of Dickens's great interest in medical curiosities. His attention to the unusual, the abnormal and the grotesque has been the subject of numerous articles and novels. Dickens was well aware of the skeptical literature on spontaneous human combustion in the forensic medical textbooks, but he preferred to use older testimonies and he adhered his whole life to a firm belief in the phenomenon (10, 77). In a letter dated 7 February 1853 to Elliotson, he expressed the following confident views on spontaneous human combustion: *"It is inconceivable to me how people can reject such evidence supported by so much familiar knowledge and such reasonable analogy. But I suppose the long and short of it is, that they don't know, and don't want to know, anything about the matter"* (20)[52]. Nevertheless, spontaneous human combustion was already at Dickens's time seriously criticized by contemporary scientists who strongly believed that it was not very likely to occur without an external flame source. In particular the English philosopher and critic of literature George Henry Lewes (1817-1878, partner of George Eliot) castigated Dickens that he was promoting bad science

51. Frederick Marryat (1792-1848). Jacob Faithful (originally published in 1834). Book Jungle (2010), page 9.

52. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Seven 1853-1855, pages 22-23.

based on a *'vulgar error….Spontaneous Combustion is not only a scientific error, which we doubt if he [Dickens] can find one organic chemist or any authority to countenance now, but it is absolutely impossible according to all laws of combustion, and to the constitution of the human body'*[53]. Dickens felt attacked by Lewes, and on 25 February 1853 he wrote him privately and comprehensively to attest his faith in spontaneous human combustion(20)[54]. In his letter to Lewes, Dickens referred to several medical cases, who in his view clearly had become victims of spontaneous human combustion, ending his letter by saying *"I can only say that I have read your ingenious letters with much pleasure – that I champion no hypothetical explanation of the fact – but that I take the fact upon the testimony, which I considered partially and with no preconceived opinion"*[56] [57] .

On 28 November 1863, Dickens was heavily attacked by *The British Medical Journal* - founded in 1840 - in a Leading Article following the publication of the novel Very Hard Cash by his friend and author Charles Reade (1814-1884). The novel had appeared periodically between 28 March and 26 December 1863 in *All the Year Round*, and had openly addressed the poor treatment of patients in private insane *'lunatic'* asylums. According to The British Medical Journal, Reade had satirized the Lunacy Commissioners, and therefore had *"cast diabolical charges upon the character of all medical men connected with the management of lunatics, and has, therefore, insulted the whole profession"*. Dickens was held fully responsible by *The British Medical Journal* for the publication of Reade. *"With regard to Mr. Charles Dickens, however, we must say, that there is for him no excuse"*. Further on in

53. Based on two letters of Lewes in the magazine Leader, 5 and 12 February 1853. Haight G. Dickens and Lewes on spontaneous Combustion, Nineteenth Century Fiction, June 1955, I, 53-63.

54. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The Pilgrim Edition, Volume Seven 1853-1855, pages 28-31.

55. The two recorded cases on which Dickens most relied were that of Mme. Millet at Rheims in I725 (vide supra), and the Italian Countess Cornelia Bandi of Cesena in 1731.

56. The opinion of Lewes may also be biased following a visit to Dickens's home in Doughty Street, London, in 1839. After a swift glance at his bookcases, Lewes declared that Dickens was "completely outside philosophy, science, and the higher literature" (12). Although Lewes was right in case of Dickens's belief in spontaneous human combustion, it doesn't do justice to Dickens's great and sincere interest in science and its evolution.

57. In her book G.H. Lewes; A Life, London, 1991, Rosemary Ashton - Emeritus Quain Professor of English Language Literature, University College of London - suggests that 'Beneath [Lewes's] attack and beneath Dickens's high-pitched response to it, lies an insecurity in both men arising from their lack of formal education'.

this ruthless article, Dickens was called *"a mere trader – a dealer in literary wares" (...) "It is a misfortune that some kind genius has not often whispered to Mr. Dickens that he has ever been over-fond of dishing-up spicy sauces, which best suit the appetite of the fashionably vulgar and the generally ignorant. He once, for example, went out of his way in a novel to work up as a fact the groundless assertion of "spontaneous combustion" of the human body"*. An apology from Dickens was called for and duly appeared in *The British Medical Journal* of 9 January 1864 - under the heading *Sensation Novelists* - in the form of a notice disclaiming responsibility for the views of Charles Reade. The apology by Dickens was not accepted by the Editors of The British Medical Journal and they went even further in their lamentations: *"we will tell him that the medical profession has long looked with an evil eye on a good deal of his late instruction. They think it not well that Mr. Dickens should indulge the people in mesmeric novels; in true and authentic ghost-stories; that he should puff up spontaneous combustion, and other such remnants of deplorable ignorance"*. This unfortunate episode in the relation of Dickens with the medical profession is completely out of character and rather hard to explain, since the medical journals - both *The Lancet* and *The British Medical Journal* - usually had the greatest admiration for him, in particular for his talent of being able to write about disease with accuracy and perception, and addressing social abuses[58].

58. In my opinion, the depreciation of Dickens by The British Medical Journal was the direct result of the individual opinion and attitude of the Editor Dr. William Orlando Markham (1818-1891), Editor of The British Medical Journal from 1861 to 1866. Markham turned out to be a fierce antagonist of non-traditional medicine. Following Markham's appointment as Edi-tor in 1861, The British Medical Journal reported already on 7 December 1861 "We recommend to Mr. Dickens and Mr. Thackeray, as editors of journals which patronise "mesmerism", "spiritualism" and the like (…) that they play 'The devil among the tailors' on the accordion, and so forth-nine-tenths are impudent and fraudulent knaves (…) and that of the silly dupes who have been induced by chicanery and charlatanry to believe in the so-called marvels of spiritualism, eleven-twelfths are hopeless fools". When Markham stepped down as Editor in August 1866, the physician Sir Thomas Watson (1792-1882) wrote a special address for Markham on 3 June 1867 in The British Medical Journal: "We acknowledge and thankfully appreciate your zealous maintenance of the social dignity and the scientific position of the medical profession, and your constant and stern reprobation of quackery". In Markham's obituary from 7 February 1891, it is mentioned that "Dr. Markham was (…) a trenchant writer on occasion, especially when he wished to unmask anything like quackery or humbug in the profession". The aversion of Markham against unorthodox medical practices might explain his personal antipathy towards Dickens. After 1866, when Dr. Ernest Abraham Hart (1835-1898) served as Editor of The British Medical Journal, Dickens was invariably portrayed in a more constructive sense.

Obviously, Dickens remained an ardent believer in spontaneous human combustion (Figure 18), a belief that he shared with John Elliotson. As already alluded to, an explanation might be that Dickens showed great affinity for supernatural and ghost stories (78), some of which were included in his longer works, while others were published in his magazines.

Figure 18. How Dickens Fueled Spontaneous Combustion. Mental floss magazine, December 2014. Illustration by Alamy (Dickens) / Istock (Fire) http://mentalfloss.com/article/60468

Spontaneous Human Combustion in Dickens's Novels

In *Sketches by Boz (1836)*, Dickens refers to non-human combustion when a servant wishes *"that the principle of* ***spontaneous combustion*** *would extend itself to coals and the kitchen range"* (Ch. 1, 'Scenes, The Streets – Morning').

Spontaneous human combustion was mentioned in *A Christmas Carol (1843)*, when Scrooge, awaiting the Second Spirit, was *"apprehensive that he might be at that very moment an interesting case of* ***spontaneous combustion****, without having the consolation of knowing it"*(Stave 3, 'The Second of the Three Spirits').

Martin Chuzzlewit (1844) tells of a serenade at the stairs of the Boarding

House owned by Mrs. Todgers, *"rather a bony and hard-featured lady, with a row of curls in front of her head, shaped like little barrels of beer; and on the top of it something made of net--you couldn't call it a cap exactly--which looked like a black cobweb"* (Ch. 8). The music was performed by Jinkins - the oldest boarder of the House – accompanied by some gentlemen in honour of both daughters of Seth Pecksniff - Mercy and Charity - and Mrs. Todgers herself. The serenade was so miserable that *"Nothing more dismal could have been desired by the most fastidious taste. The gentleman of a vocal turn was head mute, or chief mourner; Jinkins took the bass; and the rest took anything they could get. The youngest gentleman blew his melancholy into a flute. He didn't blow much out of it, but that was all the better. If the two Miss Pecksniffs and Mrs Todgers had perished by* ***spontaneous combustion****, and*

Figure 19. Spontaneous Human Combustion of the old Krook in *Bleak House (1853). "The cat snarls at something on the floor as Mr. Guppy and Mr. Weevle advance. O Horror, the Lord Chancellor IS here"*. Original illustration by Phiz. Alamy http://mentalfloss.com/article/60468

the serenade had been in honour of their ashes, it would have been impossible to surpass the unutterable despair expressed in that one chorus, 'Go where glory waits thee!' It was a requiem, a dirge, a moan, a howl, a wail, a lament, an abstract of everything that is sorrowful and hideous in sound. The flute of the youngest gentleman was wild and fitful. It came and went in gusts, like the wind. For a long time together he seemed to have left off, and when it was quite settled by Mrs. Todgers and the young ladies that, overcome by his feelings, he had retired in tears, he unexpectedly turned up again at the very top of the tune, gasping for breath. He was a tremen-dous performer. There was no knowing where to have him; and exactly when you thought he was doing nothing at all, then was he doing the very thing that ought to astonish you most" Ch. 11).

The most memorable passage on spontaneous human combustion can be found in *Bleak House (1853)*, where Mr. Guppy and Mr. Weevle, in search of a crucial lost bundle of letters, visit *'Lord Chan-cellor'* Krook, an elderly disreputable rag-and-bottle merchant who lives largely on gin. When entering his shop, they only find *"a smouldering suffocating vapour.....a dark greasy coating on the walls and ceiling"*; all that remained of Krook was *"a small charred and broken log of wood sprinkled with white ashes, or is it coal?...Oh, Horror, he is here! and this from which we run away, is all that represents him. Help, help, help! Come into this house for heaven's sake! Plenty will come in, but none can help. The Lord Chancellor of that court, true to his title in his last act, has died the death of all lord chancellors in all courts and of all authorities in all places under all names soever, where false pretences are made, and where injustice is done. Call the death by any name your Highness will, attribute it to whom you will, or say it might have been prevented how you will, it is the same death eternally--inborn, inbred, engendered in the corrupted humours of the vicious body itself, and that only--**spontaneous combustion**, and none other of all the deaths that can be died.* (Ch. 32, 'The Appointed Time'). The old Krook had clearly become the victim of spontaneous human combustion (79) (Figure 19)[59].

59. Dickens extensively defended the existence of spontaneous human combustion in the Preface of Bleak House (published as a one-volume edition on 12 September 1853) after being confronted by George Lewes. Dickens's concluding remarks were: 'I shall not abandon the facts until there shall have been a considerable spontaneous combustion of the testimony on which human occurrences are usually received".

Spontaneous Human Combustion in the post-Dickens era

Nowadays, spontaneous human combustion is considered complete superstition. Already in 1905 it was remarked in *The British Medical Journal* that *"If an intelligence so active and acute as that of Dickens was imposed upon by the pseudoscientific evidence in favour of this marvel, it is small wonder that a belief in it dies hard among the wonder-loving and superstitious people who form the majority of the public"*(80). When *The British Medical Journal* covered the topic of spontaneous human combustion in 1938, it noted the following common characteristics among recorded cases: *victims were chronic alcoholics, mostly elderly females; the hands and feet usually fall off; fire caused little damage to combustible things in contact with the body; combustion left a residue of greasy and putrid ashes* (81). In a Letter to the Editor, it was skeptically remarked: *"One can picture the temperance fanatics making much of the phenomenon of spontaneous combustion and pointing out the foretaste in this world of the fate which awaits the drunkard in the next"* (82). Interestingly however, there are currently still believers in the phenomenon. In 2012, a total of 12 patients were found to have died from spontaneous human combustion, based on a thorough analysis of articles published between 1 January 2000 and 1 January 2012 on this unique type of burn injury (83). The authors suggested that the phenomenon of spontaneous human combustion is reality. They also proposed that the term *"spontaneous human combustion"* should be changed into *"fat wick burns"*.

In 2013 two new cases of spontaneous human combustion were described by a French research group that reported the discovery of two female carbonized bodies without immediate evidence of an external flame source (84). After careful forensic investigation, however, it turned out that in one case there were signs of a defective burning gas stove and in the other case there was a box of matches near the body. It was therefore suggested to rename *'spontaneous'* human combustion into *'isolated'* human combustion. A review paper from 2016 reported a total of 100–200 cases worldwide, but a plausible explanation still lacks to support an internal spontaneous combustive event in these patients (85). Given the likelihood that an external source of ignition was present that was either overlooked at the scene or was destroyed by the fire, it would seem reasonable to relegate *'spontaneous human combustion'* to the realm of urban mythology.

In Part 2, the untraditional approaches of homeopathy, hydropathy, and galvanism will be discussed, followed by a general discussion

REFERENCES

1. Williams G. The Age of Miracles. Medicine and Surgery in the Nineteenth Century. Academy Chicago Publishers, 1987.
2. Smithers DW. Dickens's doctors. Pergamon Press. Oxford, 1979.
3. Chesterton GK. Charles Dickens. Originally published in 1906.
4. Kaplan F. Dickens: A Biography. William Morrow. New York, 1988.
5. Ackroyd P. Dickens: A Biography. Sinclair-Stevenson. London, 1990.
6. Slater M. Charles Dickens: A Life Defined by Writing. Yale University Press. New Haven and London, 2009.
7. Tomalin C. Charles Dickens: A Life. Penguin Books Ltd. London, 2011.
8. Schlicke P. The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens. Anniversary Edition. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2011.
9. Bodenheimer R. Knowing Dickens. Cornell University Press. Ithaca New York, 2011.
10. Eysell J. A medical companion to Dickens's fiction. Peter Lang Publishing. Frankfurt am Main, 2005.
11. Moore W. The Knife Man: Blood, body snatching, and the birth of modern surgery. The Extraordinary Life and Times of John Hunter, Father of Modern Surgery. Broadway Books, 2005
12. Moore W. Charles Dickens' scientific network. Perspectives. Lancet. 2018;392:204.
13. Sharp D. Thomas Wakley (1795-1862): a biographical sketch. Lancet. 2012;379:1914-1921.
14. Jones R. Thomas Wakley, plagiarism, libel and the founding of The Lancet. Lancet. 2008;371:1410-1411.
15. Holmes D. Wakley, and the age of "mental delusion". Lancet Oncol. 2009;10:847
16. Cheng TO. Thomas Wakley and The Lancet. Int J Cardiol. 2012;162:1-3.
17. Richardson R. Coroner Wakley: two remarkable eyewitness accounts. Lancet 2001;358:2150-2154.
18. Markel H. Charles Dickens' work to help establish Great Ormond Street Hospital, London. Lancet 1999; 354: 673–675.
19. Brain R. Dickensian Diagnoses. The British Medical Journal 1955:4955: 1553-1556.
20. The Letters of Charles Dickens. The British Academy Pilgrim Edition Ed. Madeline House, Graham Storey, Kathleen Tillotson, et al. Vols. 1-12 (1965-2002).
21. Louis PCA. Recherche sur les effets de la saignée dans plusieurs maladies inflammatoires et sur l'action de l'émétique et des vésicatoires dans la pneumonie. Paris: Librairie de l'Académie Royale de Médecine; 1835.
22. Louis PCA. Research on the effects of bloodletting in some inflammatory diseases. Boston: Hilliard Gray; 1836.

23. Gobeé C. Over de aanwijzing en tegenaanwijzing der bloedontlasting bij koortsziekten. Ned Tijdschr Geneeskd. 1857;1:183-184 (Dutch).

24. Carter KC. Change of type as an explanation for the decline of therapeutic bloodletting. Stud Hist Philos Biol Biomed Sci. 2010;41:1-11.

25. Thomas DP. The demise of bloodletting. Journal Coll Physicians Edinb 2014;44:72–77.

26. Hughes Bennett J. Observations on the restorative treatment of pneumonia. Br Med J. 1866;1:627–630.

27. Bolann BJ, Distante S, Mørkrid L, Ulvik RJ. Bloodletting therapy in hemochromatosis: Does it affect trace element homeostasis? J Trace Elem Med Biol. 2015;31:225-259.

28. Sig AK, Guney M, Uskudar Guclu A, Ozmen E. Medicinal leech therapy-an overall perspective. Integr Med Res. 2017;6:337-343.

29. Michalsen A, Klotz S, Ludkte R, Moebus S, Spahn G, Dobos G. Effectiveness of leech therapy in osteoarthritis of the knee. A randomized controlled trial. Ann Intern Med. 2003;139:724-730.

30. Keeman JN. Aderlating; een verdwenen populair therapeuticum (Dutch). Ned Tijdschr Geneesk. 2007; 151:206-211.

31. Spurzheim J.G. Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy; London: 1815. The physiognomical system of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim; founded on an anatomical and physiological examination of the nervous system in general, and of the brain in particular; and indicating the dispositions and manifestations of the mind. [Google Scholar].

32. Bilal M, Edwards B, Loukas M, et al. Johann Gaspar Spurzheim: A Life Dedicated to Phrenology. Cureus 2017; 9(5): e1295.

33. Lee JA. Cellular phrenology. Lancet Oncol. 2003:194.

34. Duchesse d' Abrantès. Memoirs of Napoleon, His Court and Family, Vol. II, Ch. 27. Bentley. London, 1836.

35. Jenkins B. Phrenology, heredity and progress in George Combe's Constitution of Man. Br J Hist Sci. 2015;48:455-473.

36. Report of the First Meeting of the Phrenological Society 1837-8. The Lancet (Vol. I):295-298.

37. Hytch EJ. Phrenological busts. Lancet. 1836;682:29–30.

38. Hytch EJ. Answer to objections against phrenology. Lancet. 1838;795: 359-360.

39. Boshears R, Whitaker H. Phrenology and physiognomy in Victorian literature. Prog Brain Res. 2013;205:87-112.

40. Johnson E. Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph. Penguin Books, 1986 (First published in the United States of America by Little, Brown and Company, 1952).

41. Gaskell E. Dickens and Medicine. An Exhibition of Books, Manuscripts and Prints to mark the Centenary of his Death: with an Introduction and Bibliography. Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine. London, 1970.

42. Putnam GW. Four Months with Charles Dickens. Atlantic Monthly, 1870.

43. Forster, John. The Life of Charles Dickens. London: Chapman and Hall, n. d. 2 vols. [Originally published in 3 vols., 1872-1874].

44. Smith A. The ghost story 1840-1920. A cultural history. Manchester University Press. Manchester and New York, 2010.

45. Marlow JE. Charles Dickens: The Uses of Time. Susquehanna University Press, Pennsylvania, 1994.

46. Gordon J. The doctrines of Gall and Spurzheim. Edinburgh Review. 1815;25:227–268.

47. McFie J. Recent advances in phrenology. Lancet. 1961;2(7198):360-363.

48. Parker Jones O, Alfaro-Almagro F, Jbabdi S. An empirical, 21st century evaluation of phrenology. Cortex. 2018;106:26-35.

49. Cohen J. De onontkoombare afkomst van Eli d'Oliveira (PhD Thesis, Dutch). Querido, 2015.

50. Simpson D. Phrenology and the neurosciences: contributions of F. J. Gall and J. G. Spurzheim. ANZ J Surg. 2005;75:475-482.

51. Sysling F. Science and self-assessment: phrenological charts 1840-1940. Br J Hist Sci. 2018:1-20.

52. Baber C. After phrenology: neural reuse and the interactive brain. Ergonomics. 2017;60:1173-1174.

53. Brodmann K. Vergleichende Lokalisationslehre der Grosshirnrinde:in ihren Principien dargestellt auf Grund des Zellenbaues (German). Johann Ambrosius Barth Verlag. Leipzig, 1909.

54. Penfield W, Boldrey E. Somatic motor and sensory representation in the cerebral cortex of man as studied by electrical stimulation. Brain 1937;60:389-443.

55. Glasser MF, Coalson TS, Robinson EC, Hacker CD, Harwell J, Yacoub E, Ugurbil K, Andersson J, Beckmann CF, Jenkinson M, Smith SM, Van Essen DC. A multi-modal parcellation of human cerebral cortex. Nature. 2016;536:171-178.

56. Apuzzo ML. The enigma of cerebral function: milestones of comprehension. World Neurosurg. 2014;82:1-2.

57. Kaplan F. Dickens and Mesmerism, The Hidden Springs of Fiction. Princeton University Press, 2015.

58. Dawson T. Charles Dickens: Conjurer, Mesmerist and Showman. Troubadour Publishing Ltd, 2016.

59. Steptoe A. “Mozart, Mesmer and Così fan tutte.” Music and Letters. 1967: 248-255.

60. Montinari MR, Giardina S, Minelli P, Minelli S. History of Music Therapy and Its Contemporary Applications in Cardiovascular Diseases. South Med J. 2018;111:98-102.

61. Darnton R. Mesmerism and the end of the Enlightenment in France. Harvard University Press, 1986.

62. Moore W. The Mesmerist: The Society Doctor Who Held Victorian London Spellbound. Weidenfeld & Nicolson Publishers, 2017.
63. Moore W. John Elliotson, Thomas Wakley, and the mesmerism feud. Lancet 2017;398:1975-1976.
64. Kandela P. Sketches from The Lancet. The stethoscope. Lancet. 1998 ;352:997.
65. Schneck JM. John Elliotson, William Makepeace Thackeray, and Doctor Goodenough. Int J Clin Exp Hypn. 1963;11:122-130.
66. Ridgway ES. John Elliotson (1791-1868): a bitter enemy of legitimate medicine? Part II: The mesmeric scandal and later years. J Med Biogr. 1994;2:1-7.
67. Brown PS. Mesmerism, galvanism and quackery. Bristol Med Chir J. 1983;98:61-64.
68. Milne Bramwell J. Hypnotism, its history, practice and theory. Second Edition. Alexander Moring. Limed De La More Press. 32 George Street, Hanover Square, London W. 1906 (Chapter II).
69. Basford JR. A historical perspective of the popular use of electric and magnetic therapy. Arch Phys Med Rehabil. 2001;82:1261-1269.
70. Macklis RM. Magnetic healing, quackery, and the debate about the health effects of electromagnetic fields. Ann Intern Med. 1993;118:376-383.
71. Tinterow MM. Satanic agency and mesmerism reviewed-James Braid. Am J Clin Hypn. 1993;36:3-6.
72. Deeley Q. Hypnosis as therapy for functional neurologic disorders. Handb Clin Neurol. 2016;139:585-595. Review.
73. Adam P, Larson A. Hypnosis for Surgical Pain. Am Fam Physician. 2017;96:Online.
74. Sterkers N, Chabrol JL, De Troyer J, Bonijol D, Darmon JC, Donnez O. Hypnosis as adjunct therapy to conscious sedation for venous access device implantation in breast cancer: A pilot study. J Vasc Access. 2018:19:382-386.
75. Daitch C. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Mindfulness, and Hypnosis as Treatment Methods for Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Am J Clin Hypn. 2018; 61:57-69.
76. Muirhead Little E. Spontaneous Combustion. Br Med J. 1905; 2(2330): 464.
77. Jan Bondeson. A Cabinet of Medical Curiosities. Cornell University Press. (published in Paperback in the UK by L.B. Tauris and Co, Ltd, London, 1997). Spontaneous Human Combustion, pages 1-25.
78. Bomans G. Dickens waar zijn uw spoken (Dutch). Tweede Editie. Elsevier, Amsterdam/Brussel, 1979.
79. Gamble JG. Death by spontaneous combustion: Charles Dickens and the strange case of Mr. Krook. Pharos Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Med Soc. 1999;62:111-115.
80. Bennett AG. Spontaneous combustion. Br Med J. 1905;2:417.
81. Parry LA. Spontaneous combustion. Br Med J. 1938;1:1237.
82. Thurston G. “Spontaneous Human Combustion” Br Med J. 1938;1:1340.
83. Koljonen V, Kluger N. Spontaneous Human Combustion in the Light of the 21st Century. J Burn Care Res 2012;33:e102–e108.
84. Quatrehomme G, Guinier D, Suply B, Alunni V, Pedech A. Isolated body combustion: new French cases, old worldwide issues. Am J Forensic Med Pathol.

2013;34:90-94.
85. Byard RW. The mythology of "spontaneous" human combustion. Forensic Sci Med Pathol. 2016;12:350-2.

Dickens's Editions used for Primary Sources

American Notes. Granville Publishing, London, 1985.

Barnaby Rudge. Penguin Books Ltd. Ed. Gordon Spence. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1971 (Reprinted Edition 1982).

Bleak House. Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1971 (Reprinted Edition 1982)

A Christmas Carol. The Original Manuscript. A Facsimile of the Manuscript in The Pierpont Morgan Library. Dover Publications Inc, New York, 1971.

A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Books. Introduction and Notes by Robert Dougls-Fairhurst. Oxford University Press, 2006.

David Copperfield. Penguin Books Ltd. Ed. Trevor Blount. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1966 (Reprinted Edition 1980).

Dickens from Pickwick to Dombey. Steven Marcus. W.W. Norton & Company, London, 1985. (Originally published in 1965).

Dombey and Son. Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1971 (Reprinted Edition 1982).

Great Expectations. Penguin Classics. Ed. Charlotte Mitchell. Revised Dickens Chronology and new appendix, 2003

Hard Times. MacMillan Student's Novels. Ed. James Gibson. MacMillan Education Limited, London, 1983.

Household Words (1850-1859). Publisher London: Bradbury & Evans. Digitizing sponsor Dickens Journals Online (DJO). Contributor University of Buckingham, 2012.

Three Letters from Charles Dickens to Michael Faraday. 1850. Google Books.

Little Dorrit. Penguin Books Ltd. Ed. John Holloway. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1967 (Reprinted Edition 1982).

Martin Chuzzlewit. The World's Classics. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984.

The Mudfog Papers and Other Sketches. Richard Bentley and Son, Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen, London, 1880.

The Mystery of Edwin Drood. The World's Classics. Ed. Margaret Cardwell. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982.

Nicholas Nickleby. Bantam Books. Bantam Classic Edition, London, 1983.

No Thoroughfare (with Wilkie Collins). Kessinger Publishing Co. Whitefish, Montana, USA, 2004.

Mr. Nightingale's diary : a farce in one act (with Mark Lemon). James R. Osgood & Company. Boston, 1877.

The Old Curiosity Shop. Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1972 (Reprinted Edition 1980).

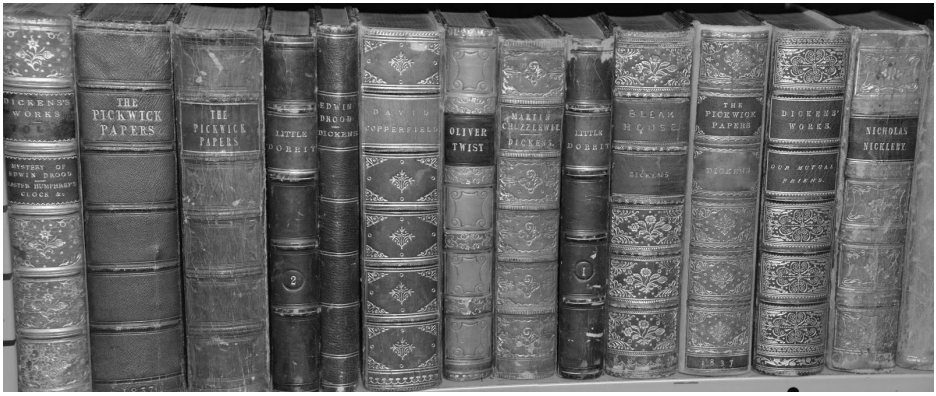
Our Mutual Friend. Penguin Books Ltd. Ed. Stephen Gill. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1971 (Reprinted Edition 1979).

Pickwick Papers. Penguin Books Ltd. Ed. Robert L. Patten. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1972 (Reprinted Edition 1978).

Sketches by Boz and other early papers 1833-1839. Dickens' Journalism. Ed. Michael Slater. Phoenix Giants, London, 1994.

Supernatural Short Stories. Alma Classics Ltd. London House, Richmond, United Kingdom, 2012.

A Tale of Two Cities. Bantam Books. Bantam Classic Edition, London, 1981.



WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE IS A RELATIVE: —*"How the Court of Chancery caused the social conditions that gave rise to the "poor relation".*

Ann de Groot-May

The Court of Chancery is central to the fog that pervades the novel Bleak House. Chancery is central to the fog and despair enshrouding many of the characters. From the very beginning of the story it sucks in its fresh new victims the "Wards of Court" and as it has with so many others, chews them up and then spits them out at the end. They are as helpless against the dinosaur that is Chancery as they would have been against a resurrected megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, wandering about Holborn, in the mud and fog. Dickens provides us with a description of London that would have fitted the aftermath of the catastrophic meteor strikes that rendered the dinosaur extinct. As anybody witnessing a dinosaur in Holborn must surely ask, we must ask of Chancery, where did it come from.

The Court of Chancery that sat prior to 1875 was established during the Norman period as the *Curia Regis* - or Kings Council, after 1066. Originally comprising of the Monarch, the great officers of the crown and any other officer elect by favour of the Monarch. The jurisdiction of the Council was basically unrestricted. It comprised of peers, members of the clergy and men of law. It became too cumbersome to be practical in the day to day running of the business of the nation, so the solution was for smaller courts to deal with the ordinary workings of the state.

Chancery was created to supply an enormous staff to the Lord Chancellor and be essential to four offices, a Home Office, a Foreign Office, a Secretarial Bureau and a Ministry of Justice. In 1280 Edward the First of England became so annoyed at the number of cases being sent directly to him personally that he issued a decree stating that: *"All petitions that touch the Seal shall go first before the Chancellor".*

This was when the great fog of Chancery started

With the decline of the Court of the Exchequer the newly established Court dealt with everything, from verbal contracts, matters of land law, trusts,

poverty, to contracts and obligations. Complaints were brought before the Court in the form of a writ and these were originally in French and later in English, but not in Latin as was the case with the other Courts.

In the reign of Edward the third the Court moved to its new address, at Westminster Hall, where it sat almost continually, gathering fog, until its dissolution in the 1870's. Realistically it was during the late 14 century that Chancery procedure became fixed. Between 1461 and 1485, under Yorkist rule Chancery saw huge expansion and although not popular with the commons or the clergy, who preferred Roman Law to Equity, for the Court of Chancery was a court of Equity, it continued unimpeded.

Over the centuries, fog continued to *flood* the Court and in 1701 a Trieste was published listing 25 procedures which contributed to the extremely high cost of fees and the correspondingly slow pace of procedures. Committees had been reporting the massive increase of fees since the previous review which had happened during the reign of Charles the First. Moreover, that expensive honorary positions had been created and on many, many occasions court officials did not know what the correct fees were. Proceedings had grown to thousands of pages in length per case.

By 1743 the fog in Chancery is described by Kerly (1890) as *"An appalling example of the abuses which the unrestrained farming out of the offices of the Court and the payment of all officials by fees had developed"*.

By the Victorian age, some small reforms had been enacted but many of the problems with the Court were extemporaneous from the time of Elizabeth

Lincoln's Inn (Old Hall, Chapel and Chancery Court 1830

the First. With the growth of wealth, which resulted from the expanding middle classes and the economic and social mobility resulting from the industrial revolution, and the benefits of empire, more and more pressure was applied for reform. In 1813 the first major change was enacted with the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor to hear more cases. Then in 1833 the jurisdiction of the post of Master of the Rolls was expanded to include hearing any and all cases. This is the period that some scholars have identified as the setting of Bleak House. The reference to the railway in Chapter 55 would suggest the 1830's. Thus an age in the history of Chancery when the fog appears to be at its densest. Changing social structures affected the way in which people earned money and held on to it. The age when the whole family brought home the bacon was gone. The middle and lower working classes were paid by the day or sometimes by the week, but not paid very much. The clerks etc. were paid, depending on their employers and any improvident decisions could result in a stay in the Marshalsea prison. As Dickens knew all too well from personal experience. His family like so many of those in his books was rescued from poverty by a bequest of a relative. Richard, Ada, Hester, Miss Flyte, they represent that class of people who were caught between the twin jaws of having no paying employment and the expectance of a settlement of the will of a relative.

The commonly held truth that *"where there is a will there is a relative"* is central to *Bleak House*. And something that John Jarndyce was only too aware of. Most of the characters are at some point victims of, or potential victims of a society that makes secure financial remuneration difficult. Victims of a stagnated judicial system operating in a stonewall fog.

By using the might of this great panoramic novel to shine a powerful light into the dark murky corners of Chancery, Dickens helped to change the collective stagnation of attitude toward institutions once considered unchangeable. Thus changing the fortunes of the Poor Relations, which every family seemed to be encumbered with. They appear a lot in Dickens: in *Pickwick Papers* at Dingley Dell, in *Great Expectations* the Pockets and others are constantly attending to Miss Havisham in the hope of financial reward. But even when the great fog of Chancery was dispersed, and its victims were freed from excessively long delays in settlements, there remains the truth that to this day is apt:

Where there is a will there will be a relative.

BLOTTONITES EN WELLERISMS

J.C. van Kessel

Dickens populariteit – niet als schrijver, maar als fenomeen in het collectieve geheugen – blijft stijgende. Je komt hem tegen op plaatsen, waar je hem verwacht: *Kraantje Lek*, Bronkhorst, Haren (Gr.), Deventer, maar ook op plaatsen en in gezelschap van lieden, die je niet op je netvlies had. Zo kon je *de Volkskrant* columnist Thomas van Luyn in Londen tegenkomen in gezelschap van een flinke longontsteking, die hem heel 'dickensiaans' voorkwam.

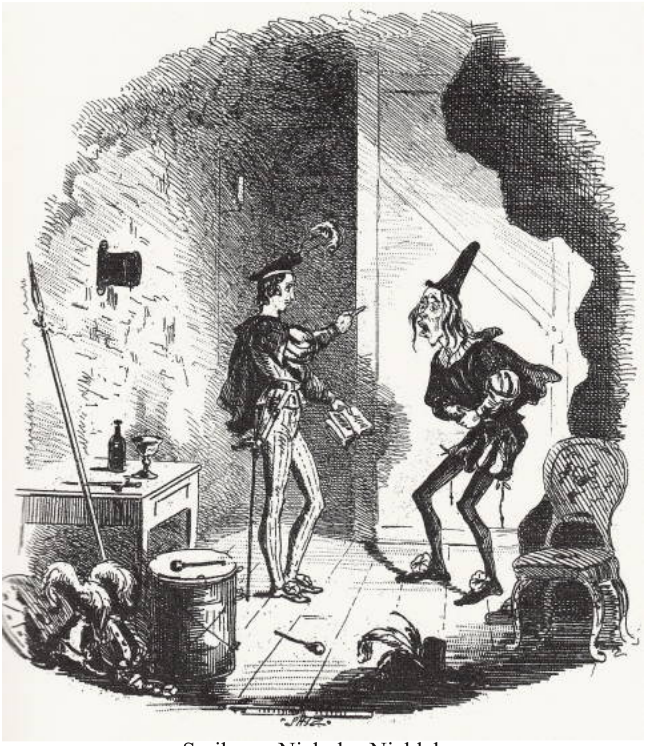
Dat Van Luyn longontstekingen met Dickens associeerde kwam, omdat hij meende dat de helft van zijn karakters aan longonsteking overlijdt. Nu neem ik aan dat Van Luyn niet bedoeld heeft dat van de circa drieduizend karakters, die in Dickens' oeuvre voorkomen, de helft het loodje legt vanwege een longontsteking. Maar ook als we aannemen dat hij de sterfgevallen in de romans en verhalen voor ogen had, blijft de twijfel of de columnist gelijk heeft en koortsfantasieën niet met hem op de loop zijn gegaan. Hier gaat de Blotton in ons opspelen. Wat is er waar van? En hoe kunnen wij zijn associatie ontkrachten.

Een aselecte steekproef moet uitkomst bieden. Beginnen wij bij de *Pickwick Papers*. De eerste sterfgevallen, waarvan sprake is, zijn die van de ouders van een crimineel, in het verhaal van de oude dominee. De moeder sterft uit verdriet om de zoon, de vader aan een infarct bij confrontatie met zijn zoon. Nu zou de moeder aan een longontsteking overleden kunnen zijn, maar het verhaal spreekt van een wekenlang ziekbed, wat een longontsteking

minder waarschijnlijk maakt. Een tweede geval is dat van de krankzinnige en zijn vrouw uit het 'Madman's Manuscript'. Beiden lijden aan een *'morbid insanity'*, die tot hun dood leidt in *'raving madness'*.

Maar zou men kunnen tegenwerpen dat het hier sterfgevallen uit de tweede hand betreft; nog geen direct bewijs. De speurtocht moet verder. *Oliver Twist*, het boek waaraan Dickens al begon, terwijl *Pickwick* nog doorliep. Het eerste hoofdstuk is meteen raak: Oliver's moeder sterft in het kraambed. Datzelfde lot treft ook de moeder van Paul Dombey uit *Dombey & Son*. Gelet op de stand van de medische wetenschap in die tijd was er geen longontsteking voor nodig om in het kraambed te overlijden.

De tocht gaat verder: Smike uit *Nicholas Nickleby*, de meelijwekkende



Smike en Nicholas Nickleby

lotgenoot van Nicholas in Squeers strafinrichting. Smike, toch al in slechte conditie, wordt ziek in Londen en moet op doktersadvies naar de gezonde buitenlucht van Devonshire. Maar waarschuwen de dokters: bereid je voor op het ergste, want *'every token of of rapid consumption had appeared.'* Dui-

delijker diagnose kan niet, is men geneigd te denken.

Vooruit, nog een paar sterfgevallen: de gebroeders William en Frederick Dorrit uit *'Little Dorrit'*. Het is een synchroon sterfbed, beiden zijn oud en zwak, William ligt al een dag of tien zwaar ziek in bed als hij de geest geeft; Frederick, geknield aan het doodsbed, *'equally removed by an untraversable distance from the teeming earth'.* Ook hier geen begin van bewijs voor een acute longontsteking.

Tot slot de dood van Little Nell uit *The Old Curiosity Shop*, wier dood heel Engeland in tranen bracht, wat Oscar Wilde verleidde tot de onweerstaanbare quote: *'One must have a heart of stone to read the death of little Nell without laughing.'* Het zou kunnen dat zij aan een longontsteking is overleden, de vervallen pastorie waar zij met haar grootvader verbleef, was zeker tochtig, toch ligt een dood door de toen alom heersende tuberculose meer voor de hand.

Al met al heeft onze columnist zich met zijn associatie van Dickens en longontsteking zich wel erg op glad ijs bewogen.

Meer beslagen ten ijs – om de beeldspraak te vervolgen – komt Van Luyn in het vervolg van zijn column, wanneer een bezoek aan de stamkroeg van Dickens hem op het spoor van het *Foundling Hospital* brengt. Wel suggereert hij dat Dickens toen met eigen ogen heeft gezien dat op de dag van de opening van het hospitaal *'er meteen honderd baby's voor de deur werden achtergelaten'*. Dat is een kras staaltje, want het Foundling Hospital opende zijn deuren in 1741. Het hospitaal – eerder weeshuis dan ziekenhuis – fungeerde zoals de befaamde *Babyklappe* in Hamburg. In de strikte zin van het woord dus niet voor weeskinderen, maar voor ongewenste kinderen. Voor Dickensians is het interessant te weten dat de stichter van het Foundling Hospital ene Thomas Coram was. Zijn naam leeft voort in de naam van het park – Coram Fields -, waar eens het hospitaal stond én in Tattycoram, het dienstmeisje bij de familie Meagles uit *Little Dorrit*.

Zoals gebruikelijk ten besluite een wellerism, ditmaal uit het proces van Pickwick, wanneer Serjeant Buzfuz geestig probeert te zijn door Sam Weller te suggereren dat het dienstverband bij Pickwick het karakter heeft van *'Little to do and plenty to get'*, waarop Sam antwoordt:

'Oh, quite enough to get , sir, as the soldier said ven they ordered him three hundred and fifty lashes.'

HOUSEHOLD WORDS

Immortal Memory, uitgesproken op 15 december 2018

Else Flim

Geachte Dickens Fellows,

Onze reis door dit jaar loopt bijna ten einde.

"Uren, dagen, maanden, jaren vliegen als een schaduw heen", dat lied van dichter en schrijver Rhijnvis Feith, voor het eerst gepubliceerd rond 1807, zong mijn vader ieder jaar vanaf november.

In het gezin waarin ik opgroeide was Het Begrip Tijd vaak een onderwerp van gesprek. Het werd benadrukt dat je 'de jou toegemeten tijd' goed moest gebruiken, je medemens tot dienst zou zijn, je talenten diende te ontwikkelen en vreugde in het leven van jezelf en van anderen moest scheppen. De boodschap was: Tijd is kostbaar.

Daar denk ik vaak aan als mijn man, Aad Kok, en ik aan het werk zijn in ons Dickenstheater.

Want als er iemand was die zijn tijd volledig heeft benut, die als één mens wel twee of drie levens tegelijk heeft geleefd, ja, dan was het wel Charles Dickens.

Door de grote variëteit van activiteiten die hij ontplooide, kunnen we vele kanten van hem belichten en keer op keer reageert het publiek verrast. Dit seizoen is de aandacht gericht op zijn combinatie van werken aan een boek of kerstverhaal en het reizen, het wonen in Zwitserland, Italië en Frankrijk. En ook daar bedacht hij allerlei mogelijkheden om even te ontsnappen aan de strenge discipline van het schrijven. Ik noem enkele voorbeelden, de jaartallen zal ik u besparen:

In Parijs (vanaf 1837/o.a. november 1846 en januari 1847/ winter van 1855 tot mei 1856/1863 januari readings) Tijdens zijn wandelingen bezocht hij daar ziekenhuizen, gevangenissen, het mortuarium, begraafplaatsen, de Opera, paleizen, wijnhuizen, concertzalen en theaters. Wandelen deed hij ook met John Forster en hij vierde er carnaval met Wilkie Collins.

In Italië (juli 1844 tot juni 1845) schreef hij het kerstverhaal *The Chimes,* bracht het naar Londen via Venetië want die stad wilde hij beslist zien en net voor Kerst was hij weer terug in Genua en hij bezocht met Catherine de marmergroeven van Carrara, Pisa, Florence, Rome en in het Vaticaan bekeken ze een

Venetië in de negentiende eeuw

voetwassing door de paus, door naar Napels, Pompeï en dan de Vesuvius beklimmen want Dickens wilde ín de kratermond kunnen kijken!

In Zwitserland, (in 1846) wonend in de Villa Rosemont in Lausanne, schrijvend aan Dombey and Son in een niet inspirerende omgeving, noemde hij in een brief aan John Forster zijn inspiratiebron Londen 'that magic lantern'. Maar hij doorbrák het saaie leven, reisde met zijn vrouw, schoonzus Georgina, een groep Engelse vrienden en twee bedienden per stoomboot over het Meer van Genève, daarna per omnibus naar Bex en per koets naar Martigny en de volgende dag trokken ze per muilezel door de Alpen want Dickens wilde het St. Bernhardklooster bezoeken! Ja, óók verblijvend in het buitenland heeft hij zijn tijd goed benut!

Zoals we bij geliefde overledenen het liefst beelden oproepen van vreugdevolle momenten, zo doe ik dat ook graag bij Charles Dickens. In George Dolby's boek *Dickens as I knew him: the story of the Reading Tours* wordt een mooie gebeurtenis beschreven. Zie het voor u: de vrienden uit Amerika, die hem daar gastvrij ontvingen, diners voor hem aanrichtten, hem uitzwaaiden bij de boot, zij zijn in juni 1869 overgekomen en worden nu op Gad's Hill Place feestelijk door Dickens getrakteerd. Op een zonnige dag rijden koetsen voor en het hele gezelschap gaat een sightseeing tour door Kent maken. De inwoners van Rochester herkennen natuurlijk hun Dickens en zwaaien uitbundig naar hem en zijn vrolijke gasten, die op weg zijn naar Canterbury. Het was een dag waarop Dickens, zoals ik van Dolby begrijp, 'iedere minuut' genoot. Stelt u zich voor hoe hij met zijn vrienden door het mooie landschap reed, met overal die met klimop begroeide muurtjes, de klimop die zijn weg kruipend vervolgt en bomen met zijn bladeren omhelst. Zo'n reis, die niet mag eindigen.

Ladies and gentlemen, please fill your glasses, stand up, and drink with me to the Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens.

—

Verslag van de 258e vergadering van The Dickens Fellowship Haarlem Branch, gehouden op 15 december 2018.

Pieter de Groot

In een opgeluisterd *Trou Moet Blijcken* verzamelden zich veertig leden. De president ziet een overweldigende opkomst en meent ook een Kerstsfeer op te merken; want sinds hij over de Kerstmarkt van Haarlem is gelopen is er geen houden meer aan.

Dan memoreert hij ons medelid Marijke van Steijnen, die overleden is.

De secretaris deelt mee dat er in Zuid Afrika, in een kist met verschillende andere zaken, gemengd divers zullen we maar zeggen, een geschilderd portret van Dickens is aangetroffen. Omdat iemand dacht, kom ik zal eens kijken wat daar nu eigenlijk inzit, is dit schilderij na een

kleine tweehonderd jaar aan de vergetelheid onttrokken. Zo zie je maar weer. Onderschat nooit een kist die schijnbaar doelloos in een hoek stof staat te vergaren. Onmiddellijk openen.

Hij wijst de leden op de Annual Conference die in juli in Eastbourne plaatsvindt. Vervolgens noemt hij Haren waar de Dickens-collectie in de Dickens Room door de heer Muda is overgedragen aan de bibliotheek en de gemeente. De heer Muda kijkt opgelucht in het rond.

Dan meldt hij een programma wijziging: de uitvoering van de zang en dans wordt deze keer niet door de leden van de Lokin familie verzorgd, maar door de drijvende krachten achter het Dickens theater, mevrouw Flim en de heer Kok.

De stem van de penningmeester klinkt schril als zij aankondigt de contributies niet te zullen verhogen. De suggestie van een flink gevulde kas, die dat oproept, doet zij af als “fake news”.

De editor heeft zich achterin de zaal in een comfortabele stoel genesteld en is in een lichte sluimer vervallen. Als hij moet opstaan informeert hij om zich heen of de lezing al is afgelopen. Dat blijkt niet het geval. Waarop hij meedeelt dat er een extra dik nummer van de Dutch Dickensian beschikbaar is en dat de arm van de eindredactrice, mevrouw Van Daalen, tekenen van herstel vertoont.

Waarop de president weer opstaat. Hij deelt mee dat hij zijn functie neerlegt en wel met onmiddellijke ingang. Hij is 18 jaar in functie geweest en had graag nog 18 jaar aangebleven maar persoonlijke redenen verhinderen dat. Een daarvan is dat hij vaak in het verre Noorwegen wordt ontboden. Hij dankt voor het genoten vertrouwen en wijst de huidige penningmeester mevrouw Drost aan als zijn opvolger. Waarop hij opgelucht wegloopt richting een van die comfortabele stoelen achter in de zaal.

E.J. Potgieter

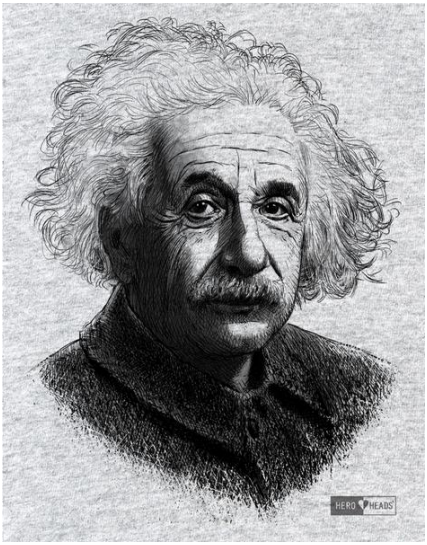
Mevrouw Drost zegt dit een belangrijke stap in haar carrière te vinden. Ze heeft een hoog ambitie-niveau en heeft dit vanaf het begin van haar bestuurslidmaatschap gewild. Sterker nog, ze is met niets anders bezig geweest. De secretaris kijkt benauwd, hij vreest blijkbaar de volgende te worden waarmee mevrouw Drost dan de volledige macht naar zich toe zal trekken. Een dictatuur ligt hier op de loer. We zijn

gewaarschuwd.

Dan geeft de presidente het woord aan onze spreker deze avond: Dr. Dick Kooiman. Hij vertelt over zijn oude verbitterde oom. Toen hij bij hem op visite ging meende hij er goed aan te doen hem op te vrolijken door hem naar zijn goede herinneringen te vragen. Maar oom had hierop gerekend en counterde het optimisme van Kooiman messcherp door Potgieter te citeren (beiden waren Zwollenaar): “herinneringen aan betere dagen scherpt de angel van het leed”. Ja, dan smaakt de thee ook niet echt meer.

Neem dan Einstein die eens opmerkte: “een goed leven is een goede eetlust en een slecht geheugen”. Maar dat herinneringen aan vroeger soms hard nodig zijn toont Dickens aan in “A Christmas Carol” waar het nodig is dat Scrooge deze ervaart.

Spreker gaat dan in op het Kerstverhaal “A Christmas Dinner” waar-in Dickens op het bijzondere van de Kerstperiode wijst en dat men het ophalen van negatieve herinneringen, want die heeft iedereen wel, beter voor andere dagen kan bewaren.



Albert Einstein

Kooiman gaat in op een onderzoek onder psychiaters die geen van allen van hun herinneringen af zouden willen; van henzelf dan, dat spreekt. Spreker noemt daarna Douwe Draaisma die zich maar afvroeg waarom het leven korter lijkt te worden als men ouder wordt, en over Aletta Jacobs die indertijd promoveerde op hersenfuncties. Ook Swaab laat zich niet onbetuigd in zijn boek “Ons Brein”, over het geheugen en wat daar in zit; vooral in de temporale kwab. In de zaal gaan links en rechts handen naar het hoofd om deze kwab te localiseren. Wij rubriceren onze herinneringen, stelt Kooiman.

Dan komt hij aan een heikel punt, het menselijk ingrijpen in het geheugen.

Hij beschrijft een film: “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotlight Mind” uit 2004. Die gaat over een stormachtige relatie, waarbij de geliefden uit elkaar gaan om vervolgens hun herinneringen te laten wissen. Vervolgens komen ze elkaar later weer tegen en gaan opnieuw een relatie aan. Je proeft, zegt spreker dat ze daarna weer uit elkaar zullen gaan, maar zo lang duurt de film gelukkig niet want je wilt ook weer eens naar huis. Maar de moraal is dus dat zij in hun oude fouten blijven vervallen.

Ook de schrijver Belcampo filosofeert over dit onderwerp. Zijn verhaal gaat over een gelukkig gezin dat aan lager wal raakt en besluit hun goede herinneringen te verkopen, aan mensen die deze wel kunnen gebruiken. Alleen de herinneringen aan hun kinderen willen ze behouden.

Spreker gaat dan in op de Kerstverhalen van Dickens, of beter gezegd verhalen die Dickens rond de Kerstperiode schreef. Vanaf 1843 verschijnt er, met uitzondering van de jaren 1847 en 1849, altijd wel een. Het gaat om 5 Christmas Books en 49 Christmas Stories. Vanavond gaat hij in op het 5de Christmas Book:"The Haunted Man".

Scheikundeleraar Redlaw zit somber in een klaslokaal. Zelfs een frisse vrouw en haar babbelende schoonvader kunnen hem niet opvrolijken want hij heeft het druk met zijn nare herinneringen. Gelukkig voor hem komt er een geestverschijning die hem een aantrekkelijk voorstel doet: hij kan zijn nare herinneringen kwijtraken, maar dan zal hij in het vervolg anderen negatief beïnvloeden. Ja, er is nu eenmaal altijd een "maar" als je zo'n aanbod krijgt.

En zo gebeurt het ook; iedereen met wie hij in aanraking komt verandert in negatieve zin. Tot en met de vrolijke Tetterby's aan toe, met hun winkel, volgepakt met waardeloze spullen.

Bijna iedereen dan, want een verwilderd straatkind en Miss Milly, die zijn redding wordt, zijn de uitzonderingen. Redlaw verandert terug en straalt van geluk.

Kooiman ziet een parallel tussen "The Haunted Man" en "A Christmas Carol"; je hebt dus nare herinneringen nodig om een heel mens te worden. Er speelt hier ook een persoonlijk element van Dickens mee. Het jaar voor hij "The Haunted Man" schreef heeft hij aan John Forster vertelt over zijn jeugd in de blacking factory. Daarmee bevrijdde Dickens zichzelf.

Spreker besluit met de laatste zin uit "The Haunted Man": Oh Lord keep our memory green.

Waarna er vragen en opmerkingen zijn.

Mevrouw Lokin vraagt zich af of het vrijwilligerswerk, dat spreker onder bejaarden doet en waar hij soms uitlegt dat vergeetachtigheid ook voordelen kan hebben, niet in strijd is met de uitleg die we nu gekregen hebben. Spreker meent van niet.

De heer Martens heeft het nog over het doorbreken van een depressie en de heer Drenth over de grens tussen vergeten en niet vergeten.

Waarop wij van mevrouw Flim en de heer Kok een CD te horen krijgen met daarop het op muziek gezette gedicht "The Ivy Green". Dit kennen wij uit "The Pickwick Papers", waar een Vicar het voordraagt op verzoek van Wardle. Henry Russell zette het vervolgens op muziek.

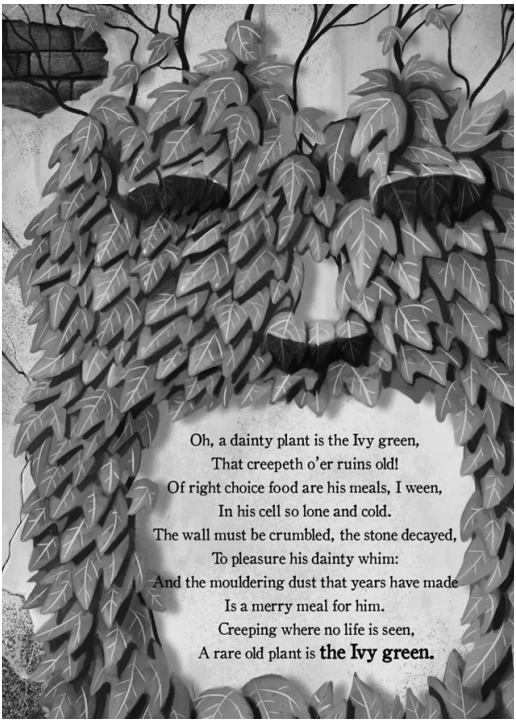
Wij zingen het refrein uit volle borst mee.

"Creeping where no life is seen, a rare old plant is the Ivy Green". Well done, us.

Waarna wij overgaan tot de borrel en vervolgens, na de Fellowship Grace, het diner.

De heer Van Koningsbrugge staat al snel op en meent dat er bij de opvolging van de president wel een Ivy Green in het spel kan zijn. Waarna wij over gaan tot de traditionele toasts.

Allereerst is daar de toast op de Haarlem Branch die altijd door de spreker wordt uitgesproken. Dat is al jaren een Brit maar nu maar eens niet. De heer Kooiman maakt er een toast op de secretaris van die moeite heeft eenvoudig te blijven. Hij zou ook nog eens alles weten, maar dat blijkt niet zo te zijn want er huisde een oude dame in London die wel echt alles wist. Volgens de heer Lokin dreef zij regelmatig sprekers tot wanhoop door tijdens hun lezingen opmerkingen te maken in de trant van: “that’s new to me”. Je wist dan dat je onzin uitkraamde. De Haarlem Branch had overigens jarenlang Louise Overbeek op deze positie.



The Ivy Green

Daarop brengt de heer Kooiman de toast uit op de Haarlem Branch.

Hierna volgt de toast op de Dickens Fellowship, door mevrouw Van Daalen. Vorig jaar lukte het niet wegens de problemen met de arm, maar dat gaat nu wel weer een beetje. Als student had haar scriptieonderwerp met Dickens te maken en zij zocht naar bepaalde edities. Toen zij er ach-ter kwam dat de Haarlem Branch die niet had werd zij onmid-dellijk lid. Als examenvraag kreeg zij een strikvraag maar mevrouw Bomans zei meteen dat zij het niet te serieus moest nemen. Ja, zo komen we er niet natuurlijk. Maar goed, hierna brengt mevrouw Van Daalen de toast uit op de Dickens Fellowship.

Tot slot volgt de toast op de Immortal Memory. Mevrouw Flim stelt dat de tijd kostbaar is, dus maak er gebruik van. Voor je weet vliegen de dagen, maanden en jaren als een schaduw heen. De leden kijken onthutst. Maar, vervolgt zij, als er iemand vol van de tijd gebruik maakte, dan was dat Dickens wel. Hij leidde

bijna drie levens tegelijkertijd. Als hij in het buitenland was, dan miste hij Londen ontzettend. De stad waar hij zoveel over schreef en waar hij zijn tijd ook goed gebruikte. Daarom, stelt zij, laten wij dan nu de tijd nemen om te drinken op de Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens.

De heer Muda geeft aan dat de Dickens Room in Haren nu weer toekomst heeft door de overdracht. Meteen daarna, de inkt was nog niet droog, bleek door een aantal geraffineerde gemeentelijke fusies de stad Groningen de eigenaar te zijn geworden. Dan kunnen wij wel raden wie hier het meesterbrein in is geweest.

De heer Lokin (ja, dezelfde) is verrast door het opstappen van de president. Hij vraagt zich af of die in de problemen is gekomen, een MeToo kwestie? Lokin vraagt om een comité.

De heer Van Kessel weet zich te herinneren dat hij zich als lid meldde bij de gebroeders Beek, een paar meedogenloze tandartsen die de Haarlem Branch met ijzeren hand bestuurden.

Hij belde aan bij een enorme villa met een bordje op de deur: alleen spreekuur op vrijdag tussen 1 en 2 uur. Dat leek hem ook wel wat, een uur per week werken en dan zo'n huis. Maar de tandheelkunde bleek onbereikbaar en hij kwam binnen het bankwezen aan de verkeerde kant van het loket terecht. Beiden heren Beek raakten later wat vergeetachtig maar wisten een hoge leeftijd te bereiken.

De president spreekt over de hoge leeftijd van de grootvader in The Old Curiosity Shop, toevallig ons Book of Study voor 2019. Zij vermoedt dat zijn gokverslaving hem jong hield.

De heer Jacobs meent dat het bezette Haren onze steun verdient. Tevens stelt hij dat Dickens kleur bracht in een grauwe tijd. Hij vraagt zich daarbij af wat zijn favoriete kleur was. Maar niemand blijkt het te weten en misschien had hij die ook niet.

De heer Kabel merkt op dat hij om toegelaten te worden een brief aan Bomans schreef, want dat kon niet zomaar. Het examen was wel eenvoudig want het antwoord was altijd: Pickwick.

De heer De Groot meldde zich als lid bij de deur aan bij de toenmalig secretaris Frank Keene. Toen hij diens vrouw op de achtergrond: "hoe is het mogelijk" hoorde roepen, wist hij genoeg

De heer Van Koningsbrugge had nog nooit iets van Dickens gelezen toen hij lid werd. Hij raadt aspirant leden in eenzelfde positie te antwoorden met: "that's new to me".

Waarna de nieuwe president de bijeenkomst besluit met de mededeling dat: " it's good to be the president". Waarop een aantal jongeren aan het einde van de tafel samenzweerderig kijken.

—

Verslag van de 259ste vergadering van The Dickens Fellowship Haar-lem Branch, gehouden op 16 maart 2019.

Pieter de Groot

In een beklemmend *Kraantje Lek* verzamelden zich 34 leden. De nieuwe president heeft het huishoudelijk reglement goed gelezen en weet dat zij verplicht is om een overweldigende opkomst te signaleren. En dat is het zelfs deze dag.

De secretaris meldt het opzeggen van twee leden maar merkt op dat twee aspiranten zich vandaag onopvallend tussen de leden hebben gemengd. Zo blijft de status quo gehandhaafd.

De penningmeester, dat is ook de president, maar niet voor lang want zij introduceert de heer Van Koningsbruggen als haar opvolger. Van Koningsbruggen zegt dat hij verbijsterd was toen hij over de aanstelling hoorde. Hij had dit nooit verwacht en verkeerd nog steeds in een staat van euforie. Hij had familie en buren voor vandaag uitgenodigd maar zover wilde de andere bestuursleden het niet laten komen. Slechts voor zijn vrouw is een uitzondering gemaakt; er zijn grenzen, ook aan euforie.

Waarop de president weer het woord grijpt en meedeelt dat de door de Haarlem Branch te organiseren Annual Conference in 2021 serieuze gestalte aan het krijgen is. Het thema zal worden: Weather, Wind and Ships. Nu, van alle drie hebben wij genoeg in dit land, dus lijkt het slagen van deze onderneming slechts kinderspel. Er is inmiddels een brainstormgroepje gevormd, maar ook anderen zullen nog persoonlijk benaderd worden. Met haviksblik scant zij de aanwezigen, wegduiken is zinloos, zoveel wordt wel duidelijk. Alsof dit niet genoeg is kondigt de president de komst van een lidmaatschapsplaatje aan. Deze zal voorzien worden van een krachtige magneet waardoor het straks oppassen is met het bestek.

Dan ziet zij een nieuw lid en laat het examen aanvangen. Aan mevrouw Van Beek wordt gevraagd of zij twee plaatsen kan noemen waar Dickens, buiten Engeland, ooit heeft gewoond. Mevrouw Van Beek noemt Parijs en Nederland. Bij de laatste plaats kijken de leden bevreemd op, maar gelukkig herinnert de secretaris zich de theorie van notaris Keuning en meent dat Dantumawoude goed gerekend mag worden.

De editor zwijgt, maar een nieuw nummer van The Dutch Dickensian is aanstaande.

Dan geeft de president het woord aan onze spreker deze middag: Paul Ferdinandusse. Die stelt dat dit een zware middag wordt, want het gaat vooral over zielige kinderen. Waarna wij er eens goed voor gaan zitten.

Het door Engeland naar de koloniën sturen van (jonge) kinderen was een prak-tijk die begon in 1616, toen werden de eersten verscheept naar Jamestown in Virginia USA, en eindigde in 1967, toen de laatsten naar Australië gingen.

Vooral in de eerste tijd ging het veelal om kinderen die gewoon van straat werden geplukt en gedeporteerd, want men had in de koloniën arbeidskrachten hard nodig. In 1645 werd dit officieel verboden, maar het ging in de praktijk ge-woon door. Het ging ook vaak om ge-vangenen, en dat waren deels kinde-ren want de leeftijd van de gevangenen lag doorgaans tussen de 15 en 35 jaar. Het ging om vele duizenden. Toen de USA zelfstandig werd kon de Engelse overheid daar niet meer naar deporteren en toen werd Australië de bestemming.

In Engeland kwam, door de snelle bevol-kingsgroei, steeds meer armoede. Bij be-volkingsgroei is er altijd sprake van veel kinderen. Omdat gezinnen alleen konden overleven als ze meerdere inkomens had-den, zaten kinderen vaak in de weg om-dat zo de moeder niet kon bijdragen aan het inkomen. Men kwam daardoor in de werkhuizen terecht met een heel hard regime. Ouders verloren daar meteen het wettelijk gezag over hun kinderen.

In 1860 verbleven er 94.000 personen in een werkhuis; 30 a 40% daarvan was kind.

Spreker laat daarna een aantal lichtbeelden zien: onder meer van wach-tenden voor een opvanghuis, gemaakt door Samuel Luke Fildes, tekeningen en foto's van de omstandigheden waaronder kinderen arbeid verrichten en afbeel-dingen van fa-ciale mis-vormingen, ontstaan door bepaalde ar-beidsomstan-digheden; zo-als "pointer's rot", veroor-zaakt door het slijpsel van naalden en "phossy jaw", veroorzaakt door het ma-ken van lucifers.

In de tijd van Dickens wemelde het in London van de straat-kinderen; kinderen die waren weg-gelopen of ongewenst waren en daarom buiten de deur waren gezet. In 1848 telde men er 30.000. Jongens leefden op straat in groepen, voor hun veiligheid, en meis-jes kwamen al snel in bordelen terecht. Ene Edward Pelham Brenton startte een landbouwschool voor straatjongens en zond deze na hun opleiding naar de koloniën. Maar daar werden ze uitgebuit. Toen Brenton dat hoorde stopte hij meteen met deze aanpak en stierf kort daarna.

Ferdinandusse gaat daarna nog in op de Ierse hongersnood en de massa -emigratie naar vooral de USA, die dat tot gevolg had.

Ook Dickens was betrokken bij de emigratie. Hij was begonnen het Urania

Cottage project, waarin vrouwen aan de zelfkant de ge-legenheid kregen een goede opleiding tot huis-vrouw te krijgen om vervolgens naar Australië te gaan. In Nederland stond ook zo'n huis, gesticht door ds. O.G. Heldring van het Reveil, dat met bijna dezelfde principes werkte, maar hier bleven de vrouwen in Nederland.

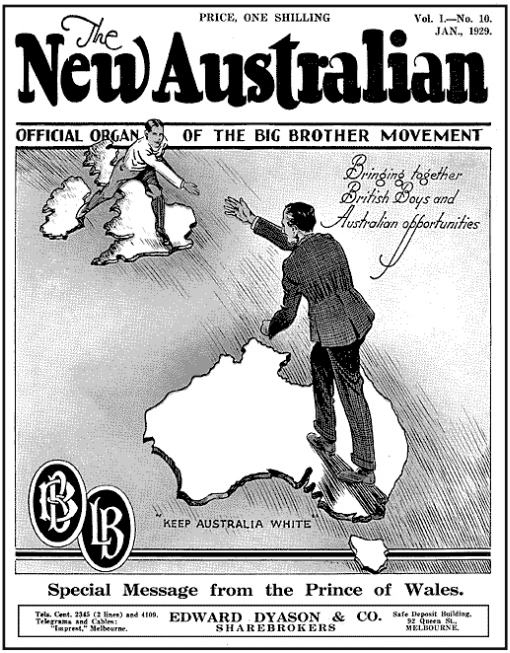
Een reden om straatkinderen te deporteren naar de koloniën was ook dat de heersende klasse bang was dat een te groot proletariaat zou leiden tot anarchie en uiteindelijk revolutie. Men had in het verleden in Europa al voorbeelden daarvan gezien. En het was ook nog eens goedkoper. Een gedeporteerd kind kostte eenmalig 15 pond en een kind in een werkhuis kostte jaarlijks 12 pond. Vandaar dat zovelen in de koloniën terecht kwamen. Ook sneuvelden er 22.000 geronselde jongens in de Krimoorlog.

Ottho Gerhard Heldring 1804-1876

Tussen 1840 en 1860 gingen er 4,5 miljoen emigranten naar de USA. Dit leidde tot bomvolle steden aan de oostkust. Ene Reverend Brace kwam op het idee om de weeskinderen onder hen te verdelen over het dun bevolkte westen. Zij gingen naar families die hen soms besteld hadden, want dat kon ook. Naar schatting zijn er 150.000 tot 200.000 door deze zogenaamde "orphan trains" vervoerd. Ook in Canada had men te maken met grote in-stroom en hier waren het Mary Rye en Annie McPherson die er met hun "childsaving movement" systeem in brachten. In Engeland zelf waren onder meer Dr. Barnardos, William Booth en Lord Shaftesbury hier actief in. Barnardos, die oorspronkelijk naar China wilde gaan om daar kinderen te helpen, werd gewezen op het feit dat er in Engeland genoeg ellende was; waarop hij bleef. Hij was een eigengereide, dominante man, maar ook zeer actief in het ophalen van donaties. Hij is echter ook de naamgever van "Barnardos Law" die inhield dat als je er achter kwam dat jouw kind in de koloniën was beland, je die eigenlijk niet kon terughalen. Bij een rechtbank werd het verzoek niet ontvankelijk verklaard of je moest de reis- en opleidingskosten willen betalen. De kinderen in de koloniën hadden het slecht, of ze nu geadopteerd waren of niet. Ze werden uitgebuit. In

Canada werden op den duur de vakbonden er boos over deze uitbuiting maar men zag de kinderen ook als een openbaar gezondheidsprobleem. In Australië kwam daarom in 1901 een restrictie op de immigratie, hoewel men nog wel blanken en dan liefst Engelse blanken wilde hebben.

Later kwamen er bewegingen, als de Big Brother Movement, die vonden dat de kinderen thuis in Engeland moesten blijven; als het even kon bij de ouders en in de eigen sociale context. Dit stond ook als aanbeveling in het rapport van de Curtis commissie. Maar men bleef vanuit Engeland maar sturen. Dit om de huizen van de instituties te vullen. Een beruchte was de Fairfield Farm van de Christian Brothers. Een kritisch rapport verdween in een lade. Tot in 1990 Margaret Humphreys het weer aan de kaak stelt; met name het sadisme van de Christian Brothers. In 2000 toont een Australische Senaatscommissie alle misstanden nog eens aan. Waarna in 2018 Groot Brittannië eindelijk besluit alsnog een vergoeding uit te betalen aan de slachtoffers van dit systeem die dan nog in leven zijn.


PRICE, ONE SHILLING Vol. 1.—No. 10. JAN., 1929.

The New Australian

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE BIG BROTHER MOVEMENT

Bringing together British Boys and Australian opportunities

KEEP AUSTRALIA WHITE

Special Message from the Prince of Wales.

Tels. Cent. 2345 (2 lines) and 4109. Telegrams and Cables: "Empress," Melbourne. EDWARD DYASON & CO. SHAREBROKERS Safe Deposit Building, 52 Queen St., MELBOURNE.

Spreker sluit af met het fragment uit The *Christmas Carol* waarin the Ghost of Christmas present Scrooge wijst op de twee verwaarloosde kinderen: *Ingorance and Want.*

Waarna wij even stil zijn en er vervolgens vragen en opmerkingen zijn. Mevrouw Van Kessel benoemt de hedendaagse situatie van straatkinderen in Zuid Amerika. Mevrouw Vroom vraagt of zieke kinderen bezocht werden door een arts. Spreker vermoedt van niet. Mevrouw Lokin spreekt over misstanden in vele landen en dat er op de Nederlandse markt veel producten te koop zijn waarbij sprake is van kinderarbeid. Ook stelt zij dat een aantal in Nederland geadopteerde kinderen min of meer geroofd zijn van hun eigen families.

De heer Van Kessel heeft het over het afvoeren van dode kinderen in een Londense kelder. Mevrouw Willemsen meent dat het hier in de weeshuizen beter ging dan in Engeland, waarop mevrouw Van Kessel stelt blij te zijn iets positiefs te horen. De heer Lokin heeft het nog over de positieve rol van Dickens bij het ontstaan van het kinderziekenhuis in

Great Ormondstreet Londen. Waar het nog steeds bestaat. De heer Kooiman spreekt over een somber verhaal, en maakt een compliment aan de spreker. Hij stelt dat de emigranten in het werk van Dickens eigenlijk altijd mensen waren die in Engeland waren vastgelopen. Of kent iemand andere voorbeelden? De heer Lokin meent dat Dickens er in zijn journalistiek werk wel aandacht aan besteedt. De president bedankt spreker en constateert dat in al deze ellende Dickens in ieder geval iets goeds gedaan heeft met zijn Urania Cottage.

Waarna wij overgaan tot de borrel en vervolgens het diner.

De tafel blijkt niet berekend op het grote aantal dat voor het diner blijft en er moet zelfs een tafeltje bij gezet worden waardoor het de hele avond onduidelijk blijft waar het hoofd van de tafel nu eigenlijk begint. De heer Van Koningsbruggen heeft hier wel een theorie over.

Omdat de tafelspeeches niet op gang komen begint de secretaris over een brief van een Deense mevrouw die om een donatie vraagt om iets te gaan doen met de Sketches by Boz. Niemand lijkt geïnteresseerd en de secretaris zelf eigenlijk ook niet. De heer Kooiman wil graag van spreker weten waar hij al die informatie toch vandaan heeft. De heer Ferdinandusse noemt het internet maar beseft te laat dat “a painstaking study” het juiste antwoord was geweest en druipt af richting het aparte tafeltje. Dan komt het gesprek nog op de film “Sunshine and Oranges” waarna de president een lijst laat rondgaan waarop zo’n naamplaatsje kan worden aangevraagd. Om de populariteit van het bestuur nog verder te verhogen deelt de secretaris roze papiertjes uit met daarop de ex libris van Dickens. Het kan weer niet op. De president sluit af met op te merken dat het buiten frisjes is en wij ons in dienen te pakken.

Overdracht Voorzittersschap

De enige bekende foto van scheidend voorzitter Martijn David achter een kan water. Rechts de nieuwe voorzitter Marijke Drost, links secretaris Pieter de Groot.

OVER DE AUTEURS:

Roselinde Bouman (1994) studied English literature at the University of Amsterdam and University of Exeter, where she specialised in Victorian studies. After obtaining a postgraduate degree in book publishing, she now works as an editor at a leading Dutch publishing house. She rereads Dickens every Christmas.

Ernst van der Wall (1947) studeerde geneeskunde in Groningen en volgde een opleiding cardiologie aan het AZVU. In 1984/1985 was hij Associate Professor Cardiology Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA. In 1986 werd hij Universitair Hoofddocent LUMC (Leids Universitair Medisch Centrum.) Van 1998 tot 2012 was hij hoogleraar cardiologie LUMC. Sinds 2012 is hij met emeritaat. Hij is sinds 1980 lid van The Dickens Fellowship.

Else Flim was in de jaren ’70 en ’80 programmamaker bij de NCRV. Ze debuteerde in 1985 als romanschrijver. Ze schreef korte verhalen, kinderboeken, romans, en jeugdromans o.a. over WO II. Else studeerde Film- en televisiedramaturgie / Creative Development aan de Universiteit van Utrecht Ze vertaalt public readings van Charles Dickens, bestudeert mimiek en intonatie van zijn optredens (monopolyloog), maakt toneelbewerkingen, regisseert ‘Dickens in het licht van de toverlantaarn’ en treedt op met haar echtgenoot Charles Dickens-acteur Aad Kok in haar Dickenstheater Laren.

Ann de Groot-May - born in Blackrock, County Dublin, Ireland and grew up in Mount Merrion. She was educated in Mount Anville Secondary School and continued her studies at University College Dublin where she received a B.A. Honours degree in 1997. She has worked for Sullivan Bluth animation Studios on, among other films, 'An American Tale'. She has also worked for the Dublin Tourism office and the Dublin Writers Museum. She writes poetry and has had a poem published in 'The Lady' magazine after winning a competition. Her chief interests are Dickens, Poetry, History and the west coast of Ireland.