1927

Chronological biography of John Forster, 1812-1876

Catherine Ritchey

The University of Montana

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CHRONOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN FORSTER 1812-1876

by

Catherine Ritchey

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

State University of Montana

1927

(Signed) E. W. Merriam

Chairman Exam. Com.
# CHRONOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN FORSTER 1812-1876

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John Forster was once called by a cabman, "A arbitrary cove." (33, p. 338) That is what he seemed to many people with his imperious manner. In reality he was only superficially dictatorial. His life was one of steady devotion to three main interests, that in earlier England, especially in the seventeenth century, that in literature and drama, and that in people. He was loud of voice and decisive of manner, and his features when he was in serious moods appeared stern and authoritative. He had a deep sympathy with his fellow men, which gave to the third interest a certain proprietary claim. It was that third, in conjunction with the others, which caused him to be influential in the affairs of his day, the welcome friend of his contemporaries. He was the friend with services ever ready, the friend constantly sought and always dependable.

Edward Bulwer Lytton, a contemporary, has written one of the most understanding of the remarks upon Forster as a man and one which bears testimony of his capacity for friendship:

"A most sterling man with an intellect at once

* "Mr. Fitzgerald says he was a despot, was dictatorial, offensively so to those who could not or would not look beneath the surface. 'The prototype of Podsnap' and like Dr. Johnson, rough and uncompromising. Macready in an irritable mood said, 'Lacking in breeding'. 'Forster seemed to me a very dictatorial person' - Sir Theodore Martin. Douglas Jerrold, picking up a pencil stump, remarked that it was like Forster, 'short, thick, and full of lead'. (33, p. 338)
massive and delicate. Few indeed have his strong practical sense and sound judgment; fewer still unite with such qualities his exquisite appreciation of latent beauties in literary art. Hence, in ordinary life there is no safer adviser about literary work, especially poetry; no more refined critic. A large heart naturally accompanies so masculine an understanding. He has a rare capacity for affection which embraces many friendships without loss of depth or warmth in one. Most of my literary contemporaries are his intimate companions, and their jealousies of each other do not diminish their trust in him. More than any living critic he has served to establish reputations. Tennyson and Browning owe him much in their literary careers. Me, I think, he served in that way less than any of his other friends, but indeed I know of no critic to whom I have been much indebted for any position I hold in literature. In more private matters I am greatly indebted to his counsel. His reading is extensive. What faults he has lie on the surface. He is sometimes bluff to rudeness, but all such faults of manner (and they are his only ones) are but trifling inequalities in a nature solid and valuable as a block of gold. (33, p. 339)

2-Birth and Family

John Forster, biographer, historian, critic, journalist, and friend of important men of the Victorian era, was born at Newcastle-Upon Tyne on April 4, 1812. He was the eldest of four children, Elizabeth, Jane, and Christopher, of Robert Forster, cattle dealer and Mary, daughter of the keeper of a dairy farm at Gallowgate. His father and his uncle John inherited nothing from the family property, owing to the fact that their father, John Forster, land owner, of Corenside in Northumberland, apparently left all his property to his two eldest sons, Lionel and Thomas. They therefore became cattle dealers in Newcastle and not butchers as was insisted by some who, in consequence, caused pain to John Forster and to his wife after his death.
The family were congenial and John Forster, who survived each member, felt deeply the successive deaths. Christopher and Elizabeth were desired as guests by their brother's friends. Dickens, in his letter of comfort on Christopher's death in 1845, writes, "The day when he (Christopher) visited us in our old house is as fresh to me as if it had been yesterday. I remember him as well as I remember you. (19, vol. 2, p. 155) Charles Lamb, writing Forster on April 24, 1833, to come down with Knowles, asked him to bring his sister if he could. (47, p. 404) Mrs. Forster, the mother, was gentle and tender-hearted and happiest when she was helping her sister, Anne Gilmour, to keep her family from starvation. (42 p. 4)

Even as a boy Forster, together with the eccentricity of manner which made his enemies refer to his father as a Newcastle butcher, showed certain characteristics of his mother. They were conspicuous enough to be unforgettable at his death by James Gilmour, a cousin and playmate of the boyhood days. He wrote, "How kind he was to me when we were boys together. He would sacrifice much to give me pleasure. And this not once nor twice. It was the same with all of us; he followed in the footsteps of my aunt, his mother, who might rightly be called the good angel of my family. Although even as a boy, his outward manner was apt to be misunderstood by strangers, yet he always seemed to have the power to turn desirable acquaintances into friends." (42, p. 5) In that boy were the traits of gentleness and sympathy which, together with unflinching honesty of purpose, were ever present in his dealings with others.

Newcastle

Newcastle, his birthplace, was situated on the north bank of the river Tyne, eight miles above its mouth and only two hundred and seventy-five miles north of London and seventy miles east of Carlisle. It was a prosperous city owing to its convenient situation on a tidal river and to immense stores of coal
in the neighbourhood, which, besides being largely exported, have stimulated a great variety of industries dependent on their use. A site good by nature, it had been easily fortified by the Romans as early as the first century. The Normans utilized the effective position and Robert, eldest son of the Conqueror, built in 1080 the original castle. Between 1172 and 1177 Henry II built upon its site the stronghold from which the town takes its name. It served the Normans and their Plantagenet successors as an impregnable fortress against the Scotch and all the king's enemies until the union of Scotland with England in 1707 did away with its usefulness and it was allowed to go into disrepair.

The keep is now one of the finest specimens of the Norman stronghold remaining in the country. It is in a state of good preservation, with walls fourteen feet thick, as is also the chapel, which is a beautiful specimen of the Late Norman style. Three years before Forster's birth the castle was purchased by the corporation for £600 and was soon put under the charge of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries, founded in 1813, who have fitted up a portion of it as an antiquarian museum. Its beauty and its past must have impressed the boy. Surroundings so marked by the efforts of the ages were in line with John Forster's life-long interest in early times and in characters of people. The Royal Free Grammar School, to which his uncle John sent him at an early age, utilised for many years the Hospital of St. Mary the Virgin.

What heritage was Newcastle to give this son in addition to the "Northumbrian roughness" (42, p. 120) at which we have already hinted in regard to his outward manner? "Newcastle," according to R. Renton, "... is not by any means the ideal place for a literary man's entrance into life. Its murky skies, grimy buildings, hard-headed, grimly independent citizens, go to make up an atmosphere scarcely conducive to the creation of even the average 'writing person', as the late Sir Walter Besant phrased it. Clever men, however, men of genius, have come
out from it from time to time, nearly all of whom having been inventors, scientists, the world's utilitarian benefactors. Not many poets, not many men of letters have hailed from Newcastle, of the few John Forster being, perhaps, the most noteworthy. (42, p. 3) If Newcastle smoke and the father's occupation of cattle-breeding induced conditions unfavourable to the gifts of the man, they yet did not by any means stifle them. His sturdy powers wrested from his early environment what it had to help him.

Procter, in a letter to Forster August 24, 1843, called Newcastle-Upon-Tyne the "region of the smoke king". (42, p. 184) It was a place, however, large enough, old enough, and beautiful enough, to combine with natural endowment to furnish John Forster with encouragement for three of his major interests throughout his life, that in early England, especially that of the seventeenth century, that in the theatre, and that in nature and historic spots.

4—Newcastle Fostered Interest in Early England

To the interest in early England and in the seventeenth century in particular this Newcastle had much to offer. His interest manifested itself early and never flagged. At the age of eighteen he took as the subject of a play the visit of Charles II to Tunbridge Wells after the Restoration. From 1830 to 1839 he was engaged in writing eight biographies of men of the Commonwealth, published in Lardner's Cyclopedia in three volumes from 1836 to 1839 and entitled the Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth. In 1845 he wrote for Douglas Jerrold's SCILLING MAGAZINE A History of Young England and for the EDINBURGH REVIEW two articles on Charles Churchill and Daniel Defoe. The Life of Goldsmith, which he had re-written at least twelve times, appeared in one volume in 1846 and, rewritten and expanded, in two volumes, in 1854. In this year he wrote for his first contribution to the QUARTERLY REVIEW an article on Samuel Foote. Early in 1855 he wrote for the FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW a sympathetic
monograph on Sir Richard Steele. In January, 1856, he dealt again with the period of the Commonwealth in a criticism of Guizot's History of the English Commonwealth entitled The Civil Wars and Oliver Cromwell, which he contributed to the EDINBURGH REVIEW. In 1858 he added to his "Historical and Biographical Essays" The Letters on the Grand Remonstrance and The Plantaganets and Tudors, a Sketch of Constitutional History. 1860 saw the publication of The Arrest of the Five Members by Charles I, a Chapter of History Rewritten in Greatly Enlarged Form, and The Debates on the Grand Remonstrance Nov. and Dec. 1641 with an Introductory Essay on English Freedom under Plantaganet and Tudor Sovereigns. In 1864 Forster expanded the Life of Sir John Eliot, first published as part of one volume in Lardner's Cyclopedia, into two large volumes, and he planned to do the same with the remaining seven of the same series; he was prevented, however, by the need of attending to the wishes of friends who died in the next twelve years and by his own death in 1876. His last work of all was the first volume of a Life of Jonathan Swift. Of these writings, twenty two in number and the sum of what he wrote except for contemporary criticism and the biographies of two friends Landor and Dickens, fifteen are on the seventeenth century, one is on "Young" England and six are biographies of men of the late seventeenth and first seventy five years of the eighteenth century. It is, then, safe to say that he was largely interested in an earlier, especially in the seventeenth century, England. That, as the list indicates, he was interested in it largely from the point of view of the lives of the men is merely corroboration of what we have said of the human sympathy of the man. Whenever Forster found a friend who shared this interest he felt that in it a strong bond existed. This was true with Landor and Carlyle, among others.

5-Newcastle Fostered Interest in Theatre

It is unmistakably clear that Forster became interested in the theatre in his boyhood years. We
know that he saw John Kemble in Lear at the age of five and that he made the most of his recollections of a great actor seen at that age when he became dramatic critic for the EXAMINER. The family were in straitened circumstances, but, as Mr. Archer points out, it seems not at all improbable that the precocious child should have been taken to the theatre by his uncle John, whose favourite he was and to whom he was indebted for his education and who, Mr. Archer says, "seems to have been a man of literary and theatrical tastes". *(2, p. viii) We know

* Mr. Archer has discovered that Newcastle was probably the last provincial town which John Kemble visited before his last appearance on any stage at Covent Garden June 23, 1817. At Newcastle he played Coriolanus on April 9, and 14, Penruidock on April 10, Brutus on April 11, and Lear on April 15, 1817, the very April on the second day of which John Forster had his fifth birthday. The Lear seems to be recalled in the EXAMINER for June 6, 1834, in which there is a mildly laudatory criticism of Macready's Lear with the observation, "We remember well the majesty of John Kemble", precisely what would be most apt to impress a child. The article is not signed but Mr. Archer proves that it was written by Forster by showing that it is one of a chain of five almost certainly written by the same man, the last one of which was undoubtedly written by him. September 7, of the same year that the above reference was made to John Kemble there is a criticism containing the following sentence: "Mr. Kemble is represented (for we cannot speak with sufficient certainty from our own recollections) to have been a great ideal actor."

In a severe criticism of Vaudenhoff's Brutus (in Howard Payne's play), November 16, there are several allusions to Kemble which clearly imply that the writer has seen him. December 14, there is an attack on Vaudenhoff's Othello and Denvil's Iago, written professedly by the same critic who had formerly dealt with Vaudenhoff, which contains a description of one of the fine touches in Kean's Othello, repeated almost word for word, in an article of October 25, 1835,
that when he was but fifteen years of age he not only went very frequently to the theatre but also enjoyed what he found there in no passive fashion.

The strongest evidence of all that John Forster early found his life-long interest in the theatre was an important factor in the decision to send him to college. It is a paper written and sent by him in June, 1827, when he was only fifteen years of age, to a lad who remonstrated with him for taking her son Frank too often to the theatre and who sought to convince him of his wickedness by giving him a tract upon the evils of play-going. Forster's article, which was termed by Charles Kent, "a singularly clever and elaborate paper (30)," was entitled A Few Thoughts in Vindication of the Stage. That he made such effort in logical criticism shows that he had already begun to exercise in the case of the drama observation and critical power which were to have no rest through twenty-five years of service to periodicals of the day. He justified it on religious grounds and cited the good and wise among the ancients as approving it. He strove to prove that the theatre, rightly used, was a strong influence for the moral and intellectual well-being of man.

"The laws restrain those actions only which loosen the bonds of society. Religion commands such as render them more efficacious. What a reinforcement religion and the laws, when they enter into alliances with the theatre, where the objects of contemplation are animated, where virtue and vice, happiness and misery, folly and wisdom, are exhibited in a thousand different forms; where the human heart, upon the rack of

*(cont.) "indubitably written by Forster". (2, p. ix) Mr. Archer feels that he can be reasonably certain, therefore, that the articles of June 8, September 7, and November 16, 1834, which speak of recollections of John Kemble were written by Forster and, accordingly, that the critic had, when just five years of age, been taken to the theatre to see the great actor
the passions, confesses its slightest movements; where all masks, all disguises disappear, and truth, pure and incorruptible, shines in open day." (42, p. 7)

This emphatic expression of interest was followed the next year by a two-act play, entitled Charles at Tunbridge, or The Cavalier of Wilding-hurst, performed at the Newcastle theatre on May 2, 1828, written for the benefit of Mr. Thomas Stuart, one of the actors of the Stock Company at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle. It combined two interests just discussed, that in the seventeenth century and that in drama.

6-Newcastle Fostered Interest in Nature and Historic Spots.

In Newcastle also, in spite of its smoke, we may look for encouragement to that interest to be later manifested in the walks and rides enjoyed so much by Forster in the years when he first knew Dickens, Newcastle was on a plateau above the river and commanded views of the country around. It was well supplied with public parks and recreation grounds. To the north of the city is the Leazes ornamental park of thirty-five acres and beyond this the town moor and race course, an extensive common, the survival of the pasture land of the township. Eastward from the town moor is Brandling Park. The picturesque grounds of Armstrong Park to the northeast of the city extend to about fifty acres, the larger half of which was presented by Sir W. G. Armstrong, who also has presented the beautifully wooded grounds of Jesmond Dene.

From an account of a trip taken in celebration of Dickens's return from America in 1842 we know that Forster was early familiar with the border and Scottish scenery (19, vol.2, p. 20) and that as a man he possessed a steadiness at heights which deterred the others which goes to prove that he was, then, likely a climber from boyhood. In later years
Forster had written one of them, the artist Maclise, something of recent travel among the mountain scenery of the wilder coasts of Donegal. It called forth from Maclise recollections of Forster's athletic achievements in early manhood. The letter, printed in Forster's Life of Dickens, says of them: "'As to your clambering, don't I know what happened of old? Don't I still see the Logan Stone, and you perched on the giddy top while we, rocking it on its pivot, shrank from all that lay concealed below! Should I ever have blundered on the waterfall of St. Wighton, if you had not piloted the way? And when we got to Land's end, with the green sea far under us lapping into solitary rocky nooks where the mermaids live, who but you only had the courage to stretch over, to see those diamond jets of brightness that I swore then, and believe still were the flappings of their tails! And don't I recall you again, sitting on the tip-top stone of the cradle-turret over the highest battlement of the castle of St. Michael's Mount, with not a ledge or coigne of vantage 'twixt you and the fathomless ocean under you, distant three thousand feet? Last, do I forget you clambering up the goat-path to King Arthur's castle of Tintagel, when, in my vain wish to follow, I grovelled and clung to the soil like a Caliban, and you, in the manner of a trick-sy spirit and stout Ariel, actually danced up and down before me!" (19, vol. 2, p. 22) Facing page one hundred sixteen in Shore's Charles Dickens and His Friends there is a reproduction of a sketch by Clarkson Stanfield, R. A. of Forster perched on the top of the Logan Stone in Cornwall. The waterfall was made permanent in their memories by Maclise's picture, The Nymph at the Waterfall now in the Forster Collection at South Kensington for which Miss Georgina Hogarth posed and which Forster obtained at the sale of the effects of Dickens at Christie's.

7-Education and Early Literary Interest

The circumstances of Robert Forster, the father, Renton tells us (42, p. 4), were never really good. All four children were chiefly indebted for their edu-
cation to their uncle John, who was six years his brother's senior and who, in a better position in every way, could and did make it possible for his brother's children to have more than the barest elementary education the father could have afforded. His favourite was the eldest, his namesake. John was placed by him at an early age in the ancient grammar school of Newcastle where he early showed the bent of his mind by making the classics his special study and where he showed its calibre by eventually reigning as head boy of the school, as Lord Eldon and Lord Collingwood had done before him. He must also have stood well in mathematics, as he was to be the guide of Dickens and Leigh Hunt in business matters. He became the favourite pupil of the headmaster, Rev. Edward Moises, the nephew of the Rev. Hugh Moises (1772-1806) who had first raised the school to a high state of efficiency by his learning and abilities and sweet manners and uniform conduct and under whose leadership Forster's predecessors as head of the school, Lords Eldon and Collingwood, received their education. Forster was to live to see the building replaced by the railway station, but often in the days of his successful manhood he spoke to his intimates of his old teacher and of his connection with the Newcastle Grammar-School in terms of affection. Once, in speaking of his early years and experiences Renton tells us that he said that "in a vaguely insistent way, literature, as he then understood it, was beckoning him onward, and creating within him a peculiar interest in it. The irresistible impulse to write, as is not unusual in such cases, soon impelled him to the production of a story, which, in due course, and to his intense joy and satisfaction, received the honour of publication." (42, p. 6)

Preceded by his success at the school, Forster's essay, A Few Thoughts in Vindication of the Stage, led the family to feel that he must go to college. Uncle John materially expressed the courage of the family opinion that he should be enabled to give his powers the opportunities of higher education, an act which
Renton says was never forgotten by the man, who always regarded his uncle as one of his cherished friends. (42, p. 9)

8-Newcastle Proud of John Forster

Newcastle took such pride in this one of its children that Richard Welford makes the mistake of supposing Forster buried among her other famous children at St. Nicholas's church, the nave of which he calls the Necropolis of Newcastle. (50, p. 210)

At his death the Newcastle Daily Chronicle printed a sketch of the man on February 15, 1876, written by Alderman Harle, which was reprinted in February, 1888, in Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend ii-49-54; Men of the Time, 9 edition, p. 413; Annual Register for 1876, p. 134.
In October, 1828, John Forster was sent to Cambridge University, but within a month decided that he wished to move on to London. His uncle was willing, and he entered as one of the first students in the class of English Law in the newly constituted University College, on November 10, 1828. Forster, Renton thinks, had a "logically constituted mind, an intuitive desire for so much of that invaluable legal training as would aid him in future marshalling of great historical facts." (42, p. 13)

His instructor in English Law was Professor Andrew Amos, a lawyer and professor of law who, upon the foundation of the University of London, afterwards called University College, was first professor of English law with Mr. Austin, professor of jurisprudence as his colleague. In the years 1829-1837 his lectures attained great celebrity. He encouraged his classes by propounding subjects for essays, by free and informal conversation, by repeated examinations, and by giving prizes for special studies. He repeatedly received testimonials from his pupils, and his bust was presented to the University College. As well as being a learned man he was a good and kind-hearted one. He was of Forster's companions in these early days and a friend right through the years, although in later times the contacts were by letter only. In 1856 one came from him warmly congratulating Forster on his marriage to the Widow Colburn. "Mr. Amos', Forster has been heard to say, 'was a very clever man, and one who could also appreciate mental capacity in others.' But apart from his admiration for Forster's intellectual gifts, he really loved the man". (42, p. 12)

2-Writing Chosen and Law Given Up - 1830

He was certainly not, therefore, an opposing influence against the tendency of John to write, whose life as a writer, we may infer, on the con-
trary found encouragement in the contact with such a teacher. In January, 1829, his first contribution to periodicals, Remarks on Two of the Annuals, was published in the Newcastle magazine. And as early as March, 1830, Charles Kent tells us, he was projecting his Life of Cromwell. (30) In 1830 he was writing for magazines both in Newcastle and in London. Up to this time his uncle had given him financial aid but now brighter prospects opened gradually and he could see the ultimate doing away with the need for further use of that help.

It was also in this year that Forster was studying in the chambers of Thomas Chitty, the eminent special pleader, whose son, Mr. J. W. Chitty, eventually Lord Justice Chitty, Forster was to make an executor by the terms of his will. Renton says, "Recognising in him the making of a lawyer of the first rank, Chitty lost no opportunity to persuade his pupil to adopt law as a profession.

"Master and pupil were already firm friends, the bond between them strengthening with the years. Availing himself of this feeling, Chitty sought to seduce the other from his literary love. 'There is nothing to which you may not rise in the law,' he urged, 'no prize you may not win, if you so desire. Literature, my dear fellow!-bah!-there is not enough in it to keep the proverbial pot boiling, much less to make even a decent fortune.'

"Forster listened to the voice of the charmer,... but that was all. Literature, by this time, had him for her own body and soul.

"It was just before the passing of the Reform Bill - a time of great and strenuous political agitation and unrest. Chitty could not help noting the keenness of Forster's interest in the burning political questions of the hour. But to his disappointment, he saw, also, that this interest in politics, was, by his association of past history with present events, drawing his pupil away from a study of law
for law's own sake, to the all-absorbing pursuit of literature.

"In such cases it is temperament that counts; the artistic temperament, that is; and that Forster was largely imbued with it, no one, who reads him, will assuredly venture to deny. To quote Henry Mor-ley again -

"That other faculty of clear judgment, which caused his chief in a special pleader's office to see in him an ornament of the bench lost to his own profession, was not wasted, for it helped to give him in after years a first place in dignity and usefulness among the critics, and to fit him for his work as a biographer. Wise words, which make easy of interpretation much about John Forster that is enigmatic, and hard of understanding." (42, p. 14)

3. Penton Place and School Friends 1828-1832

Even in these early days Forster's friends gathered at his dwelling as they were to do at his later bachelor homes at 4, Burton Street, Burton Crescent, St. Pancras, and at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and at the two homes of his married life, first at 46, Montagu Square, and later at Palace Gate House at Kensington, which he was able to build. Those days began at his first London lodgings at Penton place, where there were many little suppers at which the talking of shop was not regarded as taboo and where literary men and artists met to discuss freely the things in which they were interested. Forster loved to be hospitable and preferred the role of host to that of guest. As a result, his home was one at which his friends enjoyed many a meeting and where they always felt welcome.

A school fellow, Emerson Tennent, then "launched on the summer sea of civil service inactivity, writes to him about this time, 1831, from somewhere abroad, inviting himself to Burton Street, fully assured of a hearty welcome. More, he suggests, in the letter, a menu for the 'little dinner' which is
to celebrate their meeting; and it may be fairly concluded that Forster, always so anxious to please, would go out of his way to make that suggestion a successfully accomplished fact.” (42, p. 16) Such simple meetings "were the occasion for the due observance of all the ancient and traditional rites of true boon-companionship known to the calendar." (42, p. 17)

John Forster's friendships at school show early an interest of the man which could always take first place when it came in conflict with others. James Whiteside, who could boast of years of unbroken friendship with him, said, "Forster's intimate friends were men of culture, and he himself was worthy of their love and friendship." (42, p.11) They were many and Forster, ever ready for them, meant much to them. Professor Henry Morley says in his short biographical sketch that it was "his generous warmth, his eager intellect bent always upon worthy work, his winning sincerity, and the sound judgment, already conspicuous, that made him throughout his after years the chosen counsellor to whom every friend desired to bring his most difficult problems of life for solution." (42, p. 11) He took time from his interest in the Commonwealth to write the lives of two of those friends, the time of his last years.

Fellow students at the University College who were to be his fast friends for life were this same Emerson Tennent, James Whiteside, and Robert Browning. The two former he became acquainted with at the time. Browning was to pass from Gower street unknown to his future friend. He was to again miss meeting him at the grave of Edmund Kean at Richmond in May, 1835, where they were both gathered, but finally to become acquainted with one, who was by that time one of his critics, on the last day of 1835.

Emerson Tennent as early as October 29th wrote his "Dear Foster" (42, p. 11), whose name he could
not yet spell correctly, to come and spend an evening with him. The friendship grew rapidly and by December they were, says Renton (42, p. 11) "on terms of equal friendship". Forster, who always loved to be of service, was able to help Emerson by the loan of books, "for the latter was already a distinguished writer on classical subjects, and was then busy upon a History of Modern Greece, which was published in 1830". By Forster's advice Tennent was especially invited to follow him into the chambers of Thomas Chitty. Forster was the one friend of Tennent's who was admitted into the confidence of the latter before his marriage. The friendship was a lasting one; and Forster, in the Life of Dickens, when speaking of his death on March 12, 1869, called him "the old and dear friend". (19, vol. 3, p. 418)

James Whiteside was afterwards Lord Chief Justice of Ireland. In 1830, he was called to the Irish bar, but preferred the first year to follow Forster into the chambers of Thomas Chitty rather than practice law. He was afterwards one of her Majesty's judges, and famous also as an authoritative writer on legal subjects. Whiteside's interest in writing was a link that drew the friends together. His work in Ireland made the period of their contacts, except by letter, short.

4-Leigh Hunt 1829-1859

In 1829, Forster first made the acquaintance of one of whom he afterwards said, "He influenced all my modes of thought at the outset of my life." (30) This person was Leigh Hunt and he was able to give Forster just the aids that he needed in these early days. Hunt was a link with the past, as were two others of Forster's best friends, Charles Lamb and Walter Savage Landor. He was the first editor of the EXAMINER, a paper with which Forster was going to be connected for twenty-three years, first as contributor and chief critic both of literature and drama in 1832 and as editor for nine years beginning with 1847. Leigh Hunt had been unafraid to proclaim
the genius of Shelley and Keats in December, 1816. John Forster was to be equally fearless when he spoke laudatorily of Browning's Paracelsus in 1835. One further link with Forster's future life is the probability that the friendship originated in a mutual knowledge of Henry Colburn, the publisher, whose widow Forster was to marry in 1856. Colburn's house in Bryanstone Square was a common meeting-place for all the literary and for many of the artistic notabilities of the day.

Forster never had a friend solely or even mostly for his own benefit unless exercise of a sympathy with human men may be so called. To Leigh Hunt the friendship was also to mean much. The poet had no head for finances and throughout the period of his friendship with Forster the latter came repeatedly to his rescue. It was due to the pecuniary assistance of Forster that he was able to print for private circulation among friends in 1832, a thin volume entitled Christianism; "being Exercises and Meditations. Mercy and Truth have met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other. Not for sale - only seventy-five copies printed" (30), a volume which was to cause the acquaintance of Hunt and Carlyle. Various friends joined Forster in rendering assistance to this friend. In 1847, the Amateur Theatrical company gave two performances of Ben Jonson's play, Every Man in His Humour, in Manchester and Liverpool, by which 900 l. was raised for Leigh Hunt's benefit.

Forster knew well at this time one other link with the past. He was a late but none the less dear friend of Charles Lamb. Percy Fitzgerald says in his notice of Mary Lamb's funeral, May 28, 1847: "With them was one friend of later days - but who had become to Lamb as one of his oldest companions, and for whom Miss Lamb cherished a strong regard - Mr. John Forster - the author of The Life of Goldsmith, in which Lamb would have rejoiced as written in a
spirit congenial with his own." (18, vol. 1, p. 236)
There is a facsimile reproduction of Forster's card of invitation to the funeral now in the Forster Collection at South Kensington. (42, p. 24)

It is difficult to determine just when the friendship began. Renton says that the TRUE SUN, to which Lamb contributed and with which Forster was more or less connected, may have been responsible. We know that in 1831 Lamb wrote affectionately to Forster complaining because the latter did not come to see him oftener. (42, p. 20) We know that Forster visited Lamb with Procter in November, 1831, because he mentions it in his second volume of the Life of Landor (20, vol. 2, p. 243), when he speaks of the enjoyment Lamb derived from the verses Landor wrote in the album of his adopted daughter, Emma Isola. Edward Moxon, the publisher, who married this daughter, may also have introduced the two as he often accompanied Forster to Lamb's house. The friendship had no interruption or termination except that of the death of Lamb in 1834 so soon after its commencement. June 25, 1834, Lamb wrote to Forster: "If you have lost a little portion of my good will it is that you do not come & see me." (47, vol. 2, p. 428) Though so late a friend, Forster was included among the four or five who met him on the occasion of the dinner given him by Talfourd just before he died. Talfourd says of him: "...a friend of comparatively recent date, but one with whom Lamb found himself as much at home as if he had known him for years." (18, vol. 1, p. 216) On Lamb's death Forster wrote a memoir of his friend which was published in the NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE and which is included in Fitzgerald's Lamb. (18, vol. 1, p. 276-286) Forster never forgot this friend, whose early loss he mourned. In his own last illness he was revising Lamb's letters between the dates 1827-1833 which he placed at the disposal of Fitzgerald and which the latter has printed in his Lamb. As he was turning over the originals a short time before his death, Fitzgerald tells us, "the tears came into his eyes, and his lip trembled as he spoke of 'Poor Charles Lamb'".
(16, vol. 1, p. 22)

Forster spent much of his time aiding contemporary men of letters by suggestions, by reading proofs, and by arranging business relations with publishers. By 1833 Lamb was inaugurating his friend's long period of service which was to be first especially apparent in the early years of Browning's struggles, by submitting to him for his suggestions particularly as to title and preliminaries his volume called Last Essays. Forster read his proof and did errands for him as a letter of 1833 to him shows: "My dear Boy, Scamper off with this to Dilke, (contribution for the Athenaeum) and get it in for to-morrow; then we shall have two things in the first week. Your laureat," and there is no signature. (47, vol. 2, p. 416)

6-Forster Early Helps with the Writing of a Play

In these days Forster was following up his theatre interest by giving his help and suggestions to a writer of plays, James Sheridan Knowles, designated by Lamb as the "Hunch Back" (47, vol. 2, p. 404) because of a play he had written called The Hunchback. It is Knowles's The Wife which gives us our first record of Forster's being desired for consultation about plays. Lamb asked Forster and Knowles to come down together on April 24, 1833. He writes to Forster: "I shall be glad to see the Hunch Back and the Strait Back the first evening they can come..." (47, vol. 2, p. 404) In the summer he asked Forster and Knowles for an evening in which he said that they would be free and that he would do a prologue which we may infer was for The Wife by Knowles, since it was produced in that year, and Lamb wrote the Prologue and Epilogue. (47, vol. 2, p. 416)* Forster continued to help Knowles until

* There is a good biographical note on Knowles who is better known as a dramatist than an actor, although he did not leave the stage until 1843, in Macready's Diary. (48, vol. 1, p. 1-note 2)
some time in 1838 and even gave the title May 7, 1838, to Woman's Wit; or Love's Disguises, a play which was successful and ran thirty-one nights. After this Knowles's plays fell off in popularity and his last two, Old Maids and The Rose of Aragon were such failures that his dramatic efforts were henceforth confined to his acting. When Knowles no longer wrote plays, he drew away from his friendly helper and prosperity. In the late thirties and early forties, although Forster at first made efforts to prevent it, the friendship of which Lamb had partaken was a thing of the past.

7—An Engagement

Another of the friends included in the invitations of Lamb to Forster was the poetess Letitia Elizabeth Landon. Forster was either at that time or very soon after engaged to this very unfortunate lady. She incurred many enemies in former friends who could not get their verses published and who envied her success. Through her father's friendship with Jordan, editor of the Literary Gazette she had her poems printed. Her enemies combined to pick her character to pieces. Forster told Macready on November 11, 1835, that he had been on the point of marriage with her but that rumours against her had broken it off. A short time afterwards Forster understood that she made an abrupt and passionate declaration of love to Maclise and on subsequent occasions repeated it. Whether or not she was guilty of the intrigues of which she was charged, she received full punishment for them. She married George Maclean, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, in 1838, and either committed suicide soon after her arrival in Africa or took accidentally too much of some medicine, prussic acid, she used for spasms to which she was subject.*

* Renton quotes, underlining phrases which he thinks make it valueless, the contribution to the subject made by the author of a monograph on Forster by One of His Friends: "He had no doubt pushed (her) well
Edward Bulwer Lytton

Forster's aid to one friend (Hunt) brought him into contact with another. In 1832 he saw something of one who was to occupy much of his attention; for Forster lived, in large part, in his friends. By 1834, he was on close and intimate terms with Edward Bulwer Lytton. Their common efforts to relieve the pecuniary embarrassments of Leigh Hunt originally brought them together and their letters at first dealt chiefly with that matter. There was room, however, for criticism and friendliness and in two years a firm friendship had been established which was to last until the death of Lytton in 1872. Forster gave freely to him the usual affection, encouragement, and practical assistance that he lavished on his friends. He helped him in negotiations with publishers, corrected his proofs, advised in matters literary and political and gave comfort and sympathy in his friend's private difficulties and afflictions. The two were associated together in journalistic work and down to the year 1845 they were in harmony in their political views which were those of the Whigs.

Forster showed in the case of Lytton that he could remain friends and disagree politically. In 1860 the former, who had always been opposed to the repeal of the Corn Laws, separated himself from the...

(cont.)
forward in the Examiner" - "The fair poetess generally contrived to enlist the affection of her editors" - "The engagement was broken off, it is believed, through the arts of Dr. Magain, and it is said that Forster behaved exceedingly well in the transaction." (42, p.104) Shore quotes what Benjamin Disraeli wrote of the lady in a letter after a meeting at Bulwer's in February, 1832: "I avoided L.E.L. (the initials used for her pen name), who looked the very personification of Brompton - pink satin dress and white satin shoes, red cheeks, snub nose, and hair à la Sappho." (44, p. 185)
Whigs and, ranged himself definitely on the side of the Conservatives, but the friendship was not permanently disturbed and Forster was always generous enough to express his admiration for his friend's political writings and speeches even when he did not agree with his arguments.

In the case of this friend Forster showed too that he was capable of admiring unreservedly those who seemed worthy. He knew Lytton well for he also was a member of the inner circle and was manager, with Dickens, of the Amateur Theatricals in which he, Forster, was much interested. Forster praises him in the Life of Dickens after speaking of and quoting Bulwer's praise of Dickens: "...but there cannot now be, and there cannot ever have been, among the followers of literature a man so entirely without the grudging little jealousies that too often disparage its brightness, as Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton." (19, vol. 2, p. 456) Again he said, "'There never was a more varied genius, a more gallant spirit, a man more constant to his friends, more true to any cause he represented, or one whose name will hereafter be found entitled to a more honoured place in the history of his time.'" (42, p. 150) It was to this friend that Forster wrote about his becoming editor of the EXAMINER, as it was that he first wrote the account of his marriage. And when Lytton was asked by his Sovereign to take his place among the Barons of England, Forster wrote a letter which expressed a friend's appreciation of honour well bestowed and a friend's gladness and hope that it might be long enjoyed: "'It is impossible to say with what pleasure I receive your letter, and the news it gives me', he wrote. "'No fortune affecting myself, I can truly say, ever moved me so deeply. Because I know that you have nobly won and earned it.

"'I only pray now, that health and quiet may be yours for many, many happy years, to wear this dignity into veritable and downright old age, and with every passing year to show how worthily such honours
are bestowed, when they reward not services to party only, but a life of labour and endeavour, by which men of all parties have been made better and happier, a life of generous service to literature, which other times will probably appreciate even better than your own." (42, p. 153) Bulwer lived to enjoy it only six years and was one of the many whose loss Forster mourned before his own life was done.

9-Robert Bulwer Lytton

In friendship for Robert Bulwer Lytton, the son of that friend, Forster showed an interest that was ever characteristic and never satisfied by children of his own. We shall see later that he helped as he could young men of letters. But he sponsored Robert Lytton as a son. He early became acquainted with the boy who was one of the few intimates to go to the grave of a friend who had by then followed most of his friends to theirs.

There was here, perhaps, even greater affection than that between the older Bulwer and Forster. Their exceptional relations are considered fully in The Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of Robert, Earl of Lytton, by Betty Balfour, in two volumes, published in 1906, and according to Renton, there was not an incident which concerned the lives of Forster and Robert Lytton which does not find mention in their correspondence. Poor Forster was not to see this "son of his heart" (42, p. 156) in the days of his glory when as viceroy of India from 1876 to 1880 he served his country so well. The period was made memorable by three events, the terrible famine in southern India, Queen Victoria’s proclamation and assumption of the title of Empress of India in 1877, and the second Afghan War, which eventually resulted in the rapid declension of Afghanistan as an independent native state. In connection with the latter, Robert Lytton was responsible for whatever of honor or credit came to Great Britain. (42, p. 155)
The meaning of Forster's friendship to this son as well as to many another is given expression in Robert Bulwer's dedication to Forster in 1859 of his volume called "The Wanderer":

"For all youth seeks, all manhood needs,  
All youth and manhood rarely find;  
A strength more strong than codes or creeds,  
In lofty thoughts and lovely deeds  
Revealed to heart and mind;  

"A staff to stay, a star to guide,  
A spell to soothe, a power to raise,  
A faith by fortune firmly tried,  
A judgment resolute to preside  
O'er days at strife with days.  

"O large in love, in nature sound!  
O man to me, of all men, dear!  
All these in thine my life hath found,  
And force to tread the rugged ground  
Of daily toil with cheer." (42, p. 154)

10-Progress in Periodical Connections 1830-1833

In 1830 Forster is mentioned (30) as writing for periodicals in Newcastle and in London. As early as 1831 he had shared the difficulties of the TRUE SUN through having friends on the editorial staff. (19, p. 75) He became dramatic critic on the paper at twenty years of age, in 1832. In December of the same year he rose to the rank of director, but it was a short task due to the early collapse of the REFLECTOR. His friend, Moxon, the publisher, was bringing it out and their mutual literary friends of that date, Lamb and Hunt, were contributing. The magazine had succeeded the ENGLISHMAN'S MAGAZINE, which had been a failure. It itself was discontinued after three issues, a fact which Lamb lamented, remarking in a letter of December 31, 1832, that "Twas a child of great promise for its weeks ..." (47, p. 395)
In 1835 he was writing for the TRUE SUN, the COURIER, the ATHENAEUM, and the EXAMINER, and he became in the same year, when but twenty-one years of age, chief critic on the latter both of literature and of drama. He had "arrived". The ATHENAEUM was a weekly review dealing generally with literature, science, and art, founded in 1828. The EXAMINER was classed as a newspaper because it included political and social topics. It thus reached a greater number of people. It was one of the most prominent organs of the Liberals and always enjoyed an excellent literary reputation, probably because of the quality of its editors, Leigh Hunt, Albany Fonblanque, John Forster (in 1847) and Henry Morley. His work on it gave Forster in this early year the opportunity to exercise in a first-class paper a life-long interest in literature, and in drama.

11-Lincoln's Inn Fields 1834-1856

Forster's career as dramatic critic and journalist is chiefly associated with Lincoln's Inn Fields; with it also the first half of his career as universal friend. His first lodgings in London had been at Penton Place, Pentonville, No. 17. He moved late in 1832 to No. 4, Burton Street, Burton Crescent, St. Pancras, where the gatherings begun at Penton Place were continued. In the summer of the year of Lamb's death, he moved to the new lodgings on the ground floor of No. 58, Lincoln's Inn Fields, which were destined to become famous as the scene of many meetings of men of note. Dickens once wrote of them to an American friend that he was told, "There is a sound in Lincoln's Inn Fields at night, as of men laughing together with a clinking of knives and forks and wine-glasses". (5, p. 238) Dickens, who, when he was in town, was himself a distinguished contributor to the merriment, assigned these chambers to Mr. Tulkinghorn, Barrister in Bleak House. The house is that in the middle of the west side of the square and is recognizable by the large semi-circular portico which extends
over the entrances to two houses. Boynton writes, "There was a great deal of good talk, and that kind of informal jollity that well behaved people can have when they are not on their company manners." There were songs, recitations, everything "legitimate except formality". (5, p. 238) Here he was to remain until his marriage with the Widow Colburn on September 24, 1856.

He was described a year later as a "tall, ardent, noticeable, young fellow". (42, p. 10) Ren ton says that the picture was true of him to the day of his death. "A slight stooping of the shoulders there might have been, perhaps; acute physical suffering may have dimmed the eyes in which as a youth once shone the ardour of his ambitious soul; but go where he would, in whatever society he found himself, John Forster, actually, as intellectually head and shoulders above the crowd, was always a noticeable personality." (42, p. 10) The big, burly man was nicknamed later by some of his intimates "hippopotamus" which two or three of his wife's young nephews, who always regarded him in his presence with awe but laid aside company manners when he was not present, contracted to "the mouse". (42, p. 100)

Lincoln's Inn Fields could boast of having sheltered the poet Tennyson. It sheltered for twenty-two years one who exercised a little realized influence on the literature and drama of the latter half of the Victorian era both through his writings and through his advisings to his friends.

12-Eighteen Years with an Actor 1855-1851

One of the earliest friends who came to Lincoln's Inn Fields was William Charles Macready, tragedian, the most famous of the critic's actor friends. They met on the occasion of the burial of Edmund Kean, whom they both admired as an actor, in the little parlor of a tiny cottage adjoining the Old Theatre on Richmond Green, Surrey. This
friendship was somewhat stormy but intimate and lasting. Macready was little disposed to tolerate the outward roughness of Forster's manner or the aggressiveness. In spite of it, however, he found a faithful friend who was always at hand in time of bereavement and who became his "trusted counsellor and referee on almost every subject, both private and professional". (46-1-36) It is fortunate for their friendship that his art as an actor found favor with Forster, because the latter was likely to write what he though, a tendency which might else have seriously interrupted the friendship as it did that with Robert Browning when the critic's dicta did not please. But, as Mr. Archer says, Macready "powerfully affected Forster's imagination" (2, p. xi) and, esteeming Forster's judgment, depended much on it, * and so they weathered the momentary irri-

* So completely did Forster take charge of matters for Macready that we find him in August, 1845, declining a proposition made to Macready through him without first referring it to Macready. Mr. Webster, manager of the Haymarket theatre, had offered an engagement favorable to Macready except for a stipulation that Macready should be the one to procure Miss Cushman, a matter which Macready would have been unwilling to undertake because making such a move would seem unfriendly to Miss Faucit. It was this that made Forster decline the proposition without seeing Macready and the latter seems to have taken it as a matter of course and been pleased that he was spared the trouble since there is no complaint in the diary with which he was not inclined to be reticent in moments of anger. It was characteristic of Forster to act almost in the nature of an intermediary. Two parties would often transmit all or part of their business through him. Macready mentions on November 11, that he called to inquire of Forster regarding the orders he had given to Cattermole. So cherished a possession as Landor's ivy leaf from Fiesole, given him by Dickens, was sent by way of Forster.
tations. These were always forgotten when Macready was in real trouble. At such times Forster's name appears often in the Diaries and it is usually prefixed with such words as "kind", "good", "dear," and on the day of his daughter Nina's death, February 24, 1850, "best friend". Macready named the next child, who was born April 7 of the same year, Jonathan Forster Christina after this beloved daughter and after the friend who had proved such a comfort.

When Macready retired from the stage the following year, 1851, he gave to this cherished friend the part from which he had always studied Virginus* and the parchment that he used in the second act. This was a gift of great value coming from Macready, because it was the play which he liked the best of those in which he had appeared.

The usually daily and sometimes even more frequent meetings recorded in the Diaries had to end with the actor's retirement to Sherborne, where, however, Forster faithfully visited him when he could. At the Farewell banquet on February 5, 1851, he gave expression to his regard by reciting an ode written for the occasion by Tennyson. It is evident that it was prompted by good-will and friendship, even though Mr. Coleman, who was one of those who only saw the shell and describes only that, reports that "Mr. John Forster laddled out, or I should say, roared forth an ode written for the occasion by Tennyson, commencing, "Macready, moral, sublime!" (14, p. 58)

* One of the most successful plays of James Sheridan Knowles which provided Macready in the name part one of his favorite roles in which he from time to time continued to appear until his final retirement in 1851.
CHAPTER III

The Year 1836

The year 1836 was memorable to Forster for varied activity. It saw him an honest and skillful recorder of stage history and consequently uncomfortable. It saw him happy in friendship with three men who now have literary fame, on its eve, Browning, in its summer, Landor, and, at its close, the one who meant the most of all to his life, Charles Dickens.

Forster's articles in the EXAMINER record for us "the achievements of Macready's management, and the performances of Edwin Forrest." (2, p. vii) In 1834 Forster had made mention in his criticisms of the recollections of John Kemble, which have already been discussed in regard to his early interest in the stage. By October, 1835, his criticisms attained a degree of vigor and specificity that make the actors live.

This critic regarded the art of the actor as the "more delightful", that of the author, "the nobler" (19, vol. 3, p. 504) As we have seen, his interest in acting began in early years. It always proved "delightful". That which made acting art to Forster was that which he called "the power of feeling earnestly". (1, p. 188) He praised the actor as he approached an interpretation according to his, Forster's, and condemned him when he strutted over the stage in a mist of bad guesses.

As we have said, Macready met favor with his critic. Forster puts him before us as a great actor, possessed of faults but great. Not so Forrest. The criticisms are specific and penetrating and they paint in the case of the American actor one who could not understand Shakespeare and one who
displayed fantastic physical prowess in parts not meant for it. Such acting rang untrue with Forster who honestly recorded his impressions and brought down upon himself and upon his friend Macready the animus of the American actor.

Forster's method is to state what should have been the interpretation of a passage and to follow with piercing statements of what was the interpretation. After explaining how the beauty of the scene in the council chamber where devilish arts and practices are charged against Othello lies in "his assured quiet and, as it were, picturesque dignity", he writes: "Now Mr. Forrest began the speech with an affected appeal to the excellence of his judges. It was just as Sir James Scarlett used to address his twelve friends of a jury-box. 'My very noble-and approve-good masters!' Where some opportunity for a 'point' of this sort failed to present itself, Mr. Forrest laboured through the lines as if he had to pump up for the especial occasion every thought they conveyed. When he came to the 'And often did beguile her of her tears,' he intonated the last work as if a whine were necessary to give it meaning." (2, p. 18) Forster says of his general tendencies when speaking of like misplaced emphasis in Lear: "He severs abruptly the natural relation of two speeches to each other, with a view to producing sudden and violent effects. He does not produce them, but he startles the unthinking part of his audience into occasional applause." (2, p. 27) Forrest did not impress Forster as one possessing an imaginative conception of the meaning of his roles. As Forster paints him he seems to have used the physical for interpretation in a painfully incongruous fashion.

These criticisms of 1836, the year of Forrest's first appearance in England, sowed seeds of irritation in the American, which bore fruit thirteen years later in the sanguinary Astor Place riots in New York. That his friendship with Macready would
seem to be the source of what he might write of a rival did not make Forster swerve in his course of truthfully depicting the performances of the American tragedian. Macready felt the embarrassment and tried his utmost to get Forster to compromise, but to no purpose. Forster, although he stood almost alone among the critics of the day in so doing, continued to condemn Forrest's blusterous style.* Forrest's hatred and indignation were aroused and became those of his countrymen and Macready was to meet with consequent hostile receptions on his arrival in America and thirteen years later to be in danger of his life amid the Astor riots in New York. The military were called out, several hundred lives were lost and Macready only escaped by a disguise, timely shelter at the house of a friend, and a hurried trip in the wee hours of the morning. Forrest asserted that Macready through Forster had furnished him with just grounds for retaliation.

It is evident that Forster helped to start the misunderstanding since in 1836 he stood almost alone in his opinion. But in 1836 he had written criticisms which were sincere and thoughtful and certainly did not call for an infuriated audience in America. They were merely uncompromisingly honest. The criticisms which appeared in the Examiner in 1845 on the occasion of Forrest's second trip to England were not so fair. And it seems certain that they

One of the many encounters his doing so caused Forster was one with Mr. Cooper of Brighton. Forster was told by Mr. Price that "Mr. Kean had said that Forster had declared in his hearing that no man should succeed as a first actor while Macready was on the stage." (49, p. 358) The words were quoted from Mr. Cooper and Forster, greatly troubled, verified them by going down to Brighton to see Mr. Cooper. He discovered that Kean had said that Forster had used words to that effect three years before and that he, Kean, was kept from town by dread of the Examiner.
were not written or authorised by Forster, who was ill at the time. They were provocation for an American crowd to show what it could do to get an actor out of a city. It would not stand a jibe describing Macbeth's fight with Macduff as a process of the former "scraping his sword" on that of his opponent to the bewilderment of all until a voice from the gallery called out approvingly, "That's right! Sharpen it!" (2, p. xiii)

2—Criticism of Browning 1835-1846

When Forster really felt vitality in something, he was not afraid to be uncompromising. He advises Macready to subscribe to various things, as for instance, a memorial to be erected in commemoration of the Duke of Wellington's military achievements because he believed it good policy. But he encouraged Macready in his efforts to raise the standards of the drama and only gave up a project at the St. James theatre in 1845 because it would have involved Macready in great risk. Convinced of the calibre of something, he was unafraid to stand without support in speaking of it and so it was that the eventual judgments regarding Forrest and Browning were announced by him to a world which then disagreed.

As we have said, Forster followed in the footsteps of Leigh Hunt and announced Browning as the other had announced Shelley and Keats. He was the second to notice him and he did so when he did not know anything about him personally, as Mr. Fox, to whom belongs the first honor, did. He knew that the writer in the ATHENAEUM had called Paracelsus rubbish, and he had taken it up as a probable subject for a piece of slashing criticism. But he did not find it so. He wrote: "'Since the publication of Philip Van Artevelde we have met with no such evidences of poetical genius and general intellectual power as are contained in this volume.'" The concluding words
were: "It is some time since we read a work of more unequivocal power than this. We conclude that its author is a young man, as we do not re-collect his having published before. If so, we may safely predict for him a brilliant career, if he continues true to the present promise of his genius. He possesses all the elements of a fine poet!" (26, p. 74) Mrs. Orr writes, "It was the simple, ungrudging admission of the unequivocal power, as well as brilliant promise which he recognized in the work." (38, p. 72)

Forster followed it in March, 1836, by an article in the NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE called Evidences of a New Genius for Dramatic Poetry, which boldly proclaimed, "'Mr. Browning has the powers of a great dramatic poet,'" and his genius "'waits only the proper opportunity to redeem the drama and elevate the literary repute of England..... Without the slightest hesitation we name Mr. Browning at once with Shelley, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. He has entitled himself to a place among the acknowledged poets of the age. This opinion will possibly startle many persons, but it is most sincere...Browning is a man of genius, he has in himself all the elements of a great poet, philosophic as well as dramatic...he has written a book that will live.'" (26, p. 107)

But Forster was not to be always so pleased and he told the truth when he was not. The next seven years saw Browning failing to fulfill the predictions for dramatic poetry to the satisfaction of the critic and of Macready the actor. Browning did not like Forster's notice of his Strafford on May 7, 1837. King Victor and King Charles and The Return of the Druses, which later became the second and fourth numbers of Belles and Pomegranates, were rejected by Macready. A Blot on the 'Scutcheon brought to an end the poet's relations with the actor. On June 22, 1844, Forster wrote an uncompromising criticism of the printed Colombe's Birthday. "'There can be no question!"', he wrote,
"as to the nerve and vigour of this writing, or of its grasp of thought. Whether the present generation of readers will take note of it or leave it to the uncertain mercies of the future, still rests with Mr. Browning himself. As far as he has gone, we abominate his tastes as much as we respect his genius." (26, p. 121)*

3-Friendship with the Subject of Some Daring Criticism

With the review of Paracelsus in 1835, Forster had paved the way for a valued friendship; Browning and Forster met at last at Macready's country house at Elstree. Forster's first words to Browning were, "Did you see a little notice of you I wrote in the EXAMINER?" (25, p. 38)

"Did you write that?" said Browning, with an expression of eager earnestness." (42, p. 27)

So began a friendship which was to last nearly the life-time of Forster and throughout which Browning never forgot that early recognition. Six years later he rewarded Forster well with the manuscript of Paracelsus inscribed as follows:

"To John Forster, Es. (my early understander), with true thanks for his generous and seasonable public confession of faith in me.

R.B.

Hatcham, Surrey, 1842" **

Forster gave Browning favorable criticisms again. On April 27, 1846, A Soul's Tragedy received prompt commendation. But at the last he did not feel that Browning's genius had been any more rightly directed than in Colombe's Birthday. "I think was very good on Browning - a genuine poet who mixes eccentricity largely with his verse; then, as time moves on he loses the poetry and retains only the eccentricity." (17, p. 251) he wrote in his diary in 1872 of the man whose genius he had so early recognized.
The preface to Browning's first selection of poems published in 1863 stated that "The design originated with two friends (Procter and Forster) who from the first appearance of Paracelsus, have regarded its writer as among the few great poets of the century; who have seen this opinion, since, gain ground with the best readers and critics; and who believe that such a selection as the present may go far to render it universal." (25, p. 231)
The dedication to the three volume Collected Poems, dated April 2, 1863, reads: "I dedicate these volumes to my old friend John Forster, glad and grateful that he who, from its first publication of the various poems they include, has been their promptest and staunchest helper, should seem even nearer to me now than almost thirty years ago." (45, p. 80)

Intimacy with the poet grew rapidly and was very dear to Forster. Macready tells us in his entry for February 1, 1836, that he was talking much of Browning who, Macready writes, "is his present all-in-all". (48, p. 272) Forster introduced his friend in the early part of this same year to such friends as Edward Bulwer Lytton, Laman Blanchard, for whose Lyric Offerings he had run to Bond Street eight years before, the artists Clarkson Stanfield and Daniel Maclise, for the latter of whom he was

** It is with the manuscript of Pauline Browning's first published poem, in the Forster Collection at South Kensington. The critic borrowed it, "convey, the wise it call." (42, p. 29) Browning later confirmed the conveyance with his signature on the title page: "To my true friend John Forster" (42, p. 29) It was especially valued by Forster because it was Browning's own annotated copy, and contained notes on one or two other matters by himself, and, on the last fly leaf, some critical notes on the poem in pencil by John Stuart Mill. Forster loved manuscripts and thus early obtained two of the ones he especially valued.
pressed by Forster into writing some verses on "the instant".* He also made Browning acquainted in these early weeks with two of those who were to be honored with dedications of his writings. To Talfourd, lawyer, poet, essayist, and dramatist, Browning dedicated his Pippa Passes in 1841 and to Procter, lawyer and poet, he dedicated Colombe's Birthday, in June, 1844.

In the first eight years or so of the friendship Forster saw Browning almost daily. In 1836 and 1837 they were occupied with Forster's biography of Strafford and Browning's play called Strafford on each of which the friend helped the author. Forster worked perhaps as hard on Browning's play as on any of the many that occupied his time in these years. But in November, 1842, Forster slighted the friendship by withholding Dickens's appreciation of Browning's A Blot on the Scutcheon and provided subject for some last hard feeling when Browning first saw Dickens's letter in the Life of

* Browning wrote them at his request to express Maclise's The Serenade in the Academy catalogue. He wrote, "I chanced to call on Forster the other day and he pressed me into committing on the instant, not the minute, in Maclise's behalf, who has wrought a divine Venetian work, it seems, for the British Institution. Forster described it well - but I could do nothing better, than this wooden ware - (all the 'properties', as we say, were given, and the problem was how to catalogue them in rhyme and unreason).

"I send my heart up to thee, all my heart
In this my singing!
For the stars help me, and the sea bears part;
The very night is clinging
Closer to Venice' streets to leave me space
Above me, whence thy face
May light my joyous heart to thee its dwelling-place." (40, p. 124)

The lines were later developed into his "In A Gondola".
Dickens near the time of Forster's death. But Browning did not know of the letter then and it was Forster's review of Colombe's Birthday, June, 1844, which brought down the wrath of the poet and temporarily deprived Forster of a friendship from which he perhaps needed a rest. Both the men were quick tempered and lived intensely. They had seen much of each other.

When in the fall of the next year the friendship was renewed on Forster's call and apology,* it could not have the time of the earlier years owing to Forster's preoccupation in his leisure with more numerous friends and to Browning's engagement and marriage.** The Brownings spent most of their married life abroad but renewed their friendship with Forster among others on their visits to England. On the first of these, in 1851, Forster gave them a dinner at Thames Ditton, 'in sight of the swans'. (16, p. 139)

After Mrs. Browning's death and Browning's return to England in 1861 we have evidence that

*Browning wrote Miss Barrett October 15, 1845, that Forster called and "very profuse of gracious" adding, "we shall go on again with the friendship as the snail repairs his battered shell." (6, vol. 1, p. 245)

**Mrs. Orr says that Forster was not informed of the secret marriage until the proof of the EXAMINER was sent. He went into a passion at the supposed "hoax, ordered up the compositor to have a swear at him, and demanded to see the MS from which it was taken: so it was brought and he instantly recognized the hand of Browning's sister. Next day came a letter from Robert Browning saying he had often meant to tell him or write of it, but hesitated between the two, and neglected both." (42, p. 149)
the old intimacy flourished.* It became the custom for Browning to lunch with Forster on most Sundays. And Browning expressed his delight in still possessing Forster, the patient and faithful friend. Forster was rewarded with the dedication of his friend’s Collected Works in 1863. Renton writes, after lamenting the fact that Browning’s burnt letters have taken with them what we might otherwise know of the last years of this friendship: "One thing we do know, that when Forster died, he had no truer mourner, no one who sorrowed more, with the sorrow of a great, tender, full heart, than Robert Browning." (42, p. 31)

Forster enjoyed again a very happy friendship for a few years in the sixties with the poet for whose works he did not feel complete approval. But before the seventies Forster’s eccentricities made trouble. The two were at a dinner party and began to nag at one another. Browning cited in support of some story he had told the authority of a lady of his acquaintance; Forster expressed doubt of her veracity, and Browning, in a sudden rage, seized a decanter and threatened to throw it at his head if he said another word. Friends kept that from happening, but they did not effect a reconciliation.

So closed the happy contacts of a valued friendship. Sad indeed is their last recorded communication; we read of it in Browning’s letters to Isa Blagden of November 21, and 30, 1870. They were written in regard to a request which Browning found awkward. Isa had desired that he obtain some papers

* Browning wrote to Isa Blagden, a dear friend of both himself and his wife, on August 31, 1861: "Forster wrote, (pressingly indeed) to get me to go to him from the 17th September till the 30th. That I couldn’t do, being engaged to Miss Barrett, but I promised to try & be in England by the 1st week in the month so it appears I should just miss you and that I am unwillingly to do... (3, p. 42)
belonging to Mr. Kirkup concerned with Landor which the owner imagined that Swinburne desired. Browning writes: "I will try and ask Forster to send Mr. Kirkup the letters he lent him, but Forster is out of town and I have not seen him for many months. It is years now since I found Forster no longer bearable, and it is unpleasant to begin applying about an old forgotten matter which has no other value in Kirkup's eyes than in connection with this imaginary project of Swinburne's; still, anything for an old friend, and I will do it if I can." (3, p. 182) Nine days later he wrote: "This delay in writing was caused by my anxiety to get Mr. Kirkup's papers, or at least report that they were on their way to him before you leave Florence: on the 17th Forster wrote, 'I shall be unable for some days, I fear, to attend to anything. But as soon as ever I can I will see to the matter.' As I suppose he needs simply to go to a drawer and take and send them to me I hoped to tell you he had done so but there is nothing come nor heard of as yet: So I must be sorry and patient." (3, p. 183)

The men were of temperaments enough alike so that they could not always get along. But the friendship while it lasted was a warm one. Had Forster's health not given away so completely as to emphasize his eccentricities, the friendship of the two might never have ended. Forster had nevertheless enjoyed a friendship with one of the greatest men of his day, a friendship often happy and intimate.

4. Strafford: His Authorship Questioned

The year of Forster's first acquaintance with Browning was the year that his first volume of the Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth including those of Sir John Eliot and Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford, was written for Dr. Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopaedia. What happened in connection with the Life of the earl of Strafford is
not definitely known. Browning gave Forster, who was ill and anxious not to turn in the biography late, help of some nature. Subsequent discussion had much to say of the character of that help.* It was mechanical if we may judge from Forster's character and from the original preface that Browning wrote for his play on Strafford in which he stated: "The portraits are, I think, faithful, and I am exceedingly fortunate in being able, in proof of this, to refer to the subtle and eloquent exposition of the characters of Milton and Strafford in the Lives of Eminent British Statesmen, now in the course of publication in Lardner's Cyclopaedia by a writer whom I am proud to call my friend." (10, pp. 48-51)

When the first days came when Browning did not call Forster "my friend" but rather "old foe" (6, vol. 1, p. 212) the perspective of his view seems to have shifted. He did not contradict Miss Barrett in his reply to her letter of June 6, 1846, in which this lady showed a not unusual tendency to think that her loved one had not, through his generosity, received his full due of credit. She closed the letter with, "...I forgot again your 'Strafford' - Mr. Forster's 'Strafford', I beg his pardon for not attributing to him other men's works. Not that I mean to be cross - not to him even." (3, vol. 2, p. 214) The remark is in her usual tone when speaking of Forster.**

Convictions of Browning's authorship resulted in the biography's republication after his death with his name on the title-page. This called forth a protest from Mrs. Forster who asserted that her husband was too honourable a man to allow another's work to be put forward as his, and maintained that the work was almost wholly done by him.

** She wrote November 7, 1845 to Browning: "...and at intervals remembering in inglorious complacency (for which you must try to forgive me) that Mr. Forster is no longer anything like an enemy". (3, vol. 1, p. 268)
After Browning's death Dr. J. F. Furnivall published a letter in the Pall Mall Gazette for April, 1890, which he felt proved conclusively that the Life as well as the play of Strafford had been written by the poet, Browning. (4, p. 256) In it he asserts that Browning generously said nothing about the authorship during Forster's lifetime but that after Forster's death he told him and a few of his other friends that Forster had been greatly relieved by his kindness in offering to finish the biography and that he, Browning, had set to work on the material accumulated and completed it on his own lines in accordance with his own conception of Strafford's character.

Much that lent conviction to this idea arose from the fact that the conception of Strafford's character in Forster's Life and in Browning's play is the same. However perplexing our knowledge of the help the poet gave the biographer, that about what the biographer gave the poet is made definitely clear in Macready's entries in his diary during the time it was being written and produced. Here the similarities of conception may have entered. Forster kept Macready posted about its progress from the day, August 3, 1836 when Browning definitely decided to write upon the subject Strafford.* On October 31 it was reported finished and the alterations began. Forster cared more for the play than did Macready, who felt that the other's interest in it was due to his interest in the people portrayed. Without Forster the play would probably not have been acted, at least not so early as May, 1837. Macready's doubts of its dram-

* The twenty-eighth of the preceding May Macready had asked Browning to write him a play to keep him from having to go to America for financial reasons. Browning, who had been helping Forster with Strafford and had the Statesman in his mind, suggested Strafford. Macready gave instant approval but Browning did nothing about it until August.
atic character caused Forster much effort in the weeks that preceded its production. He assuredly helped Browning in his efforts to make his play "dramatic". Browning's thoughts in later life emphasized the faults of Forster and it seems likely that the perspective shifted until he may have believed in something he had not done. If he did deserve to be called the author of Forster's Life of Thomas Wentworth it was not an act of generosity, as Dr. Furnivall supposes to hide the fact until Forster could not defend himself.

5-Walter Savage Landor

The summer of the same memorable year which had seen the beginning of friendship with Browning and was to see that with Dickens, two men just Forster's age, saw that with an older notable contemporary, Walter Savage Landor. It was after the performance of Ion, a play by still another friend, Thomas Noon Talfourd, of whom we shall speak later. A company gathered at the latter's home. Forster's only recollection of the meeting there with Landor is of the sincerity and feeling with which both Wordsworth and Landor spoke of Southey's absence. Later Landor was to handle Wordsworth sharply in A Satire on Satirists, for disrespect to Southey, and to arouse in Forster a desire to become better acquainted with the author.

It was relating to Southey that Forster later served Landor through the EXAMINER of which he was then, in 1847, editor. He was a valuable champion of Southey and in charge of a paper of what was then called extremely liberal opinions. He found himself defending Southey against the QUARTERLY REVIEW, organ of the Tories, somewhat, her remarks, as Sydney Smith, an old Edinburgh Reviewer, had found himself defending the church against archbishops and bishops. (20, vol. 2, p. 405) For the defence of Southey properly belonged to the Tories. The EXAMINER published, among others, letters calling attention to Southey's services and to the neglect his family suffered. Forster strongly dir-
acted attention to the fact that though a Tory administration was in power when Southey died and until three years after his death, his son was still suffered to languish on less than a hundred a year in the church of whose interests his father had been so zealous a champion. Forster succeeded in awaking Lord Truro, who stepped in and making Forster the channel of his kindness, handed over to Mr. Cuthbert Southey the presentation under the great seal to a rectory of the value of upwards of three hundred a year besides house and glebe. "Even the fees had been paid by Lord Truro," Forster writes. "The transaction altogether, I need hardly add, was a wonderful surprise as well as pleasure to Landor." (20, vol. 2, p. 493) Forster thought much of both Southey and Wordsworth. "And so they lie, two men whom true Englishmen should never cease to honour, by Derwent Lake and Grasmere springs,

Serene Creator of Immortal things,

now themselves immortal," he wrote after visiting their burial places. (20, vol. 2, p. 411) Forster did much to pour oil on the troubled waters between Wordsworth and Southey and Landor appreciated his feeling for Southey, whom he himself evidently idolized. Forster says that on the day of Southey's death, March 22, 1843, Landor wrote to him telling him that it would grieve him for anyone else to write the news first.

Forster did not idolize this one of his friends, although he was loyal in the friendship, and it never wavered to the day of Landor's death. Landor, who depended almost alone upon him, had a better effect upon his nervous temperament than did Browning. But the qualities which made Landor depend upon him and think the world in general of little account did not render him admirable in Forster's eyes. He says of him: "Though I place him in the first rank as a writer of English prose; though he was also a genuine poet; and there is no exaggeration in
the saying of one of his American admirers (James Russell Lowell, of Boston) that, excepting Shakespeare, no other writer has furnished us with so many or so delicate aphorisms of human nature; his faults lie more upon the surface than is usual with writers of this high order. It was unfortunate for him in his early years that self-control was not necessarily forced upon a temperament which had peculiar need of it; and its absence in later time affected both his books and his life disastrously. Even the ordinary influences and restraints of a professional writer were not known to him. Literature was to him neither a spiritual calling, as Wordsworth regarded it; nor the lucrative enjoyment for which Scott valued it. Landor wrote without any other aim than to please himself, or satisfy the impulse as it rose. Writing was in that sense an indulgence to which no limits were put and wherein no laws of government were admitted. If merely a thing pleased him, it was preeminent and excellent above all things; what for the moment most gratified his will or pleasure he was eager to avouch wisest and best, as in the thing that satisfied neither he could find suddenly all opposite qualities; and though a certain counterpoise to this was in his own nature, his opinions generally being wise and true, and his sympathies almost always generous and noble, it led him frequently into contradictions and extravagance that deprived him of a portion of his fame." (20, vol. 1, p. 2)

Some of these tendencies, which have caused Landor to be called a second Lear, were responsible for the wavering of the friendship which took place only toward the close of Landor's life. As Landor grew older his reason grew weak and he became possessed to print all the remnants of his poetry, saying that others would if he did not. This determination had its share in Landor's dissuading Forster from making what had been for twenty years the yearly visit to him on his birthday in 1858. An illness came from which he recovered with mind
less clouded. By July Landor was off for Florence and at the close of the next year, owing to his desire to print something about what the newspapers had said of him in Bath and which Forster told him would be impossible, there occurred the only estrangement in a quarter of a century of friendship. Alienation, however, never lay anywhere but in Landor’s aged and clouded mind. Forster, from August, 1859, to the day of Landor’s death, handed over on behalf of the latter’s brothers two hundred pounds by quarterly payments to Browning who was in Florence and could look out for their old friend. Landor, when he was at last in the year before his death in 1864 to turn again to his friend, found him ready.

After that meeting in the summer of 1836 after Talfourd’s Ion the two had quickly become friends. In addition to the Southey interest they found one other in which they had much in common. Both had great admiration for those chiefs of the English Commonwealth whose biographies Forster was writing for Landor’s Cyclopaedia. It is not much wonder that by September Landor was sending Forster scenes from the Orestes at Delphos, inviting that criticism the friends of Forster found their due. Nor is it strange that on January 30, 1838, Forster began those visits to Landor in Bath which cheered the older man for twenty happy birthdays. By 1840 Dickens began to join the friends at this anniversary celebration. When Forster first made the trip, Bath was only accessible by coach and lone left after eight in the morning. But by 1840, the railroad being open and the time-table conveniently arranged, they could leave London in the afternoon, dine and pass the evening with Landor and breakfast the next morning in London. Forster says: “Still vividly remembered by us both are such evenings when a night’s sleep purchased for us cheaply the pleasure of being present with him on his birthday.” (20, vol. 2, p. 459)
Forster was one of the very few whom Landor considered congenial spirits. The Pentameron was dedicated in December, 1837, to Southey in a few words which said that only he and two others, Mr. James and Forster, would care for them. Forster appreciated the compliment, but regretted the characteristic of Landor which prompted it. He tells us that Landor always fancied that he could place himself on a hill apart even from those with whom he was actually contending. But he gave Forster the privilege of giving him constant advice and aid. It was a privilege but it was also a drain upon Forster's strength. Landor did not hesitate to send corrections whenever they occurred to him even though it was night and the day showed that they must themselves be corrected.

Forster did not, however, lose patience. A letter Landor wrote him containing a poem to his friend expresses the gratitude earned from the lonely man. Forster had been working with him upon his Collected Writings, which were dedicated to him and to Julius Hare. He had sent Landor some congratulatory verses in Landorian imitation on the completion of their joint labor in editing.

"As the volumes began, they must end with you. A te principium, tibi desinet. These verses must be added; and here are two or three words to enrich the index: red-poll'd, siller-grasping (siller, Scotch for silver). Now, these I think must be my very last; for would it not be a scandal, my dear Forster, that a man in his seventy-second year should be running with his tongue after the Muses?"

"Forster! whose zeal hath seiz'd each written page That fell from me, and over many lands Hath clear'd for me a broad and solid way, Whence one more age, ay, haply more than one, May be arrived at (all through thee, accept No false or faint or perishable thanks."

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From better men, and greater, friendship turn'd
Thy willing steps to me. From Eliot's call
Death-dark; from Hampden's sadder battle-field;
From steadfast Cromwell's tribunitian throne,
Loftier than king's supported knees could mount;
Hast thou departed with me, and hast climbed
Cecropian heights, and ploughed Aegean waves.
Therefore it never grieved me when I saw
That she who guards those regions and those seas
Hath lookt with eyes more gracious upon thee.
There are no few like that conspirator
Who, under pretext of power-worship, fell
At Caesar's feet, only to hold him down
While others stabb'd him with repeated blows:
And there are more who fling light jibes, immerst
In gutter-filth, against the car that mounts
Weighty with triumph up the Sacred Way.
Protect in every place my stranger guests.
Born in the lucid land of free pure song,
Now first appearing on repulsive shores,
Bleak, and where safely none but natives move,
Red-poll'd, red-handed, siller-grasping men.
Ah! lead them far away, for they are used
To genial climes and gentle speech; but most
Cymodameia: warn the Tritons off
While she ascends, while through the opening plain
Of the green sea (brighten'd by bearing it)
Gushes reduntantly her golden hair.

The lines, I think, will conclude the book becomingly and ornamentally, and help us hand in hand down to future generations. The men of our commonwealth indeed will never permit us to be separated, if only you remain faithful to their fields and pastures. But take care, take care you do not make me as jealous of you in poetry as I have often been in prose. Do not let me catch you again among

"Those trackless forest glades, those noble hills
And those enchanting but sequestered valleys
Which broad-browed Landor rules as his domain.

And now come and make your peace for having invaded that country." (20, vol. 2, p. 448)
When Landor went to Florence in 1858 for the last few years of his life and in 1859 ceased writing to this friend, he must have missed the companionship he so cherished. At the end of 1863, the year before he died, he cast his flimsy displeasure aside and wrote again. This letter of December 14, asked a favor. He wrote that he knew well the friendship that Forster had for him and that he had grieved over its interruption, that he would not then write but for the promise Forster had once held out to him that he might one day consent to be his biographer. Landor had just received a letter from some one informing him that his life was being written. It had disturbed Landor, who begged Forster if he still retained a thought of becoming his biographer to protect him from the injustice threatened. The last words are: "How often have I known you vindicate from unmerited aspersions honest literary men! Unhappily no friend has been found hitherto who takes any such interest in Walter Landor." (20, vol. 2, p. 588) Other friendly letters followed. On February second he wrote that Forster's letter had been the kindest of those which cheered his birthday. On February eighteenth he stated that he was perhaps writing the last letter he should ever write, but that he hoped he should live long enough to read Forster's Life of Scott. On the twenty-second he is again writing, this time telling Forster that he is anxious to read the book which Forster has so kindly promised him. The book was received and enjoyed, according to another letter dated the twenty-first of March. On May ninth he again thinks he is writing his last letter. That was not written until September ninth, when he told Forster of the great pleasure the latter's letter had given him that very day.

Forster undertook his friend's biography. But he did not do it for Landor, as he was later to do it for Dickens, after years of expecting the task, nor did he do it with the same pleasure. He had
not known Landor so intimately. And he had
known the man only in his last years.* But Landor
desired that Forster should write his life, as
did the two surviving brothers of the poet.

6-Recreation at the Court of Lady Blessington,
1836-1849

During these years Forster was often at the
court of Lady Blessington at Gore House, then in
full swing. He was valued and welcomed there at
the large and at the small and intimate gather­
ings as early as 1836. In December of that year
the Countess wrote to one of her correspondents,
"I have made the acquaintance of Mr. Forster,
and like him exceedingly; he is very clever, and
what is better, very noble-minded." (34, vol.2,
p. 397) She received a letter from Landor in this
year in which the poet wrote, "How glad I am that
you are become acquainted with Forster!" (38, p.
309) The pleasant contacts lasted until the break­
up of Gore house in 1849 and the departure for Par­
is, where Lady Blessington very soon died.**

*He was not helped regarding Landor's childhood,
as he was even then being helped with that of
Dickens, by continued confidences regarding the
ever years. Landor did not have the vivid im­
pressions of them that did Dickens. Once he had
proposed to send Forster reminiscences and had
done so up to his sixth year. But he had then
decided that he could not return to boyhood. For­
ter put away the reminiscences for safekeeping so
carefully that he could not find them when he un­
dertook the task of writing the biography.

**It may be of interest to note that Lady Bless­
ington was a friend of the ill-fated L.E.L., whose
engagement with Forster was so mysteriously broken
off. She wished to erect a monument at her own
expense over the remains of her deceased friend,
but it had already been provided.
It is evident that Forster was not immune to the attraction of foreign titles. He was once heard shouting to his servant Henry above the hubbub of conversation at one of his dinners, "Good heavens, sir, butter for the Count's flounders!" (44, p. 77) The frequency of his visits recorded by Maready and the letters published in the Memoirs and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington (34, vol. 2, pp. 396-405, 410-432) make it evident that he constantly worshipped at the shrine of Lady Blessington and at that of Count D'Orsay, who lived with her. He found with the titles real qualities and never met there disillusionment. Of the welcome they offered he wrote, "Its attraction to those who had familiar admission there was even less the accomplishments and grace of its mistress, than her true-heartedness and constancy in friendship." (20, vol. 2, p. 326)

A letter of Lady Blessington's written April 4, 1848, after the dinner to celebrate the conclusion of Dombey, does its share to sum up the contacts and the friendship which lasted to the end. "Count D'Orsay repeated to me this morning the kind things you said of him when proposing his health. He, I assure you, was touched when he repeated them, and his feelings were infectious, for mine responded. To be highly appreciated by those we most highly value, is, indeed, a source of heart-felt gratification. From the first year of our acquaintance with you, we had learned to admire your genius, to respect your principles, and to love your goodness of heart, and the honest warmth of your nature. These sentiments have never varied. Every year, by unfolding your noble qualities to us, has served to prove how true were our first impressions of you, and your sole regret has been that your occupations deprived us of enjoying half as much of your society as all who have once enjoyed it must desire. Count D'Orsay declares that yesterday was one of the happiest days of his life. He feels proud at having assisted in the triumph of a friend whose heart is as genial as his genius is great..........(34, vol. 2, p. 403)
One of the things that gained for Forster their admiration was his daring power for "slashing" criticism which he continued to exercise as occasion arose until 1856 when, having attained and carried on successfully the editorship of a first class paper, he retired from his post because of increased prosperity and the desire to work more uninterruptedly on his beloved seventeenth century. One of her letters addressed to a friend well illustrates this: "I have read with delight the article of F---- on the life of Churchill. It is the most masterly review I ever read, and places Churchill in a so much better point of view, as to excite a sympathy for him. Every one is speaking of this review. All the papers have taken it up. It is generally attributed to Macaulay, and is said to be the best of his articles. F------ has crushed took by the dextrous exposure of his mistakes, ignorance, and want of comprehension. I assure you that Count D'Orsay and I are as proud of the praises we hear of this article on every side, as if we had a share in it. F------'s notice of The Chimes is perfect. It takes the high tone it ought for that book, and ought to make those ashamed who cavil, because..........

(34, vol. 1, p. 276)

7-An All Absorbing Friendship

Forster showed remarkable versatility in his friendships. 1836 alone saw intimate ones with three utterly different men, Robert Browning, Walter Savage Landor, and Charles Dickens. But that with the last of these was that which meant to him everything that one could mean. Charles Dickens stalked first in Forster's life and had for his own all its time that he could use. Robert Browning could end his friendship with a quarrel, Landor could retire in displeasure or request favors as he chose. But Dickens always had a positive love from John Forster who from the beginning of the friendship always gave it first place in his life. It was the novelist who wrote for the people rather than the poets or the philosopher, Carlyle,
who commanded that love. It was the one who always gave to him sturdy, constant esteem and allowed him to exercise most completely his capacity for service. Two keynotes to Forster's character are revealed by the choice, interest in and sympathy with people; desire to be of use.

Christmas day of this memorable year brought Forster his introduction to Dickens. He had first seen and heard the name of his future friend in 1831, when he had seen him on the stairs of the TRUE'SUN and had learned that he had been spokesman for some recalcitrant reporters who had just disturbed the calm of the mansion by a strike. Five years after the glimpse, Forster's attention was called by Albany Fonblanque, then editor of the EXAMINER, to the Sketches by Boz, Illustrative of Every Day Life and Every Day People. On December 25 of the same year William Harrison Ainsworth, the one writer of historical novels of his generation who in the days of his glory could be sure of popularity for his work, invited to his home at Kensal Lodge the more famous future novelist and his friend, John Forster.

His early, as were his later, contacts with Dickens were treasured in the memory of John Forster. The December of the introduction, Dickens's opera of the Village Coquettes was produced with good success and furnished the occasion for his first letter from the novelist. Before the end of the month a letter accompanied a copy of it sent as a gift. Ainsworth had brought together in the interval two who were irresistibly attracted to each other. The letters of the early days show eagerness for friendship and dissatisfaction that a mutual desire of getting together has not been satisfied. The Collected Sketches, both first and

*Dickens had written the story and songs for an opera composed by Mr. Hullah to promote Mr. Brahams's enterprise at the St. James theatre.
second series, followed the Village Coquettes in February, 1837, and they were accompanied by a letter which shows that Forster already enjoyed Dickens's warm expectations of the new friendship. It was desired that they be received "as a very small testimony of the donor's regard and obligations, as well as of his desire to cultivate and avail himself of a friendship which has been so pleasantly thrown in his way....In short, if you will receive them for my sake and not for their own, you will very greatly oblige me." (19, vol. 1, p. 97) We may be sure that Forster was happy in the gift.

The whole thirty-four years of friendship saw not one week that did not bring Forster a letter from or that did not see him writing one to this friend.* On Christmas eves he was accustomed to walk with Dickens down the road from Aldgate to Bow to see the marketing for Christmas. For twenty successive years, beginning with April 2, 1838.** Forster spent the double anni-

*And what letters he could write and could inspire from his friend. Dickens wrote from America of one of Forster's, April 1, 1842: "How I have read and re-read your affectionate, hearty, interesting, funny, serious, delightful, and thoroughly Forsterian Columbia letter, I will not attempt to tell you..." (19, vol. 1, p. 352) In 1844 he wrote from Genoa: "You will have lots of hasty notes from me while I am at work: but you know your man: and whatever strikes me, I shall let off upon you as if I were in Devonshire terrace." (19, vol. 2, p. 118)

** The second anniversary of Dickens's marriage and Forster's twenty-sixth birthday.
versary with Mr. and Mrs. Dickens and was only deprived of the real pleasure resulting from it* when, in 1858, Dickens's domestic troubles brought separation from his wife. He took with Dickens memorable walks and rides. He helped him with his struggles with the DAILY NEWS and HOUSEHOLD WORDS. He acted in the amateur theatricals which Dickens managed. He enjoyed life more especially when he was with Dickens and he was with him much. He read proof for Dickens and criticized his writings before they were seen by others. He was his constant advisee in business relations. Forster's absorbing friendship for him may be glimpsed in Dickens's letter from America of April 26, 1842: "'You are a part, and an essential part, of our home, dear friend, and I exhaust my imagination in picturing the circumstances under which I shall surprise you by walking into 58, Lincoln's Inn Fields.'" (19, vol. 1, p. 387).

Forster could not know even this friend without occasionally quarreling. But such disturbances were here of the most momentary nature and were a source of deep regret to Forster because he could not bear a minute's loss of that friend. They were never disastrous and Forster enjoyed his precious intimacy to the end. In his Life of Dickens he seizes every opportunity to praise his friend and show to others the man he loved.

8-His Delight in Dickens's Sense of Humor

What he praises most in his writings and calls Dickens's highest faculty is humour, a faculty by which Dickens expressed effectively his great sym-

*Forster thought much of anniversaries. In January of this year he had begun the twenty year series of visits to Landor on his birthday. On Carlyle's seventieth birthday he overruled the objections of the cautious man with an insistent plea: "'Your birthday, Carlyle!'" (9, p. 233) and would take no denial.
pathy with mankind. He writes, "To perceive relations in things which are not apparent generally, is one of those exquisite properties of humour by which are discovered the affinities between the high and the low, the attractive and the repulsive, the rarest things and things of every day, which brings us all upon the level of a common humanity. It is this which gives humour an immortal touch that does not belong of necessity to pictures, even the most exquisite, of mere character or manners...." (19, vol. 3, p. 308) Again we have: ".....by connecting the singularities and eccentricities, which ordinary life is apt to reject or overlook, with the appreciation that is deepest and the laws of insight that are most universal.....all things human are happily brought within human sympathy. It was at the heart of everything Dickens wrote." (19, vol. 3, p. 349)

Forster was accused wrongly by Mr. John Brown of having no sense of humour. (33, p. 340) It is true that he did not enjoy the vulgar and that Bob Keeley and John Pritt Harley were of the very few contemporary actors who could make him laugh. He enjoyed humour largely as a means of approaching human sympathy and Dickens's particular brand was his favourite. His sense of fun led him, however, into delight in balloons and into games of leap-frog, as well as into many a play with the Dickens family.

9-William Harrison Ainsworth

Forster felt deeply grateful to the one who had so pleasantly thrown this friendship in his way, the one who had encouraged Dickens to publish his first book and was a common friend and constant companion of the first happy years in the late thirties. For the first three years of Forster's friendship with Dickens William Harrison Ainsworth enjoyed the walks and rides and dinners Forster records with such pleasure. He made two happy visits to Manchester possible by
causing them to be well entertained by his friends in 1838 and 1839. He is called by Forester a "welcome and pleasant companion always" (19, vol. 2, p. 431) and one "to whose sympathy in tastes and pursuits, accomplishments in literature, open-hearted generous ways, and cordial hospitality, many of the pleasures of later years were due." (919, vol. 1, p. 158)

In 1839 Forster had trouble with Bentley, which will be discussed later, which caused him to begin gradually to lose track of this friend whom he owed so much. So completely had he lost contact with him by the sixties that, at a dinner given by Frederick Chapman, the publisher, he responded to Browning's mention of having recently seen the former companion with: "Good heavens, is he still alive?" (31, p. 10)
CHAPTER IV

1836-1840

1-Troubles with Alfred Bunn

Forster had no respect for Alfred Bunn, manager of Drury Lane, and he came to unpleasant terms with him in 1837. In 1836 he gave freely of his sympathy to one who suffered because of him. His friend Macready had been at Drury Lane for thirteen years but found in the spring of this year that he could no longer get along with Mr. Bunn. He lost control of himself and made an assault upon the manager, who had made him act in a mutilated Richard III and who had upon remonstrance bitten his finger. The result for Macready was an action at law and the payment of £150 damages. Forster was at hand throughout the affair to advise and proffer what help could be given.*

Forster was thus identified with an enemy and suffered his share of abuse from Mr. Bunn and his friend Mr. Westmacott, editor of the AGE, a scurrilous paper. On November 7, he had been much distressed at an abusive article and had considered seriously doing something drastic.

*It could not be much more than sympathy. Forster faithfully brought press notices and kept Macready otherwise informed of the progress of the affair, a service which he rendered this friend as long as he was on the stage. On July 1, he informed Macready that the plaintiff's solicitor, when Mr. TheSIGER in the court said that Macready had "attempted to tear out the tongue" of Bunn, came up to him and requested, if this were spoken of among his friends, to say that such expression was in the counsel's brief. (48, vol. 1, p. 332)
about it. The year 1837 saw various attacks upon him.* In November of this year he suffered a painful and mistaken allusion to his parentage. Macready received the notice of the publication of The Life of John Forster, the Butcher Boy which was thought by him to have come probably from Mr. Bunn or Mr. Westmacott. On December 14, Forster told Macready that Mr. Evans, Mr. Bunn's solicitor, had commenced an action against the EXAMINER, of which Forster was literary and dramatic critic, for libel. On December 15, Macready heard of a report of a prosecution against Talfourd, Forster, Polhill, and Macready for a supposed conspiracy to put down the AGE. The notices were disagreeable, but nothing serious resulted.

2—Thomas Noon Talfourd

Forster had, besides Macready, a dear friend involved in the Bunn troubles. An agreement was made in 1837 with Mr. Molloy, Mr. Westmacott's solicitor, by which Forster promised not to attack Mr. Bunn personally if the attacks of the AGE on Thomas Talfourd were discontinued. Of this friend he so championed Forster himself has said that "the most constant and cordial intercourse existed between them." (42, p. 223) They had much in common in their backgrounds, in that both were members of the Bar and both were interested in dramatic literature.

Talfourd was a man of letters, theatrical

* On April 5, 1837, Macready noted in his diary that Forster had told him of an attack on him in the TIMES. On October 14, he noted that Talfourd had told him of some abuse of himself and Forster in the AGE which, Macready says, "was unimportant except as its matter testified that there are some treacherous persons about the theatre." (48-1-417)
critic, journalist (as legal reporter on The Times, 1812), dramatist, and eventually justice of her Majesty's Court of Common Pleas. Forster's connections with him had to do with the former's meeting Landor. They had to do with Dickens, for whom Talfourd worked in connection with the piracy of the novelist's writings and for which he was rewarded with the dedication of Pickwick. They had much to do with Talfourd's two plays of 1836 and 1838, the more famous Ion and The Athenian Captive, both of which were read and criticised and rehearsed with Forster present.*

Forster's memories of Talfourd who died before him were those of a friend at all times delightful. He wrote of him at the Nickleby dinner in 1839: "There was Talfourd, facile and fluent of kindliest speech, with whom we were in constant and cordial intercourse." (19, vol. 1, p. 155) Writing of the same friend when he was ten years older, he says: "Our friend was now on the bench; which he adorned with qualities that are justly the pride of that profession, and with accomplishments that have become more rare in its highest places than they were in former times. His elevation only made those virtues better known. Talfourd assumed nothing with the ermine but the privilege of more frequent intercourse with the tastes and friends he loved, and he continued to be the most joyous and least affected of companions...........and the many happy nights made happier by the voice so affluent in generous words, and the face so bright with ardent sensibility, come back to me sorrowfully

*In the case of Ion, Forster had informed Macready March 15, 1835, that it had been completed, obtained Macready to act it July 7, and generally presided over its fate. It was acted in May and June, 1836.
now. 'Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.' The poet's line has a double application and sadness. (19, vol. 2, p. 397)

2. Two Plays, a Book, and a Plan of 1837

Bulwer Lytton's Duchess of Lavalier occupied much of the attention of Forster at the close of the old year and beginning of the new. The play failed with the audience and Forster with Bulwer concocted a new scene, which Macready thought hazardous and impolitic but assented to because he understood that it was another desperate stroke to retrieve the cast-down nature of Bulwer's fame.

Browning's Strafford occupied Forster's almost exclusive attention for some weeks before its production in the spring of 1837. He was working on and brought out before the close of the year the lives of Pym and Hampden for the second volume of the Lives of the Statesmen, a volume better fated than the first. No questions ever arose over the authorship. In October, a plan was made which remained only a plan. A collection of the writings of Robert Blake, the English admiral, was suggested by Landor, who shared Forster's interest in early England. Forster writes that Landor "as much wanted patience for it as I wanted time and between us it came to nothing." (20, vol. 2, p. 323)

*The play remained a failure, but Bulwer scored a victory the following year by putting on anonymously the Lady of Lyons, which established his power to attain the art of dramatic construction and theatrical effect. Even Forster did not at first know the authorship of the Lady of Lyons. But he always knew what was going on and very soon discovered it.
Forster shared Dickens's interests and confidences so completely that the novels were events in his life. Oliver Twist was the first. As early as 1837 he had commanded Dickens's esteem for his critical capacity and delighted his friend with his praise of the partly written book.* From that date Dickens submitted everything he wrote to Forster,** who began then the revising and suggesting which shared in directing the course of Dickens's novels and caused passages to be omitted and phrases to be altered. On the evening, in 1838, to which the writing of the last chapter of Oliver Twist had been assigned, he talked long with Dickens of what should be the fate of Charley Bates, a character for whom Talfourd had eloquently pleaded.***

And in this first year of the Dickens friendship Dickens wrote: "'How can I thank you? Can I do better than by saying that the sense of poor Oliver's reality, which I know you have had from the first, has been the highest of all praise to me. None that has been lavished upon me have I felt half so much as that appreciation of my intent and meaning. You know I have ever done so, for it was your feeling for me and mine for you that first brought us together, and I hope will keep us so, till death do us part. Your notices make me grateful but very proud; so have a care of them.'" (19, vol. 1, p. 105)

** Forster writes, "There was nothing written by him after this date which I did not see before the world did, either in manuscript or proofs." (19, vol. 1, p. 105)

*** Dickens had a cold which excused him from a dinner engagement and made possible a lamb chop with Forster and the discussion remembered with such pleasure by Forster.
ship Forster began also that help which was to be of such value to Dickens in business arrangements. He learned from Dickens in this year that he had never had a copy from Mr. Bentley, his publisher, of the agreement for Oliver and that he feared he had the second novel (Barnaby Rudge) on the same terms under the same agreement. *Dickens' attitude was then as always that the creative side would suffer should he attend to that of business, and that it was better to allow neglect of the latter to involve him in bitter consequences in the future. Forster, beginning with this year, averted troubles which would have been the outcome of such an attitude and helped him to straighten out the tangles in which he already found himself. He insisted always upon copies of agreements with Dickens' publishers.

6-Play Struggles of 1838; Landor's Dramatic Efforts

Forster was busy in this year with four plays of four friends which owed much to his efforts. Knowles and Talfourd each produced one in 1838. Forster had so much to do with that of Knowles that he was even the one who gave it its title, on May 7, 1838, of Woman's Wit; or Love's Disguises. It was successful and ran thirty-one nights. **

*Forster was a party to the understanding arrived at in 1838 by Dickens to put Barnaby Rudge on the footing desired and to have it begin when Oliver closed.

** That the friendship seems to have closed with it does not appear to have been Forster's fault. He had been zealous in his efforts to relieve Knowles's straightened circumstances the previous year and had succeeded in getting Macready to advance him money on a tragedy he was contemplating; on the condition that he give Macready the refusal of all of his plays. He had been instrumental in getting Macready to give Knowles a benefit in June, 1838. But in August, Knowles refused to recognise Forster when he passed him in the garden grounds and there is no more mention of acquaintance.
Talfourd's Athenian Captive occupied a great deal of his attention and even needed considerable revision. He began a two-year struggle with Hunt's play, A Legend of Florence, which was produced successfully on February 7, 1840. He decided upon the withdrawal of a farce which Dickens had written at his suggestion.*

Forster also gave his interests in this year to Landor's efforts in the field. He does not seem to have favored the idea of the theatre for Landor and eventually persuaded him not to try the production of his play although he failed to dissuade him from adopting the dramatic form. His correspondence at this time shows him anxious that Landor should not choose it unless what he had to say really could be best expressed on the stage. He pointed out that a play, if it was to be acted, as plays should be, suffered from limitations which it was useless to endure unnecessarily. (20, vol. 2, p. 347) When he received Landor's three tragedies, he thought them good but advised strongly against their being acted.**

*It was perhaps fortunate in the interests of Forster's friendship with Dickens that the latter did not continue the dramatic efforts manifested in this and the previous year. Forster encouraged him as he did Browning and a like disaster might have resulted as Dickens did not seem to be a dramatist. In July, 1837, Forster had encouraged him in his desire to write a comedy and, in 1838, in proposing to Macready a dramatization of Oliver Twist. The last did not meet welcome with the actor but a farce was written and its production planned. There was manifest disappointment at its reading, December 11, 1838, and within the month Forster decided on its withdrawal.

**Landor had wished them acted because he had trouble with his publishers and had decided never to print anything more. Forster's advice resulted in his changing his mind and Forster writes that when it was spoken of he took it "as good
7-Years of Play, 1838-1839

Forster knew in 1838, and 1839, two years that held amid the work much boyish play. In 1838 the keeping of the anniversaries of Landor's birthday and of Dickens's wedding and of Forster's birthday first became a custom. The birth of Dickens's eldest daughter, of whom Forster was asked to be godfather, was celebrated by a ride of fifteen miles. He visited Manchester in both years, and found in the cottages of Dickens at Twickenham and Petersham a center for many happy times.

In these years Forster knew exuberant joy. Not the least delightful of his good times were afforded by balloons. A letter of June 23, calls Forster's attention to his failure to fulfill the conditions of his presidency of the balloon club at Twickenham. His duty was to keep the club supplied with balloons:

"'Gammon Lodge, Saturday evening, June 23, 1838. Sir, I am requested to inform you that at a numerous meeting of the Gammon aeronautical Association for the encouragement of science and the Consumption of Spirits (of Wine) - Thomas Beard, Esquire, Mrs. Charles Dickens, Charles Dickens Esquire, the Snodgering Blee, Popem Jee, and other distinguished characters being present and assenting, the vote of censure of which I enclose a copy was unanimously passed upon you for gross negligence in the discharge of your duty, and most unjustified disregard of the best interests

**(cont.) naturally as Benedick when rallied on his change of intention." (20, vol. 2, p. 356)

Andrea of Hungary was in Forster's hands for his criticism November 2, and Giovanna of Naples arrived nineteen days later, the result, Forster was told, of his praises of the former. The two were printed then without waiting for the completion of the trilogy. In the autumn of 1840 appeared the third, Fra Rupert, an elaboration of Giovanna after her second and third marriages.
of the Society. I am, Sir, your most obedient Servant, Charles Dickens, Honorary Secretary.

To John Forster, Esquire." (19, vol. 1, p. 159)

Lacready notes on June 24 that Forster was among those who amused themselves before dinner by sending up balloons.

His visits to Manchester in November, 1838, and in January 12, 1839, saw his introduction to the more famous literary men of the town through the courtesy of his friend Ainsworth who supplied letters for the first * and was present on the second trip. One of the principal objects of both visits was to meet and get acquainted with the prototypes of the Cheeryble Brothers in Nicholas Nickleby in the persons of William and David Grant, a matter which was managed through the courtesy of Mr. Gilbert Winter, a friend of Ainsworth. Both trips were full of festivities in honour of Forster and his companions.

In these years more than usually filled with play Forster enjoyed much intercourse with Maclise, Beard (Dickens's physician), Talfourd, Thackeray, Jerrold, George Cattermole, Ainsworth, Landseer, others who were more particularly connected with Dickens among whom may be mentioned Dickens's father and mother, two younger brothers (the Snodgearing Blee and Popem Jee mentioned above in connection with the balloons), the members of his wife's family, and his married sisters and their

*In connection with the first visit Forster, with Hablot K. Browne, the Pickwick artist and Dickens, made an excursion to Cheadle Hall, Cheshire, to see the three little daughters of Ainsworth, aged eight, nine, and eleven, who were at boarding school there. Forster had been mischievously represented to them as a dentist and, when he stepped forward to present a book he had brought, he was welcomed with a bitter cry. But it was eventually understood that his intentions were friendly and that the man from the EXAMINER was not an examiner of teeth. (42, p. 55)
husbands, Mr. and Mrs. Burnett and Mr. and Mrs. Austin, as well as Mr. Thomas Mitton, who had known Dickens when himself a law-clerk at Lincoln's Inn Fields and through whom there was introduction of the relatives of a friend and partner, Mr. Smithson, the gentleman connected with Yorkshire mentioned in the preface to Nickleby.

Forster enjoyed in particular the social charm of Daniel Macilise, which, he says, "was seldom wanting.................the grand enjoyment of idleness, the ready self-abandonment to the luxury of laziness, which we (Dickens and Forster) both so laughed at in Macilise, under whose easy swing of indifference, always the most amusing at the most aggravating events and times, we knew that there was artist-work as eager, energy as unwearying, and observation almost as penetrating as Dickens's own. A greater enjoyment than the fellowship of Macilise at this period it would indeed be difficult to imagine. Dickens hardly saw more than he did, while yet he seemed to be seeing nothing; and the small esteem in which this rare faculty was held by himself, a quaint oddity that gave to shrewdness itself in him an air of Irish simplicity, his unquestionable turn for literature, and a varied knowledge of it not always connected with such intense love and such unwearied practice of one special and absorbing art, combined to render him attractive far beyond the common. His fine genius and his handsome person of neither of which at any time he seemed himself to be in the slightest degree conscious, completed the charm." (19, vol. 1, p. 157)

As is quite evident from this quotation Macilise, a friend of Dickens, was very much a friend of Forster's. He was installed in Mistworth's place at the end of 1839 and took the trips with Forster and Dickens hitherto enjoyed by that friend who had first made the author and his biographer acquainted. When the constant widening of the Forster-Dickens circle made "the continuance of
the old-time convivialities impossible," the friendship of Forster with Maclise "mainly confined itself, of necessity, and in the case of both of them, to a more or less voluminous correspondence." (42, p. 67)

Forster often gave this friend orders for pictures he desired. Renton thinks that perhaps Maclise's best was one such painted of Fenton, the printer, with King Edward the Fourth and others of the court. Forster himself was the subject of his friend's artistic powers on several occasions. The portrait of Forster in 1830 (42, p. 10) is by Warrington and Maclise. He was portrayed by the artist as Kitely in Every Man in His Humour in the forties, sketched in 1840 (42, p. 58), and caricatured in his own chambers with other privileged ones present at the reading of Dickens's Chimes in 1844. (19, vol. 2, p. 149)

Forster did not care particularly for Thackeray who, like himself, desired power and its exercise. It is of interest that, although he was constantly thrown with Thackeray, he did not find in him an intimate friend. He was, perhaps, as Renton has pointed out, too much like him. (42, p. 210) It is interesting that he who sought out the great men of his time failed to care for this one.

He had better fortune with one who in contrast to his own appellation of "arbitrary cove" was called the "little wasp" (42, p. 169). Douglas Jerrold, a journalist by occupation and a writer of serious fiction by inclination, a wit who regarded human nature rather bitterly but one who made others laugh, met more than usual favor with Forster. The "arbitrary cove" wrote of him when noticing his death in 1856, "Jerrold's wit, and the bright shrewd intellect that had so many triumphs, need no celebration from me; but the keenest of satirists was one of the kindliest of
of men...." (19, vol. 3, p. 145) He was one of those who mourned and as pall bearers paid their last respects to Douglas Jerrold. He was one of those who helped to provide for his daughter through amateur theatrical efforts in 1856 and 1857, which will be discussed under that date.

George Cattermole, one of the painter friends, met to Forster a companion who "had enough and to spare of fun as well as fancy to supply ordinary artists and humourists by the dozen, and wanted only a little more ballast and steadiness to have had all that could give attraction to good fellowship." (19, vol. 1, p. 158) He was on friendly terms with Edwin Landseer, lover and painter of animals, especially dogs and horses, and he refers to him in the Life of Dickens as "all the world's favourite".

Forster enjoyed a lighthearted kind of friendship through many years with Bryan Waller Procter, who wrote under the name of Barry Cornwall, one who had been a school-fellow of Byron at Harrow and was on intimate terms with most of the eminent literary men of his day. It had been with Procter that in November, 1831, Forster had made the earliest visit to Lamb of which we have the data. For more than thirty years Forster enjoyed a happy comradeship different from the more strenuous type he knew with Dickens, Lytton, and Browning. It was delightful and there are nearly four hundred letters extant of Procter to Forster in the British Museum which record it. (42, p. 183)

Samuel Laman Blanchard * was a journalist whom Forster had met at the beginning of his journalistic career in the early thirties with the true

*It is of interest that he was a firm friend of Letitia Elizabeth Landon in whom he had loyal belief and whom he defended in a memoir from the cruel attacks made upon her both in her lifetime and after her mysterious death in Africa. (42, p. 226) He does not mention Forster's name.
SUN. He worked with him on the EXAMINER from 1841 until the latter, who was unequally balanced mentally, took his own life in 1845 as a result of overwork and the sudden death of his wife. On his death Forster, with Bulwer and Ainsworth, devised plans to keep the statement of the suicide from the papers and to concert means for assisting the orphan children.

Clarkson Stanfield, the one who probably introduced Forster to Jerrold, was himself a favourite with Forster who calls him "our excellent friend" (19, vol. 3, p. 288) Stanfield was another of the painter friends. His services were always at hand when needed and he painted in 1857, the Act Drop for the performance at Tavistock House of Wilkie Collins's Frozen Deep, a play given to benefit Jerrold's daughter. "Stanny", as he was called by Forster, was often a companion in the jaunts taken in the early years and when, toward the end of his life, he had much illness, Forster and Dickens gave ample evidence of the sincerity of their friendship by frequent surprise visits to cheer him up.

John Pritt Harley, chiefly noted for his impersonation of Shakespeare's clowns, (48, vol. 1, p. 31) belonged too to these days. He often afforded Forster much cause for laughter by his theatrical efforts to entertain. The former speaks of him as one present at the Master Humphrey's Clock dinner on April 10, 1841, "whose humorous songs had been no inconsiderable element in the mirth of the evening." (19, vol. 1, p. 225)

Charles Knight, publisher, especially for the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, was a friend that was of much help to Forster in the forties in connection with the plans for purchasing the birthplace of Shakespeare. Forster thought of him as the "many-sided, true-hearted Charles Knight." (19, vol. 2, p. 444) The "good Stone"
(19, vol. 2, p. 339) as Forster calls him, and Tom Landseer, elder brother of Edwin and of service to him in etching and engraving his principal pictures, were other companions that made the Dickens circle delightful to Forster.

1839 meant to Forster, in addition to the recreation and friends we have discussed, a year when the Shakespeare society was diligently attended by the friends and afforded them opportunity for much enjoyment, disputing, and after-dinner oratory. (19, vol. 1, p. 162)

Forster's quick temper under provocation and his command of a friendship that would guard him from folly are well illustrated in an incident connected with this club. Forster quite lost his temper because of some indecorous proceedings on the part of three or four persons during a speech of a member which were unnoticed both by the speaker or by Dickens, the chairman. When Forster rose to make a speech, he made a "slashing" attack on these persons. After his speech, three or four rose to question his right to rebuke them. Forster said that he disclaimed anything personal and left the room. Dickens returned thanks for his health being proposed and asked those who sympathised with Forster to leave the room. It may have been in relation to this outbreak that Dickens wrote Forster in 1839 regarding some folly he was going to commit at the Shakespeare club: "I need not, I am sure, impress upon you the sincerity with which I make this representation. Our close and hearty friendship happily spares me the necessity. But I will add this - that feeling for you an attachment which no ties of blood or other relationship could ever awaken, and hoping to be to the end of my life your affectionate and chosen friend, I am convinced that I counsel you now as you would counsel me if I were in the like case; and I hope and trust that you will be led by an opinion which I am sure cannot be wrong when it is influenced by such feelings as I bear towards you, and so many warm and grateful considerations." (19, vol. 1, p. 162)
8-Trouble with Bentley, the Publisher, 1839

This was the year when Forster began to lose contact with Ainsworth and saw more of Maclise in connection with the mutual friendship with Dickens. He came to see less of Ainsworth through trouble that he had with Bentley toward the close of the year. The editorial reins of Bentley's Miscellany had been transferred from Dickens to Ainsworth and the event aroused gossip which was hard on Forster. He was accused of persuading Dickens to sever the connections with the publishers which automatically resulted in his ceasing to be editor of the paper-mentioned. Forster's interference was denied by Dickens in a letter to Ainsworth which advised him strongly against taking over the editorship just left vacant by himself. Dickens had repurchased his copyright of Oliver Twist and cancelled his agreement for Barnaby Rudge because he considered that Bentley had broken the agreement. Forster naturally came in for blame because he was a constant advisee of Dickens in such matters. It is said that he took umbrage at Ainsworth's Jack Sheppard, which was shortly printed in Bentley's Miscellany, because it bade fair to rival the popularity of Dickens's books. (33, p. 344) However it was, he was not on friendly terms with Bentley at this time and he simultaneously began to see less of Ainsworth. Perhaps he could not keep himself from jealousy for the friend whom he always put first, Charles Dickens.

9-Help to Bulwer Lytton

This year, 1839, saw Forster busy also with the production of two plays by Edward Bulwer Lytton

* One result of Forster's quarrel with Bentley was his refusing to sign an agreement in his possession with Bentley's signature to write a book about Queen Anne and Her Times. In March of the next year Forster wrote to Robert Lytton and proposed that they collaborate. It came to nothing, however. (42, p. 142)
Richelieu and The Sea Captain. As early as 1833 Forster had begun in letters about Leigh Hunt's difficulties, criticism of Bulwer's writing. The latter was editor of the NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE and had in the previous year published Eugene Aram, a book which had rather a sensational success. On January 4, 1833, Forster said of it: "I have read Eugene Aram with very great and greedy pleasure. Your view of his character is very original, and......amazingly striking..... There is no lurching from it to the right or left... I could have wished that you had adhered a little more strictly to the small information we have of Eugen Aram because I think the cause which he himself is reported to have assigned for the murder, namely that of jealousy of Clarke with his wife, is more likely to have urged him to the deed than mere gain, though I confess you put the last motive in a singularly novel way, and manage to make even reputable....Houseman's character is, I think, magnificently brought out all through the way in which you bring about his betrayal of a knowledge of a resting-place of Clarke's bones is uncommonly fine...Believe that I say this because I really felt your book. Ever and most truly yours, JOHN FORSTER." (42, p. 143)

He showed himself further interested in his friend by revising in part Rienzi* in proofs. He wrote, "I enclose you 3rd and 4th sheets of Rienzi as printed off. I shall be delighted to take any part in the revision of the proofs that you may now or hereafter assign to me." (42, p. 144)

From 1836 to 1840 Forster was engaged in the guardianship of the plays that Bulwer spent the four years writing. We have spoken of The Duchess of La Valliere, which failed, and The Lady of

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*It was published in 1835, and, in 1837, combined with The Last Days of Pompeii as Ernset Matrares.
Lyons, which retrieved Bulwer's fame. On November 20, 1838, Forster asked Macready to ask Bulwer to dine on the following Sunday for a reading of 'Michesti'. He feared the play would not be a success, but its production on March 7, 1839, proved him mistaken. Forster was persistent, too persistent to please all concerned, in his attentiveness at rehearsals.** In October of 1839, 'The Sea Captain', which Thackeray parodied, was being read and criticised and rehearsed. Its chances for success did not seem overwhelming but Forster refused to give the word Macready longed for which would have meant its withdrawal.*** Again Bulwer's play, contrary to fears, proved successful. Forster contemplated withdrawal of the next attempt, the comedy 'Money', only because of the failures in acting. The play delighted the company from the first days in 1840.

**Forster went to sleep in the fifth act. This hurt Bulwer's feelings and probably had some part, as Macready thought, (48, vol. 1, p. 478) in Forster's conclusions that the interest of the play was not sufficient.

***Anderson in his "Actor's Life" speaks of the annoyance caused to the actors during the rehearsals of the piece by the presence on the stage of the manager's numerous friends. Morning after morning there sat, close to the prompter's table, Messrs. Browning, Bulwer, Dickens, MacIsee, Forster, and others, to our great horror and disgust. Mrs. Humby was especially annoyed at Forster's 'roaring out, when I miss a word', "Put her through it again, Mac, put her through it again", as if I were a piebald mare at Astley's!" (53, p. 140)

***Macready, who wished to be relieved of the play, remarks in his diary for October 29, that Forster, who had a chance to see the play's possibilities, might have relieved them from their embarrassing position concerning it. "He left it, however, to the 'fortune of Caesar!'" (48, vol. 2, p. 29)
when they heard it read.* Forster's efforts were rewarded by Bulwer on November 24 of this year when he dedicated the play to Forster.**

10-Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth Completed

With 1839, Forster completed his volumes for Lardner's Cyclopaedia. 1838 had seen the publication of the lives of Vane and Marten and 1839 saw that of two volumes devoted to Oliver Cromwell, a work projected as early as 1830. Emerson Whiteside, in that year, Henry Morley tells us, put the question to him in March: "How goes on Cromwell? Have you made a commencement yet?" (42, p. 17)

11-Two Vacation Trips

The completion of Dickens's books often meant trips for Forster. Between the completion of Oliver Twist and its publication, Dickens had gone to see something of North Wales. Forster joined him at Liverpool by invitation and accompanied him home. On April 4, 1840, Dickens fled after the first publication of Master Humphrey's Clock to Birmingham, where Forster joined him with news of the sale of the whole sixty thousand copies, to which the first working had been limited. He proceeded with Dickens upon a holiday which included the visiting of Shakespeare's house at Stratford and Johnson's at Lichfield. Forster and Dickens always enjoyed their trips, but this one proved so unusually delightful that their resources gave out before they reached home and they had to pawn their gold watch-

* Macready writes September 19, 1840, "I began to read the comedy to Forster, and was led on to read it through to our mutual amusement. Went to bed at half-past three o'clock." (48, vol. 2, p. 82)

** Bulwer's next play was on Oedipus Tyrannus with choruses. Macready remarked on first
es at Birmingham.

Mr. Renton's search has uncovered a picture of how Forster appeared to others upon this last trip. It shows him characteristically rough of manner and alert for his friend of friends. Mr. Renton looked upon Alderman Colburne, owner of the old hostelry, The Red Horse, beloved of Washington Irving, who stayed there during his visit to Stratford. Mr. Colburne remembered the famous tour and gave an interesting description of the old London coach drawing out of the old gateway of The Red Horse with Dickens, Forster, and the rest of the merry crowd shouting from the roof of it a rollicking "good-bye!" to a group of Stratfordians assembled to see them depart. (42, p. 128) Forster did not appeal to him very strongly. Mr. Renton says, "as I ventured to suggest to Mr. Colburne, Forster possibly would, on such an occasion, and amid strange surroundings, have been hardly likely to come out of his shell. He would probably adopt the "big bow-wow" manner, which even his closest intimates always admitted he could do to perfection." (42, p. 128) Forster's pompous way and dictatorial manner did not impress Mr. Colburne favorably but he still remembered the curious protective attitude displayed by him toward Dickens. "It was," said Mr. Colburne, 'almost pathetic, the look of affectionate concern with which he watched the other's every movement. I have never seen anything like it, before or since.'" (42, p. 128)

**(cont.) seeing the manuscript May 23, 1846, that it lacked simplicity of style and picturesqueness and reality. Bulwer was to score a triumph some years later writing a comedy to be performed by the friends in connection with their enterprise, the Guild of Literature and Art.

* A trip was made to Jack Straw's Castle, a favorite destination for short trips, in November of this year where Master Humphrey was read for the benefit of Maclise who wished to get a subject for a picture. The reading was repeated for the same purpose at Lincoln's Inn Fields within the month.
Such were the trips in the program of these early years when health had not yet made its restrictions of freedom. Sometimes Forster was the tempter; sometimes he was tempted. But the day's work was in either case often left for a brisk walk or ride.
CHAPTER V

The Early Forties

1-The Carlyles

In the years which were so memorable for the introduction and almost instant friendship with Dickens and Browning, Forster was more slowly getting acquainted with two other friends, Jane and Thomas Carlyle. The introduction to Dickens was made in 1840, so that it is fairly clear that the intimacy had not been great in the preceding years. Now he went to hear Carlyle speak and now at least he began to gain the esteem for the man as a thinker which was to do its part toward

* Carlyle wrote Forster a letter during the Pickwick days in which he related an amusing story told him by an archdeacon of a solemn clergyman who had been administering ghostly consolation hearing, after he had left the room, "Well, thank God Pickwick will be out in ten days any­say!" (19, vol. 1, p. 109)

**That Forster was an admirer of Carlyle's genius is witnessed by his frequent reference to it in the Life of Dickens. When he speaks of Dickens finding evidence of the smallness of the world and the importance of the least thing done in it in the fact that a house at Gadshill long wanted by him was discovered to be owned by a friend, he says that the relationship is "better explained by the grander teaching of Carlyle, that causes and effects, connecting every man and thing with every other, extend through all space and time." (19, vol. 3, p. 179) When Forster enters upon his discussion of Dickens's genius he prefaces what he has to say with "the hint of Carlyle, that in looking at a man out of the common it is good for common men to make sure that they 'see' before they attempt to 'oversee' him". He calls Carlyle in again to help
making the friendship the welcome thing it was.  
(48, vol. 2, p. 60) A letter of Mrs. Carlyle's proves to us that by August, 1840, Forster was a welcome guest in the Carlyle home. (7, vol. 1, p. 87) A letter of Carlyle's to his friend John Sterling, author of "The Election: a Poem" shows that the real Forster was just making himself known to the philosopher. Carlyle had inadvertently given away Sterling's authorship of the poem named and he was worried over the safety of the secret. He writes, "This Forster is a most noisy man, but really rather a good fellow (as one gradually finds), and with some substance in his tumultuary brains; a proof of which is that Bulwer does seem to be no longer all gold to him, as once was the case, but to give fatal symptoms here and there (to Forster's huge astonishment) of being mere scoured brass." (8, p. 249)

Forster found in Carlyle a suitable friendship. The two both had natural impatience and irritability, but Forster had sufficient self-control and sense of discipline and subordinated them for the practical purposes of the friendship. He was a thoughtful friend to the man he admired and Carlyle appreciated thoughtfulness.*

**(cont.)** him to define humour, "that property which in its highest aspects Carlyle has so subtly described as a sort of inverse sublimity, exalting into our affections what is below us as the other draws down into our affections what is above us." (19, vol. 3, p. 310)

*Carlyle expressed his gratitude for one of the little instances with the following acknowledgment of the receipt of some particularly choice 'Assyrian' tobacco....

"I will....straightway smoke a pipe in honour of you before going into the sun! Many thanks to the brave Forster, and may his shadow never grow less." (42, p. 39)
Forster kept him supplied with books on the English Commonwealth as Hill had with books on the French Revolution.

Time brought to Forster friendship here as elsewhere. In April, 1851, Carlyle wrote "Good be with you, dear Forster! A right kind remembrance remains with me of all your kindness to me." (42, p. 36) He echoed the same thought when he wrote, May 27, 1877, the year after Forster's death, that he wished "to write some thing about poor John Forster in memory of his great kindness to me ever since I was left alone in the world". (9, p. 333)

In 1850, when the Latter Day Pamphlets began to appear, Carlyle tells us, "Forster soon fell away, I could perceive, into terror and surprise; -as indeed everybody did." Forster was assured, April 19, by Mrs. Carlyle that they cared for him very much indeed: "With my soul on the pen, as Mazzini says, I declare that if we ever look to not care for you, it is a pure deception. My Husband may be little-too little-demonstrative in a general way; but at all rates he is very steadfast in his friendships; and as for me, I am a little model of constancy and all the virtues! including the rare gift of knowing the value of my blessings before I have lost them; ergo, if you be still driving out for exercise, please remember your promise to come again. I am sure I must have accumulated an immense number of amusing things during the Winter that it would do your heart good to hear." (7, vol. 2, p. 14)

Forster played an important role in the life of Carlyle. Renton feels that it was Forster who made Carlyle's life complete, who, by patiently listening to all his indignation at evil and wrongdoing when the rest of the world was deaf to him, afforded wonderful relief to his "much moved soul" and kept the misanthrope from developing in him and becoming dominant. It was an honor to be so
needed by so great a man, to give him mind-balance, but to need no such completion himself.

(42, p. 45)

Forster cared much for Thomas Carlyle and calls him "a very dear friend of his (Dickens's) and mine". (19, vol. 1, p. 313) Again he speaks of him when recording him as present at a dinner, May 12, 1849, as "kindest as well as wisest of men, but not very patient under sentimental philosophies." (19, vol. 2, p. 439) He also cared for his wife. In the Life of Dickens he speaks his admiration for her, calling her "a most original and delicate observer". (19, vol. 1, p. 97) And again he writes: "With some of the highest gifts of intellect, and the charm of a most varied knowledge of books and things, there was something 'beyond, beyond'. No one who knew Mrs. Carlyle could replace her loss when she had passed away". (19, vol. 3, p. 277)* He served both these friends at her death. Carlyle was in Scotland and Forster was the friend at hand.

April 18, 1866, Mrs. Carlyle had lunched with Mrs. Forster and had seemed in particularly good spirits. Afterwards she had gone to drive in Hyde

* Mrs. Carlyle records in a letter to her husband, July 7, 1849, the man in impetuous vein: (Forster had called at six o'clock and managed to get by the maid) "Pardon me, my dear Mrs. Carlyle! I am going out to dinner - ought in fact to be sitting down to dinner at this moment! My dear Mrs. Carlyle, God bless you. I am only come to ask if you will let me come to-morrow evening? You will? God bless you! I have a thousand things to say; but - God bless you till to-morrow!' etc., etc., and eventually exit.....(and speaking of the promised visit).....after eight, Forster, actually who staid until eleven! And that he did not kiss me when he went away seemed more a mercy of Providence than anything else!" (7, p. 258)
park, and when near Victoria Gate, she stopped the carriage to put down her little dog for a run. The dog's foot was run over by a passing carriage, and Mrs. Carlyle got out and took it in. The coachman continued driving by Marble Arch down to Stanhope Gate, along the Serpentine. Coming a second time near to the Achilles statue he began to wonder at getting no order and looked around but could not see his mistress. He stopped and asked a gentleman to look in at the door. He was ordered to drive to St. George's Hospital, which was not two hundred yards distant and Mrs. Carlyle was taken out dead. Forster was sent for and, said Browning in a letter to Isa Blagden, "was at immense pains to get the body removed, the authorities insisting that an inquest must be held: he put forth all his admirable energy and managed the matter, not before midnight." (3, p. 132) Forster had carried his point through his influence with official persons as lunacy commissioner and through his friendship with his physician, Dr. Quain. Carlyle, who had returned in the meantime from Scotland, wrote his appreciation of the efforts of his friend two weeks later: "It is to Forster's unwearied and invincible efforts that I am indebted for escape from this sad defilement of my feelings. Indeed, his kindness then and all through, in every particular and detail, was unexampled, of a cordiality and assiduity almost painful to me. Thanks to him, and perpetual recollection." (23, vol. 2, p. 315)*

*Forster continued his services by helping Carlyle with the business end of the Letters and Memoirs of Jane Welsh Carlyle. Carlyle wrote on March 6, 1869: "Forster is getting up the most precise documentary signed settlements, etc., with Chapman and Robson, so that no doubt can exist (were we all removed in a day) as to what the bargain and the whole state of affairs were and are at any time: - the good Forster!" (9, p. 251)
Forster did not enjoy with the Carlyles much of the conviviality of Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Carlyles did not find the life that Forster led with his intimates suitable to their health. Forster's invitations were, therefore, frequently declined both because of that* and because his guests were sometimes unable to brave the weather.**

Even Forster's invitation for a celebration of Carlyle's seventieth birthday did not meet with entire favor, as is clear from Carlyle's account written on December 5, 1865, to Dr. Carlyle at Dumfries. "Last night very much against my will, we had to go to Forster's. Forster himself (ill of gout) would take no denial: 'Your birthday, Carlyle! To set about rejoicing because one's seventieth year is done, would not have occurred to myself by any means; ah, ah me! However, the

*July 17, 1843, Mrs. Carlyle wrote her husband: "His dinner invitation I gracefully but peremptorily declined." (7, p. 121) January 16, 1847 she wrote Forster that her husband would not dine with him but would only drink tea: "You are too good a landlord: -You pour wine into unthinking men and women - till they approach the point of intoxication; and next day it is not so pleasant. "You will expect us then to tea at six." (7, p. 235)

**On February 14, 1855, she declined an invitation on the plea that the weather was impossible for her and asked Forster to come to her instead. "Since you will ask us to dine with you on Monday, it is a clear case of your being disengaged. on Monday, and at leisure. Erro, you can if you like, come and dine with us here. And won't you like? There's a good man! It is cold weather for 'a delicate female' to front the night air in; and at the same time I am wearying to see you, at 'some reasonably good leisure! So you come here this time; and we will go to you when things are softer. If any other day would suit you better than Monday, name it; only leaving me time to ask Darwin to meet you, as I know he would thank me for the opportunity." (7, p. 78)
thing went well enough, foolish as it was; and did not break my sleep. Browning was there and one Dyce (an Aberdeen Ex Scipio; fat, huge, grey man, very good-natured) who lives upon Shakespear; no other except ourselves, poor Jane says she always sleeps better after such a thing!..." (9, p. 232)

Forster was appointed in Carlyle's will, dated February 6, 1873, Executor and Trustee with his Brother John Aikken Carlyle, doctor of Medicine. James Anthony Froude is mentioned as the one to take Forster's place should the latter die in Carlyle's lifetime. Forster is also given a share in the decision Carlyle wished his friends to make after his death, regarding the manuscript, Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle entrusted to Froude to do with as he thought best and the quantity of autobiographical record in his notes to the manuscript. The will stated, "James Anthony Froude, John Forster, and my Brother John, will make earnest survey of the Manuscript and its subsidiaries there or elsewhere, in respect to this as well as to its other bearings; their united utmost candour and impartiality taking always James Anthony Froude's practicality along with it will evidently furnish a better judgment than mine can be." (21, p. 74)*

Forster was left in charge of all business matters relating to Carlyle's books, copyrights, editions, and dealings with booksellers. Carlyle wrote:

* During Carlyle's lifetime, although the will seems to show his forgetfulness of the fact, Carlyle had given these to Froude upon whom he then placed the burden of their responsibility. Froude begged and was allowed to consult Forster, who read both memoir and letters and, although he did not speak to Froude about them, Froude thought that he had spoken to Carlyle. He had said that he would tell him to make Froude's position clear in the will or trouble would come of it.
"John Forster's advice is to be taken as supreme and complete, better than my own ever could have been. His faithful, wise, and ever punctual care about all that has been a miracle of generous helpfulness, literally invaluable to me in that field of things. Thanks, poor thanks, are all that I can return, alas!"* (21, p. 75)

2-Sympathy for Macready, 1840

The year with which record of intimacy with the Carlyles begins, 1840, was a year that saw Forster's sympathy with the grief of Macready at the death of his daughter, Joan. November 30, 1840, Forster accompanied his friend to the funeral, having promised solemnly November 28 and 29 that he would not give way to his emotions. He remained with Macready the whole day and was at hand in the next hard days to walk around the park and to give what comfort he could. The following month the production of Bulwer's Money was complicated by the illness of the son, Henry, who, however, improved.**

3-Influence on the Writings of Two Friends, 1841

In the year 1841, Landor composed in Forster's library the shortest of all his Imaginary Conversations, "Whigs and Whirligigs"***He was visiting Forster on his way from Paris to Bath in May while

*The only bequest that Forster would accept, Faithorne's print of Cromwell between the Pillars was a peculiarly fitting one for a man who had helped Carlyle to get material in a field that had long been one of his (Forster's) main interests. At Forster's death Carlyle left it to Mrs. Forster, which he begged that she would accept in memory of Forster and of him.

**December 7, 1840, Forster left the rehearsal to go to get Dr. Elliotson's report of his condition and brought back the decided opinion of that physician that the child's health was improved.

***One other bit of literature was composed there before the year was out, the lines that Browning wrote to illustrate The Serenade.
Whigs were making their last unsuccessful resistance to Peel. Forster was chiefly responsible for giving to the world Landor's vehement contributions to matters of public controversy which characterized the poet's early and late years in Bath. (20, vol. 1, p. 435)

Forster was at this time conducting the Edinburgh Review, England's first high class critical journal and an advocate of the principles of the Whigs whose colors, buff and blue, it used for its cover. He requested Landor about this time to write for it some essays on Catullus, Theocritus, Petrarch, and one on Pindar. They were produced for the paper in 1845 in response to a copy received from Forster of the writings of the Greek. A note in the book also inspired Landor to write an idyl.

Forster took Dickens to Landor's in the spring of 1840 where the novelist found his first ideas of the character of Little Nell. On January 12, 1841, Dickens read to his critic the two chapters, seventy-one and seventy-two, which treat Little Nell's death. It is clear from a letter of Dickens's to Forster five days later that Forster was responsible for the tragic ending as he speaks definitely of having acted upon "your suggestion". (19, vol. 1, p. 187) The letter further expressed Dickens's pleasure that Forster had liked the last two chapters.

4-A Separation and Reunion, 1842

January 2, 1842, was to see Forster's separation from Dickens who was leaving for America. At the close of 1841 Landor had come up from Bath for the christening of Dickens's son, to whom he had been asked to be god-father, and Forster had enjoyed with the mutual friends rollicking festivities on the eve of the separation. With the New Year came the separation which was to call forth letters between them which plainly show
that they longed for reunion.*

And it was not too far away. Dickens wrote on April 26, 1842, "I exhaust my imagination in picturing the circumstances under which I shall surprise you by walking into 58, Lincoln's Inn Fields..." (19, vol. 1, p. 387) He had accomplished it by the summer. Forster writes, "His return was the occasion of unbounded enjoyment; and what he had planned before sailing as the way we should meet, received literal fulfillment. By the sound of his cheery voice I first knew that he was come; and from my house we went together to Maclise, also 'without a moment's warning,'" (19, vol. 2, p. 1)

There were, of course, dinners for Dickens to welcome him home. But the most especial celebration of the return was planned for October, when a trip to Cornwall was arranged by way of challenge to what Dickens had seen while abroad. (19, vol. 2, p. 1) Forster, Dickens, Stanfield, and Maclise made up the happy party. The trip came off with such unexpected and continued attraction for them that they were well into the third week of absence before they turned their faces homeward. Where the roads were inaccessable to post-horses they walked. Tintagel was visited and "no part of mountain or sea consecrated by the legends of Arthur was left unexplored. We ascended to the cradle of the highest tower of Mount St. Michael, and descended into several mines. Land and sea yielded each its marvels to us." (19, vol. 2, p. 20) Maclises's letter to Forster previously given describes Forster's athletic achievements on this trip. The cele-

*Dickens wrote February 27, 1842: "Oh for news from home! I think of your letters so full of heart and friendship with perhaps a little scrawl of Charley's or Lamey's, lying at the bottom of the deep sea..." (19, vol. 1, p. 312) (The Britannia had sunk)
oration was one never forgotten.

5—Forster a Buffer Between Dickens and America 1842—1844

Dickens's impressions of America had not been altogether complimentary and he was determined to publish an introductory chapter of American Notes, which Forster knew would lead to trouble and misunderstanding. It was with difficulty that he succeeded in persuading Dickens to omit it then. Dickens did so only on condition that Forster undertake to print it at some future time.* Again in the same year Forster had difficulty in keeping Dickens from an open avowal of his feelings regarding America. Dickens was determined to write on the title page his intention in Chuzzlewit. **Forster writes, "Broadly what he aimed at, he would have expressed on the title page if I had not dissuaded him, by printing there as its motto a verse altered from the prologue of his own composition . . . . . . 'Your homes the scene. Yourselves, the actors here!'" (19, vol. 2, p. 59)

3—An American Friend

To the interval between the return from America and the autumn trip belongs the beginning for Forster of a pleasant acquaintance with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow who, Forster writes, became Dick—

* Forster does this in the biography of Dickens. *19, vol. 2, pp. 13-17)

** Forster had other part in Chuzzlewit. Dickens felt so strongly that he must read him the beginning of it, even though his friend was ill in bed, that he rushed to him "with the ink hardly dry on the last slip to read the manuscript to me". (19, vol. 2, p. 24) writes Forster. The result of some subsequent trial of the effect of Pecksniff and Pinch was an alteration in the chapter in which the tables are turned on Pecksniff. Dickens wrote in 1844: "I altered the verbal error, and substituted for the action you didn't like some words expressive of the hurry of the scene." (19, vol. 2, p. 80)
ens's "guest, and (for both of us I am privileged to add) our attached friend". (19, vol. 2, p. 3) Forster was favorably impressed by the poet with whom he was to continue the friendship as opportunity arose by the latter's visits to England and by correspondence. (42, pp. 126-7) He writes further of the first visit: "...he possessed all the qualities of delightful companionship, the culture and the charm, which have no higher type or example than the accomplished and genial American. He reminded me when lately again in England of two experiences out of many we had enjoyed together this quarter of a century before. One of them was a day at Rochester, when, met by one of those prohibitions which are the wonder of visitors and the shame of Englishmen, we overleapt gates and barriers, and setting at defiance repeated threats of all the terrors of the law coarsely expressed to us by the custodian of the place, explored minutely the castle of ruins. The other was a night among those portions of the population which outrage the law and defy its terrors all the days of their lives, the tramps and thieves of London; when, under guidance and protection of the most trusted officers of the two great metropolitan prisons afforded us by Mr. Chesterton and Lieutenant Tracey, we went over the worst haunts of the most dangerous classes." (19, vol. 2, p. 3) Longfellow left for America on October 21.

7-A Blot on the 'Scutcheon

Forster acted incomprehensibly in connection with A Blot on the 'Scutcheon. On November 25, 1842, Dickens wrote Forster his emphatically favorable opinion of the play and Forster said nothing of it to Browning although Dickens expressed himself desirous that Forster inform the poet of his feelings. He withheld the letter until he printed it in the Life of Dickens thirty years later. (19, vol. 2, p. 25)
Although Browning, who did not know then of this act, considered Forster as an ally, (it was in this year that he presented him with the manuscript of Paracelsus), it is probable that Forster, who withheld a letter that would have meant so much, was, in part at least, responsible for the doubts about the play which caused unpleasant conflicts between Macready and Browning finally ending in the suspension of their friendship for twenty years.* Macready felt so doubtful of the play that, by the hint that Phelps would have to act the leading role unless it were postponed, he did his best to get Browning to withdraw it. Browning failed to understand the unsuitability of anyone but Macready acting the leading part in a new play at his own theatre and, consequently, the real meaning of Macready's hints. Forster did not help to make him understand then and the play was produced February 11, 1843, at Drury Lane.

Browning was unaware at that time that Forster had so failed in frankness to him, but he became sensible of it when the breach between himself and Forster was already complete. His words

* Macready had said that Phelps would have to act it and, when he saw that Browning would not take the hint and withdraw his play, he wished to change his mind. But Browning would not let him. He always felt aggrieved at the lack of frankness shown him. Macready's finances were in bad shape and he was afraid of the play because he did not know how the public would regard the situation on which it turned. Browning said, forty-five years later, "One friendly straightforward word to the effect that what was intended for an advantage, would, under circumstances of which I was altogether ignorant, prove the reverse; how easy it would have been to make us both." (26, p. 119) (40, p. 110) (26, p. 116) The breach between Browning and Macready lasted until they met accidentally after they had both lost their wives.
at the time of the publication of the letter seem to show surprise that at that date Forster had so dealt with him. "Why," he said, "did Forster not show this letter to me when praise from such a quarter would have meant so much to me?" (45, p. 78)

8-The Ushering in of 1843

1843 came in right royally at the chambers of Forster who had, with Dickens, purchased the entire stock-in-trade of a conjuror. Dickens and Stanfield, who delighted all by doing his part in exactly the wrong way, performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields on the last day of the old year and saw the new one in with glee. Thus early is a tendency manifest toward the amateur theatricals which were to occupy much of Forster's attention for ten years beginning with 1845.

9-1843

In 1842 and 1843 Forster was editor of the Foreign Quarterly Review "where his papers", according to Charles Kent, "bore evidence of scholarship". January 27, 1843, he was called to the bar at the Inner Temple.

The year saw in September the departure of Macready for America, a circumstance which greatly affected Forster, who went to Liverpool to see him off on September 5 and who wrote him in such wise that Macready's references to Forster in his diary while away invariably refer to him as "dear Forster". (48, vol. 2, pp. 236, 242, 244)

Forster writes of this year that "It was a year of much illness with me, which had ever helpful and active sympathy from him (Dickens)." (19, vol. 1, p. 226) Dickens attempted to get Forster to come to Richmond, where he thought being ill would not be half so hard. Forster did not go while he was ill, but he joined Dickens at a rented cottage in Finchley, where they walked and talked in the green lanes while the midsummer
months were coming on and Mrs. Gamp was met and began to grow in Dickens’s mind.

The year closed with Forster just recovered from an illness. Dickens writes of the Christmas celebration made lively by the freedom which the completion of *A Christmas Carol* had given him, "'Forster is out again and if he don't go in again after the manner in which we have been keeping Christmas, he must be very strong indeed. Such dinings, such dancings, such conjurings, such blindman's buffings, such theatre-goings, such kissings-out of old years and kissings-in of new ones, never took place in these parts before.'" (19, vol. 2, p. 39)

10-1844, The Chimes

With Forster's review, June 22, 1844, of Colombe's *Birthday* came the first serious rupture in the friendship with Browning, one not to be "repaired" for over a year. The piracy of Dickens's writings which Forster and Talfourd had long urged Dickens to end was stopped. Forster was working hard at his *Life of Goldsmith*, and Landor had begun at his friend's suggestion the Collection and Revision of All His Writings to which Forster gave help then and in the following years.

The year is chiefly remarkable in the Forster's life for being that in which the memorable reading of The Chimes took place at his chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Dickens wrote to Forster from abroad, "Shall I confess to you, I particularly want Carlyle above all to see it before the rest of the world, when it is done; and I should like to inflict the little story on him and on dear old gallant Macready with my own lips, and to have Stanny and the other Mac sitting by. Now, if you was a real gent, you'd get up a little circle for me, one wet evening, when I come to town and would say, 'My boy (Sir, will you have the goodness to leave those books alone and to go downstairs - what the Devil are you doing! And
mind, sir, I can see nobody - do you hear: Nobody. I am particularly engaged with a gentleman from Asia - My boy, would you give us that little Christmas book (a little Christmas book of Dickens's, Lacready, which I'm anxious you should hear); and don't slur it, now, or be too fast, Dickens, please!' - and I say, if you was a real gent, something to this effect might happen, I shall be under sailing orders the moment I have finished. And I shall produce myself (please God) in London on the very day you name. For one week: to the hour!'" (19, vol. 2, p. 135)

Forster, of course, proved a "real gent" and the reading came off on December 2, 1844. Those present were Forster, Blanchard, Jerrold, Carlyle, Dickens, Frederick Dickens, Maclise, Fox, Stanfield, Dyce, and Harness, a group which is reproduced in a note made by Maclise given in the Life of Dickens (19, vol. 2, p. 149). Of the evening Forster writes: "An occasion rather memorable, in which was the germ of those readings to larger audiences by which as much as by his books, the world knew him in his later life; but of which no detail beyond the fact remains in my memory, and all are now dead who were present at it excepting only Mr. Carlyle and myself." (19, vol. 2, p. 149) The reading, however, was successful, as Dickens later wrote that he would not have missed it for anything.

Of those present at the reading we are acquainted with all save Fox, Dyce, and Harness.

W. J. Fox was chiefly remarkable as a man of many vocations, having been successively a weaver's boy, errand boy, clerk, journalist, author, dramatic critic, preacher, politician, and, as a Reform leader, "stump orator" for the cause. (42, p. 207) It was the journalistic one which brought Forster into touch with him. He was to be associated with him when he was writing for and editing the DAILY NEWS. He was further connected with him by the experience of being the second while
Fox was the first to predict fame for Robert Browning.

There is reproduced in facsimile (42, p. 210) the invitation that Forster sent Fox for the reading of *The Chimes*. Forster records that Fox's attitude and manner during the reading was one of "rapt solemnity" (19, vol. 2, p. 150), judging from the caricature which is the most of the event that remained.

Alexander Dyce was one of those who occupied some of the precious time of Forster's last years when the Swift might otherwise have been finished and the other Lives of the Statesmen enlarged. When he died in 1869 he preceded Dickens but a year in giving occasion for Forster to undertake the labor of carrying matters out in accordance with a lost friend's wishes. They had much in common, both being particularly interested in literary antiquity. Dyce's tastes led him more particularly in the direction of Shakespeare and the older Elizabethan dramatists rather than among the witty writers of the Carolinian and Georgian periods, as did Forster's. (42, p. 197) The treasures each accumulated during life now rest side by side at South Kensington, a heritage of no little price. Forster says of the loss of this friend that he deplored it as one which he could never replace, for "all the qualities that give charm to private intercourse were his in abundant measure." (42, p. 202) Forster corrected and published his friend's third edition of Shakespeare and prefixed a memoir to the official catalogue of the library bequeathed by Dyce to the nation.

The Rev. William Harness was a friend of Byron and, like Dyce, a Shakespearean scholar. Forster, looking at the sketch of those at his home that evening speaks of the "tears of Harness and Dyce" (19, vol. 2, p. 150) as being their characteristic contribution to the scene.
In 1836, Forster had lost his father. One of the earliest events of 1845 was the loss of his only brother. He writes of it and quotes in a note the letter of comfort that he received from Dickens, who was in Genoa, dated January 8: "It was of ill-omen to me, one of its earliest incidents being my only brother's death; but Dickens had a friend's true helpfulness in sorrow, and a portion of what he then wrote to me I permit myself to preserve in a note........I feel the distance between us now, indeed. I would to Heaven, my dearest friend, that I could remind you in a manner more lively and affectionate than this dull sheet of paper can put on, that you have a Brother left. One bound to you by ties as strong as ever Nature forged. By ties never to be broken, weakened, changed in any way - but to be knotted tighter up, if that be possible, until the same end comes to them as has come to these. That end but the bright beginning of a happier union, I believe; and have never more strongly and religiously believed......................I read your heart as easily as if I held it in my hand, this moment. And I know - I know, my dear friend - that before the ground is green above him, you will be content that what was capable of death in him, should lie there....I am glad to think it was so easy, and full of peace. What can we hope for more, when our own time comes? - The day when he visited us in our old house is as fresh to me as if it had been yesterday. I remember him as well as I remember you....I have many things to say, but cannot say them now. Your attached and loving friend for life, and far, I hope, beyond it. C.D. (8th of January, 1845)
CHAPTER VI
1845-1855

1-Amateur Theatricals of 1845

A project had started on the night of the reading of The Chimes for a private play to be acted by Dickens and Forster upon the former's return from Italy. That project became a reality with the production, September 21, 1845, of Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humour. Many were the good times enjoyed in the next ten years by the company, then assembled, with Dickens as manager. There were among the actors John Leech, an artist friend known now perhaps mostly for his connection with Punch, who had been one of the rejected competitors for the position of illustrative artist on The Pickwick Papers; E. M. Ward, R. A.; Young Dickens; Jerrold; Augustus Egg and Frank Stone, both artists; Mrs. Cowden Clarke, author of the Concordance to Shakespeare; Edward Bulwer Lytton; George Cruikshank, illustrator of Dickens and Ainsworth; George Henry Lewes, dramatic critic; Cattermole; John Tenniel, the greatest of all the Punch cartoonists. The play chosen seems to have been the one most mentioned of the productions in which Forster and Dickens appeared and to have been exceedingly popular, judging from the number of times it was produced. In 1845, it was given at two theatres, at Miss Kelly's*, September 9, and at the St.

*Owner of a tiny theatre in Dean Street, Soho. Dickens writes Forster in 1845 of difficulty with her: "Heavens! such a scene as I have had with Miss Kelly there this morning!"

"She wanted us put off until the theatre should be cleaned and brushed up a bit, and she would and she would not, for she is eager to have us, and alarmed when she thinks of us...She exaggerates the importance of our occupation, dreads the least
James in November. Forster writes of the first production that it was played "with success that out­ ran the wildest expectation; and turned our little enterprise into one of the small sensations of the day. The applause of the theatre found so loud an echo in the press, that for the time nothing else was talked about in private circles; and after a week or two we had to yield (we did not find it difficult) to a pressure of demand for more public performances in a larger theatre, by which a useful charity received important help and its committee showed their gratitude by an entertainment to us at the Clarendon, a month or two later, when Lord Lansdowne took the chair." (19, vol. 2, p. 185)

The play had been chosen with special regard to the singleness and individuality of the 'humours' portrayed in it", writes Forster (19, vol. 2, p. 184) who played Kitely.* Dickens played Bobadil and, says Forster, "took upon him the redoubtable Captain long before he stood in his dress at the footlights humouring the completeness of his assumptions by talking and writing Bobadil, till the dullest of our party were touched and stirred to something of his own heartiness of enjoyment". (19, vol. 2, p. 184) The two signed their letters at this time respectively Kitely and Bobadil.**

*(cont.) prejudice against her establishment in the minds of any of our company, says the place has already quite ruined her, and with tears protests that any jokes at her additional expense in print would drive her mad. By the body of Caesar, the scene was incredible. It's like a preposterous dream." (40, p. 261)

*Macready said that he played it as a tragic character, "the grand mistake" as Fitzgerald's unintentional criticism in the remark "At one time he spoke in so strange a tone that he was very near making us laugh" reveals. (48, vol. 2, p. 304)

**Mackie painted Forster and Dickens in their characters and there is in the Forster and Dyce collection a playbill bearing a pencil sketch of the two. There is an estimate by Forster of the action (19 vol. 2, p. 186)
Before the close of the year the players appeared in a play by Beaumont and Fletcher, The Elder Brother. Forster played the part of Charles, in which, Macready says, he was "quite beyond his depth — indeed rather entirely out of his element". (48, vol. 2, p. 318)

2. Forster's Pen in 1846

Forster was directly connected with Dickens's two ventures as editor of a periodical, the first of which was being planned in this year. The Daily News was a morning paper started by Bradbury and Evans with Paxton, Duke of Devonshire's agent, and another capitalist, a Birmingham man. (48, vol. 2, p. 307) Dickens wanted to undertake the editorship and did, in spite of Forster, who advised him strongly against it because he felt that he did not have the physical equipment and that he did not know how high a price he paid for the imaginative life he led. Dickens was not as amenable to guidance in such matters as he was in respect to his writings, and he went ahead with it — and Forster, the faithful, helped him. The first number came out on January 21, 1846. Dickens remained editor for three weeks or less and then poor Forster carried it on reluctantly for the greater part of what he describes as that "weary, anxious, laborious year". (19, vol. 2, p. 194) In October, Forster resigned the post because of developments which made his honor coincident with his will. He was not one to be underhanded.*

*October 22, 1846, Forster told Macready of the combination of all the other papers against the Daily News to share the expense of Indian mails and of the fact that the proprietors of the Daily News intended to go without the Indian mail, but not to state the fact and to raise their price from 2½ d to 3d. Forster resisted this as dishonourable and sent in his letter of resignation and was kept from explaining his position to Baldwin, proprietor of the Morning Herald, according to Macready, only by Macready's persuasion.
Forster's other literary work in this year consisted in writing in Douglas Jerrold's 'Schilling Magazine' A History for Young England and of contributions to the Edinburgh Review of two articles on Charles Churchill and Daniel Defoe which were considered "masterly". (30) Lady Blessington was very much taken with the one on Churchill. (34, vol. 1, p. 276)

A criticism of Forster's in the Examiner for April 27, 1846, of Browning's Soul's Tragedy shows him again treating the poet well with his pen. On October fifteenth of the preceding year the quarrel had been dissolved by Forster's apologies and, together with approving of Browning's latest effort, Forster was again his friend.

3-Tennyson

1846 was the year when Forster shared in an unpleasant incident between Lytton and another friend, Alfred Lord Tennyson. His services to that friend in that particular year were not recalled with gratitude, at least ultimately, by the poet. Tennyson wrote later of lines he had written in 1846 against Bulwer which Forster sent to Punch: "Wretched work, Odium literarium. I never sent my lines to Punch. John Forster did. They were too bitter. I do not think that I should ever have published them". (42, p. 192) According to this statement in after years, some verses that Tennyson had written on "The New Timon", which was supposedly by Bulwer and which had caused forth in Tennyson feelings of revenge, had been sent to Punch without his knowledge. These feelings were soon supplanted by more charitable ones, but Forster sent the verses on saying that though Lytton was his friend, yet justice was more dear than friendship to him and that he did not believe Lytton's denial of authorship. Tennyson was stung again into feelings of revenge, but, regretting the publication of the verses, sent to Punch a few days later some unsigned stanzas entitled "In After-Thought". (48, vol. 2, p. 325)
Tennyson and Forster knew each other in the Dickens circle, of which the former was a member, more especially in the forties. After marriage in 1850, there are not many recorded instances of his rejoining it. Tennyson was, however, always, from 1842 on, an occasional guest at Forster's table. But both were busy in later years and Forster's health was failing fast, so that contacts had to depend much upon correspondence more or less spasmodic. There was a curious link between these friends. In the early days the poet had lived at 58, Lincoln's Inn Fields under the same roof with Forster.

Forster invited most of his literary friends at some time to contribute to Albany Fonblanque's paper, the EXAMINER. "It was a graceful way of paying a friendly compliment, and Forster availed himself to the full of the privilege of his position." (42, p. 164) "The Charge of the Light Brigade" is of especial interest in that it was the occasion in 1855 of a letter of Tennyson's to Forster which reveals clearly that Tennyson was free to and did call on Forster as did other friends. (38, p. 567) After the poem's first publication in the EXAMINER it found its way to the Crimea, becoming a favourite with the soldiers. Tennyson writes, "By-and-by copies of it were asked for on behalf of the men, by a chaplain of the S. P. G. Tennyson, hearing of this, wrote to Forster and requested him to have a large number of copies printed for distribution among the soldiers, each copy to bear the legend: 'From A Tennyson'. The effect was extraordinary, the general verdict of the soldiers being that the poem was 'splendid'. (42, p. 195)

4-Landor's Collected Works

Forster had a share in preparing the collected writings of two friends. He was painstaking and careful as well as critically able and his two poet friends met in 1836 availed themselves of his services. Browning's did not come out un-
til 1863. Landor's filled much of Forster's time in the forties. It had been planned that the Collected Works appear in 1845, the year of Landor's seventieth birthday. It was, actually, four years late. Forster had many a struggle with Landor incident to the help he gave which, he says, "ended sometimes doubtfully but always peacefully." (20, vol. 2, p. 461) One of these in which Forster was successful was a conflict regarding Landor's intended reformation in spelling. Forster felt that spelling could only be simplified by a great work designed for no other purpose. He argued that since Johnson had found it impracticable, it must be. There seemed to Forster to be already too much literature to permit such a wide departure in spelling customs as Landor desired. He did not feel that it was worth while to disturb customs so long established on the vain hope of attaining an impossible uniformity. He felt that if Landor could succeed in getting a following he would only make worse such confusion as already existed. And Forster did not feel it desirable if it were possible to attain uniformity which, he says "could hardly be desirable in a language derived from such an infinity of sources. You may destroy a language as you clean a picture by rubbing away the richness and mellowness of time". (20, vol. 2, p. 65)

One other matter arose for disagreement with which Forster was not so successful. He wished included in the Collection only that which Landor's best. He wanted to omit the political dialogues, but Landor would not agree. He succeeded with difficulty in eliminating the Latin poetry.* When the

*These poems won Forster's admiration. He thought that more real pleasure of original poetry could be derived from them than from any other modern Latin verses. Here and there the construction is difficult, he says, but it "has never anything of the schoolmaster's expletives or phrases, but in that as in other respects may be read as if a Roman him-
work came out in 1849 it found the two still
friends, the dedication that had been planned was
carried out, and Landor wished to close the vol-
umes as well as begin them with Forster.

5-Forster and Walter Gay

These were the days of Dombay and Son. It
has quite infuriated Georgeissing (24, p. 66)
that Dickens consulted Forster so dependently
about a change he wished to make in the character
of Walter Gay. Dickens wrote from Lausanne that
he was thinking of having the boy trail away from
the love of "adventure and boyish light-hearted-
ness, into negligence, idleness, dissipation, dis-
honesty, and ruin...show how the good turns into
bad by degrees". Then Dickens asked the question
which has aroused comment and which Forster prints
at no gain in some minds for Dickens: "Do you
think it may be done, without making people angry?
................This question of the boy is very im-
portant....Let me hear all you think about it.
Hear! I wish I could." (19, vol. 2, p. 313)

6-Amateur Theatricals of 1847

The amateurs were on tour in 1847 and Fors-
ter is delightfully described in a few pages he
quotes which Dickens wrote of Mrs. Gamp's Account
of her Connection with this affair.* Mr. Wilson*

*(cont.) self had written it". (20, vol. 1, p.
21). Forster would, however, have tried to keep
them from publication even by themselves had he
foreseen the trouble they were to cause him. It
is in connection with them that he speaks of how
Landor, always sending in corrections, twenty or so
that in the end proved to the last: "Extremum hunc, Forstere, mihi con-
gade laborem." (20, vol. 2, p. 456)

*Mrs. Gamp's account was to have benefited the Am-
teur Theatrical cause but it never appeared due to
the failure of the artists to illustrate it.
who is making Mrs. Gamp acquainted, introduces Forster thus: "'This resolute gent a-coming along here as is apparently going to take the railways by storm - him with the tight legs, and his waistcoat very much buttoned, and his mouth very much shut, and his coat a flying open, and his heels a giving it to the platform, is a cricket and beeograffer, and our principal tragedian." (19, vol. 2, p. 353)

Forster, with his friends, was thus on tour to benefit Leigh Hunt, who was sadly in need but who received civil help as soon as the benefit was announced, so that it was not necessary to give the performances planned for London and a dramatic author, Mr. John Poole, "to whom help had become also important" (19, vol. 2, p. 340) received all realized beyond a certain sum from the performances in the provinces.

July 26, they played Every Man in His Humour at Manchester and followed it by the farces A Good Night's Rest and Turning the Tables with receipts of £440 12s. July 28, they performed at Liverpool changing the farce to Comfortable Lodgings or Paris in 1750 with receipts of £463 8s 6d.* The expenses were so great that the profit was very small.

Leigh Hunt wrote his opinion of the productions planned for his benefit: "Simultaneous with the latent movement about the pension was one on the part of my admirable friend Dickens and other distinguished men, Forsters and Jerrolds, who, combining kindly purpose with an amateur inclination for the stage, had descended to show to the public what excellent actors they could have been, had they so pleased, - what excellent actors, indeed, some of them were... They proposed... a benefit for myself... and the piece performed on the occasion was Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humour... If anything had been needed to show how men

*Forster recited a prologue written by Lytton on this occasion.
of letters include actors, on the common principle of the greater including the less, these gentlemen would have furnished it. Mr. Dickens's "Bobadil" had a spirit in it of intellectual apprehension beyond anything the existing stage has shown ....... and Mr. Forster delivered the verses of Ben Jonson with a musical flow and a sense of their grace and beauty unknown, I believe, to the recitation of actors at present. At least I have never heard anything like it since Edmund Kean's." (19, vol. 2, p. 343)*

Though Jonson was a favourite he was not the only author chosen by the players. A trip to Paris where Forster visited with Dickens Victor Hugo gave rise in this same year to a desire to put on the Frenchman's Hernani. They did so and Forster played the title part.** The following year they were to choose a Shakespearian play.

7-Forster in Europe, 1845 and 1847

Dickens was responsible for the two times of which we have record that Forster set foot upon the continent. In June, 1845, Dickens had enticed

*Not so did Macready, the actor, write in his diary, November 16, 1845. He thought it good, but "Judged therefore by the poet and by the art, by what the one affords the opportunity of being done, and what the other enables the actor to do, the performance would not be endured from ordinary, or rather regular actors by a paying audience. They seem to me to be under a perfect delusion as to their degrees of skill and power in this art, of which they do not know what may be called the very rudiments." (48, vol. 2, p. 310) Macready admitted, however, that, for people without any training they did well.

**Macready thought the work in general for Hernani very poor indeed except for that of Forster who, he said, "with a little practice would make a very respectable actor." (48, vol. 2, p. 366)
him to meet him at Brussels after unsuccessful efforts to get him to come to Genoa. Jerrold and Macilise were also of the party; and they all spent a delightful week in Flanders.

In 1847, Forster was able at Dickens request to go to Paris and the account of the delightful trip may be best given by Forster himself.

"We passed a fortnight together and crowded into it more than might seem possible to such a narrow space. With a dreadful insatiability we passed through every variety of sight-seeing, prisons, palaces, theatres, hospitals, the Morgue and the Lazare, as well as the Louvre, Versailles, St. Cloud, and all the spots made memorable by the first revolution. The excellent comedian, Regnier, known to us through Macready and endeared by many kindnesses, incomparable for his knowledge of the city and unwearying in a friendly service, made us free of the green-room of the Francais, where on the birthday of Molière, we saw his Don Juan revived. At the Conservatoire we witnessed the masterly teaching of Samson; at the Odeon saw a new play by Ponsard, done but indifferently; at the Varites 'Gentile Bernard', with four grisettes as if stepped out of a picture by Watteau; at the Gymnase, 'Clarisse Harlowe' with a death scene of Rose Cheri which comes back to me, through the distance of time, as the prettiest piece of pure and gentle stage pathos in my memory; at the Porte St. Martin 'Luchessa Borgia' by Hugo; at the Cirque, scenes of the great revolution and all the battles of Napoleon; at the Comic Opera, 'Jivvy'; at the Palais Royal the usual New Year's piece, in which Alexander Dumas was shown in his study beside a pile of quarto volumes five feet high which proved to be the first tableau of the first act of the first piece to be played on the first night of his new theatre. That new theatre the Historique, we also saw verging to a short lived completeness; and we supped with Dumas himself, and Eugene Sue, and met Théophile Gautier and Alphonse Karr. We saw Lamartine also, and had friendly intercourse with Scribe, and with the kind,
good-natured Amedee Pichot. One day we visited in the Rue du Bac the sick and ailing Chateaubriand whom we thought like Basil Montagu; found ourselves at the other extreme of opinion in the sculpture room of David d'Angers; and closed that day at the house of Victor Hugo by whom Dickens was received with infinite courtesy and grace. He was himself, however, the best thing we saw; and I find it difficult to associate the attitudes and aspect in which the world has lately wondered at him, with the sovereign grace and self-possessed quiet gravity of that night twenty-five years ago.... and certainly never heard the French language spoken with the picturesque distinctness given to it by Victor Hugo.

At the Bibliotheque Royale we were much interested by seeing among many other priceless treasures, Gutenberg's types, and Racine's notes in his copy of Sophocles, Rousseau's music and Voltaire's note upon Frederick of Prussia's letter." (19, vol. 2, pp. 303-5)

Before Forster quittead Paris early in February they had a last talk of social problems after dinner at the Embassy which, writes Forster, "was of the anger underlying all this, and of the signs also visible everywhere of the Napoleon-worship which the Orleanists themselves had most favoured. Accident brought Dickens to England a fortnight later, when again we met together at Gore-house, the self-contained reticent man whose doubtful inheritance was rapidly preparing a fall to him. (19, vol. 2, p. 306)

*Forster saw Louis Napoleon at a dinner party of five at Gore house on the first day of his arrival in London after the escape from Ham. He described for them his way of escape. He afterwards gave Forster with an inscription to him written on the flyleaf a book "The Prisoner of Ham" with a clever pen and ink sketch. Other talk that was significant was about Cromwell. D'Orsay spoke in an exaggerated way of Forster's Cromwell. So Forster at Napoleon's request, explained the conferences preceding Cromwell's rejection of the crown. (20, vol. 2, p. 469)
It was in this year that Forster added to his acquaintance with Longfellow that of one other American man of letters, Ralph Waldo Emerson. It was usual for the circle to gather with Dickens but on April 25, 1847, Forster records that Dickens and Carlyle with the "admirable Emerson" (19, vol. 2, p. 445) met at his "rooms because of some accident that closed Devonshire terrace for the day.

In 1847 Forster reached the height of his long career as a writer for periodicals with his appointment to the editorship of the EXAMINER, one of the foremost newspapers of the day. He had been, for fourteen years, its literary and dramatic critic. He had always been quick to announce new evidences of genius. He had always been fearless and prompt in recognizing valuable material. As editor he found complete power. He kept the standard of the paper high and maintained its independence. As editor of a liberal paper he was not afraid to plead in its pages for Southey's son, a person who belonged to the conservatives. He sought out writers whom he deemed capable and he had a sure eye. One of these was a remarkable find and was to be his successor in the editor's chair. Forster reprinted, in 1849, one of Henry Morley's articles which led to that author's contributing to the famous newspaper, and this in turn led to an invitation to contribute to Household Words; and this again to an offer of a permanent position on the staff of the EXAMINER. Forster not only used himself but recommended to Dickens, when an editor, his future successor as editor of the EXAMINER. On April 4, 1850, Morley received a letter from Forster enclosing one from Dickens asking that he write on sanitary matters for Household Words. Forster replied to Morley who wrote to him about accepting a position on the staff of the same paper; "Mr. Dickens is the kindest and most honourable of men; and in what-
ever you do for him you will be able to reckon steadfastly on his earnest acknowledgment and liberal desire to make it more and more worth your doing." (31, p. 308) The offer was accepted and Morley justified expectations.

Forster came to have sole control of the EXAMINER through an appointment of his predecessor, Albany Fonblanque, to Chief of the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade. Albany Fonblanque, an old friend who had studied law under Chitty, and had remained in the field by writing, in the main, on political matters, had been an amicable companion in the fourteen years of Forster's connection with him on the paper. Forster respected his ability and called him "as keen and clear a judge as ever lived either of books or men". (19, vol. 1, p. 49) It was a tribute to his work that Fonblanque secured his appointment as editor when he himself desired to retire.

Forster wrote Bulwer Lytton, October 27, 1847, some of the details of the new arrangements by which he was to enter upon his new task, and requested even then services for his paper. He said: "And now of my own concerns. You would probably see the announcement of P's appointment. This is the last week of his editorship of the EXAMINER. I will speak to you very freely and unreservedly (in confidence, I need not say) of the arrangements he has proposed, and to which I have conditionally consented. In these circumstances - already adverted to - he can only for the present afford to give me a small pittance (comparatively speaking) for the editorship. But within a certain time I am to have either a percentage on profits, or an absolute share, and meanwhile we are bound to the present arrangement only as long as I find I can work in it. I am to have the sole editorship...and to receive £500 a year. He is himself, for the present, to continue to write something every week....I am venturing to entertain the hope that I may have some assistance from you! Something from week to week, however brief....Of the ultimate destination of the paper
(beyond my share in it) we have not spoken, but in times of less money pressure I should have had no difficulty, with the help of friends, in effecting a purchase of the entire property, on terms that, after a year or two, supposing all to go well, would lie very lightly indeed. Nor do I yet despair of this. All my efforts shall be directed towards it.'” (42, p. 145)

Matters did go well, as we have said, and Forster only resigned the post when he received his appointment in 1855 as secretary to the Lunacy Commission. He gave up the idea of buying the paper. Albany Fonblanque replied to his resignation announcing the close of their business relationships with words which showed that he had not regretted obtaining Forster’s appointment to the chair of importance:

"I apprehended the nature of your communication, and opened your note with misgivings.

"I cannot deny the wisdom of your determination, though.......the straightforwardness, the kindness, the frankness, make it only the more un-acceptable to me. You see by the erasures that my eyes and hand are not very true and steady, and in truth I write with a heavy heart.......We have been connected now for twenty-three years, and have never had a difference beyond opinion - seldom that - never unfriendly. Be your successor who he may, he can never fill your place. I feel my moorings are lifted." (42, p. 250)

10-The Goldsmith of 1848

In 1847 Forster was writing for the twelfth time his still unpublished Life of Goldsmith and was bringing it nearly to completion. On September 5, 1847, Dickens wrote and proposed in connection with it a design for an edition of old novelists, which was never worked out: "Supposing your Goldsmith made a general sensation, what
should you think of doing a cheap edition of his works? I have an idea that we might do things of that sort with considerable effect." (19, vol. 2, p. 556) Later in the year we find Dickens begging Forster to let Goldsmith "die by the seaside": "Why don't you bring down a carpet-bag full of books, and take possession of the drawing-room all the morning. My opinion is that Goldsmith would die more easily by the seaside!" (19, vol. 2, p. 355)

The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith came out in 1848 in one volume and was dedicated to Dickens as one whose knowledge of and sympathy with his fellow-countrymen was great.* The volume was daintily illustrated by his friends Maclise, Stanfield, Leech, Doyle, and Hamerton and won instant popularity.

In 1848 Forster and his friends considered in their search for a suitable play to perform Jonson's Alchemist, Beaumont and Fletcher's Beggar's Bush and Goldsmith's Good Natured Man, Jerrold's Gent Day and Bulwer's Money. Choice was made, however, of Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor. Nine performances were given, from the first in London on April 25 to the last in Glasgow on July 20, one each at Manchester, Liverpool, and Edinburgh and two each at Birmingham, Glasgow and at the Haymarket in London, where the queen and prince honored the amateurs with their presence. The gross receipts from the nine performances before the nec-

*The dedication read as follows:

"Come with me and behold
Of friend, with heart as gentle for distress,
As resolute with wise true thoughts to bind
The happiest to the unhappiest of our kind,
That there is fiercer crowded misery
In garret toil and London loneliness,
Then in cruel islands mid the far-off sea."

(28, p. 20)
ecessary deductions for expenses were two thousand and five hundred and fifty one pounds and eight pence.*

The proceeds from these productions, as well as those from a revival of Every Man in His Humour, went to endow the curatorship of the Shakespeare House at Stratford-on-Avon, meant to be always held by some one distinguished in literature, especially dramatic literature. The profits were kept separate from the fund raised for the purchase of the house for the nation. Knowles was the person in mind at the time. The plan for the curatorship was abandoned upon the town authorities taking everything into their own hands, but the sum received was given to Knowles.

Forster's part in the Merry Wives was that of Master Ford and if we may judge from a statement of a witness and fellow actor, he did it well. Mrs. Cowden Clark writes, "John Forster's Master Ford was a carefully finished performance." (13, p. 306) T. Purland, who was later a member of the London committee of which Forster was chairman for the raising of a fund to purchase the house of Shakespeare's birth has something to say of Forster's Kitaly in performances of Every Man in His Humour on May 15 and 17, 1848: "The acting was generally good, Charles Dickens and John Forster in particular, but the costumes were awfully bad: Kitaly and Cob were the only characters correctly dressed. **Very poor audiences on both nights. Expenses heavy." (43, p. 117)

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*Haymarket  L 319  14s
Manchester  266  12  6d
Liverpool  467  6  6
Birmingham  327  10
Birmingham  262  18  6
Edinburgh  325  1  6
Glasgow  471  7  8
Glasgow (half price)  210  10
12. A March Day in 1848

Early in the year there had been a delightful ride. Forster, Leech, Lemon, and Dickens spent the "whole of a March day riding over every part of Salisbury plain visiting Stonehenge and exploring Hazlitt's hut at Winterslow, birthplace of some of his finest essays; altogether with so brilliant a success" that Dickens on the thirteenth of November wished to repeat the idea in a new direction in mid-winter, to see dark winter cliffs and roaring oceans. As the winter came it brought enough storms for Dickens so that he decided on a visit to some old cathedral city they did not know. (19, vol. 1, p. 430) Illness prevented Forster from making this trip but the others went.

**(cont.) It may be of interest in regard to the costuming to quote a letter upon the subject dated 8/7/45 of Dickens to Mr. Wilmott, sometime stage manager at Drury Lane and the Lyceum Theatres and a personal friend: "Mayhap you may have heard how that some friends of yours are going to have a private play at Miss Kelly's Theatre - how that Clarkson Stanfield Esquire is not innocent of the fact - how that John Forster Esquire has been spoken of for Kately - and how that Charles Dickens Esquire is connected-in whispers - with Bobadil.

"It will not come off until the 15th of next month, but I and some others want our dresses made at once, in order that we may be easy in them, as well as in the words. It has occurred to me that nobody can tell us so well as you where we can get them well, and not ruinously made. If you will take a chop with us either Saturday or Tuesday, you shall have it at your own house. What do you say to Saturday?"

"'You shall be producible behind that fat wilver watch you used to hang up in your box at Drury Lane, at any moment you choose.'" (42, p. 134
13-1849-1850

Talk on Forster's visit to Landor on his birthday in 1849 led to the writing of the quatrain which was adopted afterwards as the motto to his Last Fruit, beginning:
"I strove with none for none was worth the strife"...

This was the year that Talfourd reached the bench and the year of the visit of Macready to America which culminated in the disastrous Astor riots, the result of unfriendly relations with the American tragedian, Forrest, already discussed. Also in this year Forster suppressed material Dickens wished printed. Dickens received a doubtful compliment in the Daily News and was, as Forster tells us, not a little nettled by what he felt a jesting allusion to himself. He asked Forster to forward a remonstrance which in the latter, having a strong dislike to such displays of sensitiveness, did not do but printed later in the Life of Dickens. (19, vol. 2, p. 446) This year too, that of the writing of David Copperfield, so closely allied to Dickens life, occasioned many outpourings of the heart of the man to Forster, whom he now regarded as his biographer and who, accordingly, both as a friend and as a future biographer was apprised of the fact that Dickens after all was going to do what seemed to him like sending some part of himself out into the outside "Shadowy World". (19, vol. 2, p. 462)

A friendship that had been carried on mainly by letters was to see an end the following year in the death of Francis, Lord Jeffry, critic and editor of the Edinburgh Review, as fearless as Forster when power or intimidation threatened. He was a great admirer of Forster's historical studies and biographic faculty (42, p. 240) and of Little Nell and Dombey. Forster
wrote of him: "Jeffrey had completed with consummate success, if ever man did, the work appointed him in this world; and few, after a life of such activities, have left a memory so unstained and pure." (19, vol. 2, p. 452)

In 1848 the Italian irreconcilable, Giuseppe Mazzini, an essentially kind-hearted man with a strong love for his fellow-countrymen (42, p. 41) brought a letter of introduction to Mrs. Carlyle, who petted and made much of the exile and strove in every possible way to interest her friends in him, and Forster especially. As an incident, therefore, in the Carlyle friendship, Forster, the historian of the Commonwealth, enjoyed with "Giuseppe Mazzini, the history-maker during Italy's most troublous time" a brief and interesting friendship. (42, p. 42)

1850 took fresh toll among Forster's friends. He and Landor expected a summons from Lord Nugent for a promised autumn visit at Salisbury plain, but while the summons was waited for the news of death came. Forster says of him, "A courageous and consistent politician and few men have been so at the cost of greater worldly sacrifices". (20, vol. 2, p. 461)

Macready's Mina died, too, in this year and her and Forster's namesake, Jonathan Forster Christina, was born. Forster repeated the friendly offices that Macready had found so pertinent ten years before. On February 21, 1850, he sent a water-bed and on the following day some clotted cream.

14-Forster and Household Words

Forster did not have to assume the entire responsibility with Dickens's second venture as editor owing to the fact that it was much happier and better fated than that with the DAILY NEWS.
But he yet had much to do with it. He recommended to Dickens the one who became assistant editor, Mr. Wills, a man who had remained with Forster and proved his ability during his editorship of the DAILY NEWS. Forster writes, "I am happy now to remember that for the important duty Mr. Wills was chosen at my suggestion. He discharged its duties with admirable patience and ability for twenty years and Dickens's later life had no more intimate friend." (19, vol. 2, p. 422)

The original agreement for the establishment of HOUSEHOLD WORDS was made, March 28, 1850, between Dickens, William Bradbury, Frederick Mullett Evans, Forster, and Wills. Dickens was to have one-half and be editor at a salary of £500 a year and additional payment for literary articles. Bradbury and Evans together were to share one-quarter, Forster an eighth, and Wills an eighth with £8 a week as sub-editor. It was stipulated "that in consideration of the share hereby reserved to him the said John Forster shall from time to time contribute literary articles to the said publication without any additional renumeration for the same". (32, p. 196)

The paper lasted from March 30, 1850, until May 28, 1858. It saw in this last year difficulties which occupied considerable part of Forster's time. Differences with his wife, from whom he was separated in this year, led to trouble between Dickens and the publishers, Messrs. Bradbury and Evans. Dickens, quite against Forster's advice, published a statement about his domestic affairs because of the gossip. Forster was consulted frequently at this as well as at other times. Dickens usually had implicit faith in what he advised. He wrote to Wills, November 10, 1858: "You know how emphatically he feels that the first thing above all others is not to injure the property." (32, p. 255) The result of the

*Forster relinquished his share six years later.
trouble with the publishers had been a determination to wind up HOUSEHOLD WORDS and start ALL THE YEAR AROUND in its place. A bill in Chancery had been filed, and by order of the court "the right to use the name of the periodical HOUSEHOLD WORDS together with the printed stock and stereotyped plates of the same," (32. p. 261) was put up to auction in one lot on Monday, May 16. Dickens himself was the purchaser, HOUSEHOLD WORDS was incorporated with ALL THE YEAR AROUND the last number of the former being issued May 28 and the first number of the latter April 30. As independent publications they thus overlapped by five issues. Forster continued to give his assistance, when it was needed, on the last paper. Dickens did not, throughout his experience on the two papers, fail to consult Forster on whatever difficulties that arose and he sometimes even overbore the reluctance of Wills. He had not taken his advice in 1850 when Forster had strenuously objected to the project, one to provide imaginative produce for ordinary ground of miscellaneous reading. But he freely went to him at all times for help. It is clear that Forster in this matter as in others put the friendship first and cared too much for Dickens to retire in dudgeon or indifference when his advice was not taken.

15-The Guild of Literature and Art, 1850-1851

In 1850, Forster appeared again as "Kately" with the original actors in Every Man in His Humour. Three private performances were given in the great hall of Lord Lytton's old family mansion in Knabworth park. Forster thus describes them and the venture then inaugurated which was dear to his heart but did not meet very great success: "All the circumstances and surroundings were very brilliant; some of the gentlemen of the county played both in the comedy and the farces; our generous host was profuse of all noble encouragement; and amid the general pleasure and excite-
ment hopes rose high. Recent experience had shown what the public interest in this kind of amusement might place within reach of its providers; and there came to be discussed the possibility of making permanent such help as had been afforded to fellow-writers by means of an endowment that should not be mere charity but should combine indeed something of both pension list and college-lectureship, without the drawbacks of either. It was not enough considered that schemes for self help, to be successful, require from those they are meant to benefit, not only a general assent to their desirability, but zealous and active cooperation.... the enterprise was set on foot and the 'Guild of Literature and Art' originated at Ensbworth." (19, vol. 2, p. 366)

The Guild planned for its first venture a five act comedy to be written by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. When a certain sum of money had been obtained by public representation of it, the details of the scheme were to be drawn up, and "appeal made to those whom it addressed more especially". (19, vol. 2, p. 366)

In a few months everything was ready except a farce which Dickens was to have written to follow the comedy, but which unexpected cares of management and preparation were held to absolve him. A farce written by Lemon was substituted, "to which, however, Dickens soon contributed so many jokes and so much Gampish and other fun of his own, that it came to be in effect a joint piece of authorship;........... The Duke of Devonshire had offered his house in Piccadilly for the first representations, and in his princely way discharged all the expenses attending them. A moveable theatre was built and set up in the great drawing-room and the library was turned into a green-room." (19, vol. 2, p. 366)

Forster had in this play of Bulwer's part to
which he was well suited, that of Mr. Hardman who with a severe and peremptory air is truly sympathetic and is the first to say a kind word to the small poet or hack pamphleteer. "Not so Bad as We Seem was played for the first time at Devonshire-house on the 27th of May, 1851, before the Queen and Prince and as large an audience as places could be found for; Mr. Nightingale's Diary was the name given to the farce. The success abundantly realized the expectations formed; and, after many representations at the Hanover-square Rooms in London, strolling began in the country, and was continued at intervals for considerable portions of this and the following year. From much of it, illness and occupation disabled me, and substitutes had to be found; The company carried with them, it should be said, the theatre constructed for Devonshire-house, as well as the admirable scenes which Stanfield, David Roberts, Thomas Grieve, Talbin Absolon, and Louis Haghe had painted as their generous free-offerings to the comedy; of which the representations were thus rendered irrespective of theatres or their managers, and took place in the large halls or concert-rooms of the various towns and cities."

The following advertisement of the project of the Guild of Literature and Art, which never had very great success, was published in the daily papers of the time:

**GUILD OF LITERATURE AND ART:** to encourage life assurance and other provident habits among authors and artists; to render such assistance to both as shall never compromise their independence; and to found a new Institution where honourable rest from arduous labour shall still be associated with discharge of congenial duties. To bring this project into general notice and to form the commencement of the necessary funds, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, one of its originators, has written and presented to his fellow-labourers
in the cause, a New Comedy in Five Acts. It will be produced under the management of Mr. Charles Dickens, in a theatre constructed for the purpose; and will be performed by Mr. Robert Bell, Mr. Wilkie Collins,* Mr. Dudley Costello, Mr. Peter Cunningham, Mr. Charles Dickens, Mr. Augustus Egg, A.R.A., Mr. John Forster, Mr. R. H. Horne, Mr. Douglas Jerrold, Mr. Charles Knight, Mr. Mark Lemon, Mr. J. Westland Marston, Mr. Frank Stone, Mr. John Tenniel, Mr. F. W. Toppan, and others. Portions of the scenery have been presented by Mr. Absolon, Mr. Thomas Grieve, Mr. Lewis Haga, and Mr. Talbin. The first representation of the Comedy which is entitled, Not So Bad as We Seem; or Many Sides to A Character, will take place at Devonshire House, on Friday, 16th May, before Her Majesty the Queen, and His Royal Highness the Prince Albert, Ladies and Gentlemen wishing tickets for the performance at Devonshire House, price 15 each - this sum being regarded as a contribution in support of the design - will, on a written application to his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, at Devonshire House, receive a voucher for the same, exchangeable at Mr. Mitchell’s library, 33, Old Bond-street; and Mr. Sams, 1, St. James’s street.

"William Henry Wills, Hon. Sec."

(52, p. 44)

16-Forster and the Acquisition of Shakespeare’s Birthplace.

About this time plans were underway for the acquisition of Shakespeare’s birthplace for the nation, a matter with which Forster had much to do. Within a month only of ten years from the date of Forster’s first visit to Stratford, there was a meeting February 13, 1851, of the Royal Shakespearean Club held at the Town Hall, Stratford-on-Avon. The subject of the custodia ships of the Shakespeare birthplace was discussed and it was

*Writer of the sensational novel and a great friend of Dickens’s.
resolved that a report embodying the views of the Stratford committee as to the future custody of the house should be remitted to Forster, as chairman of the London committee.

The London committee, consisting among others already spoken of Purland, and Peter Cunningham, a close student of the lives of eminent authors, artists and other persons of the two preceding centuries, John Forster, chairman, met the fifteenth of the same month and passed a resolution that a sub-committee consisting of four members of the London committee and three members of the Stratford committee, be appointed, with power to conduct a negotiation with the Government and report the result to the London committee. (42, p. 120-1)

The members chosen from the London committee were: "John Payne Collier, Shakespearian scholar, Peter Cunningham, antiquarian and man of letters; John Forster, (chairman), and Charles Knight, the eminent publishing reformer. The three members of the Stratford committee were: Sir. Thomson, Charles Holt Bracebridge, and Mr. Flower. It seems from the records, still existing at Stratford, that Forster and Peter Cunningham took upon themselves the oversight of both committee's accounts, which, considering the former's clearness of vision in such matters, could not be otherwise than satisfactory, and a practical guarantee for the financial success of the scheme." (42, p. 121)

Renton feels certain that Forster was the real moving spirit of the undertaking except in the only too-frequent intervals when he was ill. It appears from the record of that which took place at a special meeting of the Royal Shakespearian Club at the Town Hall, Stratford, on April 23, 1853, that he had no inconsiderable share. "It appears from this, that Forster, as chairman of the London committee, had on his own initiative entered into obligations with the
Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests with a view to the Shakespearian property being transferred to the guardianship of the Crown, as a part of the Nation. This action of Forster's met with, as might be expected, the unanimous and unqualified approval of both committees; he himself promising to make public the result, when known, with as little delay as possible. So successful was Forster in his friendly negotiation with Lord John Manners, the Chief Commissioner, that his Lordship undertook to introduce a Bill into Parliament, its object the transferring of Shakespeare's house to the Office of Her Majesty's Works and Public Buildings in perpetuity; official notice of such Bill to be duly advertised in the LONDON GAZETTE." (42, p. 122)

A change of administration and Forster's illness rendered necessary the indefinite postponement of presentation of the Bill. Forster remained ill for some time and, fearing that the delay would let the opportunity slip of getting the Bill under way for the present session, he requested the Minister to see Mr. Cunningham, who was as fully informed on the matter as he himself. Here was the first effort of a matter which was to take some years more to accomplish. In 1874 the house was put up for sale and was purchased by the Nation at £3000. By a special act of Parliament in 1891, the Birthplace was placed in the hands of trustees.

17- 1851

1851 was the year of Macready's farewell to the stage and of the dinner given him. And in this year the second edition of Browning's poems in which he had had the help of Forster, Talfourd, and Procter, was nearing publication. In this year the Brownings returned to England for a short visit and acquaintance with Forster among others was renewed.
18-Forster and Skimpole

In 1853 Dickens was at work on Bleak House. We have evidence in Skimpole of Forster's influence. Skimpole, a shiftless, amateurish, artist, was changed at his advice so that he was not quite so like Leigh Hunt, of whom he is said to have been a caricature. Dickens wrote, March 18, 1852, "I have again gone over every part of it very carefully, and I think I have made it much less like. I have changed Leonard to Harold. I have no right to give Hunt pain, and I am so bent upon not doing it that I wish you would look at all the proof once more, and indicate any particular place in which you feel it particularly like whereupon I will alter that place." (19, vol. 2, p. 7)*

An apology was made in ALL THE YEAR AROUND in 1859 after Hunt's death, which mentioned a revision of the first sketch so as to render it less like at the suggestion of two friends of Hunt, Forster and Procter.

19- 1852-1855

In 1852 Forster lost his mother and, in the following year, he suffered further loss in the death of his sister Jane. Carlyle's letter of condolence written September 29, 1853, speaks of Forster's own poor health. (9, p. 156)

In 1854 Forster expanded the Goldsmith into two volumes with the enlarged title of the Life and Times of Goldsmith. Carlyle and Whitwell Elwin, a friend met in this year, preferred the volume of 1848 to the expanded one of 1854 and thought that the latter encompassed by the

*The alterations were many but the essential wrong remained, "the pleasant sparkling airy talk, which could not be mistaken, identified with odious qualities a friend only known to the writer by attractive ones." (19, vol. 3, p. 7)
TIMES lost the unity. Elwin, in the memoir prefixed to the catalogue of the Forster Collection at South Kensington, says that Goldsmith was not the moving spirit of his times and that "the fascination of the extraneous details to Forster prevented his seeing that his portrait of Goldsmith, by losing its unity, lost something of its force". (Memoir p. 10) (17, vol. 2, p. 154) Elwin wrote what was ostensibly a review of the two volumes for the Quarterly Review, October, 1854. But it was really an independent biography and was later interleaved for revision and only one or two subsidiary pages which had given colour to it as a review and contained some complimentary mentions of Forster's book were omitted.

In March, 1855, Forster contributed a sympathetic monograph on Sir Richard Steele to the Fortnightly Review. In January 1856 he wrote for the Edinburgh Review The Civil War and Oliver Cromwell - a criticism of Guizot's History of the English Commonwealth.

June 22, 1854, Forster had informed his co-proprietors of his inability henceforth to contribute literary articles to HOUSEHOLD WORDS. It was agreed that he should retain his eighth share on condition that "he shall, on February 22, 1856, pay to his co-proprietors the sum of £100. Failing this payment, Forster's share is to revert to the other proprietors." (32, p. 196) Forster relinquished his share on the date named and one eighth was given to Wills and one eighth was kept by Dickens.

It was in 1855 that Forster quitted his post as editor of the EXAMINER. In December Proctor was promoted from Secretary of the Lunacy Commission to Commissioner and interest was used with Lord Shaftesbury, the chairman, to obtain the vacant secretory ship for Forster. Efforts were successful and Forster was sworn in on December 24th. His income from it was £600 a year and he immediately withdrew from the EXAMINER, for which he never again wrote, and devoted his leisure to literature.
CHAPTER VII

The Last Twenty-Two Years, 1854-1876

1—A friend of the last years, 1854-1876

Forster had one important friendship with one who was not an admirer of Dickens's books. The Rev. Whitwell Elwin, Rector of Booton, Norwich, liked Dickens personally and socially but he thought that his books were spoiled by caricature. He knew their common friend chiefly through meetings at Forster's.

Forster was introduced to Elwin by Peter Cunningharn at a Garrick Club dinner on January 12, 1854, and a warm and intimate friendship sprang up between them at once. It lasted to the end of Forster's life. Elwin was on the lookout for fresh writers for the Quarterly Review, of which he was editor, and he enlisted John Forster, whose first paper on Samuel Foot, published in October, was considered not only by far the best in the number but of high intrinsic merit. Lord Brougham wrote to Elwin that nothing he had read for a long while had struck him so much. (171-p.192)

Forster seems to have borne himself more gently with Elwin than with many. The latter wrote to Murray, February 9, 1876, just after Forster's death: "He was two distinct men and the one man quite dissimilar to the other. To see him in company I should not have recognized him for the friend with whom I was intimate in private. Then he was quiet, natural, unpretending, and most agreeable, and in the warmth and generosity of his friendship he had no superior. I am his deep debtor for many years of signal, unwearied kindness, and never had so much as a momentary ruffle with him. Sensitive as he was in some ways, there was no man to whom it was easier to speak with perfect frankness. He always bore it with gentle good nature." (17, p.307)

It is to Elwin that Renton assigns the roll of having "succeeded in curbing the overbearing boisterousness of Forster." (42, p.109) Forster wrote to him, February 14, 1857: "You are never in my mind associated in the most remote way with this party or with that—as mere advocate or supporter of either—in far serener heights I think of you." (17, p.92)
So much did Forster think of this friend that he would have no one else to officiate at his marriage to Mrs. Colburne in 1856. Legal formalities would not allow Forster to go to Norfolk, so Elwin left his hermitage and traveled to London to perform the ceremony. One other service Forster required of this friend. He appointed him, together with Lord Lytton and Justice Chitty, an executor. He did not consult Elwin about the matter, but he knew well that Elwin would carry out his wishes. Elwin was left at Forster's death the latter's gold watch and a legacy of £2000 besides which there was an uncalled bequest of £1,500 to Frances Elwin, who died at the close of 1875 and whom he had always chosen to regard as his god-daughter. Out of this sum the parents eventually filled a large west window at Booton church with stained glass.

Whitwell Elwin and Forster mutually enjoyed each other. Forster once wrote of a visit he paid to Booton that he was received with "a greeting from Elwin such as he only can give!" (17, p.165) When they were acquainted but a little while he had written, November 14, 1854: "Most welcome was your letter this morning, as your letters always are to me. They come fraught with some new proof of the true, warm-hearted, generous friend who has made life worth something more to me than it was a year ago." (17, p.305) On May 23, 1869, he wrote, "My dear fellow, with the ranks so thinning around us, should we not close up--come nearer to each other? None are so dear to us here at home as Mrs. Elwin and you, and all of you." (17, p.306) July 22, 1874, he wrote in his diary after Elwin's last visit: "Dear old friend. Our meeting was very delightful to me." (17, p.306) One of the last entrances in his diary, December 10, 1875, reads, "Precious letter from dearest Elwin." (17, p.306)

Nor was it a one sided friendship. Elwin wrote to Lord Brougham, August 16, 1855: "I know no kinder or more honourable man, none more earnest and diligent in whatever he undertakes, and a very few who are
abler." (17,p.306) On March 27, 1861, he wrote, "Forster has a number of admirable qualities and I have a particular regard for him, and often delight in his society." (17,p.307)

Elwin was introduced at Forster's house, where his friendship and social gifts made him always a welcome guest, to very varied groups of society all more or less distinguished by position or intellect. He had often taken Forster's advice on literary matters and had he written the Life of Pope he intended, he would have dedicated it to Forster as a memorial of their friendship. Forster suggested to him once when he was on a visit to him in London that he explain how such a "trivial creature" as Boswell seemed had been able to bring out the "gravity, and wisdom of Johnson" as he had done in his celebrated Life. Elwin did this in a paper in the Quarterly Review of March, 1858, under the title of Boswell-Early Life of Johnson." The sequel came out in January, 1859. It was Forster who persuaded Elwin to have nothing to do with the project of writing a Life of Joshua Reynolds, which Leslie the painter had left as a legacy to him. Elwin was very busy with the Quarterly Review and the Pope he was editing and kept his decision in abeyance for a year and finally declined to perform the task simultaneously with giving up the Review. When in 1861 Murray, the publisher, got impatient at the delay in the progress of Pope Forster successfully interposed and obtained patience for his friend.* (17,p.263)

*Nine years later the Pope was published, November, 1870. It justified Forster's early prophecy that it would be the "best edited English classic we have," (17,p.284) a prophecy which shows Forster's admiration for detailed work.
Forster, among other friends of Elwin, felt that he needed to get away in his later years from the solitude of Booton. In 1861 he attempted to get him a cannonry. Lord Brougham had applied to Lord Palmerston and Forster had urged the matter on Lord Shaftesbury, but no post that would suit was vacant at the time and Elwin would probably not have accepted it had a proposal been definitely made. Again in 1870, Murray and Forster took up the project, Brougham having died in the interval. They obtained a letter from Bishop Pelham, of Norwich, recommending him for preferment, and through Lord Shaftesbury they approached Mr. Gladstone, who was then Prime Minister, and decided that the Rectory of Middleton would not do and that a cannonry, by preference, at St. Paul's Cathedral was what would be most appropriate. In June Elwin conferred with Forster on the subject and then agreed to leave himself in his friend's hands. In September, Gladstone offered another living and Elwin promptly declined it saying that he was happy at Booton. He wrote to Murray, "When Forster told me the history, and pressed me with his usual urgency, I felt deeply the kindness, and had not the ungracious courage to thwart so much generosity. Nevertheless I had an inward consciousness that it was best for me to be left as I am..." (17, p.281) It was Murray and Forster who procured the signatures for Elwin's admission to the Athenaeum Club. Elwin's turn did not come until 1871, and then he wanted to withdraw, but felt the difficulty. He wrote to Murray, "I know (though nobody has hinted it to me) that you and Forster have secured them by your personal influence. His and your zeal and kindness are absolutely unbounded..." (17,p.291)

2-Marriage

Mr. Walter Frith, son of W. P. Frith, R. A., told Mr. Renton that he distinctly remembered Mrs. Colburne as a widow coming in company with Forster more than one annual show Sunday to the studio of his father, for whom Forster had a great opinion both as an artist and as a man, to see the pictures for the forthcoming Academy
Forster had known Henry Colburne and his wife for many years. In 1856 he married Mrs. Colburne, who had become a widow.*

September 28, 1856, Forster wrote the following letter to Bulwer which announced a complete change in his arrangements for life:

58 Lincoln's Inn Fields,
28th September, 1856.

"Private,
My Dear Bulwer Lytton,

"Great blanks occur in our intercourse, incident, I suppose, to all human intercourse; but I do not find these avail to relax the hold which the past and all its memories and associations have upon us.

"I am going to enter upon a great change of life, and cannot bear that you should hear it authoritatively from any but myself. Gossip I dare say you have heard already, for my private affairs seem to have been much talked of lately, and people have known far more than myself about them. I say this only for the purpose of adding, that if I had thought it right and becoming to tell such things of myself, I should not have been so long before I spoke of them to you.

"I am about to marry Mrs. Colburne. You have seen her, I think and if I were to say to you how amiable, gentle, and accomplished she is, you would of course expect me to say no less. With that, therefore, I leave it, only perhaps, I may add that, as

*Dickens's reaction to the news is of interest: "'I have the most prodigious, overwhelming, crushing, astounding, blinding, deafening, pulverising, scarifying secret of which Forster is the hero, imaginable, by the whole efforts of the whole British population. It is a thing of the kind that, after I knew it (from himself), this morning, I lay down flat as if an engine and tender had fallen upon me.'" (42,p.95)
ae is more than seven years younger than myself, there is no improper disparity in point of age.

"Anything further I spare you, till I find out you care to hear more as to my future intentions. I shall leave town for an absence of a month or more—a rare holiday for me! I have taken house in Montagu Square (No.46), and (upon my return) poor old Lincoln's Inn Fields, where I have lived for three-and-twenty years, will hereafter now me not!..... I hope that all has been well with you. Even when I do not see, or hear of you, you re not--can never be--wholly absent. As I look back along the past, there is no figure I see surrounded with so much that has made it pleasant to e, and dignified it with worth recollections, as our own.

"And with all those old warm feelings of grateful friendship, I am, and must be, "Ever yours,
"John Forster *
(42, p.147)

ulwer's reply was that of a friend wishing him well: My Dear Forster,

"I heard of your proposed marriage long since, upon hat seemed good authority. But I did not write to congratulate you, for I presumed, that if you desired congratulations, you would make the announcement to me ourself, and you know too well my brotherly affection or you to doubt my sincere interest in your happiness. have at present but a slight acquaintance with Mrs. olburne, but the little I do know confirms all you say f her, and assures me of the wisdom of your choice. I ot only wish you happiness from my heart, but, I be- lieve, with my reason, that it will be secured, perhaps ore so than if you had married at an earlier age.

"I am going abroad, D.V., soon for the winter, but hope we shall cement our friendship by a close union etween Park Lane and Montagu Square on my return. "Adieu, my old and dear friend, Health, calm fel- city, and long life to you and yours,
"E.B.L.

Knebworth
Monday." (42, p.148)
For the remaining twenty years of his life Forster had in his wife "the truest and best help meet man ever had," (42,p.96) Renton goes on to say that as adviser and friend even more than as wife she influenced his life and looked after and kept out of sight the troublesome if necessary details which would have irritated and hindered his particular nature. And in later days, when disease worn and in agony "almost beyond human bearing, her gentle ministrations soothed and comforted him, as no earthly living soul could, I believe, have done. And he was not an easy man to deal with in sickness." (42,p.96)

Forster cared a good deal for social position and the marriage meant success for that ambition, and the home at Montagu Square and later that built by themselves at Palace Gate, Kensington, was the scene of many occasions that must have contributed to the satisfaction of Forster.

Renton concludes the chapter in which he treats of the marriage with some words of commendation for the wife: "After Forster's death she suffered much, while there was every indication that all through the terrible time of her husband's failing health and last long illness, she herself was far from being well, was, indeed, in a state calling for especial care and attention. Of a surety, Eliza Forster must ever have a foremost place among the number of those wives of notable men, who, subordinating self to the interests, comfort, and, not seldom, the caprices of their husbands, have won name and honour, which will live, I believe, as long as that of the men, of genius and reputation, howsoever great, with whom their lives and fortunes were linked and identified." (42,p.114)

3. Last Theatrical Venture

1856 was the year of Jerrold's death. The self-constituted actors got together once more and Frozen Deep was performed as a benefit for his daughter. The play was written by Collins. The prologue, by Dickens,
as recited by Forster. The play was taken into the country with success and the sum was invested ultimately for Jerrold's unmarried daughter, who at the time Forster was writing the *Life of Dickens* was still receiving the income from himself the only surviving trustee.

### Worried about Dickens

Forster saw in the amateur acting managed by Dickens in the later years a symptom of the restlessness which Dickens felt as a result of his unhappiness in his home. When all was not well with his friend, he worried. He writes, "though it was but part of his always generous devotion in any friendly duty to organize the series of performances on his friend Jerrold's death, yet the eagerness with which he flung himself into them, so arranging them as to assume an amount of labour in acting and traveling that might have appalled an experienced comedian, and carrying them on week after week unceasingly in London and the provinces expressed but the craving which still had possession of him to get by some means at some change that should make existence easier. What was highest in his nature had ceased for the time to be highest in his life, and he had put himself at the mercy of lower accidents and conditions. The mere effect of the strolling wandering ways into which this acting led him could not be other than unfavorable. But remonstrance as yet was unavailing." (9,Vol.3,p.157)

With 1858 came the separation between Dickens and his wife.Confidences of Dickens to his biographer were made primarily to afford him relief.

In 1862 he wrote Forster, "I must entreat you to use for an instant and go back to what you knew of childish days, and to ask yourself whether it is natural that something of the character formed in me, and lost under happier circumstances should have appeared in the last five years. The never-to-be-forgotten misery of that old time, bred a certain
shrinking sensitiveness in a certain ill-clad, ill-fed child, that I have found come back in the never-to-be-forgotten misery of this later time." (19, Vol.1, p.53)

On April 15, 1858, Dickens had given the first of his public readings, that of the Christmas Carol for the benefit of the Child's Hospital. The consequences gave Forster much food for worry about his friend. The urgent demands which followed for a repetition of the pleasure resulted in his engaging publicly in such readings for himself, a project against which Forster had always given his insistent advice both because he felt them to furnish an unworthy pursuit to one of Dickens's talent, and because he felt Dickens unequal to them physically. Nine years later Dickens increased his friend's worries as well as his own poor physical condition by determinedly going to America for readings. Forster always felt that the consequences of the trip were momentous to Dickens. He writes, "My own part in the discussion was that of steady dissuasion throughout; though this might perhaps have been less persistent if I could have reconciled myself to the belief which I never at any time did, that Public Readings were a worthy employment for a man of his genius." (19, Vol.3, p.292) It was felt by Dickens's friends and particularly by Forster and Wills that Dickens was not physically fit for the trip to America in 1867. It was always felt by Forster that it was beneath Dicken's dignity to give the Readings. He says: "It was a substitution of lower for higher aims; a change to common place from more elevated pursuits; and it had so much of the character of a public exhibition for money as to raise, in the question of respect for his calling as a writer, a question also of respect for himself as a gentleman. This opinion, now strongly reiterated, was referred ultimately to two distinguished ladies of his acquaintance, who decided against it... To the full extent he perhaps did not himself know, how much his present wish to become a public reader was, but the outcome of the restless domestic discontents of the last four years; and that to indulge it, and the unsettled habits inseparable from it, was to abandon every hope of resettling his disordered home." (19, Vol.3, p.165)
And yet he was able to estimate the Readings highly. He admits of his estimate of the readings given in 1858 and 1859 that it is not strictly in accordance with the popular one given by the audience. But it is of interest, for it shows Forster's taste for the humorous. He says, "Of these, the most successful in their uniform effect upon his audiences were undoubtedly the Carol, the Pickwick scene, Mrs. Camp, and the Dombey—the quickness, variety, and completeness of his assumption of character, having greatest scope in these, here, I think, more than in the pathetic or graver level passages, his strength lay; but this is entitled to no weight other than as an individual opinion, and his audiences gave him many reasons for thinking differently."

(19, Vol. 3, p.208)

Very soon was that friend to leave. In Forster's, house in the year of Dicken's death, Carlyle saw the novelist for the last time. At Forster's Dickens passed his last birthday, February 7, 1870, and there February 25, March 21, and May 7, he read his third, fourth, and fifth numbers of the novel Edwin Drood, for which Forster was to have to perform that service inserted in the publisher's agreement which all had thought superfluous and which provided that Forster should see to it that the publishers did not lose in the event of Dickens's death before the novel's completion. Forster saw Dickens for the last time, May 22, 1870, when they dined at Hyde Park Place, and thought of Mark Lemon, just dead. Forster received a last note on May 29, and by June 9 Dickens was dead.

5- 1857 - 1876

In 1857 Dickens dedicated to his long-time and faithful friend his Collected Works. Eight years earlier Landor had done likewise. Six years later Browning followed suit and was the third to award the honour to the common friend.
In 1858 Forster published his own Collected Historical and Biographical Essays in two volumes, among which for the first time were The Letters on the Grand Remonstrance and The Plantagenets and Tudors, a Sketch of Constitutional History.

This was the year that a portrait of Dickens was finally undertaken by Frith. Forster had commissioned it in 1854 but had delayed the matter because of Dickens's persistency in wearing a beard, an addition to his countenance of which Forster did not think at all highly. Dickens, however, was curiously independent and Forster gave in and hastened the picture for fear that the novelist would have whiskers too before it was completed.

Forster's last visit with Landor came in this year. The latter telegraphed him at midday of July 7 that he would be in London enroute to Italy that very evening. Forster happened to have a dinner party, but Landor could not join it. Dickens was privileged to go out to see him. A year later Forster had incurred Landor's displeasure, but was at the same time aiding his material welfare. At the close of 1863 Landor got over his feelings and renewed the friendship, asking Forster to be his biographer as has already been stated.

In 1860 Forster published the Arrest of the Five Members by Charles the First: a chapter of History rewritten, in greatly enlarged form, and The Debates on the Grand Remonstrance November and December, 1641, with an Introductory Essay on English Freedom under the Plantagenet and Tudor Sovereigns.

1861 saw Forster appointed a Commissioner of Lunacy with a salary of 1,500£ a year, and he resigned his post as secretary.

1862 was the year that his ambitions regarding a home were finally completed. In this year he built
for it Palace Gate House, at Kensington, the house where he lived until his death in 1876. In the same year he made with Procter the first selection of Browning's poems.

Landor's death in 1864 put upon Forster's shoulders the burden of writing the biography and of seeing through the press a complete edition of his friend's Imaginary Conversations, the latter task being accomplished within the year. 1864 also saw the publication expanded to two volumes of Forster's Life of Sir John Eliot.*

By 1869 the Life of Landor in two volumes was published. It was the occasion of a review, which was Dickens's last contribution to All the Year Around.**

1865 was the year of the birthday party for Carlyle on the occasion of that person completing his seventieth year. The following year Mrs. Carlyle died and in the next few years Forster helped Carlyle with the business end of his work on Memorials and Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle.

In 1868 his own favourite sister, Elizabeth, died and he bought the family vault where both he and his wife were eventually to lie. 1869, the year of publication of the Landor biography was one which brought him fresh tasks with the death of Alexander Dyce. Forster corrected and published his friend's third edition of Shakespeare and prefixed a memoir to the official catalogue of the library bequeathed by Dyce to the nation. The year brought him also the death of that dear friend of the days of University College, James Emerson Tennent. Dickens's death the

*It has been said of the biography of Sir John Eliot that it will rank for all time as one of the finest historical biographies in the language "and certainly as the most illuminating contribution to the history of the period." (42,p. 18)

**The task had been assigned to Mrs. Lynn Lynton, but she did not perform it to Dickens's satisfaction, not herself caring for the author. Dickens returned it and wrote one himself.
Following year led to his last finished biography, one volume of which was published in 1872, another in 1873, and the last in 1874. In 1872 he resigned his office of Lunacy Commissioner because of his failing health. Death was upon him while he was correcting the last sheets of volume one of the Life of Jonathan Swift. The preface was dated June, 1873. His only finished volume was published at the beginning of 1876, the year of his death.*

The Dickens Biography

Dickens had given Forster in his friendship perhaps the greatest thing in his life. Renton thinks that writing the life of the friend he had lost was the thread that mainly sustained Forster's few remaining years. He writes of Forster at Dickens's funeral:

"His nearest and dearest only and a friend or two well-nigh as near and dear.

"Among the latter, the tall, still burly figure, bowed through grief and disease, of John Forster was sadly conspicuous. Gone all that was autocratic and domineering about him; gone the dignity, the imperiousness, the harsh 'commandeering' of all else human to his own will and pleasure.

"There remained only the true, inner, natural man, shaken with a sorrow such as is not given to very man to feel. Himself hopelessly racked with physical pain, he appeared almost as if he were burying the etter part of himself. This impression was told to me by one who was there, and it is easy to realise the ruth and fidelity of the picture. He had lost his chief object in existence; which, until he himself ent to join his friend, was, I am convined, mainly sustained in and by the occupation of writing that friend's life. His state of health was such that the physical as well as mental strain consequent upon such

*The first volume was reviewed by Forster's friend LWin in December, 1871. It was an act of friendship. He turned aside from Pope for a week or two at the request of the editor of the Quarterly. Of it he said, it will probably satisfy no one. Forster will think it too lukewarm; others, perhaps, will think it the reverse. As for me I had only one care viz. that it
an effort must have been enormous, so that, with the completion of the work, those about him plainly perceived that the end was not far." (42-90)

The writing of "that friend's life" had been entrusted to Forster as early as 1847, and had never been withdrawn, nor had the confidences begun at that time ever ceased. An accident first called* them forth (19, Vol. 1, p. 26) and desire continued them. John Forster was to him a friend and future biographer to whom he could give the most of confidence he could ever give a living soul.

The biography, when written, did not meet with universal favor. Many readers felt that undue prominence was given to the biographer and friend. Wilkie Collins wrote that it was "'the Life of John Forster with occasional Anecdotes of Charles Dickens.'" (44, p. 197)**

*April 22, 1848, Dickens wrote, "'I desire no better fame, when my personal dustiness shall be past the control of my love of order, than such a biographer and such a critic.'" July 6, 1862, he wrote on the same subject, "'You know me better than any other man does, or ever will.'" Between these dates Dickens gave to Forster an autobiographical fragment of which an entry in Forster's diary informs us: "'20 January, 1849. The description may make none of the impression on others that the reality made on him... Highly probable that it may never see the light. No wish. Left to J.F. or others... No blotting, as when writing fiction; but straight on, as when writing ordinary letter.'" (19, Vol. 1, p. 20)

**James Crossley, the famous bibliophile, and Ainsworth, the novelist, both showed their displeasure or anger at being "overlooked" by uncomplimentary remarks respectively: "'I cannot call him the successful biographer of Dickens!'" "'I see he only tells half the story.'" (42, p. 107)
But Carlyle wrote: "So long as Dickens is interesting to his fellow men, here will be seen, face to face, what Dickens's manner of existing was." (24, p. 64) It continues to be the authoritative and exhaustive biography of Dickens. George Gissing wrote that he knew of "no book more helpful to a prospective writer—especially a novelist, than this biography." (24, p. 64) "When we have read it we feel *George Eliot wrote of it to her friend Miss Sara Hennell at the close of 1871: "If you have not yet fallen in with Dickens's Life, be on the lookout for it, because of the interest there is in his boyish experience, and also in his rapid development during his first travels in America. The book is ill organised and stuffed with criticism and other matter which would be better in limbo; but the information about the childhood, and the letters from America, make it worth reading." (15, Vol. 3, p.117) Chesterton speaks of its great inaccessibility as a reason for his own life of Dickens: "Books like Forster's exhaustive work and others, exist and are as accessible as Saint Paul's Cathedral; we have them in common as we have the facts of the physical universe; and it seems highly desirable that the function of making an exhaustive catalogue and that of making an individual generalization should not be confused. . . Allowing however for this inevitable falsity (once a man is dead) a figure vivid and a little fantastic, does walk across the stage of Forster's Life." (12, p. 158)
acquainted with Forster's friend, and Forster knew him very well.

7-Failing Health, Death, and Bequest

It is of interest that Forster, who had long been in failing health, had for one of his numerous friends his physician, Sir Richard Quain. Quain was "a friend in chief of every individual man of letters upon his list of patients." (42, p. 112) He attended Forster both as doctor and friend for many years and was with him when the end came. Forster put complete trust in him and placed himself, as did Disraeli, Renton says, unreservedly and without question in his hands. (42, p. 113)

Edwin, in his memorial of John Forster, speaks of the physical cause of irritability." Forster's temper was hasty, and in conjunction with his emotional nature there was a physical cause for the effervescence which ordinary observers did not guess. The strain upon his system, in the many years of unintermittent mental toil, rendered his nerves intolerant of ruffles which would have pressed unheeded in health. Slight contrarities were as chafings against inflamed flesh." (17, p. 307p. xiv of Memoir) Forster's health received constant mention by Carlyle throughout the years of the correspondence between the friends. Carlyle was always sensible of physical limitations, but Forster's bad health was no myth of Carlyle's. It was sober fact. In 1859 Carlyle wrote: "We are greatly shocked and surprised to hear of the bad turn of health you have had; and proportionately thankful to Heaven and the other Helps, that it is over again! It seems to me, dear Forster, you ought to be out of London altogether, in this hot season, while the country is in all its glory and the Town in all its noise and smoulder. Why not fling up your office altogether,* if it tie you in in any measure in respect of what is so all-important as the concern of Health: To you no Office is of the least practical moment; yields neither

*A thing which Forster finally did do in 1872.
distinction, nor real profit of any kind;--nor does your pleasure lie, I think, in that direction tho' probably some vague notion of 'duty' may, as habit no doubt does. I pray you reflect seriously on this! To me the country with its mere silence, purity, etc., is always about some three or five percent on the right side of the balance as to health. I am seriously minded, if I ever live to get done with this undoable Book, to be actually off, and quit the horrors of Babel and its ugly Nebuchadnezzars for a place of God Almighty's making! ................. On the whole, practically, write a word to us, dear Forster, and say exactly how you are, to ears interested." (9, p. 200)

Renton's description of the man bowed by grief and disease at Dickens's funeral in 1870 has already been quoted. The last years were to be so painful that though their termination snatched him from his Swift it must have been a relief. The end when it did come came suddenly, February 1, 1876. The particulars are given in a letter of Carlyle to Dr. Carlyle.

"I am just returned from Fensal Green and poor Forster's funeral, which has occupied me in personal activity for all the morning (indeed a good part of the night); but which, thanks in great part to Mary's precautions and asiduities, I don't think has done me any special damage,--great as have been the confusions, fasheries, and chaotic sorrows and reflections connected with it and him, ever since his sudden removal from among us. Nobody, I believe, expected so sudden a death. I had called at the door on Sunday last and there met Dr. Quain just stepping out, who told me cheerfully that Forster, who had been suffering much in previous days, was today a shade better. Tuesday morning following Quain was sent for hurriedly between eight and nine; and before twelve appeared here, and by cautious degrees informed me, with considerable emotion of his own, that poor Forster was no more. It is the end of a chapter in my life, which had lasted, with unwearied kindness and helpfulness wherever possible on Forster's part, for above forty years. Today
ontrary to expectations, I found myself next after Lord Lytton, constituted chief mourner, I and the lawyer Chitty along with Lytton, leading the mournful procession, which was at an hour much too early for e. Mary, however, had provided everything that was possible to secure me from trouble or injury; and I got home accompanied by Froude, in Mrs. Forster's own marriage about half past twelve, and have now at east got into natural temperature again, and hope here is no injury done. The event is really a sorrowful one, and practically a very considerable loss; ut in all cases we have to adjust ourselves under it, and be thankful for what of human good there has been in it, without repining that it has come to an end. o poor Forster himself, it has clearly been an immense deliverance from long years of pain and distress."

(3, p. 325)

John Forster was buried in the family vault bought y him when his sister died eight years earlier. Here also lies Mrs. Forster, who died in 1894, surviving her second husband eighteen years and six months. The inscription on the monument reads:

In Memory of

John Forster, Esq.,
Historian, Biographer and Critic

Noted in private life
For the robustness of his character
And the warmth of his affections
For his ceaseless industry in literature and business
And the lavish services in the midst of his crowded life
He rendered to friends;
For his keen appreciation of every species of excellence,
And the generosity of his judgments,
On books and men.

Born 2nd April, 1812
Died 1st February, 1876.

In addition to the epitaph, articles in the Times, ebruary 2 and 7, 1876, paid the man honour, saying at although many were disposed to think him at first ight obstinate and overbearing, they were bound to unfees that they had found him in reality to be one of
the tenderest and most generous of men. There was also an article in the Athenaeum, February 5, 1876, and one in the Newcastle Daily Chronicle, February 15, 1876, by Alderman Harle, reprinted in February, 1888, in Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend ii-49-54; Men of the Time, 9 edit., p. 413; Annual Register for 1876, p. 134. Sketches of him have been written by Morley and Elwin and Charles Kent.

As Lord Lytton was leaving for India at the time of Forster's death, Chitty and Elwin divided the duties left the three in Forster's will, Chitty being responsible for the legal and Elwin for the literary part of the business.

Forster's private letters and papers were put in Elwin's hand either to destroy or to place at South Kensington according to his discretion. He was conscientious as Forster must have known he would be and it is to that conscientiousness that we perhaps owe our lack of knowledge of Browning's friendship. Elwin had to read thousands of letters, for Forster had corresponded with many persons of note, and had been the intimate confidant of several of his friends and had kept large masses of his correspondence. The manuscripts were sent down to Booton in several large boxes which Elwin diligently worked through. "His own inclination, and Forster's instructions were both in the direction of destroying all personal letters, however eminent the writer might be, but he none the less scrupulously examined everything, spending some months almost exclusively on the task." (17, p. 308). Forster's library, including the manuscripts he had bequeathed to South Kensington, involved many negotiations and the arrangements in connection with Forster's Landor, of which he had left an edition only partly printed, involved still more work.

Mrs. Forster, to whom all had been left during her life-time, surrendered her claims in order to secure more quickly the fulfilment of her husband's wishes. The library was lodged as quickly as could be managed at South Kensington Museum and Elwin was asked to write a biographical sketch of the donor to be prefixed to the catalogue. He consented in affection
is old friend. "All the extraneous materials for it," he told Lord Lytton, "were a few dates or three short extracts, the whole not covering side of a sheet of notepaper. The poverty of the information made me shrink from the undertaking, could not bring myself to attempt it till the text was printed, and waiting for the prefatory," (17, p. 304) It was written on February 17, and is prefixed to the catalogue of the Forster Collection in the South Kensington Museum contains some 18,000 volumes, many manuscripts, eight oil paintings, and an immense number of first folios of Shakespeare, the first edition of Gulliver's Travels, 1726, with Swift's annotations in his own handwriting. The manuscripts are nearly all of the original ones of the novels of Charles Dickens.

Forster's Position in the Life of His Time

Forster's position in the life of his time to have been no inconsiderable one. He himself was an industrious writer and able critic and His contributions were important for shedding light on the time of the English Commonwealth, Lytton liked the biography. He wrote, "I have read your sketch of Forster with surprise and delight. It always seemed to me that a biography of this kind must be more difficult than a full life. I think you have succeeded wonderfully in giving a very lifelike, very pleasant, and generally true portrait of the real man." The main complaint of Mrs. Forster who begged that he not describe her father as a Newcastle butcher, but Elwin thought the truth and in Forsterian fashion insisted on leaving
and two authoritative biographies of contemporary men of letters, Landor and Dickens. He influenced the literature, theatre and art of his day both through his criticism in a foremost paper and through his relationships with the writers, actors, and artists. He brought prominent men into contact with one another. He was a valued adviser to whom they gravitated. He was a convenient as well as an esteemed friend who was always at hand to give the help of his critical ability. He was always willing to undertake the drudgery of proof-reading, and generous with his power of suggestion for additional work to be undertaken, and with his capability in business affairs.
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