

"Rustic life and poverty
Grow beautiful beneath his touch.

There are two characteristics of his genius that add much to the charm of his novels, his humor and pathos. The former abounds every where in his works. Dickens is inclined to look at the weaknesses of human nature in a good natured, tolerant and laughing way, and, as he does not attempt to describe perfect characters, he finds plenty to laugh at; and, indeed, he often uses his humorous style with good effect in making his characters describe themselves. Some critics insist that Dickens turns his humorous characters into caricatures. But while it is true that he often exaggerates any striking peculiarities in his characters, the exaggerations cannot be called caricatures, because there is so much solidity beneath his humor,—though grotesque in form, they are true and natural at heart. A caricaturist, too, would show us nothing but a man's peculiarities, while Dickens always presents the man. Most of his best and most exuberant humor is displayed in representing characters composed of vanity, conceit and ignorance. His "Artful Dodger" and "Mr. Bailey" are instances in point.

The genius of Dickens can draw tears as well as provoke laughter. Sorrow, poverty, pain and death he depicts with power and often great skill. Few can read his works without strongly sympathizing with those in sorrow and distress, and the descriptions of many scenes, especially the deaths of little children, are very affecting.

In the representation of the deeper passions, Dickens is masterly. The generous and malignant passions are well and faithfully described, and an instance can be given of his tragic power and the masterly way in which he describes the baser passions and criminal spirits, in the chapter in *Oliver Twist* entitled, "The Jews Last Night Alive." So well does he tell the story of that horrible night, that the reader is disgusted, yet fascinated by the scene.

Many Americans are inclined to judge Dickens hastily because of his book criticising our character; but they must remember that Dickens did not possess the qualities of a statesman. With all his abilities as a novelist, he lacked the ability to generalize, and as any peculiarities in individuals would make the strongest impression on such a nature, he would naturally draw incorrect conclusions as to our national character.

Dickens' success as a novelist is attested by the un-failing interest with which his works continue to be read. The man who began his literary life with a condemned farce, a poor opera and some slight sketches of character, lived to achieve a fame recognized not only where the English tongue is spoken, but in all civilized countries, and to see his own works translated into languages of which he understood scarcely a word.

Dickens had no mission to accomplish, no high philosophy of society, nor scientific theories of human nature in general, nor any particular standard of morality to sustain. He was a reformer, indeed, but one who reformed, not by attempting to put into practice some impracticable theory, but by daring assaults upon what ever he considered wrong, unjust and inhuman.

He has been a powerful agent in reforming society, and, by calling attention to the real condition of the lower classes, he did much to elevate them. He was truly, what critics have often called him, "a benefactor of mankind."
'84.

Drift.

The Palladian boys have concluded to give up the scheme of amassing princely fortunes by lecture courses, concerts, etc. Hereafter they will make money in the strictly legitimate way, by selling books at "1/3 the original cost of binding" to unsuspecting natives, by beating their washerwomen out of 100 per cent of their just earnings and by other wiles which every student in the University understands too well to need any reminders from the gifted pen of the Drifter.

But why everybody in Lincoln did not turn out to hear the world-renowned divine, Talmage, is one of the things that "no fellow can find out." There was a fair house but not a wild and uncontrollable jain such as Bob Ingersoll harranged. The Palladians confidently expected a full house and consequently were disappointed when they found their receipts so small. Talmage has no business to charge such ridiculous prices for his lectures anyway. He really amounts to very much less as a public speaker than people are led to think by his reputation. His remarks in chapel were exceedingly trite and commonplace—such as any average student could have said as well and as affectively—and his whole speech fell very flat. What filled the soul of the Drifter with indignation was his excessive lack of tact. When he used a copy of the *STUDENT* that was lying on the desk as an illustration in one of his anecdotes, and held it at arm's length with the remark "that's as dry as chips," when he did this I say, a groan of anguish and a wail of desolation and despair arose from the lips of the three hundred students assembled there. A wail of agony so dreadful, that when it had escaped from the chapel by means of the holes in the ceiling, it settled over Lincoln like a black pall and caused the head of "Nebraska Weather Service" to hang out a bulletin warning everyone of the approach of a cyclone. Such was the grief caused among us at the too great mildness and charitableness of the great Talmage's allusion to the *STUDENT*.

The blooming meds have left us. They have received their diplomas and have vanished from our halls. Out into the high-ways and by-ways of great and populous Nebraska a throng of young men and women, educated, polished and intelligent, with the power to benefit their fellow men, have gone. We miss them. We miss the sight of them, carrying into their lecture room huge bundles carefully done up, "my washing you know." We miss the cold shudders that used to run down our back when one of them grasped us by the hand and inquired "how's your health?" It used to suggest such fearful thoughts to us. We found ourselves wondering whether they observed our condition of health with an eye towards making us a possible patient or an interesting "subject." Either idea was so frightful that beads of sweat broke out all along the bridge of our Roman nose every time it was suggested to us. But that is all over now. They have departed. Peace be with them.

It pains us that there is so little society feeling in N. S. U. at present. There was an epoch in the good old times of yore that was marked by the keenest possible rivalry between Palladian and Union. This seems to be so far