A BUNDLE OF EMIGRANTS' LETTERS.

A SCHEME has been propounded by MRS. CHISHOLM, a lady to whose great exertions in reference to the emigration of the poor, especially of her own sex, the public is much indebted,—for the establishment of what it is proposed to call 'A Family Colonisation Loan Society.'

The design is based, in the main, upon three positions. First, 'that it is melancholy to reflect that thousands of British subjects should wander about, more like spectres than beings of flesh and blood; and that hundreds should die from starvation, while our vast colonies could provide abundantly for them.' Secondly, 'that in England a society is much needed, the great moral aim of which should be to check crime, by protecting and encouraging virtue.' Thirdly, 'that the zealous endeavours of the charitable, combined with the industrious and frugal efforts of the working classes themselves,' could accomplish great ends in the way of emigration.

For these leading considerations, it is proposed that the projected society should assist persons desiring to emigrate, by loans of money for two years or longer without interest. That these loans should be made to friendly parties or groups of approved individuals, acquainted with the character of each other, and becoming jointly and severally responsible for the loans made to them. That agents should be appointed in different parts of Australia, to maintain a general knowledge of the emigrants so assisted, and a general communication with them; and that the advances should always bear a certain proportion to the amount of the funds raised by the emigrants themselves, or by their friends in the Colonies, at the time of their making application for assistance to quit this country.

The re-uniting of various members of one family when some have emigrated, while others have been left at home; and the removal of the difficulty too often found in raising sufficient funds to effect this re-union, is one important object of Mrs. Chisholm's scheme. And it must not be forgotten that money lent and repaid, would be lent again and again; and thus the good effected by one small sum would become quite incalculable.

It is admitted in the published letter setting forth the design, that the friends and well-wishers of the society can hardly expect the full confidence of the public at its commencement; the great moral problem being yet to be solved; 'whether the various grades of our working classes can be trusted, or whether, with all our religious, moral, social, and commercial advantages, we are rearing rogues or honest men;' at the same time it is understood on the authority of the projectress, that in numerous cases where private advances have been made with similar objects, the rule has been gratitude and honesty—not ingratitude and dishonesty; and that her personal experience on this point, under many disadvantageous circumstances, is powerfully encouraging.

There may be difficulties in the details of such a plan; and it is possible that many persons who would retain an honourable sense of an obligation to an individual, would subside into a more lax morality, if the obligation were to a Board. The observation is trite enough, that a number of individuals united in an association will do, without any scruple, in the name of the society, what each of them would deem unworthy of his own character; but there are two sides to this question, and it is equally certain that many persons will take advantage of an associated body, if they can, who would hesitate to cheat any single member of it.

Reserving such questions, there can be little doubt, we apprehend, of the soundness of the three positions we have briefly stated. It is unquestionably melancholy that thousands upon thousands of people, ready and willing to labour, should be wearing away life hopelessly
in this island, while within a few months'sail—within a few weeks! when steam communication with Australia shall be established—there are vast tracts of country where no man who is willing to work hard (but that he must be, or he had best not go there), can ever know want. That we have come to an absurd pass, in our costly regard for those who have committed crime, and our neglect of those who have not, must be every day more manifest to rational men whose thoughts are not confined within the walls of prisons, but can take the air outside. Nor is it to be contended—either that where it is possible for the poor, by great self-denial, to scrape together a portion of the means of going abroad, it is extremely important to encourage them to do so, in practical illustration of the wholesome precept that Heaven helps those who help themselves; or that they who do so help themselves, give a proof of their fitness for emigration, in one essential, and establish a strong claim on legitimate sympathy and benevolence, to do the rest.

Besides which, it appears to us that there are strong reasons in favour of this emigration of groups of people. It is not only that colonial experience, acting on this side of the water, can wisely proportion the amount of strength and the amount of weakness in each group—the number of single people, the number of married people, the number of men, the number of women, and the number of children—but it is, that from little communities thus established, other and larger communities will rise in time, bound together in a love of the old country still fondly spoken of as Home, in the remembrance of many old struggles shared together, of many new ties formed since, and in the salutary influence and restraint of a kind of social opinion, even amid the wild solitudes of Australia.

These remarks have originated in the circumstance of our having on our desk certain letters from emigrants in Australia, written to relatives and friends here—to serve no purpose, to support no theory, but simply to relate how they are doing, and what they know about the country, and to express their desire to have their dearest relatives and friends about them. As the truth, whatever it may be, on such a subject, cannot be, we think, too plainly stated or too widely diffused in this country, we consider ourselves fortunate in the possession of these documents. We are responsible, of course, for their being genuine, and we write with the originals before us. The passages we shall give are accurately copied, with no correction, and with no omission, but that of names when they occur.

The first is from a man in Sydney, who writes to his brother. He 'would like to come to England for one day and no more to see the Railways and the baptist chappel.'

If you can emigrate out i shall be able to provide for you Send me word in your next what progress you are making to winding your way out here do not stop there to starve for as bad as Sydney is no one that is willing to work need want i am beginning to think of expecting some or all of you out i have told you what i can do and look to God and he will do the rest for you dear brother send answer to this as soon as Possible that is if you can understand it but it is wrote so bad i think it will take some time to make it out.

The next is from a man at Melbourne writing to his wife:

My Dear and most beloved Wife this is the 7th letters I have written and sincerely hope this may find you and my dear children in good health likewise all my friends and acquaintances but I have not yet received one from you excepting the one Mr W brought I am really very anxious about you particularly as I hear such bad accounts from home you are in my thoughts day and night Oh that I could see you here then you would spend the happiest days you have ever yet spent there is not the care and trouble on your mind here as there is at home but God knows
I have my share of it about you but I persevere for your benefit. My dear wife do keep up your spirits and come as soon as you can you will not have to study which is the cheapest way to get a meal here you can judge for

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yourself when I tell you that the best flour is only 20 shillings the sack and such quality that you cannot buy in England the bread is the best bread I ever eat in my life and the meat very fine and no price at all for instance I saw a man on Saturday night last buy a very fine round of beef and a fine leg of mutton for 2 shillings and for all that Butchers is a very good trade here there are several Establishments called the boiling down houses where they boil down Bullocks and sheep for the fat only and one house alone will boil down 800 and sometimes a 1000 in one day this may seem almost incredible to you but it is a fact and the beast must be of the best quality sheeps heads and plucks you can have by wheel barrows full for fetching away for people never think of eating such stuff as they call it ox tails you can have for fetching away but you must skin them yourself so much for meat. Tea is 1s 6d lb but it can be bought for 1s by the chest Coffee is 9d lb wich can be bought for 5d but you must roast yourself or send it to the roasters but you can do it at home very well for every body has what is called a lamp oven here which costs about 7 or 8 shilling and you can bake your bread or your dinners at your own fireplace Potatoes are rather dear they are 1d lb but they are butifully fine onions the same price Cabbages 11/2 and 2d each fresh butter 1s 6d lb and salt do 1s 2d lb Mushrooms grow very plentiful you may go and get a bushell some time before breakfast I have taken a deal of notice in the people here they do not study economy as they ought if you where here we could save money fast I am determined to buy a piece of ground shortly and I intend joining the building society but I dont know what to do untill I heare from you I am daily expecting a letter from you I know I could not have had one much sooner for I recon upon ten months to get an answer. I am still living in the little cottage and I have worked very hard lately I dare say you will be suprised when I tell you that I have been at work as a joiner the last 3 months and I have made 3 Chests of drawers at home in my over time since for a Master Cabinet Maker I expect a winters work at the carpentering as there are a great many Buildings going on here I am happy to say that I enjoy most excellent health indeed it would be a sin to wish for a better state of health I never have had the slightest cough since I came here I have had a slight touch of my old Complant in the legs but I have got a presription which cures it directly the Chemist that made it up told me that my stomach must be like iron and my Constitution as strong as a horse to take It the doctor told me to wear flannel drawers so I got 2 pair and since then I never have it. Rents are rising rapidly here you cant get a cottage with 2 rooms under 7 or 8 shillings a week they have rose my rent to 5s I almost forgot to say that I shall have 10s monthly to pay in the Building Society and 10s entrance it began in january so I shall have the back money to pay and it is expected that it will run out in six years and then you will get 120 pounds out if you let it lay the whole time there is two of them and they are going on flourishing. I have been at work at the builders now 11 weeks and have not lost an hour till last week and then I only lost a quarter which was 1s 6d but I got 10s profit for I had an infant to bury. I made the coffin after I done work that is the rst funeral I have been to they never keep a corpse more than 2 days. I have been thinking a great deal about Alfred wether his master will give him his time out to come with you Tell my dear sarah that I have got a beautiful parrot for her I tried hard to rear some to send home to jane and one for poor C. but they died I think of Mr and Mrs C. and fameley very often I wish he
was here to have a glass of ale and a pipe with him but he must not expect a long pipe here for they smoke nothing but short pipes about 6 inches long and the blacker they are the better they like them and you have to give 1/2 each for them give my best respects to him I shall always be glad to hear of his welfare I do hope it will be in my power to reward him for his kindness before long and to Mrs C. and fameley give my love to my brothers and sisters with one exception tell master he would do well here it is an excellent business here indeed one of the best give my love to my dear children. Oh that the day may not be far distant when my happiness may be more complete by seeing them and you on the happy shore in the Province of Victoria this is the new name given by the Queen for Port Phillip. My dear as soon as I get a letter from you letting me know that you are coming then I shall begin to make up things for myself un till then I am unsettled which way to act for I have saved a few pounds which will be very much wanted to lay out and I have bought myself several things since I have been here that I could not do without, I have been very careful and am almost a teetotaler I very seldom drink anything but I will live well and I feel the benefit of it in my strength for I have lately often worked from 4 in the morning till 11 at night and don't feel half so tired as I used with half a day's work but sometimes I am almost compelled to go and get a pint of beer for the sake of company as I am at home by myself and no one to speak to. I get very dull there is no notice taken of Easter here. I worked all day on Good Friday and Easter Monday the Melbourne races are thought the most of it lasts 3 days but I worked all the time and did not go to see them I cant enjoy pleasure until you come to share it with me.

This poor fellow seems to be possessed of an appetite which must have been very inconvenient to him at home. This is his account of a light supper he had one night:

I almost forgot to say that I wanted something for my supper Saturday night so I went to the butchers to get some chops and I had a pound and half of the loin 2d fine sheep hearts and a sheep kidney and how much do you think they was why only 4d the lot a fine bullocks kidney is only 2 and a very fine shin of beef 4d or 6d what will the London butcher say to this. Poultry is rather dear but it is about the same price as at home.

Finding himself not quite well, and perhaps a little affected in his digestion by the trifling meal just described, he put himself on short commons as follows:

Yesterday being Sunday I took some medicin so I got 4 lbs 1/2 of the neck of mutton and made myself some nice broth and some suet dumplings the meat only cost me 4d 1/2 I think my dear I have stated facts wich ought to cheer you up and you must consider that the sun has been clouded from us a long time but thank God that cloud I hope is being removed and our sunny day are yet to come. I have no doubt about it I can assure you I have not the slightest wish to see England again I dont know whether I told you that all sorts of clothing is much about the same here as home there is some very fine linen drapers shops here there is one thing that is very dear here and that is artificial flowers the commonest is a shilling a sprig flannel is 1 8 a yard the ladies dress very fashionable here My dear as I have nothing more to say at present I must conclude with hoping you will keep up your spirits and that you may have a pleasant and prosperous Voyage with there is no fear of for it is considered the best voyage out of London. I shall write directly I receive your letter which I am sure will not be long.

A gentleman, who has been ordained as a clergyman of the Church of England, writes thus of Sydney at present:
Sydney is at present crowded with respectable young men.—Bankers and merchants' clerks, artists and such kind of people, are not wanted at all, so that many of them having but small means are quite in despair. They are almost useless to the settlers and people in the Bush and can find no occupation in town and are therefore liable to every temptation. I hope you will exert all your influence in preventing such people from coming out here, unless they come prepared to go into the Bush as shepherds, &c.

A vast number of the orphans who have come out here have turned out ill in consequence of the bad training at home. They fancy they are young ladies and that they ought to sit and knit or just take a walk on the race course or in the domain, with children. They have not the slightest idea of industry, nor do they understand what household work is. All this they should be practically taught in the old country, and it would save much disappointment and misery when they arrive here.

A poor woman at Sydney, re-united to her children, writes,—

Dear Friend, Your kind note of Dec. 4th I have received informing me that you had obtained passage to this port for my children. They safely arrived by the Castle Eden all in good health. They however left their box of clothes behind at Plymouth and I have not as yet been able to get any account of it. It appears to be lost, but as they arrived safe I do not care to trouble any one to enquire for this. The oldest girl got married about five months since to a respectable young man a tradesman, a pretty good match the next boy is apprenticed six months ago to the wheelwright business and the next boy is four months apprenticed to a boot and shoemaker—the other the little one I have myself. My own health is pretty good, and although times are rather dull just now yet I hope that I shall find enough to do to keep along with. Many ships have arrived here with emigrants and this for a time causes rather more to be looking for situations than there are situations to be filled, but most of them go into the country.

An orphan girl at Bathurst, to whom the Emigration Company granted a free passage, writes thence to a lady in Ireland, 'If in case any emigrants were coming to Sydney, to send me my little sisters which I left at home.' Another sighs from 'Patrick's Plains, New South Wales,' for another sister. In these cases, and in that of the wife of the good fellow with the appetite, it seems to us that a society on the proposed plan would do great service, and run little risk. Also in such an instance as the following:

Melbourne, Port Phillip My Dear Brother and Sister I now take this opportunity of writing a more lengthened letter than my last which I wrote in haste in which I Enclosed a Draft for the sum of twenty five pounds £25 payable to you on the Bank of Australasia in Austin Friars London thirty days after sight, which I hope you will get Safe. I also send by this ship's Mail another Draft for the same money only to Ensure the money safe in case one ship might get lost on the passage to London and one Draft I Keep myself. I hope as soon as you receive my letter that you will not make any Delay but write to me Immediately and I hope and trust you will send me a long letter for nothing will give me more pleasure than to hear a little about you all not Omitting one of you you wrote to me for £30 but 25 is all I can spare for the present. I have been perfectly aware of the state of England Ever Since I left or I should have been among you many years since but now I have banished all thoughts from my mind of ever seeing England, the way to Say it is don't want, for ever since I have been here I have not seen anybody in want but at the present time wages is not quite so good as they were when I wrote to you first that is in Consequence of the late Inlux of Emigration of late, you say you have not left a stone unturned to try to get to me the reason is you dont understand farm-
ing nor sheep, I am sorry poor mother has met
with the accident of which you say poor Creature Mother must by this time be quite Infirm,
and I am happy to hear my sister Mary's Child I
will now say a man Thomas is quite well I suppose he cannot recollect me 20 years since I saw
him, I have often thought of him when he first Called me uncle, If I am not mistaken you are
the only one who had written anything to me
about him I was very fond of him and my Kind
love to him and I hope he has the use of his
feet. I was not aware of you being married you
never stated how long you had been so whether
girls or boys what age, now this is unkind of
you was it my case I should have told you all
particulars with their age and Everything, as-
sist poor Mother all you can for what kindness
I have received from her now think of that. It
appears to me that you are all in a thriving way
you four Children and your Sister Eight, as I
stated in my last letter here I am Tom nobody
but myself but you must Endeavour to Increase
your family to the same number. I suppose your
wife will laugh at me making so bold to say so
but she must forgive me and she must say so
in your next Letter to me my kind love to her
and your Children and I hope I shall have that
happiness of seeing you all with me before this
time 1 2 months. I will try to make you all
as comfortable as my circumstances will admit
please the Almighty to spare me but I have my
troubles in another way to yours. I

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believe I told you I had separated from my
wife some years since In Consequence of her
taking to Drink but she followed me over to
port phillip of late since you read my letter.
I gave her another trial and I expended about
£20 but all to no purpose therefore I have left
her about four months since she has kept me
back considerably in pocket but still I Care not,
so long as the almighty spares my health how
happy I should be if you was with me, but please

God in the meanwhile I will Endeavour to pur-
chase about an Acre of Land on some of the
Townships so that it will at all times be your
Own and a home as long as you live but at the
present time I hold a Ticket for which I gave
five Guineas for landed property to be drawn in
a Lottery in the port phillip District at present
belonging to the Bank of Australasia when you
take your Draft for the £25 which I remit to
you ask any of the proprietors of the Bank and
no doubt they will Explain all to you about
the Drawing for they are all prizes from 640
acres of land in a prize to 1/2 an acre as also
Dwelling houses. should I be fortunate to get a
grand Drawing it shall be all for the sole bene-
fit of you and yours I do certainly expect things
will get rather worse that is as far as regards
wages, but at the present time when all things
is considered now being the middle of winter the
slackest time of year but still should it be as I
anticipe, then it will be Ten times better than
England as you say you can scarcely keep the
wolf from the Door but here you can for you
Can and we do buy a sheep at a time from 4s
6d to 6s each oftentimes a milking cow from
£1,0,0, to thirty shillings sometimes less a Lack
of flour of 200 weight of the best quallity for one
pound sugar 2d 1/2 per lb 1s 6d per lb for Tea
Everything will seem Quite strange if you come
I must Initiate you in our colonial ways you will
not be like many who arrives here strangers that
know no one. I hope should you come you will
bring as many newspapers as you can as also
books should you have any for I am very fond of
reading should you Engage with the Emigration
agents to come Out you will Immediately post a
letter in London to me stating the name of the
Ship you will be likely to arrive in so that on her
Arrival in port phillip I will come on board for
you as also on your arrival here you will send a
letter Directly from the Ship to me by the post
as probably by that means I may get one Safe
for where the Shipping Come to anchor is nine
miles from Melbourne Just off williams Town. I
sent you the first Draft for the £25 by mail that went to London in the ship General Palmer as I am to send by two separate Ships on the receipt of any of my letters you will write to me immediately you will if you possibly can to bring some recommendations they may be a service to you at all Events they will do you no harm should it cause you any trouble never mind. I suppose I told you in my last Letter of my cousin Williams Death some years since the Bank here charged me £1,000 to send you the £25 Mr C. or Mrs C. will no Doubt put you in the way to come to me as I have remitted all I Can spare, had I have reed your letter one Month Earlier I would have sent you £40 they say farm labours is all they want here I Say no I Consider that my Judgment and Experience of 20 years will allow me to say something on that head for I have seen persons and that many who arrived from London I can safely Say never knew what a plough was meant for untill they came to these Colonies they have made far better farm servants in all its Branches than people from the rural Districts of England who had been brought up to a farm from their Infancy and that in the space of a Couple of years in fact the Londoners is Considered the best working men in the Colonies upon an average they so soon pick anything up and they are I may say the majority of them are the hardest working men such as Bush carpenters splitters and fencers. I stated in one of my letters some years Since to Mother about me being Deaf but I am happy to say that I am now but very slightly and that in my right hear first through a Cold but this last four Months I have been at times been slightly troubled with spitting blood and palpitation of the Heart but I am under a Course of Medicine and getting better I expect all through a cold that I Caught, Medicine and Doctor's Charges are very Dear here all has to be paid for. I also Enclose to you the second Draft for the £25 in this Letter as also a memorandum of the present rate of wages for working people as you must expect there has been a great reduction since you received my first letter the Consequence of so many arriving of late from England but still if you was here it would not Interfere materially with you while I am alive please God to see that you and yours would be more comfortably situated than many who Arrives entire strangers to this province.

The writer of the next, sent out as a labouring man, and then very poor, now holds an influential position at Sydney. The reader will smile at his description of 'mean and unmanly occupations:

In Sydney times are rather dull at present—various causes have given rise to this; the disturbed state of Europe has sensibly affected commerce. The Gold hunting Mania of Chalaforina has put to light many small capitalists, who will ultimately return if permitted by the daring freebooters of that Country. The steady stream of immigration pouring into Sydney has brought down to a fair standard the exorbitant wages given to female Servants. For this the Public are mainly indebted to you. It would be well if possible to advise all persons before leaving home, not upon any account to hang about the purlieus of Sydney, or the other Towns of the Interior for a dislike is generally acquired in those places for a bush life. It is deplorable to see the Number of able bodied men who eke out a miserable subsistence in Sydney in mean and unmanly occupations, such as hawking through the Public Street fish, fruit, vegetables, pies all hot and various other things as equally disreputable, whilst they could if they possessed a spark of Manliness or common energy of mind obtain respectable employment in the interior, but their Weak and fantastic minds conjure up a thousand Hobgoblins in the Shape of Blacks, Snakes, flying foxes, Squirrels, Mad Bulls, and other dreaded Animals, as equally ridiculous. A man coming to New South Wales 16000 miles in search of a living and remaining in Sydney after he lands, is like to an individual who digs
all day long in search of some hidden treasure, who when he discovers it declines to take it up, because it would be too burthensome to take home.

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The letter with which we shall conclude our extracts, is from a convict—the only one before us, from any member of that class.

New South Wales. Dear Affectionate Wife and family I with pleasure embrace this first Opportunity of addressing these few lines to you hoping by the blessing of God they will find you in the perfect enjoyment of Good Health as it leaves me at present thank God for it. I wrote you a letter to you while our stay at the Cape of Good Hope which I hoped you received. We abode there one week and we arrived at Port Jackson in Sydney on the 8th day of June after a fine and pleasing voyage for 4 Callender Months wanting two days only. Nothing worth Mentioning happened all the Voyage. Only 2 of our unhappy Number was taken away from us by death. While lying in Sydney Harbour I engaged for one twelve Month and am now for the present time situated up in the country, in not so quite a comfortable position as I should wish but I must bear it for a short time, and as conveniences will allow I shall be in Sydney to work. Dear Wife You can come out to Me as soon as it pleases you and also my Sister and I will provide for you a comfortable Situation and Home as a good one as ever lies in my power. And When you come or send You must come to My Masters House at Sydney. He is a rich a Gentleman known by every one in this colony, and you must come out as emigrants, and when you come ask for me as an emigrant and never use the word Convict or the ship Hashemey on your Voyage never let it be once named among you, let no one know your business but your own selves, and When you Land come to my Masters a enquire for me and thats quite sufficient. Dear Wife do not you cumber yourself with no more luggage than is necessary for they are of no use out here you can bring your bed and bedclothes and sufficient clothes for yourself and family. You can buy for yourself a tin hook pot to hang on before the fire in the Gally to boil tea at times when it is required. And a few Oranges and lemons for the Sea Sickness or any thing you please. Dear Wife this is a fine Country and a beautiful climate it is like a perpetual Sumer, and I think it will prove congenial for your health, No wild beast nor anything of the Sort out here, fine beautiful birds and every thing seems to smile with pleasure Cockatoos as plentiful and common as crows in England. Provisions of Every kind is very cheap you can buy Beef at 1 penny per lb flour 11/2d per lb tea 2s per lb and Sugar at 2d per lb and other things as cheep. but this is every poor mans diet. Wages is not so very high out here not so much as they are in England. I have Nothing more to Say at Present more than this is just the country where we can end our days in peace and contentment when we meet. I send my kind love and best of wishes to you all and every one related to you and me, to your father and Mother. Sisters and Brothers, acquaintances and friends and to every one who may ask for me. I send my kind love to you all and especially to my wife and children. Farewell.

These 'simple annals of the poor,' written for no eyes but those to which they were addressed, are surely very pleasant to read, and very affecting. We earnestly commend to all who may peruse them, the remembrance of these affectionate longings of the heart, and the consideration of the question whether money would not be well lent or even spent in re-uniting relatives and friends thus parted, and in sending a steady succession of people of all laborious classes (not of any one particular pursuit) from places where they are not wanted, and are miserable, to places where they are wanted, and can be happy and independent.
Article: 'A Bundle of Emigrants' Letters' by Charles Dickens, Caroline Chisholm

Journal: Household Words, Volume I, Magazine No. 1, 30 March 1850, Pages: 19-24

Author(s):

- Charles Dickens


In the partnership agreement under which H.W. was set up, Dickens was, with the publishers Bradbury & Evans, with Forster and with Wills, one of the joint proprietors; he held an interest of one-half share. On Forster's relinquishing his one-eighth share in 1856, Dickens divided that one-eighth between himself and Wills. Dickens's salary as editor was £500 a year; he was to receive payment also for what he wrote in the periodical (Lehmann, ed., Charles Dickens As Editor, pp. 19, 195-97). (In the Office Book, Wills did not record the payments made or credited to Dickens for his H.W. writings.)

Dickens set the editorial policy of H.W. and supervised its being carried out. He had, in Wills, a capable and efficient subeditor on whose judgment he came more and more to rely; yet, especially in the early years of H.W., he concerned himself with every detail of its production. Before the first number appeared, he wrote to friends and acquaintances asking them to become contributors. He read - especially during the early years of H.W. - hundreds of MSS, some submitted directly to him, others referred to him by Wills for final acceptance or rejection. When possible, he conferred weekly, sometimes more often, with Wills on editorial matters. When personal conference was not possible, he sent his instructions and suggestions by letter - instructions and suggestions ranging from matters of editorial policy to matters of typography and punctuation. He revised - sometimes almost entirely rewrote - contributed papers; he read proofs - sometimes revises of proofs that he had in the first place altered or emended. He suggested subjects for articles; he sent to the office materials to serve as the basis for articles. On occasion, he made excursions in company with a staff member to gather material for articles. He wrote much for the early volumes of H.W., comparatively little for the later volumes. Morley's writings in the periodical exceeded his by some 300 pages. Nevertheless, as he stated when he brought H.W. to a close ("A Last Household Word"), his name had been, "as his pen and himself" had been, "inseparable from the Publication" throughout its entire existence.
Most of Dickens's writings in *H.W.*, like almost all contributions of other writers, appeared anonymously. Only *Hard Times*, the one of his novels that he serialized in the periodical, carried with the title of the work in each instalment the ascription "BY CHARLES DICKENS." Four weeks before the serialization of that book began, it was announced: "NEW TALE by Mr. CHARLES DICKENS"; thereafter, each week's *H.W.* number announced the portion of *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens that was to appear the following week; before the appearance of the final chapters, as also after the completion of the serialization, *H.W.* published advertisements for the novel in book form as a Bradbury & Evans publication. *A Child's History of England*, Dickens's only other extended work in *H.W.*, appeared in the various instalments without Dickens's name after the title, but, during the serialization, advertisements in *H.W.* for the *History* in book form as a Bradbury & Evans publication stated Dickens's authorship.

Of various other of his *H.W.* writings Dickens also made his authorship known. "Personal," his statement concerning the "domestic trouble," bore his name as signature. "Curious Misprint in the Edinburgh Review," his reply to J. F. Stephen's article "The License of Modern Novellists," announced: "the hand of Mr. Dickens writes this paper." In "A Nightly Scene in London," it was "I, the Conductor of this journal," who told of coming upon the poor souls crouched before a Whitechapel workhouse. The footnote that Dickens added to "Three Graces of Christian Science" he signed "C.D." Writing in first or third person, Dickens also made clear that he was author of the introductory and closing comments in *H.W.* ("A Preliminary Word," "All the Year Round," "A Last Household Word"), as of "Pet Prisoners," the detective police articles, "The Guild of Literature and Art," "The Late Mr. Justice Talfourd," and "To Working Men."

In bold type, the words "CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS" appeared on the *H.W.* masthead; in small type they spanned the verso and recto of facing pages. In the first five years of *H.W.*'s publication, Dickens's name appeared in more than seventy-five *H.W.* advertisements and announcements in connection with the periodical and one of its supplementary publications, and in connection with *A Child's History* and *Hard Times* (in some advertisements and announcements his name appeared as many as three times). In the last year of *H.W.*'s publication, readings by Mr. Charles Dickens were announced in forty-one *H.W.* numbers. Dickens was omnipresent in his periodical.

In view of this fact, as also for other obvious considerations, Dickens naturally wanted in *H.W.* stories and articles no laudatory references to himself - or references that might be so construed. Thus, in "Our Society at Cranford," he substituted mentions of Hood and Hood's writings for Mrs. Gaskell's mentions of Boz and Boz's *Pickwick* and *Christmas Carol*: "... with my name on every page of Household Words," he wrote to Mrs. Gaskell (Dec. 5 [4], 1851.), "there would be - or at least I should feel - an impropriety in so mentioning myself." In a letter to Cunningham, June 24, 1853, he referred to his "usual precaution" in deleting from articles references that "unmistakably" applied to himself. An exception to this policy was the publication in *H.W.* of a personal letter from John Pascoe Fawkner, in which Fawkner stated that Dickens's writings had "beguiled many an hour of my life," and wished Dickens "many years of healthful employment in the highly useful manner" in which he had been so long engaged ("A Colonial Patriot").

But the observation of a reader (a reader of "a quick wit and a happy comprehension," as Dickens characterized him) that Dickens's writings had the tendency "to hold up to derision..."
those of the higher classes" also found a place in *H.W.* pages ("Ready Wit").

Impersonal references to himself and to his books Dickens had no objection to. Mention of "Mr. Dickens" appeared of necessity in Morley's "Our Wicked Mis-statements"; in occasional articles by non-staff writers mention of Dickens was appropriate and unobtrusive. References to his novels - *Pickwick*, *Oliver Twist*, *Nichols*y, *Chuzzlewit*, *Dombey*, *Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit* - their characters, place-names, distinctive phraseology - appeared in one or more items by Stone, Dodd, Capper, Oxenford, Miss Lawrence, Paym, Morley, Costello, the Rev. James White, Samuel Sidney, Kent, Percy Fitzgerald, Wilkie Collins, Mrs. Linton, and Thornbury. (The reference to Mrs. Gamp in "Railway Waifs and Strays" could be by either of the joint authors - Wills or Hill.) Of these references, the most extended was Fitzgerald's recital, in "My Long Lost CheeyId!", of the plot of a melodrama based on Dombey; the most amusing was White's depiction, in "Fiction Crushing," of a Dora-like wife who comes to despise her Copperfield prototype. In at least seven of his own articles, and in one by him and Wills, Dickens referred to characters in his novels. In a footnote to "Pet Prisoners" he mentioned American Notes, and in "That Other Public" he quoted from the book.

Various of Dickens's *H.W.* writings elicited praise from contemporaries. Among his articles in the early volumes, for example, "A Child's Dream of a Star" seemed to Percy Fitzgerald written with Dickens's "most delicate touch"; and nothing, thought Fitzgerald, could be "more witty or sarcastic" than "Red Tape" (Memories of Charles Dickens, pp. 137, 155†). Crabb Robinson found one of the "Raven" articles "a witty paper," "a capital satire" (On Books and Their Writers, II, 704). The Quart. Rev. (June 1856) mentioned Dickens's "excellent papers" on the London detective police. Mrs. Cowden Clarke wrote to a friend: "The 'Christmas Tree' paper is charming, is it not?" (Letters to an Enthusiast, p. 32). Among Dickens's articles that antagonized certain readers were "Frauds on the Fairies," "Pet Prisoners," and "Whole Hogs." Dickens's remonstrance, in "Frauds on the Fairies," against George Cruikshank's rewriting "Hop-o'-My-Thumb" to serve propaganda purposes provoked a reply from Cruikshank, in which he justified his treatment of fairy tales and set Dickens right "upon one or two points" (George Cruikshank's Magazine, Feb. 1854). Dickens's comments on prison chaplains, in "Pet Prisoners," resulted in his being "severely mauled at the hands of certain Reverend Ordinaries" ("Small-Beer Chronicles," A.Y.R., Dec. 6, 1862). "Whole Hogs" aroused the indignation of temperance advocates (Kitton, "Introduction" to Old Lamps for New Ones and Other Sketches and Essays, by Dickens; also, Dickens's *H.W.* article "Sucking Pigs"). Dickens's statement, in *H.W.*, concerning his domestic affairs was generally condemned as in poor taste.

Dickens's relationship with most of his contributors was amicable. To some who were newcomers in the field of writing he at times wrote detailed criticisms of their submitted MSS, with words of advice and encouragement. Among *H.W.* writers who, at one time or another, showed their regard for him by dedicating to him a book were Marston, the Rev. James White, Wickenden, Forster, Prince, Landor, Charles Knight, Samuel Sidney, Wilkie Collins, Marguerite Power, Duthie, Spicer, Wills, Yates, Lever, Kent, Percy Fitzgerald, Paym, and Thornbury. Hans Christian Andersen, who was technically not a contributor, but one of whose stories appeared in *H.W.*, dedicated three books to Dickens.

Of the items included by Dickens in Reprinted Pieces, "A Plated Article," recorded in the Office Book as by Dickens and Wills, was reprinted by Wills in his Old Leaves: Gathered from
Household Words, 1860, there indicated as written in part by Dickens. Wills's Office Book ascription of the item to Dickens and to himself is more authoritative as to its authorship than is Dickens's reprinting.

As Dickens's letters and as occasional comments by contributors indicate, Dickens made changes - deletions, additions, emendations - in more items than those for which the initials "C.D." appear in the Office Book jointly with the name of a contributor. Thus, it is not inconceivable that he might have written the hymn, sometimes attributed to him, that concludes "Poor Dick's Story" in the 1856 Christmas number (see identification note on Harriet Parr). The attribution, however, seems to be in error.

Harper's reprinted, in whole or part, seventeen of Dickens's H.W. articles and stories (including "A Plated Article," claimed by both Dickens and Wills), three acknowledged to H.W., nine to Dickens personally, and five unacknowledged to any source. Harper's reprinted as by Dickens eight items not by him (see Elizabeth Gaskell, Home, Sala, Morley, the Rev. James White, Harriet Martineau, Wilkie Collins, Eliza Lynn Linton). Two of Dickens's items were included in the Putnam volumes of selections from H.W.: Home and Social Philosophy, 1st and 2nd ser. The collection of Dickens's H.W. items published in 1859 by the Philadelphia publishing firm T. B. Peterson, Dickens' Short Stories. Containing Thirty-one Stories Never Before Published in This Country, contained no items that Dickens had not included in Reprinted Pieces. D.N.B.

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Dickens served a full newspaper apprenticeship, beginning as a teenage penny-a-liner for The British Press (1826). Having taught himself shorthand in the late 1820s, Dickens practised the craft in the antiquated courts of Doctors' Commons before moving up to join the select band of parliamentary reporters, working first for his uncle's voluminous Mirror of Parliament, then for the radical True Sun during the stormy passage of the Reform Bill through parliament (1832), and finally securing a coveted reporter's job on the newly-reorganised Morning Chronicle, under veteran Benthamite editor John Black (1783-1855). There he undertook varied work - theatre reviewing, election reporting, express reporting of extra-mural political events, as well as enduring the daily grind of parliamentary debates. Given the fluctuating demands for space which the latter placed on a 7-column broadsheet like the Chronicle, room was soon found for Dickens's witty sketches employing, amongst a wardrobe of other styles, the rhetoric of political journalism to narrate the world of everyday Londoners. These came to be signed 'Boz', and between 1836 and 1839, together with tales from the Monthly Magazine and Bell's Life in London they were republished to extensive acclaim, overlapping with the monthly release of 'Boz's next great success, The Pickwick Papers (1836-37).

Thereafter, Dickens's writing ventures all self-consciously straddled the permeable frontier between journalism and popular literature. He left the daily press for the more genteel world of monthly magazines, with the editorship of Bentley's Miscellany (1837-39), but sought to reconnect with satirical weekly journalism through editing Master Humphry's Clock for Chapman & Hall (1840-41). This was something of a misfire, in journalistic terms, though it bequeathed Old Curiosity Shop and Barnaby Rudge to literature. So too was Dickens's involvement with the Daily News (1845-46); critics point to the fact only 17 issues of the new Liberal broadsheet were published under his watch. Yet Dickens's effectivenes, as celebrity launch editor, should not be underestimated; his newsgathering and recruiting arrangements stood the test of time,
and he led from the front with a series of inventive contributions on social and cultural issues. Even while seeking to reposition himself as a serious novelist with *Dombey and Son* (1846-48), Dickens returned to newsprint, with around 30 anonymous reviews and irony-laden leaders for the *Examiner* under John Forster (1848-49). These were a prelude to his return to full-time editing and leader-writing, with *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* - hugely successful enterprises in weekly magazine journalism which, however, did not prevent Dickens from writing a further eight serial novels and undertaking punishing tours as a public reader in Britain, France, and America. Dickens is now widely recognised - and was during his lifetime - as a crucial contributor both to the popular appeal and the respectability of the mass-market newspaper and periodical press.


Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

- **Caroline Chisholm**

Philanthropist. Born in Northamptonshire. Lived in Madras, 1832-1838, where her husband, Captain Archibald Chisholm, was stationed; there established school for neglected children of soldiers. In Australia, 1838-1846; established Female Immigrants' Home in Sydney; conducted groups of immigrants into interior to find them suitable situations; established Registry Office for immigrant families. In England, 1846-1854; worked to make possible emigration of wives and children of liberated convicts then in Australia; established Family Colonization Loan Society to enable the poor to emigrate. Wrote pamphlets on emigration; obtained help of influential persons among them, Lord Ashley, M.P., and Sidney Herbert, M.P., in forwarding her projects. Supervised the sending out of emigrant ships. Again in Australia, 1854-1866; then returned to England. In 1867 granted Civil List pension of £100 a year "In consideration of the valuable and distinguished services rendered by her to emigrants in New South Wales (Colles, *Literature and the Pension List*)."

On February 24 1850, Elizabeth Herbert, wife of Sidney Herbert, who interested herself much in emigration, wrote to Mrs. Chisholm: "I saw Mr. Dickens to-day and he has commissioned me to say that if you will allow him, and unless he hears to the contrary from you, he will call upon you at 2 o'clock on Tuesday next, the 26th. I told him about your emigrants' letters, and he seemed to think that the giving them publicity would be an important engine towards helping on our work, and he has so completely the confidence of the lower classes—(who all read his Books if they can read at all), that I think if you can persuade him to bring them out in his new work it will be an immense step gained. He is so singularly clever and agreeable that I hope you forgive me for having made this appointment without your direct sanction, and for having also told him that I knew you wished to make his acquaintance" (Shepard, "Dickens and His Models", *Month*, April 1902).

Mrs. Chisholm's "emigrants' letters" appeared in the first number of Dickens's "new work," i.e., *H.W.* Writing to Wills, March 6 1850, Dickens mentioned 'A Bundle of Emigrants' Letters' as "a little article of my own ... introducing some five or six originals [i.e., original letters], which are extremely good". The Office Book assigns the article to Dickens and Mrs. Chisholm. Mrs.
Chisholm's share in it, in addition to her furnishing the letters to Dickens, was her giving him information on her experience with emigrants and on the Family Colonization Loan Society, and perhaps a copy of her *A.B.C. of Colonization* (from which the article quotes). In the article, Dickens paid tribute to Mrs. Chisholm's work in behalf of emigration; he stated and endorsed the purpose of the Colonization Society, and explained its plan, which he considered essentially sound.

On March 4—in the week following the appointment arranged by Mrs. Herbert for his calling on Mrs. Chisholm—Dickens wrote to Miss Burdett-Coutts: "I dream of Mrs Chisholm, and her housekeeping. The dirty faces of her children are my continual companions" (*Heart of Charles Dickens*, ed. Johnson, p.166). Mrs. Chisholm's preoccupation with philanthropic works, to the neglect of her home and family, obviously suggested to Dickens the similar characteristics of Mrs. Jellyby in *Bleak House*, though another *H.W.* contributor—Harrier Martineau was generally credited in contemporary report as being Mrs. Jellyby's original.

In the two years following the publication of *'A Bundle of Emigrants' Letters'* support of Mrs. Chisholm's Family Colonization Loan Society and commendation of her work for emigration appeared in other *H.W.* articles. Two such articles ('Safety for Female Emigrants' and 'Official Emigration') were by Wills; the others were by Samuel Sidney, who had of course often mentioned Mrs. Chisholm and her work in his *Emigrant's Journal*.

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Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

**Genre(s):**

- *Prose: Report*  
  A 'more or less detailed description of any event ... intended for publication'; an 'account given ... on some particular matter, esp. after investigation' (OED) involving e.g. fieldwork, first-hand experience, original research.

**Subject(s):**

- Agriculture; Fishing; Forestry; Gardening; Horticulture
- Australia—Description and Travel; New Zealand—Description and Travel
- Communication; Telegraph; Postal Service
- Emigration; Immigration; Expatriation
- Family Life; Families; Domestic Relations; Sibling Relations; Kinship; Home;
- Food; Cooking; Gastronomy; Alcohol; Bars (Drinking Establishments); Restaurants; Dinners and Dining
- Great Britain—Colonies—Description and Travel
- Great Britain—Social Conditions—Nineteenth Century