

WILLIAM DE MORGAN

and

CHARLES DICKENS .

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by

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CHAPTER 1.

General Influences upon the Literary Work of De Morgan.

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The aim of this thesis is to give an account of the literary work of William De Morgan, and, at the same time, to trace, as far as is possible, the influence of Charles Dickens in this work.

Although genius is inherent and will always tend to fight its way upward toward its highest achievement, yet its bent must in part, be determined by outward circumstances. This is particularly true of William De Morgan who had lived a long life, rich in experience, before he began to write at all. In this respect he holds a rather unique place in English Literature, for his first novel, "Joseph Vance", was not published until he was sixty-seven, and already had behind him a long and successful career as a designer of tiles and pottery. On a man of so rich a nature this long period of preparation and apprenticeship, unconscious as it was, must have made a deep impression, and must have influenced him when he began his latest and greatest work, along particular lines which should be clearly disclosed by a brief study of his life.

The De Morgan family is of French origin. On the father's side the De Morgans for four generations back were soldiers in

the service of the East India Company. On the mother's side the family may be said to be intensely English. Sophia De Morgan was descended from the Friends of Canterbury and the Blackburne's of Yorkshire, numbering among her relations Archdeacon Blackburne, who in turn was connected with the picturesque Launcelet Blackburne, Archbishop of York. Our author's father, Augustus De Morgan, was a distinguished mathematician who held the post of Professor of Mathematics at University College for some thirty years, and who married the daughter of another professor, William Frend, a Cambridge Lecturer.

Their eldest son, William, was born at 69 Gower St., London in 1839. When he was ten he was sent to the University College School, and six years later to University College, where he remained for three years. During this period his inclinations were all for art, and after he left the College he took lessons in drawing at the old school in Streatham St., Bloomsbury. In 1859 he became a pupil in the Royal Academy Schools, an impression of which he gives us in the narration of certain incidents in the youth of Charley Heath in "Alice-for-Short".

Three or four years later De Morgan became deeply interested in stained glass work and pottery, and until he took to the writing of literature at the age of sixty-four, he devoted his whole time to this branch of art, which he describes with his inimitable humour in "Alice-for-Short". Until 1871 he

carried on his work at No. 40 Fitzroy Square, which is the original of the No. 40 X. . . Street, which plays such an important part in creating the mystery background in "Alice-for-Short". In this year, being influenced no doubt by the fact that while conducting experiments in pottery in the cellar of No. 40 he blew the roof off, he moved to Chelsea and took a house in Cheyne Row, two doors from Carlyle's. Here he built a kiln in the garden for his experiments, which has since been replaced by a laundry. He subsequently moved to Orange House, Chelsea, which has now been pulled down, and after his marriage to Miss Pickering, he again moved to a charming house in the Vale. Mr. and Mrs. De Morgan spent their winters in Florence during this period, partly for the sake of De Morgan's health which was never robust, and partly to be near Mrs. De Morgan's uncle, Spencer Stanhope, a painter, who lived in Italy. Stanhope, however, died in 1912, and after his death these visits were discontinued. The influence of these Italian visits is seen in his fifth book, "A Likely Story", which has an Italian setting.

During all this time De Morgan worked at his chosen work and became widely known for his beautifully decorated tiles and pottery, and for the invention of a new kind of lustre for pottery. From early youth he was the intimate friend of Burne-Jones and William Morris, whose artistic aims and tastes he shared, and at whose homes he was a frequent and welcome visitor. Unfortunately,

in spite of the artistic charm of his pottery and the fame of he had achieved, his work was not altogether a success from a commercial standpoint. This was due, not to the absence of a market for his wares, but rather to the cost of production and to his own lack of business capacity. He was too much the artist to give much attention to the business end. He was always experimenting and endeavoring to find something new, and when one of his experiments was successful and began to bring in large sums of money, he promptly used his earnings to experiment on grander and larger scales. The characteristic story is told of him that once when he was moving to a new workshop and found it necessary to pack and ship a large number of pieces of pottery, valued at about three pounds each, he was discovered by his workmen breaking them to pieces with a hammer in order to save the trouble.

De Morgan always took a deep interest in his workmen who were practically all drawn from cockney London. It is said that he took great enjoyment in sitting in his own corner of the shop and observing them and listening to their conversation. Unwittingly he was laying by a rich store which in later years he found of incalculable value. His kindness and liberality to his workmen was unbounded. He was deeply interested in their welfare and countless instances of his generosity to them are on record.

It is as a novelist that De Morgan is next heard of, but it is not true as some critics claim that he turned to literature as

a means of livelihood because he was in straitened circumstances financially. It is true that he had not prospered greatly as a designer of tiles and pottery, but he had other sources of income, and in 1906, when he had reached the age of sixty-seven, he might have looked forward to spending the remainder of his days in comparative ease. He discovered his own ability along this line by a sort of accident and approached literature not so much as a means of repairing broken fortunes or as a life work, but rather as a diversion.

He tells that never during his long life time had he felt the least urge to write. In his letters he always insisted that he never read anything. He wrote, "I scarcely looked in a book, unless it was about pots and mechanisms, for forty long years.

There is a confession -- a little exaggerated in form from chagrin at the truth of its spirit, but substantially true for all that." (1)

If he had not had an attack of influenza when he was sixty-four which confined him to his bed for some weeks he might never have written a novel. As he lay in bed with nothing to do he amused himself by writing down on small scraps of paper the first two chapters of "Joseph Vance". "If I had not had the flu", he wrote, "I should not have thought of writing a book.

I started "Joseph Vance" just for a lark." (2) He made out no plan (1917.

(1) W. L. Phelps in the North American Review, Vol. 205,

(2) W. L. Phelps in the North American Review, Vol. 205, 1917

or plot; he had no idea of the story or of the probable history of the characters. He simply began to write, and h's writing ceased he thought forever upon his recovery. The world owes the completion of his story to Mrs. De Morgan who prevented him from destroying the pieces of paper AND Insisted upon his continuation of the story. Even then he came near destroying the early chapters which seemed to him to be too much like Dickens to pass muster.

"Joseph Vance" was not published until 1906, but this delay in publication was not as is sometimes said due to the fact that it went the round of the publishers before its acceptance. The truth is that the manuscript was put away in a drawer of De Morgan's desk and lay there forgotten for some time. There was some reluctance on the part of the publishers to have it read, it is true, because of its great length and owing to the fact that it was all in manuscript, but Mr. Heineman saw its possibilities and gave orders for its typing. There is a rather interesting story about this. When the enormous bundle of manuscript was parcelled out among the typists they became so absorbed in the story that they forgot to go on with their work and it is said that some of the girls were so deeply affected by the more pathetic parts that they were found in tears. This story may not be true, but nevertheless it is true criticism.

Writing in a "bookful age" and offering as he did, an ~~all-written~~ biography of some 280,000 words in a leisurely and discursive style, to a public which ~~was~~ clamored for short stories, of the quick moving type, De Morgan should by all rules of the literary game have been doomed to failure. In this case however the unexpected happened, "Joseph Vance" became a regular "best seller" and impression after impression had to be printed to supply the demand. His public cried for more and there followed in quick succession, "Alice-for-Short", 1907; "It Never Can Happen Again", 1909; "An Affair of Dishonor", 1910; "A Likely Story", 1911; and "When Ghost Meets Ghost", 1914.

The sudden outbreak of the War in 1914 found him busy with a new book, "The Old Madhouse". This last book remained unfinished for, like many others, he found that he could not work while the Empire was involved in this life and death struggle, and he died before peace was proclaimed. It was, however, finished after his death by his wife to whom he had given an outline of the remainder of the story. For the next two years and a half his whole interest was absorbed by the war. He followed every step, used his literary powers to enlighten public opinion both at home and in America, and put his scientific experience at the disposal of the War Office. His services were accepted and he devoted his time to making scientific experiments at the Polytechnic, and in perfecting new discoveries which might prove

useful in submarine warfare. When on January 15th, 1917, a sharp and sudden attack of influenza carried him off after a short illness of two weeks, the news of his death came as a shock and with a feeling of deep loss to his many friends and admirers.

In such a long life and in one so rich in experience, there must have been many and varied influences which had a bearing upon his literary work. It would be an impossible task to trace all of these, but there are several which have such far reaching effects that they will bear mention.

The first of these that I wish to discuss is the general influence of his early life. De Morgan was very fond of looking backward, and he drew upon the memories of his past life for hundreds of small details. The setting and the background of all his stories are taken from places with which he was familiar:- Camden Town, Soho, Bloomsbury, Chelsea, Wandsworth and Florence. He does not describe his houses as wholes but treats them as he does his characters, takes a piece from one and a piece from another and builds them up into a whole. To properly appreciate this feature of De Morgan's work one must be a Londoner. Mr. St. John Adcock, who evidently knows his London, writes in this connection, "In 'Joseph Vance' and in the early parts of 'It Never Can Happen Again', De Morgan draws on his memories of life as he saw it among the middle class and very poor of Camden Town. He lived opposite a queer little Nonconformist Chapel there at No. 7

Camden St., which has lately been swept away to make room for a Council School, from the time he was five until he was twenty. You cannot linger through the streets of this neighborhood without feeling that you are breathing the air of "Joseph Vance".....
..... It is all very well for De Morgan to describe old Mr. Vance's house as one of Stallwood's Cottages and next door to Packles Laundry, and then to plant the cottages at Clapham and cunningly and casually to refer to them as seven miles from Hampstead, but it will not be easy to persuade one that Stallwood's Cottages are not in Camden. Tallack St., also smacks of Camden.¹¹ (3).

Again, his long career as an artist must have influenced him greatly in his later work. There would seem to be very little connection between tiles and novels, yet De Morgan has himself said that his novels are indirectly the result of his work as a potter. Of course a study of one branch of art is always a preparation for another, and our author is always the artist with the artist's sense of technique and of beauty of form and of human life, but in De Morgan we feel that this was inborn. It was rather in his close touch with human nature, particularly with the characters he was later to use in his books, that De Morgan was preparing for his great work. His was a particularly

(3) A.St. John Adcock in the Bookman (English), Vol.38, 1910

observant nature, and during the fifty years he was engaged in making tiles and pottery, he acquired that familiarity with the working classes and with the dwellers in the slums, with their language, their habits and their points of view, which he used to such advantage in his novels, and which enabled him to portray them with such deep sympathy and kindly humor.

A third and much greater influence was that of his home life. The impress made by a good home upon a man's character and even upon his ideas and general conception of life is bound to be deep and lasting. His mother and father had strong, intellectual personalities, and the influence of both can be clearly traced in his literary work. Mrs. De Morgan was a woman of fine intellectual attainments and considerable literary ability. She was deeply interested in social work in the slums of London which she frequently visited with her son. These visits, together with his mother's interest in particular cases which were discussed at home, very largely accounts for De Morgan's ability in portraying the slum dwellers. His mother was the author of a fine biography of her husband, a volume dealing with spiritual phenomena, entitled, "From Matter to Mind", and a delightful book of reminiscences, "Three Score Years and Ten", which was published in 1895, by her daughter Mary, herself known as a poet and writer.

Both his parents were^{both} deeply interested in spiritualism and supernatural manifestations, and it was only natural that De Morgan himself should acquire this interest, which he uses

to such an extent in his works, particularly in "Alice-for-Short", the whole background of which is given by the appearance of the ghosts.

The strongest factor of all, however, was that of his father to whom he owes more than to any one outside influence. Augustus De Morgan was no scholar of the 'dry-as-dust' type. His kindly humor and his deep sympathy with human kind made him one of those lovable persons who are written large in every way. His letters, many of which have been included in his wife's biography of him, are interesting not only as showing the character of the man himself, but as revealing the extent to which the son was influenced by his father. A perusal of them shows that he not only inherited many of his father's opinions and much of his quaint humor, but he writes in much the same leisurely and colloquial style, shows the same closeness of observation, and has the same penchant for discovering at a glance the oddities of human nature. Many of Augustus De Morgan's letters might have been written by the son. The two quotations which follow will serve to illustrate this:-

In a letter to a Dr. Whewell, Augustus De Morgan speaks of Roger Bacon, and continues airily:-

"Bacon is a queer name, but there seems to be a providence that watches over names, and makes the great men have names of bearable sounds. None of the hypothesis that, be the names what they may, their exploits will sanctify them in time. If Bacon

and Newton had been Wiggins and Figgins would any time have taken off the ridicule of the rhyme? Could anybody with a grave face have argued the question whether the immortal Figgins was or was not indebted to the great Wiggins?"

This might just as easily be conceived as one of those asides of William De Morgan which are one of the most charming features of his book. And what a Dickensytwang it has!

Just as characteristic and illustrating another feature of our author's work, his coining of suitable words and phrases to clothe his thought, is the following passage which is taken from a letter to Captain Smyth, in which he declines to be President of the Astronomical Society, but makes a humorous list of desirable officers and their qualifications, putting himself down as one of the secretaries.

"Augustus De Morgan," he writes, "well enough in his way, but cranky,----- for miscellaneous work, from wax candles to Council Minutes", and concludes by saying that Sir John Herschel must be their President because

"the President must be a man of brass, a micrometer-monger, a telescope-twiddler, a star-stringer, a planet-peker, and a nebula-nabber." (4)

De Morgan then did not have to turn to other writers in order to develop his latent literary ability. When the influences around him throughout his long life, shaping his ideas and cultivating his tastes, are considered, his readers can only wonder

(4) A. St. John Addock in the Bookman, Vol. 38, 1910
Biographical facts taken from the short biography,
by Julia Cartwright -- William De Morgan -- A Short
Reminiscence, Living Age, Vol. 293, 1917.

why his literary genius was so long in finding expression. Much of the best that is in his books is fashioned out of past experience ; out of the memories of his boyhood days: out of his fifty years of work as a petter; and out of the deep and lasting impressiens made upon him by his parents,

CHAPTER II.

The Particular Influence of Charles Dickens.

Before passing on to a consideration of the influence of Dickens upon De Mergan, it would be well perhaps to note briefly certain influences and tendencies in the life of Dickens himself which helped to color his own work, and which helped also to mark out the difference between his work and that of the later author.

The first of these is found in the circumstances of his early life, which were in strong contrast to those of De Mergan, and made an impression upon his boyish mind which tended to influence his more mature thought in later life. His father, John Dickens, the prototype of Micawber, was kind and well intentioned, but more fitted to harangue his large family than to supply them with the necessities of life. He moved from place to place, sinking deeper and deeper into poverty, and landed finally in a debtor's prison. It was in this environment that Charles Dickens spent his early days, and at the age of eleven, "a child of singular abilities, quick, eager and delicate, and soon hurt bodily and mentally" as he described himself in a fragment of autobiography, he was forced to help maintain the family by working as a poor little drudge in a blacking factory at six shillings a week. "My work", he writes, "was to cover the pots of

paste-blackening; first with a piece of oil paper, and then with a piece of blue paper; to tie them round with a string; and then to clip the paper close and neat, all round, until it looked as smart as a pot of ointment from an apothecary's shop. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, and thought and delighted in, and raised my fancy and emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more; cannot be written. My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man; and wander desolately back to that time of my life". (1)

This painful experience of his early life together with the fact that he wrote in an age of suffering, of expansion, of progress, an age which is described by Gissing as "a time by several degrees harsher, coarser, and uglier than our own, a time of ugly religion, ugly law, ugly relations between rich and poor, ugly clothes, ugly furniture", (2) imbued all his work with an ethical purpose and caused him in his zeal for the betterment of the poor, to become, at times, rather shrill in tone or a little too sentimental.

(1) The Life of Dickens -- Forster and Gissing -- p. 25

(2) Charles Dickens -- George Gissing -- p13

The second characteristic is rather an inborn tendency than an outside influence. When, after leaving the warehouse, at the early age of twelve, Dickens was sent to school, he was very active in getting up school theatricals, and when a little later he was employed as a junior clerk in a law office he continued this interest in the theatre by attending as often as possible a small theatre, where he was frequently given a part. Again, at the age of nineteen, after he had taken to reporting and found it a rather precarious means of livelihood, he studied and practised himself in parts, and finally offered himself as an actor to Covent Garden. An appointment was granted him by the manager but before he could keep it he became ill, and wrote to say he would make his application next season. Success in journalism, ~~however~~, turned his thoughts elsewhere and he gave up the idea of becoming an actor. The tendency, however, still remained, and later influenced his writing, particularly his early works, which are somewhat stagey and melodramatic.

And now to return to William De Morgan. De Morgan must have become acquainted with the works of Charles Dickens at an early age, for both his mother and father were ardent admirers of this great writer, and his books were read aloud in the De Morgan home.

Writing of Augustus De Morgan in her biography of him his wife says, "He liked reading to me when he could get anything likely to please us both, so I heard several of Dickens' novels from

beginning to end. They came out in monthly parts and he would say, 'We shall have a Pickwick (or whatever it might be) to-morrow', and on the first day of the publication we had read and commented upon it".

In spite of William De Morgan's statement, previously quoted, that he scarcely ever looked into a book, yet as a matter of fact he knew Dickens as few readers have ever known him. If he is to be judged by the Browning references in his books, particularly in "When Ghost Meets Ghost", which contains many of them, he must have had a fair knowledge of this poet too, and at times his writing is so much like that of Thackeray that it is hard to believe that he had no knowledge of Esmond, and Pendennis and Becky Sharp. In writing to Henry Dennis Hammond, a young student, who had had an essay on "De Morgan" published in the "Yale Courant", he says, "But then Dickens was my idol in childhood, boyhood, youthhood, manhood and so on to a decade of senility, even until now." (3)

After he began to write De Morgan freely acknowledged his indebtedness to his predecessor. In one of his letters he wrote, "Dickens was the master at whose feet I sat", and he always insisted upon ascribing whatever merit his own writings possessed to this influence. He was always gratified if, when his writings were reviewed, a critic said that he imitated Dickens, provided

(3) William De Morgan -- WL L. Phelps in North American Review, Vol. 205, 1917.

the reviewer meant that his imitation was not a failure. He, himself, thought that he could trace the influence of Dickens in almost every page, but so high did he place the earlier writer and so modest was his estimate of his own writings that he was quick to add that he could not be sure that it might not be his vanity that caused him to see such resemblances.

There is something very pleasing in this hero-worship of De Morgan for the greater writer, and it is very characteristic of the man; yet a close reading of his books leaves the reader with the conviction that he has a much too modest estimate of his own literary abilities. It is true that there are resemblances, and that these are sometimes so close that the reader involuntarily finds himself saying, "That is Dickens!" His method of narration, his power of close observation, his characterization, his turn of colloquial speech, his infectious humor, all remind one of the older writer. And in case these should fail De Morgan keeps his readers constantly reminded by reference or direct quotation. But in spite of all these resemblances De Morgan is no mere imitator, nor can he rightly be called as Mr. Phelps calls him, a reincarnation of his predecessor. There is much originality in his work; every resemblance on closer study is found to contain also a difference, and the total impression he leaves with his readers is not that of one who has revived an older author, but of one who has a new and living personality of his own.

A close study of De Morgan's works reveals the fact that the longer he wrote the less he became influenced by Dickens, and the more he gave of his own individual genius. The influence is strongest in the opening chapters of "Joseph Vance", in which, of course, he consciously tried to emulate, and in the "Lizarann" story in "It Never Can Happen Again". In the other books it is not so easy to trace this influence, and in the "Challis" story in "It Never Can Happen Again", in "Somehow Good", and in "A Likely Story", the resemblance is very slight indeed. Another fact that is revealed in his works is that De Morgan resembles other authors who wrote in the same period of English literature as Charles Dickens. In his style, in his kind of comment, in his knowledge of men, and of society in the country and town houses of the upper classes, he resembles Thackeray. His men and women are ordinary, everyday people and might almost have stepped out of the pages of Trollope's "Barchester Towers" except that they are treated with more humor and more imagination. The quality of his analysis of character -- Dickens is never analytical -- is somewhat like that of George Eliot, and in a lesser way he also resembles Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade.

Although then, the influence of Dickens is admittedly stronger than that of these other writers, yet what he has captured is rather the spirit of the age in which these men wrote. He has disregarded the modern French school and returned to the period of the 40's and 50's both for his material and his method.

De Morgan, while he never lost touch with the great questions of his own times, was always more interested in the days and fashions of his youth. This attitude he expressed in his own reminiscent and whimsical way in "When Ghost Meets Ghost," where he says in an aside to his readers;

"For these were the days of crinolines; of hair in cabbage nets, packed round ~~with~~ rubber inflations; of what may be called prote-croquet, with hoops so large that no one ever failed to get through, except you and me; the days when 'Ah che la morte' was the last new tune, and Landseer and Mulready the last words in Art. They were the days when there had been but one Great Exhibition -- think of it! -- and the British fleet could still get under canvas. We, being an old fogey, would so much like to go back to these days -- to think of the daguerretype as a stupendous triumph of science, balloons as indigenous to Cremorne, and table-turning as a nine days' wonder, in a word to feel our biceps with satisfaction in an epoch when wheels went slow, folk played tunes, and nobody had appendicitis. But we can't." (4)

In spite of De Morgan's own protests against the charge of mid-Victorianism, he belongs to that period of English literature. Yet he belongs to us too, and links up the age of Dickens and Thackeray with our own times by extending their manner and spirit to meet the problems of modern life. The spirit of his writings is that of a man freed from mid-Victorian prejudices and conventionalities by a ^{love of} long beauty and a lifelong association with painters and other artists. It is Victorianism "recollected in tranquillity".

(4) When Ghost Meets Ghost, p. 98.

I have attempted in these first two chapters to point out in a general way that, while De Morgan saw many of the things that Dickens saw, he saw them from an entirely different point of view. A comparison of these two writers will serve as a summing up. Dickens, the journalist, fond of the stage and the melodramatic, deeply interested in social reform, and using his pen for this purpose, writing in an "ugly" age, while still young, after a hard and disillusioning childhood which left him with a slightly better outlook upon life; De Morgan, the artist writing about the same period but with a modern viewpoint, and with the whimsical detachment and placid tolerance that comes to a man of his type after a long, peaceful life, rich in experience; surely there must be many differences in the literary work of these two writers. In the following chapters it will be my aim to indicate these differences in a more particular manner by tracing them through the outstanding features of the works of both novelists.

CHAPTER III

Style and Plot Structure.

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The most remarkable characteristic of De Morgan's style is the absence of practically all of those elements which, according to the standards of modern literary technique, are necessary to the success of a novelist. He does not strive for effect, nor does he write by any particular formula, but creates his characters first and then waits to see what they will do, and while he is waiting he chats away to his reader on anything "from cabbages to kings". His novels, like Topsy, "are not born. They simply grow".

This leisurely and discursive style of writing is, of course, characteristic of the elder school. There is much of Dickens in it, and much of Thackeray -- it is difficult to say which he resembles most -- but there is more of De Morgan himself in his writing than of either Dickens or Thackeray. His style is so original, full as it is of "verbal quips and pleasantries" and of gaiety and deep irrepressible enjoyment, that a De Morgan reader would never confuse a characteristic page of his writing with that of any other novelist. The following quotation which comprises the first two paragraphs of the first chapter of "When Ghost Meets Ghost" is typical:--

Chapter 0.

A connecting link between the writer and the story amounting to very little. There was a court some fifty years since in London somewhere that is nowhere. That's all!

"Some fifty years ago there still remained, in a street reachable after inquiry by turning to the left out of Tottenham Court Road, a rather picturesque court with an archway, which I, the writer of this story, could not find when I tried to locate it the other day. I hunted for it a good deal and ended by coming away in despair and going for rest and refreshment to a new born tea shop, where a number of young ladies had lost their individuality, and the one who brought my tea to me was callous to me and mine because you pay at the desk. But she had an orderly soul for she turned over the lump of sugar that had a little butter on it so as to lie on the buttery side and look more tidy like.

If the tea had been China tea, fresh made, it might have helped me to recollect the name of that Court which I am sorry to say I have forgotten. But it was Ceylon and had stood. However it was hot. Only you will never convince me that it was fresh made, not even if you have me dragged asunder by wild horses. Its upshot was, for the purposes of this story that it did not help me to recollect the name of that Court".(1)

No mistake could be made here. What other author would have opened a book in just this way? What other author would have dared to digress before he had even introduced his characters, to talk on tea shops, or to assume at the outset that the reader could be interested in the question of whether a piece of sugar had fallen with the buttered side up or down? To what other author could be ascribed the whimsical touch concerning the waitress and her tips?

(1) "When Ghost Meets Ghost", p. 3.

And yet, in spite of the general "too muchness", in spite of the rambling style, the total impression left by De Morgan's books is that of wonderful reality. His characters are the commonplace people we meet every day, and we get to know them as we do our friends and neighbors. Their dialogue is the real unliterary talk of ordinary people. Things happen in his books as they do in real life casually and unpremeditatedly, and the reader who would understand what it is all about must listen to the prattle of children and keep an eye on the neighbors. Every detail, small and unimportant as it may seem, has its significance and plays its part in building up the story.

That it is this characteristic style that gives a great deal of their charm to De Morgan's books is proved by his one venture into the realms of modern technique. In "An Affair of Dishonor" he deliberately discarded his own particular style to write "a strictly realistic piece of modern fiction" and the result was a comparative failure. Of all his books this is the one with which his readers would most readily dispense. And yet this very failure was in reality a triumph, for it proved conclusively that De Morgan owed his great popularity not so much to his skill as a storyteller, as to his own peculiar style of writing.

And now to analyze this style ~~of writing~~ and to try to discover just what elements it has in common with that of Dickens. Let us deal with the most pronounced of De Morgan's characteristics

first. De Morgan does resemble Dickens in his method of narration. Both authors edit their own texts and in the works of each the course of events is constantly interfered with by the author's gloss. This characteristic, however, is more pronounced and the method more successfully used in De Morgan. Dickens' comments are serious and usually on one theme, that of social reform, and he ~~felt~~ so strongly on this point that they very often become sentimental or conventional and lose their value. They could be taken out of his works without much loss, and in some cases their elision might be a distinct gain. Take his asides out of De Morgan, however, and most of his charm disappears. In some writers so much digression would amount to garrulity and would quickly bore the reader, but when the author is interesting, profound and entertaining as De Morgan is at all times, we cannot have too much of him. Even when he repeatedly advises his readers to skip whole chapters at a time, we never take him at his word but gladly leave the story for his shrewd comment on his characters or upon life itself in one of its various phases.

To illustrate this characteristic of De Morgan's it is only necessary to turn to any chapter in any one of his books. Some of the best illustrations are to be found in "Alice-for-Short". Note the aside of the author on Miss Straker, which also illustrates his attitude toward his characters:

"In this story (perhaps you may have noticed it?) some of the characters are known to and understood by us, the writer, down to the ground. Others there are whom we can make no profession of understanding. We can only conjecture and surmise about their motives and feelings. Never mind why this is so; include Miss Straker in the latter class, make Charles the most conspicuous character in the former, and ask no questions.

Whether the young woman said to herself that so long as he ended by coming to the house and hearing her sing, the interim was of no importance, as we have no means of knowing. It is possible that we do her great injustice by speculating on that point. And remember too, that, by admitting that she had made up her mind to entangle Charles and capture him, she was not, so far as we can see, playing the game unfairly. For it is a game every woman has a right to play -- as good a right as the swimmer has to strike out for the shore. Remember too the stakes she puts on the table". (2)

The following quotation illustrates another type of comment:

But the truth is Alice was old enough to understand a great deal about it; little girls always do. Our own opinion is that the younger they are the more they know, and that inexperience comes on them unawares between childhood and womanhood". (3)

Again, what author but De Morgan would chat about the construction of his plots, and refer the reader to a previous page? In Chapter XLV of "Alice-for-Short" he mentions the story of Alice's father's dream ("that he dreamed a dream") and writes, "If you have forgotten all about this, see page 111." (4)

- (2) "Alice-for-Short," p. 216.
- (3) "Alice-for-Short," p. 264.
- (4) "Alice-for-Short," p. 478.

There is so much of this sort of thing that is good, that the inclination to continue quoting is well nigh irresistible, but since to do it justice would be to quote about four-fifths of De Morgan's writing, a line must be drawn, and it might as well be drawn here, for enough has been given to illustrate this characteristic.

Neither Dickens nor De Morgan can lay much claim to elegance of style or literary finish. Depending as he did very largely upon incident for effect, Dickens' style, naturally more conventional, had a vigor and a graphic power which are not to be found to the same extent in the later writer. There is, it is true, no lack of action in De Morgan. In "Joseph Vance", for instance, there are three cases of drowning and one tremendous fire. These however are not described as Dickens would have described them. Dickens was inclined under stress of emotion to strive for effect. De Morgan is seldom dramatic, and even in such scenes as these his language has the absolute simplicity of reality. This characteristic of De Morgan's is probably nowhere better illustrated than in his account of the duel which Charles Heath fought with his wife's lover. This incident is not described or even mentioned at the actual time of its happening, but is brought out much later incidentally in a conversation between Charles and Alice, and is disposed of in a short paragraph. Charles tells Alice of tracing the lovers ~~on~~ to Spezzia and of giving him a good thrashing after

chasing him out of the hotel into the street. The lover did not like the thrashing and challenged him to a duel, and although Charles had never used a sword in his life he accepted. ". . . . I went to a great professor of Scherma, as the Italians absurdly call fencing," he said". . . . and asked him how much he could teach me in a fortnight, I never having handled a sword in my life. He said, through an interpreter, who spoke English fluently: 'No usefulness. Not for you.' And then he added: 'I vite you coat?' He gave me a fail to show my paces with, and put some chalk on the end of his own. In a few seconds he had put a white spot exactly on every button of my waist coat, beginning at the top one and going down. . . . Then he told me all he could recommend was that I should point my sword straight at my adversary and keep quiet. I did so, and the excellent man was in such a hurry to murder me, in addition to his other benefactions, that he rushed right into my abominable spike, and very nearly hurt himself seriously. He was in hospital six weeks, I believe." (5) How casual and yet how effective in giving an air of reality this is! And what a contrast to the way Dickens would have written the same scene!

De Morgan's success in gaining this effect is largely due to his presentation of such momentous events through the lips of common and indifferent observers. In "Somehow Good" for instance

(5) "Alice-for-Short". p. 462.

the meeting of Desalind and her husband from whom she had been legally separated for twenty years, and who had now been brought to her by chance with his memory gone, is told by the cabman in whose cab he is sitting at the time. De Morgan too deliberately seeks the colloquial phrase when another writer would strive for remote epithet. "Try to mean what you want to say and leave the dictionary to take care of itself" is his maxim.

If De Morgan gained in reality, however, he lost in vigor and graphic power. In these latter characteristics he could not approach Dickens who was at his best in fast moving narrative and in description. His stage coach journeys, for instance, that of the Muggleton coach in "Pickwick", and the posting journey of Inspector Bucket and Esther Summerson in search of Lady Dedlock are masterpieces of descriptive narrative, while the story of David Copperfield's journey on the Dover Road is as good a piece of its kind as we have in English.

Of description for its own sake there is scarcely a trace in De Morgan. His London scenes are good, although it is rather impressions that we get of them than pure description. Some of the scenes between Blind Jim and Lizarann might almost have been taken from Dickens. The only outstanding dramatic scene, however, in all De Morgan's writing is that of Mrs. 'Picture's' farewell to her convict husband in "When Ghost Meets Ghost", which is as vivid as any companion scene in the older author's books.

Dickens, on the other hand, although he did not overburden his narrative with description, often used it to good effect. His picture of the gloomy Sunday in London in the opening chapters of "Little Dorrit" and his more cheerful descriptions of Mr. Guppy's "London particular" in "Bleak House" may be compared to De Morgan's description of the fog in "Somehow Good". In his description as in his characterization Dickens shows a fondness for the quaint and grotesque.)

(What lover of Dickens will ever forget Jacob's Island, Tom-all-alone's and Kreek's, each of which he paints as George Gissing remarks: "to leave the effect of fine, wild etchings, lighted only just sufficiently to show the broad outlines and to suggest features one does not desire to pry into".⁽⁶⁾ What he can make of a wretched little room a few feet square in a close packed, sordid neighborhood is shown in the following piece of description from "Martin Chuzzlewit":-

"The room in which he (Jonas) had shut himself up, was on the ground floor, at the back of the house. It was lighted by a dirty skylight, and a door in the wall, opening into a narrow covered passage or blind-alley, very little frequented after five or six o'clock in the evening, and not much in use as a thoroughfare at any hour. But it had an outlet in a neighboring street.

"The ground on which this chamber stood, had at one time, not within his recollection, been a yard; and had been converted to its present purpose for use as an office. But the occasion for it, died with the man who built it; and saving that it had

(6) "Charles Dickens" by George Gissing, Chapter IX, p. 192.

sometimes served as an apology for a spare bedroom, and that the old clerk had once held it (but that was years ago) as his recognized apartment, it had been but little troubled by Anthony Chuzzlewit and Son. It was a blatched, stained, mouldering room, like a vault; and there were water-pipes running through it, which at unexpected times in the night, when other things were quiet, clicked and gurgled suddenly as if they were choking." (7)

Dickens uses this power of description in presenting his characters too. Note for instance this short but vivid picture of Lee Gregory:

"Jee was a fair man with curls of flaxen hair on each side of his smooth face, and with eyes of such a very undecided blue that they seemed somehow to have got mixed with their own whites. He was a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish, dear fellow -- a sort of Hercules in strength and also in weakness". (8)

This power of outlining a particular scene or character with a few strong strokes is not found in De Morgan, but then the very essence of his method differs from that of Dickens, and we do not look for it.

Like Dickens, De Morgan is very fond of dropping into the vernacular conversation of his characters and many of his books are veritable gold mines for the student of dialect. The following short quotation from "When Ghost Meets Ghost" is one of the finest nuggets of all:--

"But you may take it from me ma'am, en'y to go no further on any account, that Mrs. Prichard is not, as they say, free spoke about her family, but on the contrary the contrary".

(7) "Martin Chuzzlewit", Chapter 46.

(8) "Great Expectations", Chapter 3.

Mrs. Burr was unconsciously extending the powers of the English tongue, in varying one word's force by different accents.

Uncle Moses, he cut in, being at home that time:

"Was you saying, ma'am that the old widderlady's husband had been a convict in Australia?"

Aunt M'riar, speaking from the stove, where she was extracting out the tea leaves from the pot, was for calling Uncle Moses over the coals." (9)

De Morgan again resembles Dickens in his love of contrast and ~~has~~ more particularly in placing social extremes together. No one ever forgets the dramatic thrill of old Mrs. Verrinder's awakening after a sixty years' sleep, Fenwick's restoration to conscious identity after being electrocuted, the recognition of their true relationship by Phoebe and Maisie Runciman at the age of 82, after each had thought the other dead for fifty years, and Adrian Terren's recovery of sight. Contrast of social extremes is used in practically all De Morgan's books, but it is in "It Can Never Happen Again" and "When Ghost Meets Ghost" that it is most noticeable. In the former we have the people of Tallack Street and Royd, and in the latter those of Sapp's Court and Ancestor Towers, placed in close relationship throughout the whole story.

De Morgan shows, like Dickens, a preference for the unusual, but he does not carry it so far as to picture the grim and grotesque. The charge of caricature could never be levelled against

(9) "When Ghost Meets Ghost", p. 44.

De Morgan. He is particularly good at depicting the phenomenon of lost memory and lost senses, and he invests the blind and crippled with rather more life than their more fortunate brethren. Jim Coupland, one of his finest characters, is both blind and crippled. This same romantic and unconquerable love of life causes him to breathe life into a multitude of mere things until they become almost volitional agents. The 'hinseck' which was 'crooked' by the sweep in "Joseph Vance", the beer jug and the ring in "Alice for Short", the model of the old mill in "When Ghost Meets Ghost", all these seemingly unimportant objects assume a deep significance in the lives of the people of the story in which they occur.

Both authors wrote to great length. In the first draft of "When Ghost Meets Ghost", De Morgan wrote about a thousand pages. Before publication he was forced to cut this down to about eight hundred pages, which is about the average length of the books of both authors. Both used a large number of characters --there are forty in "Joseph Vance", and many sub-plots all woven intricately into the main plot. Both approximate closely to the accepted ideal of English tradition, writing a love story with a happy ending, in which, like all great novelists, they put the love story in large perspective and make it a background for their conception of life.

In two other respects De Morgan resembles Thackeray rather than Dickens. Like Thackeray he is fond of recurring to his

"ingenious conceits", the most memorable of which is that used over and over again in "It Never Can Happen Again" in describing the feeling of Challis in his relation to Judith Arkroyd, the sensation "like having the hair of his soul brushed by machinery". Again, he resembles Thackeray in that, although he invests material objects with a sort of supernatural significance, he never puts them in place of character, nor does he, as Dickens often does, put accident in place of causality.

Neither Dickens nor De Morgan would have attained literary fame by virtue of their plot structure. Dickens never did master this phase of literary art. In his earlier writings such as "Pickwick", influenced no doubt by the authors he had read in his boyhood, particularly Smollett, he wrote collections of sketches rather than novels. He recognized his weakness and in his later novels put all his energy into planning of the plot, but although he gained in proficiency, he never altogether mastered the "art of adapting simple probabilities to the end of his narrative," and his plots were seldom concerned with the plain motives of human life. Owing probably to his fondness for the odd and grotesque and for the theatre, Dickens took some unusual event or some far-fetched eccentricity as the foundation on which to build his plot. He planned his story as if he were planning a play to be acted, and the result was often a sort of stageyness in effect. Dickens was always strong on incident but never had command of situation.

A great situation must be led up to by careful and skilful foresight in character and event, and it was precisely this characteristic that Dickens lacked. De Morgan was not particularly strong in plot building, but he did have this power. He was able to look before and after, and get the necessary perspective to make his stories satisfyingly plausible and realistic. When in "Bleak House" Dickens did construct a good theatrical plot he did it so well that it became mechanical and lost in reality of life by being held together by coincidence, while in "The Tale of Two Cities" he has told a good story, but lost much of the humor and power of characterization for which he is famed.

Dickens too always had to contend against a special difficulty which must in part account for his lack of perfection in plot structure. He published most of his books in serial form, in monthly or even weekly instalments. In this form of publication each part must close effectively with the promise of as good or better in the next number, each part must contain its allowance of pathos and humor, and repetition was made necessary as a means of refreshing the memories of readers of an indolent turn of mind. All this, of course, tended towards the melodramatic and artificial in plot.

De Morgan's difficulties were of another kind. His very method of writing precluded good plot structure. Writing of "It Never Can Happen Again" Mr. Utter cleverly paraphrases Dr.

Johnson on Richardson. He says, "Sir, if you were to read it for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. You must read it for Lizarann and Jim who have unsatisfactorily few points of contact with the affair that can never happen again." (10) This criticism perhaps fits this particular book which is the most poorly constructed of De Morgan's works but it is too severe for the others. "Joseph Vance" for an autobiographical novel, which must necessarily be rambling, is very well constructed. His other books are rather too complicated in plot structure, although the threads are never lost, and particularly in the case of "A Likely Story" the adroitness with which they are interwoven is remarkable. The best of De Morgan's plots is that of "Somehow Good", which, although elaborate and ingenious, is less complicated and always interesting. Probably the only plot in Dickens that can compare with this is that of "Great Expectations".

Before closing this chapter there are one or two peculiarities of structure in De Morgan that must be briefly touched upon. Every one of De Morgan's stories except "An Affair of Dishonor" is a dichronism; that is, the story turns upon some secret hidden in past time which is revealed before the end of the book to alter profoundly something in the present. In "Alice-for-Short" it is the secret of Mrs. Verrinder whose memory left her when she was thirty and is restored by a surgical operation when she is ninety. In "Something Good" an electric shock destroys a man's

(10) "William De Morgan" by Robert L. Utter, in
"The Nation", Vol. 109, 1919

memory and blots out his early life, and while in this condition he stumbles upon the wife he had married and divorced twenty years before, and marries her the second time. In "It Never Can Happen Again" Challis is almost trapped into a felony by a hidden secret. In "When Ghost Meets Ghost" twin sisters are separated for fifty years each believing the other dead, and at the age of eighty-two are again brought together.

De Morgan's books all have the same peculiarity of starting off with a rush, and although they are by no means slum stories, yet they lead us, in the first chapter into the dirt and grime of the slums. "Joseph Vance" opens with the scene at the public house where the sweep 'crecks' the 'hinseck' and invites the fight with Chris. Vance; "Alice-for-Short" with the breaking of the beer jug and "Somehow Good" with the fight in Livermore's Rents. Mr. Phelps gives his opinion that the first chapter in "Somehow Good" might serve as a model for the commencement of a novel, and goes on to say of De Morgan's novels, "The foundations are like those of a cathedral, deep in the dirt, but the total impression is one of beauty". (11)

Thus it will be seen, that, although there are resemblances between De Morgan and Dickens in style and structure, yet these only go so far as the individual propensities of De Morgan will allow, and the differences noted are those which we might expect from our study of the two men in the first two chapters. Dickens,

(11) "Essays on Modern Novelists", by W. L. Phelps,
(Macmillan's), p. 27

influenced as he was by his zeal for social reform, by his love for the odd and grotesque, and by his fondness for the stage, wrote in lively dramatic style. De Morgan, putting as he did, his memories into a series of novels as other men put them into biography, and attempting always "to see life steadily and see it whole", wrote in a style that is rambling, colloquial and commonplace, but which gives a wonderful impression of reality. What he himself wrote about "When Ghost Meets Ghost" might be extended to apply to all he wrote. He says:-

"I, who write, have no aim in telling this story beyond that of repeating as clearly and briefly as may be the bare facts that make it up,-- of communicating them to whoever has a few hours to spare for the purpose, with the smallest trouble to himself in its perusal. I feel often that my lack of skill is spoiling what might be a good story. That I cannot help; and I write with the firm conviction that any effort on my part to arrange these facts in such order that the tale should show dramatic force, or startle him with unexpected issues of event, would only procure derision for its writer, and might even obscure the only end he has at heart, that of giving a complete grasp of the facts, as nearly as may be in the order of their occurrence". (12)

(12) "When Ghost Meets Ghost", p. 72.

CHAPTER IV.

Characterization.

I. -- A General Note.

The tendencies which were noted in the preceding chapters as affecting the style and structure of Dickens' and De Morgan's novels influence their delineation of character in much the same way.

The most pronounced characteristics of De Morgan's character drawing are probably the wideness of his range, both in depicting classes and individuals, and the power he has of drawing commonplace, everyday people with absolute reality.

De Morgan is at home in the portrayal of every class from Sapp's Court and Tallock Street, to Ancestor Towers and Royd. He is wider in his range than Dickens who made few attempts to portray the higher classes, probably because of his sense of the injustice of the rich in their oppression of the poor. In his portrayal of the lower classes, however, Dickens was unsurpassed by any English writer. De Morgan excels rather in the delineation of his own class, the more comfortably off middle class, and there is something in his method of doing this that is very modern, and reminds us somewhat of Arnold Bennett. He pictures with singular completeness the characteristics of present day civilization in England while at the same time he takes us back some fifty

years to these old fashioned times of which he was so fond. He has an irresistible way of hitting off the distinctive features of the Englishman "en famille"; its prosperity in the material things of this life; its petty bickering and its enduring goodwill; its seeming concentration on the small issues and its championship of the vital issues when such is needed. No truer pictures of this class could be given than those of the Heath family in "Alice-for-Short". The one for instance near the opening of the book where one by one, in coming down to breakfast, the members of this prosperous British family are introduced to the reader, or later in the book, the scene in which the banker listens to the confidences of his son in reference to Lavinia Straker. And what could be more realistic than the scene in "Somehow Good", in which Professor Sales Wilson, at the command of his wife, speaks to Tishy on the same subject. Again, who has depicted the English family at the seaside as has De Morgan in "Alice-for-Short" and "Somehow Good".

And if De Morgan excels in the portrayal of any one member of this class, surely it is the Englishwoman, the British matron when she wore lace caps and walked with conscious dignity, "like Convection coming down stairs" -- the Mrs. Heaths, the Mrs. Sales Wilsons and the Mrs. Verekers. He makes fun of all the little idiosyncrasies of this middle aged lady, her belief in her own exceeding righteousness, her habit of being herself always in the right and putting her husband and children always in the wrong, her readiness in assuming an air of "resigned martyrdom" if her

wishes are not always consulted and followed.

While this phase of English life belongs in a particular way to De Morgan, Dickens is at his best in the portrayal of a different phase--that of the poorer classes. It is true that De Morgan gives us some very excellent pictures of the English, and more particularly of the Cockney, working man, but he does not, except in a few cases, attempt to depict him at home. It is his individual characteristics with which he is concerned. In Dickens this characteristic becomes one of the most delightful of his work, and it is probably one of the most enduring too, for it is in this connection that we get most of his best description, his truest humor and his deepest pathos. No man loved England more than Dickens, and no man felt more deeply than he the wretched conditions under which the poor lived in his time. He has given us picture after picture of the typical English life of this period. Just to think of Charles Dickens and his works is to picture immediately some of those cosy inns with their warm welcome to the weary traveller after a long, tiresome journey. What a wonderful picture we get in "The Old Curiosity Shop" of the "Jolly Sandboys" where Nell and her grandfather and the wandering showmen found shelter. Many scenes illustrating as many types of English life might be mentioned, but we are particularly concerned with those which portray the poor. The homes of these people are drawn only as one with minute powers of observation

and the deepest sympathy with their inmates, could draw them. Dickens here again has drawn many types. Perhaps the most outstanding is that of people who, almost beaten by life in an effort to exist, still retain a love for home and family. Let us turn for a moment to the description of Kit's home in "The Old Curiosity Shop":

"The room in which Kit sat himself down, in this condition, was an extremely poor and homely place, but with that air of comfort about it, nevertheless which--or the spot must be a wretched one indeed--cleanliness and order can always impart in some degree. Late as the Dutch clock showed it to be, the poor woman was still hard at work at an ironing table; a young child lay sleeping in a cradle near the fire; and another, a sturdy boy of two or three years old, very wide awake, with a very tight nightcap on his head, and a nightgown very much too small for him, on his body, was sitting bolt upright in a clothes basket, staring over the rim with his great round eyes, and looking as if he had made up his mind never to go to sleep any more; which, as he had already declined to take his natural rest, and had been brought out of bed in consequence, opened a cheerful prospect for his relations and friends. It was rather a queer looking family; Kit, his mother, and the children being all strongly alike,

Kit was disposed to be out of temper as the best of us are too often, but he looked at the youngest child, who was sleeping soundly, and from him to his brother in the clothes basket, and from them to their mother, who had been at work without complaint since morning, and thought it would be better and a kinder thing to be good humored. So he rocked the cradle with his foot; made a face at the rebel in the clothes basket, which put him in high good humor directly; and stoutly determined to be talkable and make himself agreeable". (1)

And then again Dickens would take his readers to the slums and picture in a few graphic words the misery and despair of those squalid districts. Take for instance his picture of the room at Krook's in which the stranger was found dead by Mr. Tulkinghorn:-

(1) "The Old Curiosity Shop", Chapter X.

"... "It is a small room, nearly black with soot, and grease and dirt. In the rusty skeleton of a grate, pinched in the middle as if Poverty had struck it, a red coke fire burns low. In the corner by the chimney, stand a deal table and a broken desk; a wilderness marked with a rain of ink. In another corner a ragged old portmanteau on one of the two chairs, serves for cabinet or wardrobe; no larger one is needed, for it collapses like the cheeks of a starved man. The floor is bare, except that one old mat, trodden to shreds of rope yarn, lies perishing upon the hearth. No curtain veils the darkness of the night, but the discolored shutters are drawn together, and through the two gaunt holes pierced in them, famine might be seen staring in--the Bon-shue of the man upon the bed.

For, on a low bed, opposite the fire, a confusion of dirty patchwork, lean ribbed ticking and coarse sacking, the lawyer, hesitating just within the doorway, sees a man. He lies there, dressed in shirt and trousers, with bare feet. He has a yellow look in the spectral darkness of a candle that has guttered down until the whole length of its wick (still burning) has doubled over, and left a tower of winding sheet above it. His hair is ragged, mingling with his whiskers and his beard--the latter ragged too, and grown like the sun and mist around him, in neglect. Foul and filthy as the room is, foul and filthy as the air is, it is not easy to perceive what fumes those are which most oppress the senses in it, but through the sickness and faintness and the odor of stale tobacco, there comes into the lawyer's mouth the bitter, rapid taste of opium". (2)

The only picture in the whole of De Morgan's books that at all resembles those of Dickens is that of the Kavanagh family in "Alice-for-Short". Even here, however, the reader feels that the author is attempting to paint the evils resulting from continued intemperance rather than to picture family life.. De Morgan gives us the slums in Sepp's Court and Fulleck Street, but they are not the slums of Dickens. He does not outline these scenes for us in a few bold strokes as does the older writer. What we get is rather a sum total impression, an impression which is rather

(2) "Black House", Chapter X.

pleasant than otherwise, and we feel that we would gladly accompany Lady Gwen on her visits to Sapp's Court and make the acquaintance of Uncle Moses, Aunt Mr^riar, Mrs. "Picture" and more particularly of Michael Ragstrear and Dave and Dolly Wardle.

De Morgan's range in individual characterization is wide, rather wider than that of Dickens. He uses forty or more people in some of his books and every last one of them is real. In "When Ghost Meets Ghost" his characterization covers practically every condition of life, from Daverill the convict to Lady Gwen of Ancestor Towers. He depicts odd characters such as Chris. Vance, the artist, Verrinder and Uncle Moses, but unlike Dickens he does not specialize in such, and they are quaint and eccentric rather than grotesque. Quite seventy-five per cent of his people are ordinary everyday people such as Charley Heath and Courad Vereker. His children are delightfully drawn and are remarkably real, and the same is true of his old ladies in their serene and ripened perfection. We grow almost as fond of 'Old Jane', Mrs. 'Picture' and Granny Marrable, as we do of Alice, Dave and Dolly, and Lizarann. He is particularly good at depicting youth, particularly young ladies. Alice, Peggy Heath, and Gwen Rivers are charmingly real with their beauty and wit. While, just to show that he was not limited to the common stock of attributes in characterization, he gives us individual characters such as Challis, who, Mr. Follett writes, is "One of the most subtle,

intellectual, and sophisticated men between two covers", (3) and the lively and charming Sally who is as fine a type of the modern outdoors girl as is to be found anywhere in modern fiction.

It has already been noted that Dickens restricted himself almost altogether to the portrayal of the poorer classes. Critics have charged Dickens with being unable to draw a real gentleman. The truth of this criticism depends, of course, upon the interpretation given to the term "gentleman". No one has given a truer picture of "nature's gentlemen" than Dickens has in Norman Noggs, Tom Pinch, Joe Gargery and many other of his characters. But if the term is taken, as it generally is, to include manners as well as feelings and actions, then we have to admit that Dickens was not so successful. De Morgan is more like Thackeray than Dickens then in that he was able to portray quite successfully individual members of the upper classes.

It will be found that in the reality of his characterization De Morgan again differs from Dickens. The latter author's love for the odd and grotesque in human nature, which has already been noticed, influenced him very largely in his character drawing. He had no interest in the commonplace -- De Morgan was interested in little else -- but any oddity in man or woman had an irresistible fascination for him. This characteristic of his writing has caused him to be repeatedly charged with unreality of characterization, and with caricaturing his characters. We are not

(3) "Some Modern Novelists" by H. T. and W. Follett, p. 171.

concerned here with the truth of these charges. It is probably true that Dickens actually saw these characters before he placed them in his pages, but he saw them with that particular twist which emphasized their odd or grotesque characteristics rather than the sum total which made up and rounded out the real man. It is equally true that in reference to his best work, in any case, the word caricature is far too coarse a term to use. Mr. Gissing, it seems to me, has approached the truth when he says, "Caricature proceeds by a broad and simple method. It is no more the name for Dickens' full fervor of creation than for Shakespeare's in his prose comedy".⁽⁴⁾ But the point I want to emphasize here is that such characters could not be called commonplace. They have nothing in common with the ordinary, everyday people we meet in De Morgan's pages. It is true that Dickens' characters are not all of this type, but it is the characters like Mrs. Gamp, Tom Pinch, and Pecksniff that are unforgettable. Dickens had an amazing power of giving a strange intensity of life to his grotesques. His heroes and heroines, however, are usually colorless and lifeless.

De Morgan follows the method of creating his characters first and then waiting to see what they will do. Like Thackeray he is a long time in making his characters known to us, but when we do know them we feel as if they are old friends. Dickens, on

(4) "Charles Dickens", by George Gissing, Victorian Era Series, p. 131.

the other hand, excels in giving short pen portraits, a few deft, bold strokes and the character is before us. Again, while De Morgan's characters have the power of growing, Dickens never develops character through circumstance; his characters are the same at the end of the tale as at the beginning. Nor does Dickens attempt deliberate analysis of character except in few cases, and in these it is not well done. De Morgan has the somewhat rare power of making his characters unfold themselves in the story, and as we follow their actions through the mass of detail that makes the story we gradually begin to realize that these people are ordinary, everyday people just like ourselves, and we get to know them as we do our own friends and neighbors. Knowing them in this way we are interested in all the trivial things they do, things that would not hold our interest if done by anyone else. Then, when they begin to do ~~next~~ the real things of the tale, De Morgan has our interest doubly secure and the eight hundred odd pages in which he tells their story are all too short. This is not the Dickensian way of character portrayal, nor is it the modern analytical method of George Eliot. It resembles the latter more than the former, but De Morgan's method is one of suggestion rather than actual analysis. Writing as he did, with the tolerance of one who has lived a long life and has come to a thorough understanding of his fellow creatures, he gained a perspective that would be absent in a younger writer. We feel that he loves all his characters. His good people are not too good, and his

sinners do not seem to be too bad, for the reader knows all about them, and if they have sinned it is possible to find extenuating circumstances to lessen the blame. He never gives a bare outline of a character but always the whole man or whole woman. He looks before and after, and gives his readers the same wide perspective, so that all the influences which helped to shape the life of any particular character are known to us and we can guess how they will behave in a given crisis.

Dickens' characters lose the human touch of De Morgan's by being types. Most of his characters are incarnations of qualities they are supposed to exhibit, and characters cannot be put into separate classes like this and still give the impression of absolute reality. De Morgan recognized this, and though type names occur in his pages -- Miss Valmes, Mrs. Diamond, Mr. Treatment, Lady Horse, Lord Pouralet -- he does not use them to name important characters, but merely for some passing mention. He uses burlesque names too, but does not limit the scope of his characters with them as Dickens does. They occur chiefly as nicknames from the ready tongue of Chris Vance, or in the perversion of children's speech.

Neither Dickens nor De Morgan have great heroes or heroines. Generally speaking the more elaborate their conception of character the less successful they are. Neither author is altogether successful in depicting great villains or criminals, or in portraying the passionate emotions. So far as love is concerned

what is found in their books is either the romantic attachment of boy and girl, or the ripened domestic love of man and wife. De Morgan gives his conception of love through the lips of Dr. Thorpe "Love", said the Doctor, "is the golden bead at the bottom of the crucible. But love isn't thought or perception or even passion, in the ordinary sense. It's God knows what! I give it up. But it's a breath of fresh air from the highest Heaven brought somehow into the stuffy cellar of our existence. It's the flash of light that strikes on the wall of the tunnel our train is passing through, and shows us the burst of sunshine that is coming." (5) This idea of love is just what we should expect from De Morgan. He presents, not the passion of early love, but that higher, more lasting happiness, the union of two hearts cemented by the joys and sorrows of years of experience. When, as he does in depicting the relations of Challis and Judith Arkroyd, he attempts a more emotional presentation, we have a feeling that he is not quite at home in his subject. Certainly Judith is not one of his typical young ladies.

II. -- MEN and WOMEN.

.

De Morgan resembles Dickens in that he makes his heroes live in the common sense world and proportions them to their surroundings. They are simply links in the chain of association and may sometimes be subordinate to them in interest and achievement. De Morgan's heroes are all very commonplace fellows -- Joseph Vance, Charley Heath, Conrad Vereker, Adrian Torrens -- there is nothing to mark any of these from the ordinary people we meet every day, and if it were not for their relation to Lessie, Alice, Sally and Gwen we should be very apt to forget them very easily and very quickly. Mr. Orle Williams calls them "real ghosts of the author's self". The only hero that stands solidly on his own legs is probably little Dave Wardle in "When Ghost Meets Ghost", and even Dave must have the help of Dolly. The men who stand out most solidly in De Morgan's works are his older men such as Chris Vance, Uncle Mo., and Jim Coupland. De Morgan was at his best, however, in the portrayal of ladies. Dickens, on the other hand, found it difficult to portray women, unless it was in a satirical or grotesque way, and it is in his characterization of men that his creative genius is most marked. De Morgan, we feel, had not the virility necessary for the creation of a Peggoty, a Joe Gargery or a Pecksniff.

De Morgan is very much at home in his delineation of the English workingman who was well known to him through his own work as a potter. He treats him, however, from the humorous side and

does not give us any outstanding characterizations except in the case of Chris Vance. Chris. is De Morgan's greatest character and is more Dickensian than any other, resembling as he does the elder Weller in his whimsical philosophy.

The author has put into his delineation all that he had learned in fifty years' close observation of his own potters. He is typical of the London workingman of the 50's. De Morgan's method is not primarily descriptive but yet how clearly he puts this character before his readers, and how true to type he is with his shrewdness, his shiftlessness, his kindliness and his venial dishonesty. Certain scenes in his life stand out as clearly as any in Dickens;- the 'crockang' of the 'hinseck', the fight with the sweep, the buying of the signboard, his first visit to Poplar Villa, the broaching of the pure Cairn Magerrachan Mountain Dew after the first Mrs. Vance's funeral, the burning of the factory at Chelsea and the rescue of himself and his signboard, and the deathbed scene where he learns for the first time that it was Joe who threw the bottle at the sweep. The humorous way in which he is presented is also Dickensian, more so perhaps than anything else in De Morgan's works. When he is present we always expect to laugh and we are never disappointed. Yet he does not become merely a piece of machinery for turning out jokes, but like all of De Morgan's characters is very human and lovable. The more we see of him the deeper is our affection for him, until when he dies we feel that we have lost a friend.

While both Dickens and De Morgan repeatedly showed the influence of good women upon men's lives, yet Dickens' women are not so real as De Morgan's. Dickens was a man's writer and made his first appeal to men. He was never a prime favorite with women. This is soon understood when it is remembered that his peculiar power lay in satiric and grotesque portraiture, that he depicts largely the coarser aspects of life and gives in his books so little of conventional tenderness and so much of bloodthirsty violence. To women he often seems coarse and vulgar, and his portraits seem to be too often a sort of libel on the fair sex. On the other hand, it was his portrayal of womanhood, and particularly the charm of his young ladies that made De Morgan popular. What would become of his books without their women? We cannot think of "Joseph Vance" without Lottie and Janey, of "Alice-for-Short" without Alice or Peggy Heath, of "When Ghost Meets Ghost" without Lady Gwen, or of "Somehow Good" without Sally. We can more easily imagine "David Copperfield" without Agnes, or "Martin Chuzzlewit" without Ruth Pinch.

In his earlier books Dickens' women are conventional types. Mary Graham, Madeleine Bray and Rose Maylie show how deeply Dickens was saturated with Fielding. He soon saw, however, that milk and water heroines, such as these, were not suited to his robust men and as he matured he began to substitute for these visions women who actually had some influence upon the destinies of his

men. He made service the keynote to character and created as his ideal type of Womanhood those "little women", domestic types of goodness and comfort -- Agnes, Ruth Pinch, Esther Summerson, Det Peerybingle, Clemency Newcombe, Bella Wilfer-- small, plump, domesticated little women.

Almost all the other types of womanhood in Dickens are drawn either in a spirit of satire, or to illustrate some oddity in character. Many of these are wonderfully drawn and belong to his finest work. Mrs. Gamp and Betsy Prig are drawn in broad 'caricature', others like Mrs. Weller are broadly humorous, but the greater number are foolish, ridiculous or offensive women whose real business in life seems to be to make everyone around them as uncomfortable as possible. Mrs. Sowerby, Mrs. Snagsby, Mrs. Gummidge, Mrs. Pocket, Mrs. Jellyby, and Mrs. Gargery all belong to this type. Dickens' own description of the last named is excellent. He writes, "Mrs. Joe was a very clean housekeeper, but had an exquisite art of making her cleanliness more uncomfortable and more unacceptable than dirt itself. Cleanliness is next to Godliness, and some people do the same by their religion." (6)

De Morgan's women, with a very few exceptions, do not fit into any one of Dickens' types. Lottie and Alice, it is true, give rather an impression of smallness and capability, but they are not altogether like Ruth Pinch and Agnes. They are placed in a slightly different background and there is a glamour^{of romance} about them

(6) "Great Expectations", Chapter IV.

that is absent from the Dickens pair. There is perhaps a closer resemblance in the portrayal of elderly ladies, a resemblance, not so much in the ladies themselves, as in certain characteristics which they have in common. It is De Morgan who is the less merciful here. It may be that because of his age he was more partial to youth, but as soon as the enchantment of youth had passed, his well-to-do respectable people became either tiresome or comic, and we are never allowed to see his divinities grow old. He could conceive of no attractive female over forty. Take, for instance, Mrs. Eldridge. Dickens was never harsher in his criticism than De Morgan is here. She is the vulgar and accomplished mischief-maker who visits her friend, and by a word dropped here and there at the right time poisons her mind against her husband, and causes endless trouble and misery. De Morgan doesn't charge her with being shrewish, but we should imagine by the way John tags around after her and seconds everything she says, that his domestic troubles were not unlike those of Mr. Snagsby or Joe Gargery. It is characteristic of our author that while Mrs. Eldridge is one of the most tiresome characters ever created we never lose interest in her. She builds up her case in such a way that she is always plausible, and we see the result as inevitable. Mrs. Vereker is another of these tiresome elderly ladies. She makes life uncomfortable for her son Conrad, who is afraid to do anything without consulting her, and when, in reply to her complaints, he tells her

that he didn't say anything, she invariably replies, "My dear, you said nothing." and he is defeated. There are others too that might be mentioned such as Mrs. Heath and Mrs. Sales Wilson, and they are all treated in the same way, the only exceptions being Sally's mother in "Somehow Good", and the Widow Thrane in "When Ghost Meets Ghost".

De Morgan is more kindly in his treatment of old people, and those he has drawn are practically all women. Where could we find in fiction any more lovable old ladies than 'Old Jane', Mrs. 'Picture' and Granny Marrable?

It is in his portrayal of young ladies, however, that De Morgan excels. There is nothing like them in Dickens. De Morgan has given himself every freedom in the creation of pleasant characters. He writes, we feel, to please himself, and gives his readers young ladies as he remembers them in his own youth. With the exception of Sally then, who is quite modern, they all belong to the old times, and being memories, are rather too faultless. They were cheekily affectionate to their parents, adored their brothers, went into ecstasies over babies, nursed infectious diseases at a moment's notice and rescued little children from the slums. If they are too good yet they are not mere dolls, but are full of abundant vitality and beauty, and are human enough to be real and satisfying. If their faults are not obvious yet we feel that they have them. They are successfully made for love though not for worship.

Lossie, Janey, Alice and Peggy were all of this type and might have been sisters. The reader is perhaps more interested in Alice than the others for she is introduced to him as a quaint, old fashioned little kid of five, and he watches her grow up to a glorious womanhood. Lady Gwen seems a little more modern and no doubt her environment had something to do with this impression. Sally is the modern girl and although there is something about her that stamps her as a De Morgan creation, she might just as easily have stepped from the pages of one of our modern authors. There is nothing of the psychological in De Morgan's treatment. "We scarcely see beneath the surface of their emotional life," writes Mr. Utter, "and when one of them is cast for tragedy we feel as if we were kept outside the real story, peering at it through a pane of glass which baffles us with the reflection of outward things." (7)

(7) "William De Morgan", by Robert P. Utter,
The Nation, Vol. 109, 1919.

Chapter IV.

III — CHILDREN.

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This phase of characterization is so well done by both Dickens and De Morgan that we might search the history of English literature from its beginnings up to the present day without finding a writer to equal either of them in the portrayal of child life. Yet, although we feel that De Morgan's love of Dickens must have influenced him in his sympathy and love for children, his treatment is different. He writes from a different point of view and with a different purpose.

Reference has already been made to the effect which the painful conditions of Dickens own childhood had upon his later life and upon his writing. There is a passage in *David Copperfield*, where David goes, at the age of seven, to call on Captain Hopkins in the Marshalsea prison, "and found him with very dirty lady in his little room and two wan little girls, his daughters, with shock heads of hair. I thought it was better to borrow Captain Hopkin's knife and fork, than Captain Hopkin's comb. The Captain himself was in the last extremity of shabbiness, with large whiskers and an old, old brown great coat with no other coat below it. I saw his bed rolled up in a corner, and what plates and pots he had, on a shelf; and I divined (God knows how) that

though the two girls with the shock heads of hair were Captain Hopkin's children, the dirty lady was not married to Captain Hophins. My timid station of his threshold was not occupied more than a couple of minutes at most, but I came down again with all this in my ~~mind~~ knowledge, as surely as the knife and fork were in my hand." (8) Mr. Forster states that Dickens here was relating a personal experience, with his father as Micawber and a Mr. Porter as Mr. Hopkins.

These lines show how Dickens had been introduced to the ugly facts of life at an age when most children are still at school. And it was this fact that gave him such a deep sympathy with the type of children he portrays. His best and most pathetic examples are naturally drawn from the worst class of children, the child thief and the boy criminal. To realize the ugliness of the times in which he lived in this respect, we have only to turn to the records of juvenile crime. "I know of one infant," said Dickens himself, "six years old, who has been twice as many times in the hands of the police as years have passed over him." Dickens' picture of Fagin's den is not an exaggeration, for police records show that in England at this time children were regularly and systematically trained in the arts of theft. We cannot help feeling that the very depth of feeling Dickens had for these children and his burning zeal on

(8) "David Copperfield", Chapter XI.

their behalf prevented him from making his children quite life-like, and sometimes led him to become melodramatic in his treatment of them. Little Nell, though a wonderful picture of childish innocence, is rather shadowy. Oliver Twist is no more real and less interesting. Paul Dombey, pathetic as he is, has little substance. Pip is a much truer study of boy nature, and David Copperfield is the most convincing of all his children. Mr. Utter approaches the truth we feel when he claims that Dickens' children only serve to remind us that Dickens never was a child. "There are no children in his novels," he continues, "only wistful, little figures such as he was, yearning for childhood but never experiencing it". (9)

We have only to call the roll of De Morgan's children to realize the difference between them and those mentioned in the last paragraph. How unlike they are to quaint old-fashioned Alice, Dave and Dolly Wardle with their happy childish imaginations, "that precocious, cheeky young vagabond, Michael Ragstroar", or lovable little Lizarann with her innumerable drolleries. If Dickens drew one side of childlife, the sad and pathetic side, De Morgan just as truly pictured the other side, that with which we are glad to be able to say in these days that we are more familiar ~~with~~, happy carefree childhood. De Morgan did not have to go to the home of the middle or upper classes either, to find such children. He found them where Dickens found them, in the

(9) "William De Morgan", by Robert P. Utter,
The Nation, Vol. 109, 1919.

slums of London. He paints for us a whole gallery of London children and does it realistically because he himself still retained that simple, childlike nature that is necessary to a proper understanding of children. He loved these slum children and knew the shy, brave little souls of them as well as he knew their Cockney accent. And the slum districts in which they are found and which Dickens paints with such squalor and sordidness, are in the imaginations of De Morgan's children a sort of fairy-land. Sapp's Court is such to Dave, for instance, who working with Dolly's help to stem the flood of water which was running over the cobble stones of the Court and save their Aunt Mr'iar and Uncle Mo. from the "Noah's flood", runs out of the mud, and leaves the Court to explore the roadway where a sewer is in process of construction. De Morgan continues, "There were lions in his path, as there used to be in the path of knights-errant when they came near to the castles of necromancers who held beautiful princesses captive -- to say nothing of full-blown dragons and alluring syrens." These lions took in one case, the form of a butcher boy, who said untruthfully:- "Now, young hobstacle, clear out o' this! Boys ain't allowed on bridges", and in another that of Michael Ragstrear, who said, "Don't let the Company see you carryin' off their property. They'll rip you open as soon as look at you. You'll be took afore the Beak". (10)

(10) "When Ghost Meets Ghost", p. 21.

Dickens and De Morgan together then have given us a picture of childhood which includes every phase of child life. To Dickens must go the credit for first introducing children into fiction and of bettering the condition of the children of his age by depicting the pathetic side of childhood. De Morgan took up the brush and finished the picture by showing how happy these same children could be under improved conditions, and under the influence of kindly, charitable people.

To sum up very briefly then, it is evident that De Morgan's characters resemble those of Dickens in certain minor details but that there are differences as well as resemblances. De Morgan's characters are more commonplace and real, and he covers a wider range. Dickens' genius in characterization lies in depicting those oddities of character in which he was so deeply interested. His characters are more lively but less lifelike than De Morgan's. Dickens is primarily a man's writer. De Morgan's books live because of the charm of their women. Both excel in the portrayal of childhood but see children from a slightly different viewpoint.

CHAPTER V.

Humor and Satire.

.

The most remarkable quality of the works of both Dickens and De Morgan is their infectious humor. It pervades their books until the whole art of their writing has been touched and changed by it. It is bound up inextricably with their method of writing and their characterization; it is found in close relationship with their pathos; and, in Dickens particularly, it is used to further the author's ideas of social reform.

De Morgan's humor has a distinctly Dickensy twang, but a close study of the humor of both authors discloses the fact that again, as in style and characterization, there is something very original and individual about it. And again we can attribute it very largely to that difference in temperament and point of view which we have noticed throughout our study of these two authors. There is a robustness in the humor of Dickens which is not found to the same extent in De Morgan, and a whimsical quaintness, and a more subtle, intellectual quality in De Morgan that is lacking in the older writer. Each author is a pastmaster in his own particular style, and any preference must be simply a matter of individual taste. If the reader wishes to have an occasional hearty laugh he must go to Dickens. If he prefers to be kept smiling for page after

page he must turn to the more waggish and philosophical humor of De Morgan. In both cases the humor is mostly genuine.

De Morgan's humor, however, like his characterization, is more normal. It can be checked by everyday experience and will be found accurate. Mr. Lucas writes of his humor:-

"His success is the triumph of the humorist. He is an almost perfect example of the humorist, that is, of one who brings to this life a lovable whimsicality of his own, and a desire to discover it in others, and who never, under any conditions, however serious, loses the gift or the desire. There is nothing in his pages to make us laugh outright as in Dickens or Mark Twain. On the other hand, there is hardly a page free from a smile".⁽¹⁾

As we might expect from our study of his unusual characters, the works of Dickens abound in ludicrous situations which are pure farce. De Morgan rarely, if ever, uses this type of humor. Nearly all of Dickens' grotesques are conceived in the light of a joke. They had to be treated in this manner in order to prevent them from becoming too sordidly real and disgusting. Mrs. Gamp, for instance, was in reality a slovenly, dishonest, avaricious and drunken woman, one whose acquaintance we should *not* care to make in real life. And yet, by humorous treatment, Dickens has subtly idealized her, until we cannot meet her

(1) "William Frend De Morgan", Artist, Potter, and Novelist",
by E. V. Lucas in The Outlook, Vol. 90, 1908

too often in his pages, and her conversation is made a source of endless amusement and uproarious laughter. What reader of Dickens will ever forget Mrs. Gamp's reference to her visionary confidant, Mrs. Harris, her many reiterations concerning the rum bottle, or such scenes as that in which she has tea with Betsey Prig, or in which she visits the "Ankwork's Package." In Dickens' earlier works farce is nearly always a result of exuberance of spirits. Later he introduced it deliberately. It pervades the whole scene of Mr. Pickwick's trial; the scene between David Copperfield and the waiter is farce; better still is the forced marriage of Jack Bunsby to the great M^r Stinger. The last mentioned scene is the ludicrous in its purest form, and proves Dickens to be a master of this type of humor. It is farce, but we would not be without it. Its effect is side splitting laughter, a result never attained by De Morgan.

Farce, however, is not true humor. Mr. Gissing has said that farce "leaves nothing but the healthful after-taste of self-forgetful mirth: . . . True humor always suggests a thought, always throws light on human nature. The humorist may not be fully conscious of his own meaning; he always, indeed implies more than he possibly can have thought out; and therefore it is that we find the best humor inexhaustible, ever fresh when we return to it, ever, as our knowledge of life increases, more suggestive of wisdom." (2)

(2) "Charles Dickens", by George Gissing,
Victorian Era Series, p.p.168, 169.

Dickens is by no means lacking in this higher type of humor which is found largely in the characters themselves, expressed either consciously or unconsciously. Both Wellers, for example, are drawn with true humor. In neither case does he exaggerate, nor does he put them into improbable situations. We enjoy the quaint philosophical outlook of the elder, which is never dimmed by difficulties, and laugh with the younger in his pure, boisterous fun, and like Chris. Vance they soon become our fast friends. Dickens, it has been noted, is at his best in the portrayal of the everyday life of the poorer classes, and here is to be found some of his best and truest humor. This type of humor is so widespread throughout his books that it is difficult to choose. Let us recall a few of the outstanding scenes which illustrate it:-

the Bagnets in "Bleak House";

Mr. Smallweed giving Jogling a dinner at the chophouse;

Spewlow and Jerkins;

David and Dora's housekeeping;

the description of Todgers';

Codlin and Short and their travelling show.

In these and many others that any lover of Dickens will recall the humor is absolutely true. There is never a false note and never a hint of exaggeration.

To what extent has De Morgan followed Dickens in his humor? To use farce or the humor of exaggeration in his books would be to defeat his own purpose for it is his sincere aim at all times "to see life steadily and see it whole".⁽³⁾ In fact very little

(3) "William De Morgan", by W. L. Phelps, in the North American Review, Vol. 205, 1917.

humor arising from situation is found in his books; he does not treat many of his grown up characters humorously, nor is he fond, as is Dickens, of laughing either at them or with them. What use he does make of these types of humor is found in that part of his writing in which he was consciously trying to imitate Dickens -- in the early chapters of "Joseph Vance". Here we do find scenes and characters which might almost have been taken from Dickens. For instance, the conversation of Mrs. Vance and Mrs. Packles at the tea resembles so closely that of Sarah Gamp and Betsy Prig that the latter must have served as a model for the former, and although it will involve much quotation yet a comparison is interesting and well worth while:

"Law, Mrs. Packles, Ma'am," said my mother, if I was to worrit every time Vance comes in late, there'd never be an end. Your petticoat is scorching".

"It ain't my best. If you was to spare me the toasting fork, now your piece is brownd I wouldn't spoil the knife end in the fire over mine. Being likewise the butter knife."

"I was looking for it. . . . It's your dress scorching now, Mrs. Packles -- do'ee double it back like I do mine. . . . Vance is that particular about bleaters that I was thinking we might wait till he comes. Tea-time, -- he said. One bleater kept back to be done later has a feeling of discomfort when you come in and other folks has finished. Don't you think so, Ma'am"?

There was the slightest shade of asperity in the question, and I read in it that Mrs. Packles had looked unsympathetic.

She also said something but I failed to catch it, owing to Mrs. P. having a defect in her speech. Like Timour, she had only one tooth above and one below, but then they didn't extend all along the gum, like his. However, she had the reputation of being a Tartar; and Mrs Packles used to confirm this report in public, -- perhaps I should say in public. What Mrs. Packles had said evidently reflected on my father -- No, Ma'am, said my mother, "On the contrary, Vance is by nature a sober man -- not like neighbors of his I could name whose habits are proverbial, as the sayin' is. In some cases as you know Ma'am, the smell of beer is transparent, and in such credit is given undeserved. In others secrecy throws a veil, even I am told, in high places, and none suspect. But Vance was ever that open nature! However, we will put the bloaters on the trivet if you say the word."

Mrs. Packles did not say the word for the reason I have mentioned, nor any word distinctly. But I understood that she waived the defence of Packles against my mother's insinuations in consideration of the bloaters. Also that, to avoid the quicksands the conversation had so narrowly escaped, she passed in review the condiments or accompaniments to bloaters sanctioned by judges. I heard my mother's answer:-

"Accordin' to me, Mrs. Packles, I am not sing'lar, gin on no account! Coffee also, though no objection can be raised, if popular in quarters, is, to my thinking, contrary to bloaters. Now to 'ot tea and buttered toast there can be no exception." (4)

Note the marked resemblance between this scene and the similar one in Dickens in which Mrs. Gamp and her friend, Betsy Prig are the characters:

"My precious Betsey," said Mrs. Gamp, "how late you are!"

The worthy Mrs. Prig replied, with some asperity, "that if perverse people went off dead when they was least expected, it warn't no fault of her'n." And further, "that it was quite

aggravation enough to be made late when one was dropping for one's tea, without hearing it again,"

Mrs. Gamp deriving from this exhibition of repartee some clue to the state of Mrs. Prig's feelings, instantly conducted her upstairs, deeming the sight of pickled salmon might work a softening change.

But Betsy Prig expected pickled salmon. It was obvious that she did, for her first words after glancing at the table were: "I know'd she wouldn't have a cucumber". Mrs. Gamp changed color and sat down upon the bedstead.

"Lord bless you Betsey Prig, your words is true. I quite forgot it."

Mrs. Prig then triumphantly produced a twopenny salad and recommended that it should be sliced up "for immediate consumption in plenty of vinegar". Then she continues:

"And don't go a dropping none of your snuff in it. In gruel, barley water, apple tea, mutton broth, and that, it don't signify. It stimulates a patient. But I don't relish it myself."

"Why, Betsey Prig," cried Mrs. Gamp, "how can you talk so?"

"Why, ain't you patients, wotever their diseases, always a sneezin' their wery heads off, along of your snuff?" said Mrs. Prig.

"And wot if they are?" said Mrs. Gamp.

"Nothing if they are," said Mrs. Prig, "but don't deny it, Sairah."

"Who deniges of it, Betsey?" Mrs. Gamp inquired again. Then Mrs. Gamp, by reversing the question, imparted a deeper and more awful character of solemnity to the same. "Betsey; who deniges of it!"

It was the nearest possible approach to a very decided difference of opinion between these ladies; but Mrs. Prig's impatience for the meal being greater at the moment than her impatience of contradiction, she replied for the present, "Nobody, if you don't Sairah", and prepared herself for tea. For a quarrel can be taken up any time, but a limited quantity of salmon cannot." (5)

Other characters and scenes in the opening chapters of this book are also Dickensian in conception. Chris. Vance has already been noted. Rev. Benaiah Capstick, Mrs. Vance's spiritual adviser, is an echo of Mr. Stiggins, the preacher friend of Mrs. Weller, except for the fact that the latter is also spirituous. De Morgan does not make Capstick spirituous but he does make Chris. Vance think him so. Joseph Vance tells the story:

"My father was a very ill-informed man on religious topics," he says, "so much so that he imagined that the phrase, 'the Religious Public' meant Mr. Capstick's Chapel that my Mother went to on Sundays and sometimes took me to. He conceived of it as a source of relief for spiritual thirst, as the Roebuck and its like were for material thirst. He was therefore ill qualified to instruct the young."

Joe then gives some of his own early experiences under the tuition of Mr. Capstick, and thereby proves that his father was not altogether in the wrong. This time we are more closely reminded of Chadband and his stock phrase, "the light of Terewth":

"I remember," he says, "how his lessons on early Jewish history lost value owing to a confusion of identities which a person of more insight would have foreseen and provided against. Even now, Moses the Prophet, and Moses and Son, the clothiers, do not discriminate themselves with the clearness I should have desired at times. My error was found out and corrected."

"There, I declare now," said my mother, when I betrayed my misconception, "if that child hasn't got 'old of the idear that Moseses is Moses."

"I referred the matter to Porky Owls, who derided me for not knowing the difference. The former, he pointed out, were Jews and would go to Hell; and the latter was an Israelite and would go on, or had gone to Heaven, being in the Bible. I complimented Porky on his erudition, and he said, 'Yes, I'm a winner at knowing things, I am.'" (6)

All this is noticeably in the spirit of Dickens, but it will be remembered that De Morgan, when he wrote this, had no intention of offering it for publication, but was merely attempting to write like Dickens in order to while away the time during an illness.

A reading of his later works reveals the fact that De Morgan's genius as a humorist did not lie so much in this type of humor as his earlier writing would lead one to expect. When he begins to give more of himself in his work we notice a slightly different tone in his humor. While it still resembles that of Dickens in some respects, it becomes distinctly individual and original. It is found almost altogether in humorous twists given to statements of fact in conversation, usually in that of children and workmen, and in the author's own comments and asides, which are very witty. It is less boisterous, less laugh provoking than that of Dickens, but rather more subtle and intellectual. This type of humor is rather difficult to use successfully. Some writers overdo it and tire their readers. De Morgan, however, never lets his cleverness get the upper hand, and keeps us continuously on the lookout for those

(6) "Joseph Vance", page 16.

quiet but delicious bits of humor which bubble up on almost every page of his books, and which are so characteristic of him.

The most whimsical and delightful of De Morgan's humorous passages are spoken by his children, and the fact that ^{as} we read these bits of childish conversation we realize that they are spoken just as real children would talk, makes them more charming still. Although we find some delicious child humor in the early chapters of "David Copperfield" and "Great Expectations", yet Dickens' children are not generally treated in this way, and when we might laugh at them or with them, we remember what pathetic little creatures they are, and desist. De Morgan's humor, when it takes this direction, is noticeably akin to that of Lewis Carroll with its whimsical fancies and unforgettable remarks and incidents, and we cannot help regretting that he never wrote a book wholly for children. We find it sometimes in child language, in the reproduction of which De Morgan is unsurpassed, and sometimes in the working of the child mind.

There is so much of this type of humor in De Morgan's books that selection is very difficult. Perhaps the best however is to be found in the quaint and amusing speech of Dave and Dolly Wardle in "When Ghost Meets Ghost". Note for instance the following quotation in which Dolly tells what she knows about Dave being run over by the fire engine:--

"Closely reported, the substance of her commentary ran as follows:-- "Dave tooktited the mud when I fessed him the mud in my flock"--this was illustrated in a way that threatened to outrage a sensitive propriety, the speaker's aunt's -- "and spooshed up the werty and spooshed up the werty"-- this repetition had great value -- "and spooshtited the werty back, and then there wasn't no more mud it was all fessed away in my Flock All dorn!-- ass, it was -- all dorn!" -- this was in a minor key, and thrilled with pathos -- "and Dave dode to fess more where the new mud was, and was took to the Hostickle and never come back no more " At this point it seemed best to lay stress upon the probable return of Dave, much to Dolly's satisfaction, though she would have been better pleased if a date had been fixed." (7)

And again, Dave is asked by Aunt Mr^riar to tell Mrs.

Prichard all about Mrs. Marrowbone and the bull and the duckpond:

"Dave, with absolute belief in the boon he was conferring on his venerable hearer, started at once on a complicated statement, as one who accepted the instructions in the spirit in which it was given. But first he had to correct a misapprehension.

"The bool wasn't in the duckpong. The bool was in Farmer Jones's field, and the field was in the duckpong on the other side. And the duck was in the pong where there wasn't no green."

Evidently an oasis of black juice in the weed, which ducks enjoy. Dave thought no explanation necessary and went on:--

"Then Farmer Jones he was a horseback, and he rodid acrost the field, he did. and he indood the gate with his whip to go froo, and it stumbled and let the bool froo, and Farmer Jones he rodid off to get the boy that understoodid the bool. He fetched him back behind his saddle, he did. And then the boy, he got the bool's nose under control, and leaded him back easy, and they shet to the gate."

One or two words -- "control", for instance -- treasured as essential and conscientiously repeated, gave Dave some trouble; but he got through them triumphantly.

"Is that all the story, Dave?" said Mrs. Prichard, who was affecting deep interest; although it was by now painfully evident that Dave had involved himself in a narrative without

much plot. He nodded decisively to convey that it was substantially complete, but added to round it off:-

"Mr. Marrowbone, the Smith from Crincham he come next day and mended up the gate, only the pool he was tied to a post, and the boy whistled him a tune, or he would have testid Mr. Marrowbone the Smith". (8)

There are many passages too, which illustrate in a humorous way the working of the child mind. Two of the finest of these are also found in "When Ghost Meets Ghost". The following letter is written by Dave to Granny Marrable after he had returned home from a visit to her:-

"Dear Granny Marrowbone, I like you. I like Widow Thrale. I like Master Marmaduke. I like Sister Nora. I like the lady. I like Farmer Jones, but not much. I am going to scrool on Monday, and shall know how to read and write with a peng my own self. Writited for me by Mrs. Picture upstairs on her decks with hink." (9)

Just as good and illustrating De Morgan's own cleverness, is that passage in which Michael "Ragstroar" explains to Daverill why he is not at church:-

"It was a fine Sunday morning in Sapp's Court and our young friend Michael Rockstraw was not attending public worship. Not that it was his custom to do so. Nevertheless, the way he replied to a question by a chance loiterer into the Court seemed to imply the contrary. The question was, what the Devil he was doing that for?-- and referred to the fact that he was walking on his hands. His answer was, that it was because he wasn't at Church. Not that all absentees from religious rites went about upside down, but that, had he been at Church, the narrow exclusiveness of its ritual would have kept him right side up." (10)

(8) Ibid, page 170

(9) Ibid, page 131.

(10) "Alice-for-Short", Page 482.

What an irresistible combination are the humorous thoughts and sayings of these children, and the clever comment of De Morgan himself! There is a subtlety, an intellectual quality in this humor that is not at all Dickens like but is a product of De Morgan's own peculiar genius.

Almost as humorous and treated in much the same whimsical way are De Morgan's delineations of the working man at his work. Here the humor arises largely out of his Cockney dialect and the technical jargon which he so pridefully uses in connection with his odd jobs. If we except Chris. Vance, the best representative of this class is Mr. Pope of the firm of Chappell and Pope, stained glass window makers. De Morgan here uses his knowledge of his own branch of art to give us some of the most delicious humor in all his work. The best passage relating to this is that which gives the conversation between Mr. Pope and Charley Heath when the former gives Charley a small commission -- a sketch for a five-light window to illustrate the Decalogue. This quotation is unfortunately too long for repetition here, but a second incident occurs later in the book which is shorter and which is also very humorous. This time the conversation is between Alice and Mr. Pope. Alice was visiting No. 40, and met Mr. Pope who said to her:-

"I have got my hands pretty full Miss Kavanagh, and that's the truth. You'd say so if you was to see the amazin' variety of Martyr's heads we've knocked off and burned in this last month. Large West Window in memory of St. Peter Martyr. Parties he burned himself, turn and turn about with medallions of opposition martyrdoms. Pretty ideas! -- Mr. Chappell, he's attended to his side, me to mine.

"I don't understand! Did St. Peter ever burn anybody?" Mr. Pope smiled benignly. "Not he!" Knew better than to, any such thing. This was a mediaevally disposed party -- Inquisitor, I believe, -- Holy Office! You as go to the National Gallery -- There's a picture of him being stuck through the gizzard in a pleasant champagne country. Would you perhaps care to see some of the heads? Got 'em on a bench downstairs."

.
The heads of the martyrs were impartially mixed up on the leading-up bench, and Mr. Pope picked them up, one by one, to show against the light. 'Heads of Ridley and Latimer' -- thus ran his commentary -- Interesting countenance! 'Head of an Albigeance. All belonging to my side. ('Head of Joan of Arc -- Mr. Chappell's department. I call it 'appealin' to the Gallery. St. George, similar remark! -- St Lawrence -- St. Barbara." (11)

And then, less individual but just as true to type and just as humorous are such scenes as that which tells of the workmen moving the furniture in "Alice-for-Short", of the men at work on the sewer, and Mr. Bartlett, the builder in "When Ghost Meets Ghost", and of the man laying the carpet in "Somehow Good". The monologue of the carpet layer, who had failed to fit the carpet, and "who seemed to mean to pass the remainder of his days scratching the head of perplexity on the scene of his recent failure to add to his professional achievements," is very humorous.

"It's what I say to the gov'nor"--thus ran his Jeremiad--
"in dealin' with these here irregular settin's out, where
nothin's parallel with anything else, nor dimensions lendin'
theirselves to accommodation. 'Just you let me offer it in,'
I says, 'afore the final stitchin' to, or even a paper tem-
plate in the extra cases is a savin' in the end. Because it
stands to reason there goes more expense with an ill-cut
squint or obtoose angle, involvin' work to rectify, than cut
ackerate in the first go-off. Not but what ruckles may dis-
appear under the tread, only there's nothin' like careful
plannin', and foresight in the manner of speakin'. And as I
say to the gov'nor, there's no need for a stout brown paper
template to go to waste s'cein' it works in with the under-
packin'. (12)

Another delightful piece of humor of the same type is
found in the same book in reference to the naming of the Night-
ingale villa:

" Krakatoa was not a volcano, except so far
as eruptions on the wallpaint went. But then it had become
Krakatoa through a mistake; for the four coats of paint at the
end of the first seven years, as per agreement, having com-
pletely hidden the first name, Saratoga, and the builders'
retention of it having been feeble--possibly even affected by
newspaper posters, for it was not long after the date of the
great eruption -- the new name had crept in in the absence of
those who could have corrected it, but had gone to Brighton
to get out of the smell of the paint.

When they returned, Mr. Prichard, the builder, though
shocked and hurt at the discovery that the wrong name had been
put up, was strongly opposed to any correction or alteration,
especially as it would always show if altered back. You couldn't
make a job of it; not to say a proper job. Besides the names
were morally the same, and it was absurd to allow a variation
in the letters to impose on our imagination. The two names
had been applied to very different turn-outs abroad, certainly;
but then they did all sorts of things abroad. If Saratoga,
why not Krakatoa? Mr. Prichard was entrenched in a stronghold
of total ignorance of literary matters, and his position, that
mere differences of words ought not to tell upon a healthy mind
was difficult to shake, especially as he had the coign of vantage.

He had only to remain inanimate, and what could a (presumably) widow lady with one small daughter do against him? So at the end of the first seven years, what had been Saratoga became Krakatoa, and remained so." (13)

De Morgan is at his best in the reproduction of humorous conversation, and although he almost invariably used Cockney dialect for this purpose, he was not altogether restricted to it. Take for instance, the conversation of the German baron in "Somehow Good:"

"I ganned throw steanss. I am too vat. I shall sit on the beach and see effrypotty else throw steanss. I shall smoke another cigar. Will you haff another cigar, Mr. Prown? You will not? Ferry well! Nor you, Mrs. Prown? Not for the worlt? Ferry/well! Nor you, Mr. Bilkington? Ferry well! @ shall haff one myself, and you shall throw steanss.
.....@pleitch me with a madge." (14)

Dickens of course also uses the conversation of his characters as a means of conveying humor, but De Morgan's conversation, humorous as it is, seems more true to life. This may be because he uses children so frequently as a medium, or it may be because he has modernized these forms of speech. Dickens was writing of characters which are not so real to us because they were peculiarly of his time. In any case, the conversation of such characters as Sarah Gamp yields a broader more boisterous, but less true and less subtle humor than that of De Morgan. The following short quotation from the convers-

(13) Ibid, page 16.

(14) Ibid, page 459.

ation of Mrs. Gamp and Ruth Pinch at the "Ankwerk's Package" will serve to illustrate this difference:

"As a good friend of mine has frequent made remark to me, which her name my love is Harris, Mrs. Harris through the square and up the steps a turnin' round by the tobacker shop, 'Oh Sairey, Sairey, little do we know wot lays afore us!' 'Mrs. Harris, Ma'am,' I says, 'not much it's true but more than you suppose. Our calculation, Ma'am,' I says, 'respectin' wot the number of a family will be, comes most times within one, and oftener than you would suppose, exact.' 'Sairey,' says Mrs. Harris, in an awful way, 'tell me, what is my indiwiggle number?' 'No, Mrs. Harris,' I says, to her, 'excuse me, if you please.' 'My own', I says, 'has fallen out of three pair backs, and had damp doorsteps settle on their lungs, and one was turned up smilin' in a bedstead unbeknown. Therefore Ma'am, I says, seek not to proticipate, but take 'em as they come and as they go.' (15) We should never find anything quite so braed as this in De Morgan.

De Morgan's books abound in humerous phrases in which he pokes fun at the imperfections and peculiar absurdities of modern civilization. It seems only natural that he should attack our hackneyed little forms of speech. To exemplify this habit would be to quote nearly half of De Morgan's writing, but the following examples are these less likely to be forgotten:-

The milk cart that was inscribed 'Families Supplied Daily', and the street that looked like it;

the invalid Mrs. Surr who really must be better "because she has gone to her married niece, at Clapham". (It seemed a sort of destiny that this niece's wifehood should be emphasized. It was almost implied that a less complete recovery would have resulted in a journey to a single niece, at Clapham; or possibly only at Battersea")

the charwoman who emphasizes the fact that she does not take intoxicants and the help this was to her husbands -- her third had "never touched anything but water";

the servant at Heath's who says, "Miss Peggy is up, but not down."

De Morgan differs from Dickens in another respect. A great deal of humor of the distinctly clever and witty type is found in the asides of De Morgan to his readers. Dickens' comments of this kind were almost invariably serious. Telling of the arrangements made for Uncle Mo while the rest of the family are visiting at Ealing, De Morgan writes:-

The old boy himself remained in residence, being fed by the Rising Sun, which sounds like poetry, but relates to chops, and sausages, and a half-pint. . . . (16)

And again, in introducing Mrs Burr to Sally's Court:

"Mrs. Burr dawned upon the Court as a civil-spoken person who was away most part of the day, and who had not develop her identity vigorously during the first year of her tenancy. One is terribly handicapped by one's own absence, as a member of any Society". (17)

Mr. Fenwick's air of self-satisfaction after buying Mrs. Nightingale a fur coat is described:

"Nor did she (Sally) notice any abnormal satisfaction on Mr. Fenwick's countenance as he came into the drawing room by himself, such as one might discern in a hen--if hens had countenances--after a special egg." (18)

Miss Sally is kneeling on a hassock before a 'mature' fire, and:- "The Major is becoming conscious of a smell like Joan of Arc at the beginning of the entertainment, when her mother comes in on a high moral platform, and taxes her with singeing, and dissolves the parliament. . . ." (19)

(16) "When Ghost Meets Ghost", Page 373.

(17) Ibid, page 12.

(18) "Somehow Good", page 51.

(19) Ibid, page 55.

Just as characteristic of De Morgan is the use of purely verbal pleasantries, which he is very fond of coining for himself. Let us note a few of these:-

Alice's "squashy" days, which Mrs. Heath fails to understand;

the "goozling" of Mrs. Vereker--Sally's word for her affectionate advances;

the author's own comment on the completeness of Fenwick's "tame attitude" in the Nightingale family;

the suggestion thrown out in the Vicar's sermon in reference to second marriages--"The lesson we had to learn from this miracle was obviously that nowadays widows, however good and solvent, were 'mundane', and married again; while in the City of Man, nineteen hundred years ago, they (being in Holy Writ) were, as it were, 'Sundane', and didn't;

the reference to the writer of a book of etiquette as a "genteelologist";

and, Sally's use of the word "inquisit"--as a verb.

The question of satire in our author's works as seen disposed of. Dickens by his very aim and method is bound to be satirical. De Morgan with his kindly tolerance and wide perspective, with his purpose that of depicting truly everyday life rather than attacking particular abuses, finds very little use for satire.

Gissing calls Dickens England's greatest satirist, but points out that this satire was directed against abuses which were in their nature temporary, and it has therefore lost its edge to some extent. (20) Dickens' satire is directed against

(20) "Charles Dickens" by George Gissing,
Victorian Era Series, p. 110

practically every phase of the life of his time, both public and private-- law and government, education, so-called charity, the surface splendor of society, religion. He felt very strongly the abuses of his time and, particularly in his defence of the poor, the helpless, and the outcast, is often tempted into rhetoric too loud and shrill and satire neither fine nor fair.

De Morgan, although he writes with this same period as his background, naturally does not feel so deeply about conditions which no longer exist. We, therefore, find little satire in his pages, and when he does become satirical he is so genial, and so gentle about it that it is hardly recognizable as such, and most of it has been treated AS HUMOR. We feel that he is not really himself, but is imitating Dickens in his portrayal of Rev. Capstick. Perhaps he thought this himself and tried to make up for it by his later delineations of that fine type of clergyman -- Rev. Athelstan Taylor. The characteristic features of the middle aged lady, his exposure of the tricks of the jerrybuilder, and his ridicule of the absurdities in our common speech, have already been mentioned. These are all brought out with a gently malicious chuckle, and we feel that they are all treated in the spirit of pure fun. He is rather less kindly when he gets nearer to his own personal likes and dislikes, and perhaps his most

severe treatment is that accorded to the Impressionistic School of painting, and to Mr. Jerrythought, who brought to extreme perfection the art of never re-touching. He says of him:-

"Mr. Jeff. was another sort -- but still an Artist. To him a canvas was a canvas, and what more could you want? It was a thing he flew at for an hour or so with masterly touches; at the end of which period he wrote 'Jerrythought' very large across one corner of it. Then it was a Jerrythought. He had many admirers, and owing to the way he wrote his name got the credit of having profited by a year or so in Paris, and knowing the secret of 'chic'. He was quoted as an authority by some of his contemporaries, as for instance: "Jeff says it's no use looking at your picture". -- "Jeff. says it's no use looking at your model" -- "Jeff. says retouching's a mistake", -- and so forth" (21)

We feel that here and in his account of Charley Heath's efforts to become an artist, De Morgan is thinking of his own wasted time in the Royal Academy Art School.

CHAPTER VI.

Pathos.

"Pathos is inseparable from the gift of humor" (1) Like Dickens, De Morgan is a master in the portrayal of pathetic emotion, and he dealt with it just as extensively, and with just as wide a range. In both authors the most pathetic scenes are blended with the most infectious humor, and in both it is most often found in the portrayal of child life.

Dickens, however, while he was no doubt more real to an age which had been used to the sentimentalism of Richardson, quite often lost his self restraint and elaborated his pathetic scenes in a theatrical sense until he sometimes seems to us almost maudlin. De Morgan, on the other hand, has always an admirable reticence. As Mr. Follett puts it, "He kept his load of emotion for ballast and did not let it become part of the cargo". (2)

Dickens' pathos is not all strained. His works abound in true pathetic scenes. As with his humor, his best and truest pathos is to be found in his portrayal of homely English life. Where, for instance, could there be found anything truer

(1) "Charles Dickens", by George Gissing,
Victorian Era Series, p. 175
(2) "Some Modern Novelists", by H. T. and W. Follett,
(Henry Holt), p. 158.

to life and more truly pathetic than the picture he gives us of the Coavinses after the death of their father. This scene, unfortunately too long for quotation here, is a masterpiece of description, and deeply pathetic as it is, rings absolutely true. In such scenes Dickens is at his best. It is when he is describing the more emotional scenes, especially those which depict the deaths of children that he lets his sentimentalism get the upper hand, such scenes as the deaths of Paul Dombey, Little Nell and Jo, the crossing sweeper. The latter, which is probably the less artificial of the three scenes mentioned is given in full to illustrate this characteristic of Dickens:

"Jo is in a sleep or in a stupor today, and, Allan Woodcourt, newly arrived, stands by him, looking down upon his wasted form. After a while, he seats himself upon the bedside with his face towards him -- just as he sat in the law-writer's room -- and touches his chest and heart. The cart had very nearly given up, but labours on a little more.

"Well, Jo! What is the matter? Don't be frightened."

"I thought," said Jo, who has started and is looking round, "I thought I was in Tom-all-Alone's agin."

"Ain't there nobody here but you, Mr. Woodcot?"

"Nobody".

"And I ain't took back to Tom-all-Alone's. Am I, sir?"

"No". Jo closes his eyes, muttering, "I'm very thankful".

After watching him closely a little while, Allan puts his mouth very near his ear, and says to him in a low distinct voice:

"Jo! Did you ever know a prayer ? "

"Never knowd nothink, sir."

"Not so much as one short prayer?"

"No sir. Nothink at all. Mr. Chadband he was a-prayin' wunst at Mr. Sangsby's and I heerd him, but he sounded as he was a-speakin' to hisself, and not to me. He prayed a lot, but I couldn't make out nothink on it. Different times, there was other gentlemen come down Tom-all-Alone's a-prayin', but they all mostly sed as the t'other wuns prayed all wrong, and all mostly sounded to be a-talkin' to theirselves, or a-passin' blame on t'others, and not a-talkin' to us. We never knowd nothink. I never knowd what it was all about."

It takes him a long time to say this; and few but an experienced or attentive listener could hear, or hearing, understand him. After a short relapse into sleep or stupor, he makes, of a sudden, a strong effort to get out of bed.

"Stay, Jo! What now?"

"It's time for me to go to that berryin' ground, sir," he returns with a wild look.

"Lie down, and tell me. What burying ground, Jo?"

"Where they laid him as was wery good to me, wery good to me indeed he was. It's time for me to go down to that there berryin' ground, sir, and ask to be put along with him. I wants to go there and be berried. He used fur to say to me, 'I am as poor as you today Jo', he ses. I wants to tell him that I am as poor as him now, and have come there to be laid along with him."

"By and by, Jo. By and by."

"Ah! P'raps they wouldn't do it if I was to go myself.

But will you promise to have me took there, sir, and laid along with him?"

"I will, indeed."

"Thank'ee, sir. Thank'ee, sir. They'll have to get the key of the gate afore they can take me in, for it's allus locked. And there's a step there as I used to clean with my broom. -- It's turned wery dark, sir. Is there any light a-comin'?"

"It's coming fast, Jo."

Fast. The cart is shaken all to pieces, and the rugged road is very near its end.

"Jo, my poor fellow!

I hear you, sir, in the dark, but I'm a-gropin'--a-gropin'--let me catch hold of your hand".

"Jo, can you say what I say?"
"I'll say anythink as you say, sir, for I knows
its good."
"Our Father"
"Our Father!--yes, that's wery good, sir."
"Which art in Heaven".
"Art in Heaven -- is the light a-comin, sir?"
"It is close at hand. Hallowed be Thy Name!"
"Hallowed -- be -- Thy -- "

The light is come upon the dark benighted way. Dead!

Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead,
Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead,
men and women, born with Heavenly compassion in your hearts.
And dying thus around us every day." (3)

There is, it is true, a power in this which touches the
feelings, but we get the idea that Dickens is labouring to
be impressive and that he might have added pathos to the scene
had he rested content with a few simple touches of nature.

Let us compare with this the natural simplicity of the
death of Lizarann as described by De Morgan in "It Never Can
Happen Again":-

"Adeline Fossett had had over three hours when she waked
with a start in response to a hand on her shoulder. "I should
like you to come", said Miss Jane, who then returned at once.

Lizarann, on the shadow that had been she, was propped
up with pillows on the bed when Miss Fossett followed her
friend two minutes later. "Is that Teacher", was what she
seemed to say. But speech was very faint indeed.

"I don't think she sees you", said Miss Jane. "Can you
hear what I say, Darling?" Yes, apparently; and knows it is
Teacher who speaks. What is it we can get for her? For the
feverish movements of the hands, and the constant effort to
articulate, have all the usual effect of baffled speech, with
much to say.

Miss Fanshawe's wider hospital experience makes her less receptive of the idea. She waited, silent, while Miss Fossett asked the question more than once, before any intelligible answer came.

Then speech came suddenly to Lizarann. She wanted to get up now and go to Daddy. Yes! -- she should like to have her new flock ~~now~~ on and go to her Daddy. Mustn't she go, Teacher? To which Teacher replied:-

"Yes, darling, you shall go, very soon. But it's night now and Daddy is in bed."

"But I shall go?"

"Yes -- indeed you shall! Very soon." Then Miss Fossett looked up at Miss Jane, who merely said, "Not very long now. But how strong the voice was for the moment!" "Yes that would be so -- sometimes -- sometimes even louder than that." Wasn't she speaking now?

Miss Fossett stopped to listen again. "I shall see my Daddy", is all she hears. Yes -- Lizarann shall see her Daddy -- it's a promise. What is that she's saying now? Be quiet and listen!

"When I see my Daddy -- when I see my D----"

"Yes -- darling! What?"

"When I see My Daddy, I shall call out 'Poy-lot!' " (4)

The death of Lizarann is the only scene of this kind in De Morgan. More often his pathos is found in the child's sweet unconsciousness of the misery among which it has been brought up and to which it has grown accustomed. It is found in the six-year old Alice who, sent by her mother for beer, is knocked down and breaks the jug and so is afraid to return home; in Lizarann's ignorance of the occupation of her father, a beggar, as she goes each night to a corner to guide him home, announcing herself to him with his old sea call of 'Pilot!';

in Dave and Dolly Wardle's faith in the return of their beloved Mrs. 'Picture' as they set the toy tea things out for her every day.

But there are cases too in De Morgan which concern men and women -- Joe Vance's hopeless love for Lottie; old Jane, who never speaks and has been fed with a spoon for fifty years; Phoebe and Maisie Runciman, the twin sisters, who, after thinking each other dead, are united after fifty years at the age of eighty-two; the scene at the deathbed of Chris. Vance, where he learns for the first time that it was the Nipper who defended him by throwing the broken bottle at the sweep; and the death of Alice's mother, Mrs. Kavanagh. This last scene is very characteristic of De Morgan's treatment of the pathetic. Mrs. Kavanagh has gradually fallen from respectability with the growth of her family and her consequent descent into poverty. She takes to 'spirits' and her husband takes to beer in self defence. In one of the frequent quarrels which grew out of this state of affairs she aggravates her husband to such an extent that he loses his temper and hits her over the head with a hammer, and after she had been taken to the hospital, he commits suicide by taking poison. Little Alice, left alone, is befriended by Charley Heath, who takes her home to his sister Peggy. Peggy takes Alice

to the hospital to see her mother, and instead of finding the drunken wretch she has heard so much about, is much surprised to find a resurrected woman, who tells Peggy her story:-

". . . . She speaks with much effort, but clearly and consecutively:

"You will wonder, Miss, but I would like to tell you" -- Peggy nods go on -- "It was the drink -- it was all the drink. My mother was good, but she died of it. It was one story alike -- for her and for me."

She paused a second. Best not to hurry her, thought Peggy.

"She'd had six," she went on. "And she wasn't the strong woman I was, at the first go off."

Peggy felt the whole tale was told for both, but she let her finish it her own way.

"I had been a total abstainer Miss, from fear of it. And Samuel, I made him a total too, or near upon it. It made him some happy days, and made me."

"But what was it made you give it up?"

"What can a woman do, Miss, when her strength is not enough. And when the doctor says, 'You must drink stout -- You must take port -- ?' "It began so with her -- it began so with me! And what could you hope from a man, but follow on -- ?"

Oh, Mrs. Kavanagh! I am so sorry for you. I see it all-- so plain!

The woman dropped her voice to a whisper. "Does the child know? About her father? I don't know? She knows he is dead."

"When she is old enough to understand, will you tell her all?"

"You mustn't talk like that Mrs. Kavanagh. The doctors say you will get up and be yourself again".

"Not to trust to, Miss. Much best the other way. Much best".

An nursing sister comes up, and thinks the patient has talked enough. Her temperature will go up if she talks any more. Peggy says, "Kiss your mother, Alice", and facilitates her doing so. And mother feels like a bit of cold wood to Alice. And then Alice thinks she must be dreaming, for the beautiful young lady, the incredible being who has come, like a strange revelation into Alice's life, herself stopps and kisses the cold wooden image, and says, "Goodbye, Mrs. Kavanagh. God bless you! And the image repeats, "God bless you, Miss. Tell Alice."

"And then they go away". (5)

We have only to imagine the way in which Dickens would have treated this scene with its opportunity of pointing a moral, to understand clearly the difference between these two authors in their portrayal of the pathetic emotions. There is no attempt here at fine writing. De Morgan's treatment of this incident may be summed up in his own words, found in the scene itself: "Peggy was colloquial, but people are in real speech. It is only in books they talk like books". Both this and the scene which describes the death of Lizarran are quietly effective owing to their sheer truthfulness.

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CHAPTER VII.

I.-- The Use of the Supernatural.

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In no other characteristic did our authors differ to such an extent as in their use of the supernatural.

Like Browning, Dickens had no faith in spiritualism, and despised those who did. In his letters he wrote to Mrs. Trollops: "I have not the least belief in the awful, unseen world being available for evening parties at so much a night". (1) Like all great men, however, he was deeply interested in the mystery of the Universe. "What a dream it is," he writes, "this work and strife, and how little we do in the dream after all". (2) And again; "This tremendous sickle (death) certainly does cut deep into the surrounding corn when one's own small blade is ripened. But this is all a dream maybe, and death will wake us." (3) He had several pet superstitions, was interested in the occult, particularly in mesmerism, and did make use of the supernatural in his stories.

We know, however, as we read Dickens' ghost stories, that he doesn't believe in them, and that he doesn't expect us to believe in them. He never makes his ghosts credible to his readers. He wrote ghost stories because he enjoyed them, and

(1) "Letters of Charles Dickens", Vol. II, page 466.

(2) Ibid, page 53.

(3) Forster's "Life of Dickens", Vol. II, page 136.

because through them he wished very often, to point out certain moral lessons. His supernaturalism is often grim and grotesque, but it is also broadly humorous. The dream of Gabriel Grub in "The Pickwick Papers" is typical of his treatment. The old man, after partaking of the contents of a black bottle, falls asleep and dreams of demoniac goblins, who after shamefully ill-treating him, show him how Christmas is being spent by the poor. The whole scene is full of rollicking humor, and it is only a dream. Dickens' best stories of this type are found in the Christmas Stories, the best known of which is that of Scrooge and the Ghosts of Christmas, which are introduced to him by the ghost of his old partner, Marley. But here again it is found to be all a dream and is told with a moral purpose. It was only in a few exceptional cases that Dickens tried to tell a genuine ghost story, one which credulous persons might believe. Most of his stories of this type are merely used as frameworks for his own stories or ideas.

De Morgan's treatment of the supernatural is altogether different. He was deeply interested in spiritualism and had a fondness for supernatural manifestations. This was probably due to the fact that he was brought up in an atmosphere of this sort, for, as has already been noted, both his mother and his father took a deep interest in the subject. In one of his letters, replying to a question concerning his ghost

stories he writes, . . . the attempt is to found the ghosts only on authentic ghost stories, with the same explanations, if any. . . .⁽⁴⁾ De Morgan makes his ghosts seem so credible and natural to his readers that we cannot help believing that they were just as real to him as any other sort of wonders.

We find the best illustration of this characteristic in "Alice-for-Short", in which the ordinary, everyday world, and very commonplace it is too, is completely enveloped by the spirit world. In this book De Morgan builds up his supernatural story so solidly with the main story, he interweaves it so solidly with the lives of the common, everyday people we have come to know so well, that when they see the ghost we find it hard^{not} to believe in it too, and when they are inclined to be a little incredulous, find ourselves ranged on the side of the author in his effort to convince them of the reality of the manifestation. This power of "building in the readers' minds an impression like a barrier reef, atom by atom, until it is solid enough to wreck a battleship",⁽⁴⁾ is very strong in De Morgan.

We are first introduced to the "lady with the black spots" by Alice, then a very young lady of six, and we are disposed to think of it as a piece of childish imagination, comical enough, but not worth noticing. The second manifestation comes

(4) Letter to Henry D. Hammond, quoted in "William De Morgan" by W. L. Phelps, in *The North American Review*, Vol. 205, pages 1917.

(4)' "William De Morgan", by Robert P. Utter, in *The Nation*, Vol. 109, 1919.

some time later, and is also to Alice. This time, however, it is not the 'lidy' but 'a red man with a knife'. We are still skeptical, and begin to think Alice has a propensity for 'seeing things'. We take more notice when Charley Heath sees the 'lidy'. Charley, we have learned, is a very practical person who is a failure as an artist because of his lack of imagination. He had been working on the preservation of an old picture, and is alone in the studio as he thinks, with the exception of Jeff. He drops his glasses, and as he bends down to pick them up he sees a lady who very obligingly is stooping down as though to find them and hand them to him. He is so sure of this that he says, "Thank you" and is overheard by Jeff who asks to whom he is speaking. He turns round to find the lady but she has disappeared and he thinks she has gone out of the door and closed it quietly behind her. Going to the door, however, he finds that it cannot be closed without being banged, and then comes the realization that he has seen a ghost, probably Alice's 'lidy with the black spots'. Oh no! he doesn't admit that it was a ghost. He says later of it, "Well, we know that one wasn't a ghost, because I never see ghosts. I ought to know". What we do know is that Charley ~~Heath~~ is more than half convinced.

The next appearance is made to two very hard-headed, unromantic old maids, and this time the same ghost, a lady in a flowered dressing gown is seen at two different times.

Probably the most skeptical concerning these ghostly manifestations is Jeff. Jerrythought, who never loses an opportunity of ~~slandering~~ these stories. Jeff is given an opportunity of seeing for himself, however, for it is to him that the ghost next appears, and this time it is Alice's 'red man with the knife'. Jeff and Charles are working in the studio when Jeff asks about a picture he has noticed in the lumber room from which they have just returned. "What was that picture of a chap with a sword?", he asked Charles.

"What picture? I don't know what picture you mean. Man with a sword?" "That chap in a George the Second dress -- deep crimson coat, a waistcoat and a half and tie wig -- with a drawn rapier in his hand -- straight in front as you go in."

"You've got Queen Anne on the brain, Jeff. There is no chap in a Queen Anne dress". Charles is quite positive on this point.

"I'll show it you," says Jeff, "and they return to the back room. "Just here! - - - Well that's rum too". And stands puzzled, for there, where Jeff expected to find it, is a picture certainly. But it is quite distinctly the "Three Graces".

"Well, I'm blowed!" says Jeff. And Charles appears to be blowed too". (6)

By the time the ghost is seen for the last time it has become very plausible, and the fact that this time it appears to Cockney workmen at Pope and Chappell's makes it more convincing still. Alice is visiting No. 40 and is asked by Mr. Pope to go downstairs to see some of his windows. She is followed down the steps by the 'lidy' who is seen by the workmen. Mr. Pope laughs at them and calls them humbugs -- but let me quote one of the most delightful paragraphs in De Morgan:

"But^{it} is in the nature of that strange animal, the uneducated Englishmen, to be hopelessly incapable of direct narrative under circumstances of peaceful interchange of ideas. He requires the stimulus of a grievance, or the desire to prove a friend a liar, before his tongue will unloose itself. No sooner has Mr. Pope put the matter on a disagreeable footing, than the young humbugs find their voices. The speaking one, a freckled boy with a red head, to whom contention appears congenial, extends an indignant palm (with his case on it presumably) towards Buttifant, as the intermediary through whom a sense of wrong undeserved may be conveyed, even from a drummer boy to a Field Marshal.

"It ain't only me!" he cries out indignantly. You ask young James! He seen her as well as I did. He's here to ask! You ask him. He won't tell no lies. Spots of hink on her face, and a piller of wool on her head."

"I see the ink".

"Ah, and you see the wool".

"It warn't wool. More like scruffy hair".

"You see it though, whatever you call it" !

"Oh yes -- I see it plain enough!"

"Wot did I tell you? Young James he sees it, and I see it. And you can tell the guv'nor I see it". (7)

(6) "Alice-for-Short", page 343.

(7) Ibid, page 484.

The very fact that we can read a scene like this and think it natural is the best proof of De Morgan's success in making this supernatural element plausible to his readers. All these scenes are delightfully whimsical, but yet so carefully are they prepared, and so closely are they woven into the fabric of the main story by being connected with the story of the ring found in the beer jug, that of 'Old Jane' Verrinder and that of Alice's antecedents that, in spite of its being a ghost story, the whole impression given is one of credibility and reality.

II -- The Question of Realism.

The subject of realism has been touched upon indirectly in several of the previous chapters, but a short note seems necessary in order to round it out so that a definite conclusion may be reached.

The first difficulty that presents itself is that of defining the subject. What is realism? There are so many variations of meaning in the term 'realism' and its opposite, 'romanticism' that the more one tries to get at a basic meaning of them, the more confusing they become. Mr. Chesterton writes of these terms:- "Considered merely as literary fashions romanticism and realism are both tricks and tricks alone . . . It is a trick to make a heroine, in the act of accepting a lover suddenly aureoled by a chance burst of sunshine, and then to call it romance. But it is quite as much of a trick to make her, in the act of accepting a lover, drop her umbrella, or trip over a hassock, and then call it the bold, plain realism of life." (8) De Morgan himself, when questioned on the subject, wrote: "Concerning realism and idealism, I'm blessed if I know which is which!" (9) The fact is, as the terms are commonly understood, very few writers can be put altogether in either class. A really great writer combines the two, and so

(8) Dickensian Bookman, 1914.

(9) Letter to Henry D. Drommond, quoted in "William De Morgan" by W. L. Phelps in The North American Review, Vol. 295, 1917.

it is with both Dickens and De Morgan. "Dickens has himself described his purpose to have been to dwell upon the romantic side of familiar things." (10) He was realistic in his choice of material, and romantic in his treatment of it. Lord Lovelace has said of De Morgan, "His work is the work of an idealist with realistic details, combining the sentiments and traditions of the Victorian age with the more analytical methods of the present generation". (11)

Judged by the modern school of realism which aims to set down the absolute truth without compromise no matter how sordid or disgusting the details may be, neither of our authors is a realist. Dickens was always sensitive to praise and wrote to please his public. He made it one of the principles of his writing to avoid the disagreeable as uncongenial to art. He had a moral purpose in everything he wrote. In all of this he violated the rules of the modern school. Yet in spite of his limitations -- and we are glad of them -- Dickens was possessed with a sense of the absolute reality of everything he pictured and if we compare his work with that of his predecessors we must call him a realist.

De Morgan is more of a realist than Dickens. One literary critic has said, "It is the chief duty of the novelist to come

(10) Forster's "Life of Dickens", Vol. II, page 125

(11) "William De Morgan, A Reminiscence", by
Julia Cartwright in The Living Age, Vol. 293,
1917.

near enough to life to persuade the reader and yet never so near as to disgust him".⁽¹²⁾ Surely this is exactly what De Morgan has done. We find in his work none of the exaggeration, grotesqueness or sentimentalism of Dickens; he depicts true commonplace everyday people in an everyday world; yet he is never coarse, sordid or disgusting. Chris. Vance is a typical case. We know he drinks, but De Morgan never allows his horrible beeriness to intrude into the story to the disgust of his readers. "He holds the middle course between the jovial delight of Dickens and the sordid details of the modern realist".⁽¹³⁾ He is realist both in his dialogue and in the narrative of thoughts, but his is the realism of one who has lived long enough to know that naked facts can be too ugly.

Much has been previously written concerning the realism of De Morgan, but the study is not complete without some mention of the reality of the London he describes, the London of his boyhood. He resembles Dickens in this. Chesterton has said of Dickens, that beyond any in England he had "the key of the street". De Morgan's achievement was even more remarkable. Dickens described, in his pages, streets that he had recently revisited. De Morgan's streets and courts had been buried under the expansion and rebuilding of fifty years. Sapps Court

(12) "William De Morgan", by E. V. Lucas, in The Outlook
Vol. 90, 1908.

(13) Ibid,

the basement with the extensive cellarage, Talleck St., - - -
"all had been swept away among the rubbish of London's yesterdays
before it ever occurred to him to delve for them with a pen.
He combines, therefore, something of the historical novelist's
romantic remoteness with the vivid intimacy of the eye witness". (14)

Like Dickens he must have been filled with a great affection
for the old places, to have been able to draw upon his memories
of fifty years before to picture such vivid scenes as the fog
effects in "Somehow Good", Lottie's journey from London to Herne
Bay, and Joe Vance's bus ride to Hampstead. This last scene is
contained in but a paragraph or so, and is well worth quotation,
as an illustration of this phase of De Morgan's work:

"You must go straight along the road as ever you can go,
and turn into the Wandsworth Road, and keep straight on, and
you can't miss it."

Thus my mother, whose further instructions I of course
despised; the wayfarer always does despise instructions when
assured 'he can't miss it'. But it isn't easy to Miss London
when you start within six miles from St. Paul's, so I only lost
a little time, and found a green 'Hampstead' bus as directed,
at Charing Cross. My experience in this case was the reverse
of the metaphysician's who 'defined' omnibuses as 'things
that go in the opposite direction'.

In those days Hampstead was in the country; indeed, if it
had not been for an outcrop of suburban villas at Haverstock
Hill, Mother Redcap would have been very nearly the limit of
town. Omnibuses thought this tavern the edge of civilization,
and stopped a long time for refreshments and badinage before
venturing out into the wilderness. Mine was a very slow example
and must have whiled the best part of an hour between the Red-
cap and the cowpond on the left of the road facing Downshire
Hill. At this point I began to despair of ever reaching "The

(14) "Some Modern Novelists", by H. T. and W. Follett,
(Henry Holt & Co.) page

Limes", which was the name of Miss Spencer's father's house. So I gave way to impatience and walked up the hill. This piqued the omnibus, causing it to put an extra horse with a man on it, in front, and to shout after me in triumph that I'd a better 'a' sat still and waited a minute. Perhaps I had, but then the omnibus had appeared to be chewing the cud at the bottom of the hill, in sympathy with the cows in the pond". (15)

How forcibly it strikes the reader that no matter what is quoted of De Morgan's work it is bound to contain something of his whimsical humor. This selection might have been quoted as an illustration of this. It is simply bubbling over with smiles and chuckles. It also serves to give a very real picture of the London of the 50's. Dickens and De Morgan together have left us a vivid impression of mid-Victorian London which is almost historical, and will stand as long as their books are read.

This short note on realism could not better be brought to a close than by Mr. Phelps's admirable quotation on De Morgan:

"The old realism has not returned, but since the year 1906, a fine new spirit has entered into contemporary fiction, the spirit of Reality. The last ten years have been marked by a considerable number of biographical novels, which I call, for want of a better name, the 'life' novel. Without the trappings and conventions of 'realism', we find in this life school, work that is thoroughly sincere. The basal interest in human nature is so great that even its weaknesses and trivialities

have been always thought worthy of the serious attention of artists of dignity, and when faithfully reported with sympathy as by Thackeray, or with scorn as by Flaubert, immediately arouse in intelligent readers that delight of recognition which must ever be the target of the painter of portraits, whatever his implements may be,

The new life school assume that every detail in their huge books will be interesting, so long as it can be verified by the experience of the reader. This is the secret of the wonderful charm of De Morgan, who, perhaps, more than any other novelist, is responsible for the vogue of the lengthy biographical fictions of today. When "Joseph Vance" appeared in 1906, it took England and America by storm. It narrates in the first person the biography of Joseph Vance from babyhood to old age; its descriptions are a mirror, its conversations an echo, of reality". (16)

(16) "The Advance of the English Novel", by W. L. Phelps, page 153.

III -- The Philosophy of Life.

. . . .

In his general conception of life De Morgan resembles Dickens, but there are some differences in the expression of this conception. Both authors believed strongly in personal immortality, and the ground of their writings is profoundly spiritual. Both had a great faith in humanity, and a belief that, in spite of our trials and tribulations, this world is "Somehow Good". But it has been noted many times throughout this study, that they looked at life from slightly different points of view. Dickens is always the conscious teacher and reformer, and the main part of his design is to expose the false in all its disguises, and to display the sincere. De Morgan on the other hand has the philosophic calmness of old age which gives a kindlier, more tolerant note to his writing. He expressed practically no philosophy except the belief that the world is good, and that humanity is immensely enjoyable, and even this faith he expressed only through the medium of his characters. Unlike Dickens he had no remedy for anything, no moral, social or political axe to grind. He advocates no particular faith or creed in his books, even through his characters, but draws with the same wide tolerance both clergyman and free thinker.

He aims to show us that we may get glimpses of the eternal by a close study of human personality in every day life. He rails against nothing but absolute wickedness, and he pitied even that when he had punished it. Intemperance is the evil which he most strongly condemns. Interested as he was in the people of the poorer classes, and particularly in the slum children, he realized the havoc wrought by Drink. No reader of the story of the Kavanaghs and the Steptoes can escape the vivid impression that drinking is closely connected with the depths of poverty.

It is very plain that De Morgan had no sympathy with organized philanthropy. Four of his great novels are histories of individual philanthropies. "Joseph Vance" and "Alice-for-Short" are stories of adoption. Lizarann and Blind Jim are befriended by the well-to-do. Lady Gwen assumes the role of guardian for the inhabitants of Sapp's Court. Dave Wardle, like Joe Vance, marries upward into the class of his benefactors. "What De Morgan primarily delighted in was to place social extremes together, to prove, not only that both can be equally human but also that their humanity is one".

Most of De Morgan's philosophy is found in his first two books. His strong faith in a personal immortality is given through the lips of Dr. Thorpe in his argument with Professor Absalom. (17) His conception of life as a constant change in

(17) "Joseph Vance", Chapter XL.

"things that are is given in "Alice-for-Short": ".

And then in the first flush of our long-looked-for return, we and you are full of gladness, and think it will all be as it was in the days before our parting.

But it isn't! The chill comes soon, and we know that our rejoicing is dying down. It won't come back, the old time, for all we swept and garnished our hearts to receive it. And then we look around at the things that be, the new young lives that have come and grown in our absence; the vacant places that were full, the homes that have been cleared away; the tenements, or dwellings, or mansions that have risen where they stood! And we settle down to the actual, and try to find some solace for the loss of the things that were; but perhaps, after all, if we got them back, they would interfere seriously with the things that are, and that we really must attend to". (18)

Add to this the belief that such change is a growth from low to high, and De Morgan's philosophy is complete. "The end of Life", said the Doctor, "is beyond its powers of knowledge. Death is a change that occurs at its beginning. The highest good is the growth of the Soul, and the greatest man is he who rejoices most in the great fulfilments of the will of God". (19)

(18) "Alice-for-Short", page 295.

(19) "Joseph Vance", page 378.

IV -- General Conclusion.

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In conclusion, let me repeat again what has been stated in writing of every phase of the literary work of these two authors, that while there are many points of resemblance there are also many points of difference. De Morgan's love of the old times, and his fondness for the works of Dickens made him the last of the Victorians in style and setting. Dickens was without doubt his prototype. But his own early environment, the fact that he was living in a different period, and wrote when he had reached an age ripe with experience, and above all his own God-given genius, marks him as a writer of decided originality rather than one who is directed by any outside influence. His style, more rambling and purer than that of Dickens resembles more that of Thackeray, without its clever irony. His characters, while they lack the liveliness of those of Dickens, are truer to life, men, women and children to whom we are drawn by their intensely human qualities. His humor, while not so boisterous, is more normal and more subtle, and has a more intellectual basis. His pathos is less sentimental and more simply effective. The total impression left by his work is different.

Both Dickens and De Morgan gave a great deal of themselves in their work. Both evoke a strong personal sentiment.

Neither can be dissociated as a man from his books. And yet these two personalities, similar as they are in many respects, leave a different impression upon their readers. We see Dickens as a strong, virile, robust man, one whose friendship it would be good to have in times of stress; one who, lovable at most times, could yet be stern and perhaps at times a little self-asserting and overbearing. The personality which shines through all of De Morgan's writing is less full blooded, but just as strongly felt. We have not read many chapters of his work before we realize that here is a man whose disposition is sweet and lovable at all times; one who is clever, but who never lets his cleverness prevent him from being always kindly, whimsical and tolerant, and before we have finished his first book we look upon him, not only as a most agreeable companion, but as a loving friend.

It is difficult to say at this time, what place De Morgan will take in English literature. There can, however, be little doubt as to his influence on the course of fiction in the twentieth century. He rescued the English novel from becoming merely a short story, and "gave a new vogue to the 'life novel', which differs from the popular novels of the 80's as Reality differs from Realism". (20) He will never have as wide a reading public as Dickens for the latter is read by every class, while

(20) "William De Morgan", by W. L. Phelps in the North American Review, Vol. 205, 1917.

the former with his deeper intellectual appeal has a smaller following. It follows that his chance of permanence is not so great, for the more widely read author has the better chance of reaching the heights of immortality.

I do not suppose that the most ardent of De Morgan's admirers, or the most astute chronicler of literary events would prophesy that De Morgan will be read for an indefinite period, and will eventually reach the immortals. It is, however, I think, safe to say that, if he is forgotten for a time, there are always those lovers of good literature who will find a great joy in his re-discovery, and who will appreciate as much as we do, his gift of story-telling, his admiration for all that is high-minded and honorable, his whimsical, spontaneous and unaffected humor, and his tolerant and optimistic philosophy of life,

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