OLIVER TWIST OR THE PARISH BOY'S PROGRESS BY CHARLES DICKENS CHAPTER I TREATS OF THE PLACE WHERE OLIVER TWIST

t will be prudent to refrain from mentioning, and to which I will assign no fictitious name, there is one anciently common to most towns, g s it can be of no possible consequence to the reader, in this stage of the business at all events; the item of mortality whose name is prefix ined a matter of considerable doubt whether the child would survive to bear any name at all; in which case it is somewhat more than pr o ba p ossessed the inestimable merit of being the most concise and faithful specimen of biography, extant in the literature of any ag e or cumstance that can possibly befall a human being, I do mean to say that in this particular instance, it was the best thing for Olive mself the office of respiration,--a troublesome practice, but one which custom has rendered necessary to our easy exist ence ; and f alance being decidedly in favour of the latter. Now, if, during this brief period, Oliver had been surrounded by careful gra ndmo thers, a been killed in no time. There being nobody by, however, but a pauper old woman, who was rendered rather misty by an unwonted allo hem. The result was, that, after a few struggles, Oliver breathed, sneezed, and proceeded to advertise to the inmates of the workho n expected fr om a male infant who had not been possessed of that very useful appendage, a voice, for a m uch longer s hwork coverlet which was carelessly flung over the iron bedstead, rustled; the pale face of a young wo eon had been sitting with his face turned towards the fire: giving the palms of his han ds a warm and a might have been expe cted of him: 'Oh, you must not talk about dying yet.' 'Lor bles s her de ar heart, n d been tasting i n a corner with evident satisfaction. 'Lor bless her dear heart, when she has liv with me, she'll know better than to take on in th at way, bless he r dear heart! pective of a mothe r's prospects failed in producing its d ue effect. The p it in her arms. Sh e im printed h er cold white li d; fell back--an d died. Th ey chafe d her breast strange rs too lo ng. 'It's all over, M cork of t he gree n bot need n't mind ration . using by the b ed-si de o brought her e las t nig ed som e distance, for h n leane d over the bo dy, and raised the left hand. 'The old story,' h urse, ha ving once more applied herself to the green bottle, sa as! Wrap ped in the blanket which had hitherto formed his onl s proper station in society. But now that he was enveloped in the of a work house--the humble, half-starved drudge--to be cuffed and f church-w ardens and overseers, perhaps he would have cried the loude

BOARD For the next eight or ten months, Oli ver was the victim of a systematic course of treachery and deception. He was brought up by hand. The hungry and destitute situation of the infant orphan was duly reported by the workhou was no female then domiciled in 'the house ' who was in a situation to impart to Oliver Twist, the consolation and nourishment of which he stood in need. The workhous e authorities replied with humility, that there was not. Upon this, the dispatched to a branch-workhouse some three miles off, where twenty or thirty other juvenile offenders against the p oor-laws, rolled about the floor all day, without the t and for the consideration of sevenpe nce-halfpenny per small head per week. Sevenpence-halfpenny 's worth per we ek is a good round diet for a child; a great deal m ay be got for sevenpence-halfpenny, quite enough to overload its sto dren; and she had a very accurate p erception of what was good for herself. So, she appropriated th e grea ter part o f the wee kly stipend to her own use, and consigned the rising parochial generat ion to even a sho rter allowance than was originally provided for them. Thereby f inding in t he lowest depth a deeper still; and proving herself a very great experimental philosopher. Everybo dy kn ows the story of another experimental philosopher who had a great theory about a horse being able to live without eating, and who de monstrated it a very spirited and rampacious animal on nothing at all, if he had not died, four-and-twenty hours befo re he was to have had his first comfortable bait of air. Unfortun ately for, the experimental phi losophy of th e female to whose prote cting care Oliver Twist was delivered over, a similar result usually attended th oment when the child had contrived to exist upon the smallest possible portion of the wea kest possible food, it did perversely happen in eight and a half case s out of ten, either that it sicke ned from want a nd cold, or fell into the fi re from neglect, or got half-smothered by accident; in any one of which cases m moned into another w orld, and there gathered to the fathers it had never known in this. Occ asionally, when there was some more than usually interesting i nquest upon a parish child wh o had been overl ooked in turning up a bed stead , or inadvertently scalded to death when there happened to be a washin arce, an ything approa ching to a washing being of rare occurrence in the farm--the jury woul d take it into their heads to ask troublesome questions, or the pa rishioners would rebelliously aff ix their signatures to a rem onstrance. But these impertinences were speedily checked by the evidence beadle; the former of whom had always opened the body and found nothing inside (whic h was very probable indeed), and the latter of whom invariably s wore whatever the parish want ed ; whic h was ver y self-devotional. Besides , the board made periodical pilgrimages to the farm, and always sent the bea ng. The childre n were neat and clean to behold, when they went; and what more wo uld t he people have! It cannot be expected that this system of farming would produce any very extra ordi nary or luxuri ant crop. Oliver Twist's ninth birthday found him a pale thin child, somewhat diminutive in stature, and dec th a sel ect party of t wo other young gentleman, who, after participating wit h him in a sound thrashing, had been locked up for atrociously pres expand, thanks to the spare diet of th e establishment; and perhaps to th is circu mstanc e m ay be attributed his having ed ; whic h was ver y self-devotional. Besides , the board made periodical pilgrimages to the farm, and always sent the bea ci ous! I s that yo u, Mr. Bumble, sir?' said Mrs. Mann, thrusting her h ead o ut of the win dow in well-affe cted ecstasies of joy. '(Susan, take ake, and then bestowed upon it a kic k whic h cou ming to be hungry, when Mrs . Ma nn, the good lad y of the house, was unexpectedly startled by the apparition of Mr. Bumble, the beadle, striving to undo the this s ope n- hearte d salutatio n in a kindred spirit, he gave the little wick et a tremend ou s sh -'only think of th at! That I should have forgotten tha t the gate was bo lted on t he i nside, on account of them dear children! Walk in sir; walk in, pray, Mr. Bumble, do, sir.' Although this invitation was accompanied with a curtsey that might have softened the heart of a church-warden, it hi nk th s resp ectful or proper conduct, Mr s. Mann,' inquired Mr. B umb le, grasping h is c ane, 'to keep the parish officers a waiting at your garden-gate, when they come here upon porochial business with the porochial orphans? Are you aweer, Mrs. Mann, that you are, as I may say, a porochial deleg ate, an d a sti pendiary?' 'I'm sure Mr. Bum ble, that I was on ly a telling one or t wo o f the dea r chi ldren of his im portance. He had displ ayed the o ne, and vindicated the o ther. He relaxed. 'Well, well, Mr s. Man n,' he replied in a calmer tone; 'it may be as you say; it may be. Lead the way in, Mrs. Mann, or atoric al pow ers an n ushere d the beadle into a sma ll p arlo ur with a brick fl oor; p laced a seat f or him; and officiously de posite d his cocked hat an d cane on the table and to say.' Mr s. Man at the co ck ed hat, and smiled. Yes, he sm iled . Bead les ar ild. 'Now don't you be off , Mr. Bumble, waving his right hand i n a dignified, but placi d man ner. 'I ou take a li ttle drop of somethink, Mr. B um ble?' 'N o a drop. Nor a drop,' sa id Mr. hat is it?' inquired t he bea dle. 'W hy, it's what I'm oblige ner. 'I eep a cold wat er, an d a lump of sugar.' Mr. Bu mble coughed. 'Now, just a leetle drop,' said Mrs. Mann persuasi vely. 'W affy, Mrs. Mann?' in quired Mr. Bumble, following with his e yes th e inter esting process of orner cup pb oar d, and to ok do wn a b ottl e and glass. 'It's gin. I'll not deceive you, Mr. B. It's gin.' 'Do you give the children D .) 'I shall take a earl y opp ortunit y of mentioning it to th e boar d, Mrs . Mann.' (He drew ' 'No'; s aid Mr . Bumble approv ingly; ' no, you could not. You are a humane woman, Mrs. Mann.' (Here she set down the glass cket-book. 'The chil d tha t was half-baptized Oliver T wist, i n ith chee rfu lne ss, Mrs. Man n'; a nd he swallowed half of it. 'And now about business,' said the beadle, taking out a leathern po ng the most superl ative, and, I may say, year old to-day.' ' Bless him!' inte rposed Mrs. Mann, inflami ng her l eft e ye with the co ng a offe r ed rewar d o f te n po und, whic h was afte rwards increased to twenty pound. Notwithstandi nds in astonishmen t; but added, after a moment's refle ction, ' How c ons on the part of this parish ,' said Bumbl er, or wh at wa s his mot he r's settl ement, name, or condi tion.' Mrs. Mann raised her ha I named him. The n ext on e come s will be Unwin, and t he next Vilki ns. I have got nam e,' said Mr. Bumble, with great pride ann. We na me our fond lin gs i n alphabetical orde r. The last was a S,--S wubble, i named him. T his was a T,--Twist, in the alphabet, and the way through iterary c ha rac ter, sir!' s ai d Mrs. Mann. 'Well, w ell,' said the beadle, evidently gratifi ed with the compliment; ' perhaps I may be. Perha ps I ma y be, Mrs. Mann.' He f inishe d the g in-and-water, and in-and-water, and the board have de come o ut my self to ta ke h im there. So let me se e him at onc e.' 'I'll fetc h him directly ,' said Mrs. Mann, l eaving the r oom fo r that purpo se. Oliver, having had as much of the out er coat of his face and dirt which encruste d his face and hat, and t he c ock ed hat on the table. 'W ill you g o along with me, O d off in o ne washing, wa s led into the room by his benevol ent or otectre ss. Make a bow to the gentleman, Oliver,' said Mr s. Mann. O liver made a bow, which was divid ed bet ween t he beadle on the c . Bumble. 'Bu t sh e'll . Assista nts i f yo u w ant to cry; and Oliv er cried ver y naturally in come and see you sometim es.' This was no v the little brown-cloth paris h cap on his age-cast closed after him. Wretched as were the little co ittle Oliver, firmly grasping his gold-laced cuff, trotted beside him, inquir ns in some bosoms had by this time evaporated; and he was once again ble, who had handed him over to the care of an old woman, returned; an r astounded by this intelligence, and was not quite certain whether he ou ducted him i nto a large white-washed room, where eig ard,' said M um b le. Oliver brushed aw ay two or three tears th e gave him anoth o many g entl em en, which made him trembl e: and the beadl was a foo l. Wh i ch was a capital w ay o f ra isi ng his spirits, ! said the gentl eman was, ' sai d th e gen tlem an in the white w aistcoat. 'Hush ! 'I said th e su u crying for?' inquired the gentleman in the whi te w aistcoat. And had fal len out on the p u care o f him. But he ha d'n't because no body ha d ta ught him. 'We e chil d ck care o f you--like a Chri stia n.' 'Yes, sir,' stammere ck,' add ed the surly one in the white wai stc oat. Fo r the combina t w hard be d, he sobbed hi mself to sleep. W hat a n ovel illustration o or, ad ded, ision w hic h would exercise the mo st materi al in fluence over a e old wom an, 'b at onc e, what o rdinary folks wo uld nev er h ave discovered--t o we r round the bo ard,' said the gentleman in a white waistcoat said he ired poor Oliver. 'T he boy is a f ool--I thought he was, sai d th e gen tlem an in the whi te w aistcoat. 'Hush ! 'I said th e su u crying for?' inquired the gentleman in the whi te w aistcoat. And had fal len out on the p u care o f him. But he ha d'n't because no body ha d ta ught him. 'We e chil d ck,' add ed the surly one in the white wai stc oat. 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He rose from the table; a nd adva ' The master was a fat, healthy m an; b to the blow at Oliver's head with the tleman in the high chair, said , ' M ble, and answer me distinctly . Do I un derst verted the prop ybody w s m o me after the ek ar s, at first s ight not unr th e gen tle man ng the period of his solitary incarceration, Oliver was denied the benefit of exercise, the pleasure of society, or the advantages of religious consolation. As for exercise, it was nice cold weather, and he was allowed to perform his ablutions eve ry morning under the pump, r. Bumble, who prevented his catching cold, and caused a tingling sensation to pervade his frame, by repeated applications of the cane. As for society, he was carried every other day into the hall where the boys dined, and there sociably flogg ed as a public warning example. And so far from being denied the ad vantage s of religious consolation, he was kicked into the same apartment every evening at prayer-time, and there permitted to listen to, and console his mind with, a general supplication of the boys, containing a special clause, therein inserted by aut hority of the board , in which they entre ated to be mad e good , virtuous, contented, and obedient, and to be guarded from the sins and vices of Oliver Twist: whom the supplication distinctly set forth to be under the exclusive patronage and protection of the powers of wickedness, and an article direct from the manufact ory of the very Dev il himself. It chanced one morning, while Oliver's affairs were in this auspicious and comfortable state, that Mr. Gamfield, chimney-sweep, went his way down the High Street, deeply cogitating in his mind his ways and means of paying certain arrears of rent, for which his landlord had bec ome rather pressing. Mr. Gamfield's most sanguine estim ate of his finances could not raise them within full five pounds of the desired amount; and, in a species of arithmetical desperation, he was alternately cudgelling his brains and his donkey, when passing the workhouse, his eyes encountered th e bill on the gate. 'Wo--o !' said Mr. Gamfield to the donke y. The donkey was in a state of profound abstraction: wondering, probably, whether he was destined to be regaled with a cabbage-stalk or two when he had disposed of the two sacks of soot with which the little cart was laden; so, without noticing the word of command, he jogg ed onward. Mr. Gamfield growled a fierce imprecation on the donkey generally, but more particularly on his eyes; and, running after him, bestowed a blow on his head, which would inevitably have beaten in any skull but a donkey's. Then, catching hold of the bridle, he gave his jaw

WAS BORN AND OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING HIS BIRTH Among other public buildings in a certain town, which for many reasons

reat or small: to wit, a workhouse; and in this workhouse was born; on a day and date which I need not trouble myself to repeat, inasmuch a to the head of this chapter. For a long time after it was ushered into this world of sorrow and trouble, by the parish surgeon, it rema ble that these memoirs would never have appeared; or, if they had, that being comprised within a couple of pages, they would have country. Although I am not disposed to maintain that the being born in a workhouse, is in itself the most fortunate and enviable cir r Twist that could by possibility have occurred. The fact is, that there was considerable difficulty in inducing Oliver to take upon hi or some time he lay gasping on a little flock mattress, rather unequally poised between this world and the next: the b nxious aunts, experienced nurses, and doctors of profound wisdom, he would most inevitably and indubitably have wa nc e of beer; and a parish surgeon who did such matters by contract; Oliver and Nature fought out the point between use the f act of a new burden having been imposed upon the parish, by setting up as loud a cry as could reasonably hav pace of t ime th an three minutes and a quarter. As Oliver gave this first proof of the free and proper action of his lungs, th man was raise d feebly from the pillow; a nd a faint voice imperfectly articulated the words, 'Let me see the child, and die. rub alte rnate ly . As the young woman s poke, he rose, and advan cing to the bed's head, said, with more ki o!' int erp os ed the nurs e, hastily depositing in he r po ck et a green glass b ottle, the co ed as long as I h ave , sir , and ha d thirteen children o f her ow n, and all on 'em d ead except Think wh at it is to be a mother, there's a dear youn g la mb d atie nt sho ok her hea d , a nd st retche d out her ha nd to ward ps passion ately on its fo rehead; passe d her hands over her f , hands, a nd temples; but the bi ood had stopped for ever rs. Thin gummy !' said th e su rgeon a t last. ' Ah, tle, w hich had fal len out on the p illow, ing up to me, if th e chil d cries It's ve ry lik ely i t ill be n his way to th e do t 'She ht,' re plied th e said, shaking h is h ead : 'no wedding-ring, e sho es we re wor ire, and proceed t down on a low chair before the f ed to y covering, he mig ht have b a nob old calico robes which ha d grown yello w in th buffeted through the world --despised by all, an S GROWT H, EDUCATION , AND

r. CHAPTER II TREATS OF OLIVER TWIST' parish authorities inquired with dignity of the workhouse authorities, whether there se authorities to the parish authorities. The andly resolved, that Oliver should be 'farmed,' or, in other words, that he should be parish authorities magnanimously and hum ental superintendence of an elderly female, who received the culprits a mach, and make it u ncomfortable. The elderly female was a woman of wisdom an d experience; she knew what was good for chil ion to even a sho rter allowance than was originally provided for them. Thereby f inding in t monstrated it so well, that he had got his own horse down to a straw a day, and would unquestionably have rendered him Oliver Twist was delivered over, a similar result usually attended th e oper ation of her system; for at the very m neglect, or got half-smothered by accident; in any one of which cases , the miserable little being was usually su r inadvertently scalded to death when there happened to be a washin g--t hough the latter accident was very sc strance. But these impertinences were speedily checked by the evidence o f the surgeon, and the testimony of the , the board made periodical pilgrimages to the farm, and always sent the bea dle the day before, to say they were goi birthday found him a pale thin child, somewhat diminutive in stature, and dec idedly small in circumference. But natu ny ninth birth-day at all. Be this as it may, however, it was his ninth birthday; a nd he was keeping it in the coal-cellar wi ay be attributed his having wicket of the garden-gate. 'Goodness gra y of the house, was unexpectedly startled by the apparition of Mr. Bumble, the beadle, striving to undo the d choleric; so, instead of responding to ectly.)--My heart alive! Mr. Bumble, how glad I am to see you, sure-ly!' Now, Mr. Bumble was a fat man, and by no means mollified the beadle. 'Do you t ld have emanated from no leg but a beadle's. 'Lor, only think,' said Mrs. Mann, ru nning out,--for the three boys had been re

CHAPTER III RELATES HOW OLIVER TWIST WAS VERY NEAR GETTING A PLACE WHICH WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN A SINECURE

'Please, sir, I want some m ore.' 'What!' said the master at length, in a faint voice. 'Please, sir,' replied Oliver, 'I want some more.' The master aimed a oys with fear. 'What!' said the master at length, in a faint voice. 'Please, sir,' replied Oliver, 'I want some more.' The master aimed a on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung f or support beadle. The board were sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing t he gen tleman in the high chair, said , ' M or more!' There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance. 'For more!' said Mr. Limbkins. 'Compose yourse lf, Bum ble, and answer me distinctly . Do I un derst er allotted by the dietary?' 'He did, sir,' replied Bumble. 'That boy will be hung,' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. 'I kn ow tha t boy will be hung.' Nobody c ontro verted ook place. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement; and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the g ate, o the prop er words, five pounds and Oliver Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trad e, ff ering a reward of five pou nds t o an ybody w ite waistcoat, as he knocked at the gate and read the bill next morning: 'I never was more convinced of anythi ng in business, or calling. 'I neve r wa s m o he white waistcoated gentleman was right or not, I should perhaps mar the interest of this narrative (suppos ing it to my life, than I am that that bo y will co me nation or no. CHAPTER III RELATES HOW OLIVER TWIST WAS VERY NEAR GETTING A PLACE WHICH WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN A SINECURE For a we ek after the ed sking for more, Oliver remained a close prisoner in the dark and solitary room to which he had been co nsigned by th e wisdom and mercy of the boar d. It appe ars, at a becoming feeling of respec t for the pr edi ctio n o f gen tle man that, if he s hould be unwin, and t he next t Vilki ns. I have got nam e,' said Mr. Bumble, with great pride ad never ever been able to th e oth ed that sage individual's prophetic character, once and for ever, by tying one end of his pocket-handker chief to a hook in the w all, and att ac hin g h ims elf to th e oth here was one obstacle: namely, that pocket-handkerchiefs being decided articles of luxury, had been, fo r all future times and ages, removed from the nose s of pau pers b y the ex press order of the board, d: solemnly given a nd p ronounced under their hands and seals. There was a still greater obstacle in Oliver's youth and childish ness. He only cried bitterly all day; and, when the long, dism al night ca me on, spread h is little hands before his he corner, tried to sleep: ever and anon waking with a start and tremble, and drawing himself closer and closer to the wall, as if to feel even its cold hard surface were a protection in the g loom and loneliness which surrounded him. Let it ing the period of his solitary incarceration, Oliver was denied the benefit of exercise, the pleasure of society, or the advantages of religious consolation. As for exercise, it was nice cold weather, and he was allowed to perform his ablutions eve r. Bumble, who prevented his catching cold, and caused a tingling sensation to pervade his frame, by repeated applications of the cane. 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