

EXAMPLE 7

Dickens, *David Copperfield*, 1850

MUCH editorial effort has been directed since the mid 1960s towards the work of the major English and American novelists of the nineteenth century, most of it in America under the sponsorship of the Center for Editions of American Authors; here in Britain the Clarendon editions of Dickens and the Brontës are in progress, and there is to be a Cambridge critical edition of Lawrence. Various theoretical and practical problems have arisen in the course of all this work but, although they have been widely discussed, they have not yet been solved to everyone's satisfaction.¹ This example and the three that follow it are designed to illustrate some of these problems; and we start with *David Copperfield*, a part-issue novel of the mid century.²

Most of Dickens's major novels were published in shilling Numbers on the last day of each month. *David Copperfield* was typical in being made up of 18 parts of 32 octavo pages, each totalling about 20,000 words, plus a final 'double' Number of 48 pages. There were also two plates included in each part—Dickens considered the illustrations to his novels important adjuncts to the text—and in addition a frontispiece and engraved title-page in the double Number.

Dickens wrote the book part by part, and was seldom more than a week or two ahead of the mid-month deadline. The task of filling each Number with the right number of words could seem Procrustean, while his practice of writing the novel during publication meant both that the beginning of the story could not be reconsidered in the light of its ending, and that publication might be interrupted at any time by illness or accident. Yet for Dickens these disadvantages were outweighed by the value

¹ See Example 9, and the references given in p. 183 n. 1.

² The number of books and articles about Dickens is huge, but many of them are trivial. There is no comprehensive bibliography; the best biography is Edgar Johnson's *Dickens: his tragedy and triumph*, 2 vols., New York 1952. An edition of the *Letters* by M. House and G. Storey is in progress.

Serious work on the textual bibliography of Dickens began with Butt, J., and Tillotson, K., *Dickens at work*, London 1957, a pioneering study that has been supplemented by the introductions to the successive volumes of the Clarendon Dickens: *Oliver Twist* (ed. Tillotson, K., 1966); *The mystery of Edwin Drood* (ed. Cardwell, M., 1972); and *Dombey and Son* (ed. Horsman, A., 1974).

The editor of the forthcoming Clarendon *David Copperfield* is Miss Nina Burgis, to whom I am again most grateful for help and advice.

of the mutual relationship that developed with his readers as each part appeared, whereby their reactions influenced and encouraged him as the tale unfolded.

Dickens prefaced the manuscript of each part of *David Copperfield* with a 'Number plan', a combined synopsis and notesheet which was normally started before the Number was written and was then added to during and after the main work of composition. There was only one manuscript draft, which was written out on sheets of post quarto writing paper³—Dickens called them 'slips'⁴—at the normal rate of two or three sheets a day; and about thirty sheets of this manuscript were required to fill the thirty-two printed pages of the monthly Number. Dickens wrote a small, neat, and fairly legible hand, but he impaired both the appearance and the legibility of his manuscripts by revising each sentence as he went along, often blotting out whole phrases and adding replacements in a tiny script in the narrow spaces between the lines. He also went back afterwards to make further changes.

Difficult as it was to read, Dickens intended this first and last draft to be a precise instruction to the compositors who were to set it in type. The exact position for each interlinear correction was marked with a caret, punctuation and paragraphing was provided, and there were few mistakes or ambiguities (other than those caused by the cramped script of the interlineations).

Dickens usually got the manuscript of each number finished by the twentieth of the month, and sent it without further editing to Bradbury and Evans, who both printed and published the book. Here the compositors, skilled men experienced in Dickens's manuscripts, would take a leaf apiece for setting in type; or sometimes even half a leaf, cutting the whole leaf across the middle so that two of them could set it simultaneously.⁵ The compositors transcribed this difficult copy with great accuracy, normalizing the details in the usual way; but its sheer illegibility did sometimes lead to verbal errors. Indeed it is curious that Dickens, who must have been aware of some of these mistakes and of the reason for them, did not think it worth

³ They measured about 22·5 × 18·75 cm.

⁴ This can be confusing since type in long galley might be proofed on pieces of paper which were called 'slips', whence the term 'slip proof' as a synonym for 'galley proof'.

⁵ In the extract from the manuscript of *David Copperfield* which is reproduced below (pp. 148–9) it can be seen that leaf '9' was cut across between lines 19 and 20, the reference '9*' being written at the end of line 20 to show where the lower half of the leaf belonged when the manuscript was reassembled for proof-reading. As a rule the leaves of this manuscript were divided between paragraphs so that the type set by the two compositors could easily be fitted together. Here, however, the cut came in the middle of a sentence, and it may be that in this case it was not made until the compositor who started setting the leaf had got to the ends of lines a19/b26, which happened to coincide. On the other hand it may be that the leaf was divided as usual in advance of setting by two compositors, and that a few lines of type were run over later to make their two stints match.

while to increase the legibility of his manuscripts by using a little more paper.⁶

The first Number of *David Copperfield* was set and proofed in galley, but the rest went directly into page.⁷ Author's proofs, probably accompanied by the manuscript, were sent to Dickens; and there were also author's revises for at least some of the Numbers. The corrected pages were usually stereotyped straight away, and plates were used for printing both the individual parts and the single-volume issues that appeared from 1850; but occasional variation suggests that the type pages were used alongside plates for printing some of the individual parts. All these impressions of the original setting constituted the first edition (1850A).

A three-volume edition, meanwhile, had been set for Tauchnitz from corrected proofs of 1850A sent to Leipzig for the purpose (1850B); and the work was set a third time for part-issue in America, Numbers I and II from proofs, the rest from the English parts (eleven parts published by John Wiley and nine by G. P. Putnam, New York 1849–50; 1850C). Dickens did not make additional revisions specially for 1850B or 1850C.

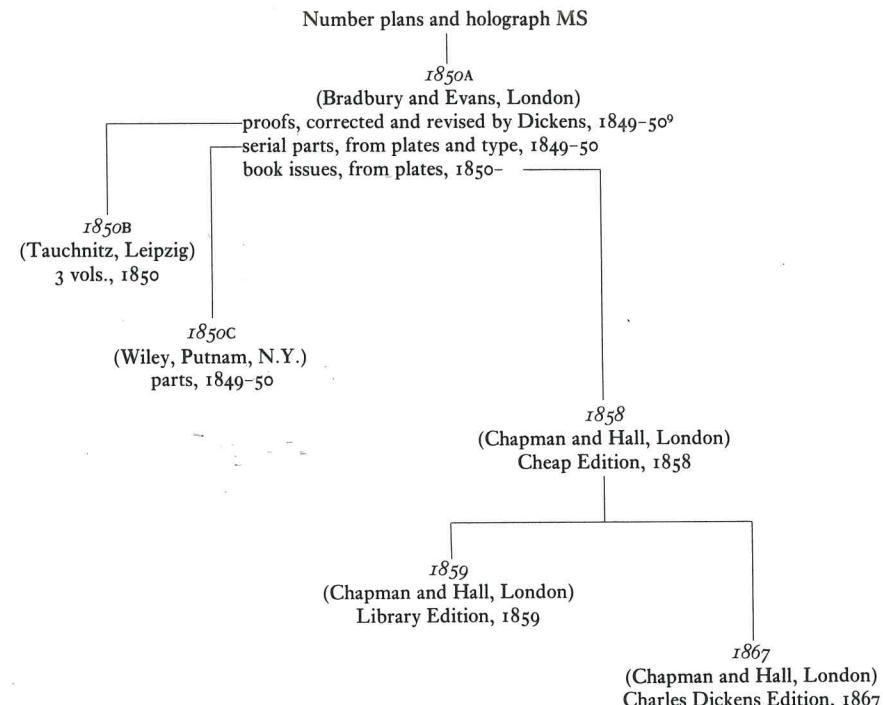
There were then three London editions published by Chapman and Hall: the two-column Cheap Edition (1858), set from an impression of 1850A; and two editions set from 1858, the Library Edition (1859) and the Charles Dickens Edition (1867). It was claimed by the publishers that the texts of 1858 and 1859 were 'carefully revised' by the author, and a similar revision of 1867 was implied; but in each case the textual changes were few and trivial and, although Dickens may have made one or two alterations to these texts, it is clear that he himself did not revise them systematically.⁸ There were a number of reprints from the plates of 1858, 1859, and 1867. No later edition of *David Copperfield* has any independent textual authority.

⁶ In fact as time went on Dickens's handwriting became smaller and more illegible; by the time he got to *Edwin Drood* he was down from 30 to 27 leaves of manuscript for a 32-page Number.

⁷ On galley and page, see NIB, pp. 194–5; and above, p. 143 n. 4.

⁸ On the Cheap, Library, and Charles Dickens editions, see the Clarendon Dickens *Oliver Twist* (see p. 142 n. 2), pp. xxviii–xxx, liii–liv; *Dombey and Son*, pp. vii, xxxvi–xxxviii.

The relationship of the first six editions was as follows:



The development of the text of *David Copperfield* was in no way abnormal. Dickens planned and wrote his manuscript month by month; the printer set it in type with a few transcription errors and a modest amount of normalization; Dickens corrected and revised the proofs with careful attention to their details but without reference to the manuscript; the book was published first in parts and then in volume form from the original setting of type; and there were five further settings of the novel in Dickens's lifetime which resulted in the usual deterioration of the text, and which were at most very scantily corrected by the author. While not all serial novelists cared for the risks and the excitements of keeping one jump ahead of the printer, Dickens's course in writing *David Copperfield* was otherwise a perfectly ordinary one, which was followed in its essentials by most of his fellow professionals.

The main editorial task, that of getting the words of the text right, is seldom a difficult one in the case of *David Copperfield*. We have the Number

⁹ The set of proofs with Dickens's first corrections that was sent to Leipzig as copy for the Tauchnitz edition cannot have been the set marked by Dickens himself, but would have been a second set with his corrections transcribed on to it.

plans and the manuscript complete;¹⁰ the author's proof and some of the author's revisions;¹¹ and all the printed editions.¹² Collation reveals the variation between these texts, and usually the reason for it, so that emendation of verbal errors poses few problems. Difficulties can arise, however, where Dickens passed in proof compositors' alterations that were not obviously wrong; and where he did notice that there was a mistake in the proof but, failing to consult his manuscript, corrected it with a reading that differed from that of the original text.

Here to illustrate these points is an extract from the text of *David Copperfield*. It comes from Chapter 4 in Number II, in which David describes his miserable life with the Murdstones, and is given as it appears in the manuscript, the author's proofs, and the first edition (see pp. 148-51).

To consider first the verbal variants between these versions, there were four changes between the manuscript and the author's proof.

- (I) a6 there is
b8 there's

Here the compositor has given Miss Murdstone a more colloquial, and perhaps a less menacing, turn of phrase. Dickens passed the alteration in proof, but it is very possible that he did not notice it, and the editor might decide to revert to the manuscript reading.

- (2) a15-16 My father had left in a little room upstairs to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) a small collection of books which nobody in our house ever troubled.

b19-21 My father had left a small collection of books in a little room up stairs, to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) which nobody in our house ever troubled.

In this case the compositor understandably mistook the order of Dickens's interlineations, so that the proof text seems to say that it was the little room, not the collection of books, which nobody ever troubled. Dickens saw that something was wrong with the proof, and attempted to mend it by adding 'and' at the beginning of the final clause of the sentence, so that it referred unambiguously to the room, not the books; and he also added 'else' to the same clause, since David himself obviously went into the room. Thus the final form of the sentence in 1850A was:

- c2o-2 My father had left a small collection of books in a little room up-stairs, to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) and which nobody else in our house ever troubled.

Here the editor is in more of a quandary. The best reading is probably

that of the manuscript, for it makes more sense to suppose that it was the collection of books which nobody troubled than that it was the room in which they were kept. But Dickens authorized the altered version by tidying it up with corrections, and there is no way of being sure that he did not consciously prefer it. Personally I would print the manuscript text, but not without misgivings.

- (3) a24 blameless
b34 brainless

This is a transcription error caused by the compositor misreading a tiny, cramped interlinear alteration in the manuscript. Dickens, seeing that it was wrong, proof-corrected ‘brainless’ to ‘harmless’. This was not the original reading, which Dickens is unlikely to have altered if it had not been wrongly set in type. Yet both words were written by Dickens, neither is notably better than the other in the context, and we do not know which of them he preferred.¹³ It is suggested that one of them should be chosen for the edited text, not because it was Dickens’s first thought or his last, but because the editor prefers it on critical grounds.

- (4) a₃₀ dignity from
b₄₁₋₂ dignity, and from

The compositor seems to have mistaken the tail of a ‘g’ in the line above (in ‘being’, a29) for an ampersand following the interlinear ‘dignity’. Dickens saw that the ‘and’ was an erroneous addition, and deleted it in proof; it stays out, of course.

Besides these four verbal variants between the manuscript and the author's proof, there was one verbal variant between a manuscript correction in the author's proof and the published text of *I850A*:

- (5) b15 (correction): months,
c16 months or more

This addition strongly suggests that there was a further revised proof, now missing, between the surviving author's proof and the published 1850A. If so, and if (as would seem likely) this was an author's revise, the addition was made by Dickens and would be accepted.

Next we can consider the problem of choosing the most satisfactory copy-text for an edition of *David Copperfield*; and it is soon apparent that there are only two possibilities to choose from: MS and 1850A.¹⁴ As our extract

(continued on p. 152)

¹³ There is the possibility that, since ‘brainless’ is similar in form to ‘blameless’, it reminded Dickens of what he had originally written; and that, if so, ‘harmless’ was deliberately chosen in preference to ‘blameless’.

¹⁴ ‘1850A’ refers to all the states of the first setting of *David Copperfield* in type before and after proof-correction, whether or not they now survive.

¹⁰ Victoria and Albert Museum MS. Forster 17 A 22-6

¹¹ Victoria and Albert Museum MS. Forster 47.A.23

¹² See *NIB*, pp. 384-91.

Dickens's MS (Victoria and Albert Museum MS. Forster 47.A.23, fo. 50^a; x.071)

[a1] It seems to me, at this distance of time, as if my unfortunate studies [a2] generally took this course. I could have done very well if I had been led and not driven [a3] but the influence of the Murdstones upon me was like the fascination of two snakes on a wretched young [a4] bird. Even when I did get through the morning with tolerable credit, there was not much gained but [a5] dinner, for Miss Murstone never could endure to see me untasked, and if I rashly made any [a6] show of being unemployed, called her brother's attention to me by saying "Clara my dear—there is nothing like work—[a7] give your boy an exercise," which caused me to be clapped down to some new labor there and then. [a8] As to any recreation with other children of my age, I had very little of that; for the gloomy [a9] theology of the Murstones made all children out to be a swarm of little vipers [a10] (though there *was* a child once set in the midst of the Disciples) and held that they [a11] contaminated one another.

[a12] The natural result of this treatment, was to make me sullen, dull, and [a13] dogged. I was not made the less so, by my sense of being daily more and more shut out and alienated from my mother. I [a14] believe my nature would have been almost brutalized but for one circumstance.

[a15] It was this. My father had left in a little room upstairs to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) a small collection of books [a16] which nobody in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield [a17] Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and Robinson Crusoe, came out, a glorious host, to [a18] keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope [a19] of something beyond that place and / time,—they, and the Arabian Nights, and the Tales of the Genii—, and did me no harm; for whatever harm was in some [a20] of them, was not there for me; *I knew nothing of it.* It is astonishing to me, now, how I found ^{9*} [a21] time, in the midst of my porings and blunderings over heavier themes, to read these books as I did. It [a22] is curious to me how I could ever have consoled myself under my small troubles (which were great troubles to me) by imper-[a23]sonating my favorite characters in them—as I did—and by putting Mr and Miss Murdstone into all the bad ones—which I did too. I have been Tom Jones (a child's Tom Jones: [a24] a blameless creature), for a week together. I have sustained my own idea of Roderick Random for [a25] a month at a stretch, I verily believe. I had a greedy relish for a few volumes of Voyages and Travels [a26]—I forget what, now—that were on those shelves, and for days and days I can remember to [a27] have gone about my region of our house, armed with the centre-piece out of an old set of boot-[a28]trees—the perfect realization of Captain Somebody of the Royal British [a29] Navy, in danger of being beset by Savages, and resolved to sell his life at a great price. [a30] The Captain never lost dignity from having his ears boxed with the Latin Grammar. I did, but the Captain was a Captain

b5

b10

b15

b20

b25

b30

b35

b40

*Variants**Manuscript*

- a2 driven
 a5 dinner,
 a6 saying "Clara my dear—there is
 a12 treatment,
 a15-16 left in a little room upstairs to which I
 had access (for it adjoined my own) a
 small collection of books which

a16 room,
 a16 Wakefield

a19 Genii—,

a20 them,

a20 *I*

a20 me,

a22 me)

a23 favorite

a23 Mr.

a23 ones—

a23-4 Jones: a blameless creature),

a26 shelves,

a27-8 boot-trees

a28 realization

a28 Somebody

a29 Savages

a30 dignity from

a30 Grammar.

Author's proof

- b3 driven,
 b6 dinner;
 b8 saying, "Clara, my dear, there's
 b15 treatment
 b19-20 left a small collection of books in a little
 room up stairs, to which I had access
 (for it adjoined my own) which
 b21 room
 b23 Wakefield,
 b26 Genii—
 b27 them
 b27 I
 b28 me
 b31 me),
 b31 favourite
 b32 Mr.
 b33 ones,—
 b33-4 Jones), a brainless creature
 b37 shelves;
 b39 boot trees
 b39 realisation
 b39 Somebody,
 b40 savages
 b41-2 dignity, and from
 b42 Grammar.

It seems to me, at this distance of time, as if my unfortunate studies generally took this course. I could have done very well if I had been led and led down, but the influence of the Murdstones upon me was like the fascination of two snakes on a wretched young bird. Even when I did get through the morning with tolerable credit, there was not much gained but dinner; for Miss Murstone never could endure to see me untasked, and if I rashly made any show of being unemployed, called her brother's attention to me by saying, "Clara, my dear, there's nothing like work—give your boy an exercise;" which caused me to be clapped down to some new labor there, and then. As to any recreation with other children of my age, I had very little of that; for the gloomy theology of the Murdstones made all children out to be a swarm of little vipers (though there was a child once set in the midst of the Disciples), and held that they contaminated one another.

The natural result of this treatment was to make me sullen, dull, and dogged. I was not made the less so, by my sense of being daily more and more shut out and alienated from my mother. I believe I should have been almost ~~stupified~~ but for one circumstance.

It was this. My father had left a small collection of books in a little room up stairs, to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and Robinson Crusoe, came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time,—they, and the Arabian Nights, and the Tales of the Genii—and did me no harm; for whatever harm was in some of them was not there for me; I knew nothing of it. It is astonishing to me now, how I found time, in the midst of my porings and blunderings over heavier themes, to read those books as I did. It is curious to me how I could ever have consoled myself under my small troubles (which were great troubles to me), by impersonating my favorite characters in them—as I did—and by putting Mr. and Miss Murstone into all the bad ones—which I did too. I have been Tom Jones (a child's Tom Jones, a harmless creature) for a week together. I have sustained my own idea of Roderick Random for a month at a stretch, I verily believe. I had a greedy relish for a few volumes of Voyages and Travels—I forgot what, now—that were on those shelves; and for days and days I can remember to have gone about my region of our house, armed with the centre-piece out of an old set of boot-trees—the perfect realisation of Captain Somebody, of the Royal British Navy, in danger of being beset by savages, and resolved to sell his life at a great price. The Captain never lost dignity, and from having his ears boxed with the Latin Grammar, I did, but the

Author's proof (Victoria and Albert Museum MS. Forster 48.B.14-14A, fol. 109^a; x 0·68).

c5
 c10
 c15
 c20
 c25
 c30
 c35
 c40

It seems to me, at this distance of time, as if my unfortunate studies generally took this course. I could have done very well if I had been without the Murdstones; but the influence of the Murdstones upon me was like the fascination of two snakes on a wretched young bird. Even when I did get through the morning with tolerable credit, there was not much gained but dinner; for Miss Murstone never could endure to see me untasked, and if I rashly made any show of being unemployed, called her brother's attention to me by saying, "Clara, my dear, there's nothing like work—give your boy an exercise;" which caused me to be clapped down to some new labor, there and then. As to any recreation with other children of my age, I had very little of that; for the gloomy theology of the Murdstones made all children out to be a swarm of little vipers (though there was a child once set in the midst of the Disciples), and held that they contaminated one another.

The natural result of this treatment, continued, I suppose, for some six months or more, was to make me sullen, dull, and dogged. I was not made the less so, by my sense of being daily more and more shut out and alienated from my mother. I believe I should have been almost ~~stupified~~ but for one circumstance.

It was this. My father had left a small collection of books in a little room up stairs, to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) and which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and Robinson Crusoe, came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time,—they, and the Arabian Nights, and the Tales of the Genii,—and did me no harm; for whatever harm was in some of them was not there for me; I knew nothing of it. It is astonishing to me now, how I found time, in the midst of my porings and blunderings over heavier themes, to read those books as I did. It is curious to me how I could ever have consoled myself under my small troubles (which were great troubles to me), by impersonating my favorite characters in them—as I did—and by putting Mr. and Miss Murstone into all the bad ones—which I did too. I have been Tom Jones (a child's Tom Jones, a harmless creature) for a week together. I have sustained my own idea of Roderick Random for a month at a stretch, I verily believe. I had a greedy relish for a few volumes of Voyages and Travels—I forgot what, now—that were on those shelves; and for days and days I can remember to have gone about my region of our house, armed with the centre-piece out of an old set of boot-trees—the perfect realisation of Captain Somebody, of the Royal British Navy, in danger of being beset by savages, and resolved to sell his life at a great price. The Captain never lost dignity, from having his ears boxed with the Latin Grammar. I did; but the

1850A (Cambridge Univ. Lib. CCC.14.2, p. 41; a copy bound from parts; x 0·68)

*Variants (other than those marked as proof corrections)**Author's proof*

- b15 [correction] months,
 b20 up stairs
 b31 [correction] favourite
 b39 boot trees

- c16 months or more,
 c21 up-stairs
 c32 favorite
 c40 boot-trees

indicates, Dickens's manuscript was not always easy to read, but it was nevertheless carefully written, meticulously amended, and for most part adequately punctuated. Provided that his later corrections and revisions are taken into account it offers a usable basis for an edited text. Likewise 1850A, the first-edition text, was carefully transcribed and lightly normalized by the printers, and was then considered in detail by Dickens and further amended. Provided that the variants in the manuscript and proofs are taken into account, it too offers a usable basis for an edited text. The later editions from 1850B onwards have no independent authority; they are no more than degraded derivatives of 1850A, and should not be used as the basis for an edition.

In practice the choice between these two potential copy-texts is between their two sets of details (punctuation, spelling, etc.), because editorial emendation should result in the words of the edited text being the same whichever is chosen. Since both the potential copy-texts are satisfactory representations of the work as a whole—there was only one main text of the novel—and since both of them have sets of details that could be used in an edited text, the editor goes on to ask whether either of the two sets of details can be said to come closer than the other to fulfilling Dickens's own intentions for the novel? And which of them would be preferred by users of the edition for critical or other reasons?

It is clear that Dickens's first intentions for the details of the text of *David Copperfield* are represented by those of the manuscript. But although he must have known from experience that his details would be altered by the compositors, he did not prevent these alterations from being carried out—as he surely could have done if he had made his wishes known in advance—but accepted and refined them, and passed them for publication; so that his final intentions for the published text are represented by 1850A.¹⁵ Nevertheless it may be supposed that, if the compositors of 1850A had (however uncharacteristically) copied the details of the manuscript without normalization, Dickens would have accepted the result, and that the manuscript details, not the normalized ones, would have entered the finally intended text. They would not have entered it without correction and most probably revision, however; and, since we cannot know how Dickens would have altered them in proof, it is not easy to say that the manuscript details as they stand are closer to his final intentions for the text than the details of 1850A which he actually passed for publication.

¹⁵ Strictly speaking by the final author's proof of 1850A with his corrections. However, this author's revise, although it did exist, has now mostly disappeared, and Dickens's final intentions for the published text would appear to be better represented by the published version of 1850A itself than by the first author's proof (which does survive).

This leaves the question of whether the readers of a critical edition of *David Copperfield* today would prefer to have a text with its details based on those of Dickens's own manuscript, speculatively emended by the editor; or whether they would prefer to have the version that was read by Dickens's original audiences, with its details based on the compositors' normalization of the manuscript, emended by Dickens. The reasons for preferring one or the other will usually be critical (though they are occasionally historical or even reverential); in any case no rule or rationale is going to give the answer.¹⁶ The editor has to decide for himself and, whichever copy-text he chooses, he is not going to please everybody.

On the other hand nobody should be seriously displeased by his choice, for the variants that are governed by the choice of copy-text are of small importance here. In our extract of 43 printed lines there are only 15 details which might be changed as a result of editing it from one copy-text rather than from the other. There might be 11 changes of punctuation, 2 of spelling, 1 of capitalization, and 1 of contraction. None of them would affect the meaning or the tone of Dickens's story in more than a trivial way; and of course if the editor were worried about the effect of any of them he could emend it.

These are the possible changes:¹⁷

MS line/ 1850A line	MS copy-text	1850A copy-text
a5/c6	dinner,	dinner;
a6/c8	saying "Clara my dear—	saying, "Clara, my dear,
a15/c21	upstairs to	up-stairs, to
a20/c28	them, was	them was
a20/c29	me, now	me now
a22/c32	me)	me),
a23/c33	Mr	Mr.
a26/c38	shelves,	shelves;
a28/c40	realization	realisation
a28/c40	Somebody	Somebody,
a28/c41	Savages	savages
a30/c42-3	dignity from	dignity, from

¹⁶ G. T. Tanselle argues (*Studies in the novel*, vii, 1975, pp. 344–50) that the editors of the first three volumes of the Clarendon Dickens should have chosen manuscript copy-texts in accordance with Greg's 'Rationale of copy-text'. Actually Greg had nothing to say about the problems of editing nineteenth-century novels: his 'Rationale' was concerned with the problems of editing Renaissance works of which the authors' manuscripts have not survived and in the printing and reprinting of which the authors took little part. (See also pp. 190–1 below.)

¹⁷ This is not of course a list of all the variants between MS and 1850A, but only of the differences that would probably result from altering the choice of copy-text. In either case the editor will no doubt incorporate in his final text the alterations made by Dickens himself (e.g. there is no comma after 'labor' in MS line 7, but it was added by Dickens in proof); and will accept the compositor's emendations of undoubtedly MS errors (e.g. the insertion of the missing comma after 'Wakefield' at the end of MS line 16).

The effect of these possible changes may be gauged by reading through the 1850A text of the extract (p. 151) and imagining how it would seem if these details were introduced from the manuscript.

To see how *David Copperfield* might actually be edited we can turn to the first few volumes of the Clarendon Dickens.¹⁸ *David Copperfield* has not yet appeared in the series, but *Dombey and Son* (to which *Copperfield* is textually similar) was published in Alan Horsman's edition in 1974.¹⁹ *Dombey and Son* also appeared first in parts (1846–8), and later in the Cheap, Library, and Charles Dickens editions; and again we have the Number plans, the complete manuscript, and most of the author's proofs and revises.²⁰

Horsman uses the first edition of *Dombey and Son* as copy-text, with verbal amendments from the manuscript. The normalized details of the printed text are allowed to stand; and the surviving inconsistencies of detail are largely regularized. The verbal variants between the manuscript and the printed versions are given as footnotes to the text, as are a number of passages cut from the proof by Dickens because the amount he had written would not fit into the 32-page parts. This record of variants does not normally cover non-verbal details, or obvious slips, or Dickens's deletions from the manuscript (which were mostly so heavily scored out as to be completely illegible). The editor's supplementary apparatus includes an introductory account of the composition of the novel; the texts of the preface to the later editions, of the Number plans, and of the descriptive headings added to the Charles Dickens Edition of 1867; and essays on the text prepared for Dickens's Readings, and on the illustrations. The illustrations themselves are all crisply reproduced, and there is a facsimile of the printed wrapper of one of the part issues.

The Clarendon *Dombey and Son* is (like its predecessors *Oliver Twist*, 1966, and *The mystery of Edwin Drood*, 1972) an estimable edition, providing much the most satisfactory version of the novel ever to have appeared. The verbal errors of the first edition and the corruptions of its successors are convincingly emended; the passages which Dickens deleted merely for lack of space are given as footnotes. The editorial and textual apparatus is learned, and attractively presented.

A few questions remain. The use of footnotes for recording textual variants is a distracting nuisance in the text of a novel—which ought above all to be readable—and it might have been better to present as footnotes only the passages cut from the proofs, and to remove the other variants to an appendix.

¹⁸ See p. 142 n. 2. The editorial principles of the series are summarized in the preface to the Clarendon *Oliver Twist*, 1966.

¹⁹ Dickens, C., *Dombey and Son*, ed. Horsman, A., Oxford 1974.

²⁰ The pre-publication documents are in the Forster collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

A relatively minor omission from the apparatus is that there is no register of the words hyphenated at the ends of the lines of the edition, to show how they should be given in quotation.

Horsman followed the practice of the series in taking the first edition as copy-text. This was no doubt the right choice—the manuscript would have required too much speculative emendation—but the case for it could have been more clearly made. Horsman also followed the practice of the series in regularizing the inconsistent spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, etc., of the copy-text. The Clarendon editors do not explain clearly why they believe that inconsistency of detail should be eliminated; it is simply taken for granted that inconsistency must be wrong.²¹ It is true of course that editors and printers, in the nineteenth century as well as in the twentieth, commonly preferred regularity of detail in printed texts, but it is equally true that many authors, including Dickens, did not care about it one way or the other. Dickens, indeed, would even introduce inconsistency of punctuation or capitalization, especially for rhetorical reasons. When Forster was 'editing' Numbers I and II of *Dombey and Son* on Dickens's behalf, he

requests the printer, near the end of chapter vi, to 'Observe some consistency in these Sirs—Let them be uniformly small or caps', or near the beginning of chapter xxx asks, 'Had not this better be the usual spelling? Mary-le-bone?' The printer's query about a comma before a vocative—'Should there not be a comma here, and in like cases?'—is answered 'Yes' by Forster, though Dickens himself sometimes takes out such commas where they are in conflict with the way he hears a piece of conversation (and wishes it to be read).²²

In cases such as this it would plainly be wrong for us to normalize Dickens's inconsistency of punctuation. But even where his inconsistency was apparently careless, there is much to be said for leaving it alone where it does not interfere with the meaning of the text. It was the way he wrote; why change it to satisfy the expectations of modern readers?

²¹ This is not to suggest that the Clarendon editors believe in normalizing the details of the text; but they do seek consistency. Thus Alan Horsman comments on the spelling of *Dombey and Son*: 'Where 48 [the printed copy-text] shows variants like *parlor* and *parlour*, *shew* and *show*, the one which preponderates has been used. Dickens does not change spelling in proof, so that the inference is fair that he approved of the printer's attempts to regularize'; and on capitalization: 'It is not consistent in either MS or 48 and Dickens does not always accept, as he does with spelling, what is in the proof. Some of his decisions, either to leave the proof alone or not, give inconsistent results . . . here the predominant form in the MS must be restored throughout the text' (*Dombey and Son*, Clarendon edition, p. xlvi).

²² *Dombey and Son*, Clarendon edition, p. xlvi.