

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Grand Tour

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that hardly a single letter from Wilkie to Dickens survives. In September, 1860 Dickens, incensed by what he considered 'the misuse of the private letters of public men,' burned in the field at Gad's Hill every letter he possessed which did not deal exclusively with business, and was determined to destroy all such letters in the future as soon as they were answered. Although he is reported as exclaiming, 'Would to God every letter I have ever written was on that pile!' it is an ironical reflection that, while so much biographical detail concerning others went up in smoke on that September afternoon at Gad's Hill, more than six thousand of his own letters have since been published. Those written to Wilkie Collins, interesting as they are, afforded only an occasional reflection of Wilkie's personality, seen as it were in a mirror.

Collins' next contribution to *Household Words* was a story of the Breton fishing community called 'Gabriel's Marriage' which appeared on April 16th and 23rd, 1853. Some weeks earlier Dickens had turned down a better story, 'Mad Monkton'—later published in the collection entitled *The Queen of Hearts*—for the reason that it dealt with hereditary insanity, a subject which might occasion distress 'among those numerous families in which there is such a taint.' Writing to Wills, Dickens is at pains to emphasise that his objection lies only in Wilkie's choice of subject, and continues: 'I think there are many things, both in the inventive and descriptive way, that he could do for us if he would like to work

in our direction. And I particularly wish him to understand this, and to have every possible assurance conveyed to him that I think so, and that I should particularly like to have his aid.' The rejected short-story was shelved by Wilkie for a year or so, eventually appearing in *Fraser's Magazine* for November and December, 1855.†

For some months Dickens had been discussing with Wilkie and Augustus Egg the possibility of a tour of Italy. The original plan would have entailed an absence of three months or more, but Dickens came to the conclusion that the editorial chair of *Household Words* could not remain empty for so long. In a letter to Wilkie dated January, 1853, which incidentally offers 'a bellyful of Gin Punch on Sunday next at 5 at the "Family Arms," Tavistock,' Dickens writes: 'I have been thinking of the Italian project, and reducing the time to two months—from the 20th October to the 20th December—see the way to a trip that shall really not exclude any foremost place, and be reasonable, too. Details when we meet.'

For the summer of 1853, Dickens had taken the Château des Moulineaux, on the outskirts of Boulogne, for himself and his family—and of course, for his friends. In June, Wilkie was summoned for a long visit.

We are established in a doll's country house of many rooms in a delightful garden. If you have anything to do, this is the place to do it in. And if you have nothing to do, this is also the place to do it in to perfection. You shall have a Pavilion room in the garden, with a delicious view, where you may write no end of Basils. You shall get up your Italian as I raise the fallen fortunes of mine. You shall live, with a delicate English graft upon the best French manner, and learn to get up early in the morning again. In short, you shall be thoroughly prepared, during the whole summer season, for those great travels which are due to come off anon.

Unfortunately Wilkie, who, far from having nothing to do, was working seven days a week on a new novel, fell

†It was included by Dorothy L. Sayers in the First Series of *Great Short Stories of Mystery, Detection and Horror*.

ill and was unable to make the journey for some weeks. As soon as his health began to improve Dickens again insisted on his coming to Boulogne to recuperate and guaranteed 'the pure air, regular hours and perfect repose' of the Château des Moulineaux to do as much for Wilkie as they had for his own complaint. 'And what was the matter with me? Sir—I found this reads like Dr. Johnson directly—Sir, it was an old afflicted KIDNEY, once the torment of my childhood, in which I took cold.'

Not until the end of July was Wilkie well enough to travel to Boulogne. Besides such entertainments as town fetes and country fetes, picnics (often in the rain) and excursions to Amiens or Beauvais, there was, for Wilkie, the opportunity for work in the most delightful surroundings. Dickens was a superb host, though he was apt to be tyrannical in the matter of punctuality. He made it a rigid rule of the Château des Moulineaux that breakfast was served at nine o'clock and that those who were not down in time went without. It is recorded that Wilkie, never an enthusiast for early rising, was discovered more than once at the Casino around eleven o'clock breakfasting in solitary state on *pâté de foie gras*.

From time to time Dickens would make a flying visit to London to attend to the affairs of *Household Words*, Wilkie accompanying him early in September in order to discuss with Bentley the publication of his next novel. On the return journey the crossing was very rough and Wilkie described the ladies with their white basins as resembling 'an immense picnic-party with everybody intent upon a pigeon pie of her own.' Guests came and went, and towards the end of the holiday there was an enormous dinner ('the best that Boulogne could supply') to celebrate the completion of *Bleak House*. For this event they were joined by Forster and Mark Lemon, and the publishers and illustrator of the book. The bill of fare Wilkie carefully preserved as 'a memorable document.'

The final plans for the Italian tour were made in London

and on October 10th, after a week-end at Boulogne, Dickens, Egg and Wilkie set off for Paris accompanied by Edward, Dickens' newly-acquired personal servant. We have, from Wilkie's letters home and from Dickens' letters, mostly to his wife, a fairly detailed account of the tour. Dickens projects himself as the 'father' of the party, the experienced foreign traveller, tolerantly leading two enthusiastic but occasionally embarrassing tourists. He is, however, at some pains to stress, after a description of some irritating incident or other, that they remained on excellent terms throughout.

After a day or so in Paris, 'very full and extraordinarily gay,' they travelled by rail to Strasbourg and Basle. Already Dickens inclined to the belief that Wilkie was the better traveller of the two: 'He takes things easily and is not put out by small matters—two capital requisites.' From Basle they posted to Lausanne where they arrived on the evening of the 15th. By this time Egg was engaged in a desperate struggle with the Italian language and found it impossible to remember what he learned. As for the other member of the party, 'Collins eats and drinks everything. Gets on very well everywhere, and is always in good spirits.' In Lausanne they hired an excellent carriage, four horses and a postilion, made an excursion to Chillon, and set off the following morning for Chamonix, 'with a Strasbourg sausage, a bottle of wine, brandy, kirsch-wasser and plenty of bread to keep off hunger on the road.' It was a tiring journey over appalling roads, but nobody seemed to mind. 'We travel in a state of mad good spirits,' Wilkie told his mother, 'and never flag in our jollity all through the day. I am Keeper of the Privy Purse, for roadside expenses of an irregular nature, and am in this capacity the purveyor of all the picnic eatables and drinkables consumed on the way between breakfast and dinner. Egg is constantly exercised in Italian dialogue by Dickens. The courier turns out to be a perfect treasure.' The night's rest at Chamonix revived them sufficiently to make an ascent the next morning of the Mer de Glace,

where the holiday nearly ended in disaster. Dickens' account of the incident is quoted in Forster's *Life* :

We were a train of four mules and two guides, going along an immense height like a chimney-piece, with sheer precipice below, when there came rolling from above, with fearful velocity, a block of stone about the size of one of the fountains in Trafalgar Square, which Egg, the last of the party, had preceded by not a yard, when it swept over the ledge, breaking away a tree, and rolled and rumbled down into the valley. It had been loosened by the heavy rains, or by some woodcutters afterwards reported to be above.

Wilkie, understandably, omits all reference to this adventure in writing to his mother.

At Chamonix the junior travellers begin to show their inexperience. 'Egg sometimes wants trifles of accommodation which could hardly be got in Paris, and Collins sometimes wants to give people too little for their trouble.' But a word from the seasoned tourist 'puts it all right in a moment.'

It was Dickens himself who ordered three hot baths and provoked the scene described in a letter to his wife.

Women ran backwards and forwards across the bridge, men bore in great quantities of wood, a horrible furnace was lighted, and a smoke was raised which filled the whole valley. This began at half-past three, and we congratulated each other on the distinction we should probably acquire by being the cause of the conflagration of the whole village. We sat by the fire until half-past five (dinner time) and still no baths. Ever since, the smoke has poured forth in enormous volume, and the furnace has blazed, and the women have gone and come over the bridge, and piles of wood have been carried in, but we observe a general avoidance of us by the establishment which still looks like failure.

For this failure, dinner, consisting of soup, beefsteak admirably cooked, boiled fowl and rice, roast leg of chamois, roast leg of mutton, and a pudding served in a blaze of rum, must have afforded some compensation.

After dinner, 'Collins (with his short legs stretched out as far as they will go) is reading, and Egg writing in a mar-

vellous diary . . . concerning the materials of which he remembers nothing, but is perpetually asking Collins as I write, about the names of the places where we have been, signs of hotels we have put up at, and so forth—which Collins with his face all awry, blowing old snuff down one nostril and taking new snuff up the other, delivers oracularly.'

Travelling twelve to fifteen hours a day over the Swiss mountain roads, they continued their journey in the direction of Milan. Wilkie, dazzled as he was by the majesty of the landscape, was still able to observe the large number of cretins in the Swiss villages, and the prevalence of goitre among the peasants. These maladies he attributed to 'exhalations from the marshy ground' around the valley streams which, shut in by the unbroken chains of mountain, poisoned the air of the villages. Crossing the Italian frontier by Lake Maggiore, they took the ferry across the river at the foot of the lake. On board was an old blind fiddler who sang Italian folk-songs to the passengers in a harsh but strangely moving voice. Describing the scene in a letter, Wilkie wrote: 'I don't know whether it was the music, which reminded me of old times in Italy, or the scenery, or the gliding motion of the boat over the clear water and through the lovely river-landscape, or the state of incessant excitement that I had been in for the last three or four days, that affected me—or whether it was all these things together—but I never felt nearer astonishing everybody by bursting out crying!'

They covered the final stage of the journey to Milan in a fusty carriage dating, according to Wilkie, from the period of Louis XIV. The innkeeper warned them of robber-bands on the route, who would certainly steal their luggage from the roof unless they took special precautions. These measures consisted in tying to each trunk a string, the end of which was led into the carriage through the window and held firmly by the owner travelling within. 'It was,' wrote Wilkie to Charles Ward, 'like sitting in a shower bath and waiting to pull the string—or rather, like fishing in the sea, when

one waits to feel a bite, by a tug at the line round one's finger. You would have imagined we were taking all the treasures of Golconda to Milan.' By this time they had travelled in a weird variety of vehicles—'like swings, like boats, like Noah's Arks, like barges and enormous bedsteads.'

They arrived at Milan on the night of October 24th tired, dusty and a trifle out of humour. A performance of the latest Verdi opera at La Scala Wilkie found 'utterly miserable and incapable.' In his tour of the art galleries his enthusiasm was reserved for Raphael's 'Betrothal of the Virgin'; da Vinci's 'Last Supper' he described as 'the utter ruin of something which was once a picture,' so disastrously had the restorers—or 'picture-patchers'—done their work. To complete his disenchantment his favourite snuff-box was stolen by a pickpocket. From Dickens comes a hint of irritation in a letter to Georgina Hogarth: 'I have long entertained that other men in general (and Collins in particular) spit and snort rather more than I have ever found it necessary to do, particularly in the early part of the day.'

From Milan, they made a wearily slow journey by carriage to Genoa, where they embarked on the P. & O. steamship *Valetta* for Naples. The voyage, short as it was, proved something of a nightmare. The steamer was already more than filled with passengers from Marseilles and all was in confusion. They found that there were no berths or accommodation of any kind available despite the heavy first-class fares they had paid; even their meals had to be taken on deck. At Leghorn there was some delay and the ship had to lie off all night. Dickens describes the scene on board: 'Ladies and gentlemen lying indiscriminately on the open deck, arranged like spoons on a sideboard. No mattresses, no blankets, nothing . . . We three lay together on the bare planks covered with our coats. We were gradually dozing off, when a perfectly tropical rain fell, and in a moment drowned the whole ship. The rest of the night we passed upon the stairs, with an immense jumble of men and women.'

When anybody came up for any purpose we all fell down, and when anybody came down we all fell up again.' The next morning Dickens managed to get a state-room for himself and used his influence with the Captain to have the store room opened up for Collins and Egg; here they slept amid cheeses, fruit, spices and moist sugar with the steward, a cat and a stowaway for company.

The voyage lasted four days; on arrival at Naples they took rooms in the Hotel des Etrangers, facing the sea. During their week's stay, the three tourists explored Pompeii, ascended Vesuvius—and, incidentally, suffered agonies from fleas and mosquitoes. Wilkie paid some social calls, renewing acquaintances of his former visit. He described, in a letter to his brother Charley, his call upon Iggulden, the Naples banker and an old friend of the family :

He was extremely depressed and gloomy, and surrounded by wretched pictures, on which he had been lending money, I suspect. He grievously desired to know whether I was still going on 'writing books,' and whether I ever meant to 'practise my profession.' He asked after you and my mother with great interest, and then introduced me to a tall young gentleman with a ghastly face, immense whiskers, and an expression of the profoundest melancholy, who was casting accounts and reckoning up dollars in the outer office. Do you remember little Lorenzo, who was the lively young 'Pickle' of the family in our time? Well! this was Lorenzo!!! He asked me whether I had not broken my arm when I was last in Naples. I told him *you* had. He rejoined gloomily: 'Galway's dead'—and then waited for me to say something. I said, 'God bless me! Is he indeed?'—And so we parted. I must not forget to say that Charles Iggulden—the pattern *goodboy* who used to be quoted as an example to me—has married a pretty girl *without* his parents' consent—is out of the banking business in consequence—and has gone to Australia to make his fortune as well as he can. I was rather glad to hear this as I don't like 'well-conducted' young men! I know it is wrong, but I always feel relieved and happy when I hear that they have got into a scrape.

They had intended to visit Sicily but, being already behind schedule, went direct to Rome, where they stayed at an excellent hotel overlooking the Piazza del Popolo; a large



dining-room, a handsome front drawing-room and three front bedrooms cost them four shillings a day each. Both Naples and Rome were, of course, familiar to Wilkie, their sights and sounds evoking memories of the happy months he had spent there as a boy. Coming back was like reliving a dream. Rome, in particular, had provided his young imagination with the germ of those ideas which, years later, had matured to produce his first novel. 'Nothing has astonished me,' he wrote to Charley, 'more than my own vivid remembrance of every street and building in this wonderful and mournful place . . . Not the least changeless object in Rome was our old house in the Via Felice. The Virgin is still in her niche—the cabbage stalks and rubbish are strewn about underneath—the very door looks as if it had never been painted since we left it.' In the old surroundings Wilkie began to boast mildly, as travellers do, about his earlier visit. It is hardly likely that he expected to be taken literally, and one may consider Dickens' comments, in a letter to Catherine, unduly tart :

But the best of it is, that he tells us about the enormous quantities of Monte Pulciano and what not, that he used to drink when he was last there, and what distinguished people said to him in the way of taking his opinion, and what advice he gave them—being then exactly thirteen years of age.

He adds, however,

All these absurdities are innocent enough. I tell them in default of having anything else to tell. We are all the best of friends and have never the least difference.

It was now the middle of November and there were several Italian cities on Dickens' list still to be visited. Leaving Rome for Florence, they spent the first night at Bolsena, on the shore of a dismal lake, in malaria-ridden country. The inn was wretched and dirty, offering little to eat and nothing but sour country-wine to drink. 'However,' said Dickens, 'we made a great fire, and strengthened the country wine with some brandy (we always carry brandy) and mulled it with cloves (we always carry cloves) and went to bed,

and got up before 5 and breakfasted on our own tea (we always carry tea), and came away in the dark.' The next night was spent at Siena and the travellers reached Florence the following evening.

Wilkie had taken the opportunity to start growing a moustache. Once again Dickens is disapproving :

You remember how the corners of his mouth go down, and how he looks through his spectacles and manages his legs. I don't know how it is, but the moustache is a horrible aggravation of all this. He smooths it down over his mouth . . . Likewise he tells Egg he must 'cut it for it gets into his mouth'—and he and Egg compliment each other on that appendage.

The journey to Florence seems to have put Dickens out of humour for, having told his wife that he will not enter a picture-gallery with his companions, nor will he join in their discussions on Art, he continues :

To hear Collins learnedly holding forth to Egg . . . about reds, and greens, and things 'coming well' with other things, and lines being wrong, and lines being right, is far beyond the bounds of all caricature. I shall never forget it. On music, too, he is very learned, and sometimes almost drives me into frenzy by humming and whistling whole overtures—without one movement correctly remembered from the beginning to the end. I was obliged to ask him, the day before yesterday, to leave off whistling the Overture to *William Tell*. 'For by heaven,' said I, 'there's something the matter with your ear—I think it must be the cotton—which plays the Devil with the commonest tune.' He occasionally expounds a code of morals, taken from modern French novels, which I instantly and with becoming gravity smash.

Fortunately, there is no suggestion that the good-tempered Wilkie took offence at this headmasterly behaviour on the part of his friend.

There was only time to remain one day in Florence, after which the party pressed on to Venice. The travelling arrangements and general organisation appear to have been Dickens' responsibility. 'We observe the Managerial punctuality in all our arrangements,' he remarks in a letter. He also notices 'that the expenses make the Neophytes wink a little,

and that the shirts do a good deal of duty.'

In the matter of dress it is clear that Egg and Wilkie were no match for the elegant Dickens. Here is his account of a visit to the opera in Venice :

It is the usage that when you go to the play the chief of your two gondolieri lights you up to your box with an enormous lantern. Last night . . . this ceremony was observed with great state, through brilliantly lighted passages, where the lantern, big as it was, became a mere twinkle. Imagine the procession—led by Collins with incipient moustache, spectacles, slender legs, and extremely dirty dress gloves—Egg second, in a white hat, and a straggly mean little black beard—Inimitable bringing up the rear, in full dress and big sleeved greatcoat, rather considerably ashamed.

The performance of the opera—Verdi's 'Nabucco'—was good, the ballet capital, and the best box in the house cost them approximately seven-and-sixpence. They wound up the evening at Florian's in the Piazza San Marco drinking punch. In a letter to his mother Wilkie wrote : ' We lead the most luxurious, dandy-dilettante sort of life here. Our gondola (with two rowers in modern footmen's liveries!) waits on us wherever we go. We live among pictures and palaces all day, and among Operas, Ballets and Cafés more than half the night.'

For the two poorer members of the party, funds were beginning to run low and they made one or two pathetic attempts at economy. ' This morning at breakfast,' wrote Dickens,

' they settled that there was no need for them to have the Servitore di Piazza today . . . Downstairs we all go. In the hall is the Servitore. To whom Collins—in Italian, expounds that they don't want him. Thereupon he respectfully explains that he was told to come, has lost his day, and has been waiting an hour. Upon that, they are of course obliged to take him; and the only result of the great effort is (as it always is) that it has been a profoundly mean, and utterly fruitless attempt at evasion. We brought some good tea with us from Genoa, and if you could have seen them, when it was first going to be used, devising how a teapot and boiling water were to be got from

the hotel for nothing, you would never have forgotten it. Of course I clinched the matter very speedily by ordering tea for one (tenpence in price) which we didn't use. Egg is always reasonable on all such points if he is spoken to, seriously. But there is a ridiculous contrast sometimes between their determination to have good things and their tremendous readiness to complain—and their slight reluctance in paying afterwards.'

By implication, Wilkie was less reasonable when spoken to seriously, and who can blame him? Obviously there were occasions when Dickens was not the most sympathetic of travelling companions.

The journey home from Venice lasted only ten days. After a brief glance at Parma and Verona the travellers reached Turin whence they took the mail-coach over the Mont Cenis to Lyons. They went by river-steamer up the Saône to Châlon where they caught the Paris train and eventually arrived back in London on December 10th having been away two months.

The expenses of the trip seem remarkably high, and Wilkie and Egg may not have found the holiday quite as 'reasonable' as Dickens had promised. Wilkie received the reckoning within a few days of their return:

The total expenses (deducting of course all charges incurred for Edward and Charley) have been in French money 9510 francs. That is, in English money £380-8s.-4d.—or, say in round numbers £380-10-0.

One-third share of this sum is	£126 16 8
You have actually contributed	90 0 0
Leaving a balance for you to pay of	<hr/> 36 16 8
To which is to be added, money lent	6 15 0
Making a total for you to pay of	<hr/> £43 11 8

Back in Hanover Terrace, Wilkie got down to work again on the new novel, which was concerned to some extent with Art and Artists. This may explain his current preoccupation with the details and techniques of painting; the 'reds and greens' which had irritated Dickens on the Italian tour. It is plain that these minor skirmishes which figured so often in Dickens' letters home were of no real significance, for the three remained as good friends as ever. Egg, incidentally,

had acquired the nickname of 'The Colonel'—sometimes 'Kernel'—and thus he was known to Dickens and Wilkie evermore.

Wilkie, now 30 years old, spent most of July and August, 1854, with the Dickens family at the Villa du Camp de Droite at Boulogne, a house rather larger than the Moulineaux, which they had taken for the summer. In inviting him to the villa, Dickens expressed the hope that he would finish the third volume of his new book there, but the book was already finished and in the printer's hands; not until after it was published in June, 1854, did Wilkie cross the Channel.

*Hide and Seek*, as the new novel was called, could hardly have appeared at a less propitious moment. The Crimean War had flared up and was absorbing the attention of all England; people were reading newspapers rather than novels. The first printing of *Hide and Seek* just met the public demand and no further copies were printed for several years. Wilkie did however receive two tributes from fellow novelists which must have offset the comparative apathy of the public. Macaulay, whom he had not met, wrote a letter full of lavish praise; Dickens, generous as always in his enthusiasm for Wilkie's work, made no reservations this time. Writing to Georgina Hogarth he said: 'I think it far away the cleverest work I have ever seen written by a new hand. It is in some respects masterly . . . In short, I call it a very remarkable book, and have been very much surprised by its great merit.' And in reply to a criticism by Georgina, he concluded: 'Nor do I really recognise much imitation of myself.' The echoes are there, certainly, even if Dickens failed to notice them, but this is the last of Collins' novels to show to any marked extent the Dickens manner. Soon the influence was to be seen working in the opposite direction.

*Hide and Seek, or the Mystery of Mary Grice* is an altogether more lighthearted affair than the sombre *Basil*, from which it marks an abrupt departure. As a story it carries

less conviction. Of the strange bunch of characters one is pleased to have made the acquaintance of Zach Thorpe, an engaging young extrovert in revolt against his puritan upbringing, and of Valentine Blyth who paints potboilers to support his paralysed wife, Lavvie. Less credible is the mysterious Mat, who has been scalped by Indians and wears a skull-cap to conceal the fact. The author's obsession with physical infirmity leads him to make the other leading character, Madonna, a deaf-mute, his object being to illustrate 'the patience and cheerfulness with which the heavier bodily afflictions are borne, for the most part, by those afflicted,' a favourite Wilkie Collins theme. He claimed to be the first novelist to draw such a character but his failure to make her live suggests all too clearly why his predecessors left this particular ground unexplored.

It is a tribute to his narrative skill that one follows with interest, if without excitement, the search for the solution to Madonna's identity; the *dénouement*, however, depends upon an incredible series of coincidences. Contemporary readers of the novel found its ending objectionable for a different reason. By revealing a close blood-relationship between two characters who had, in all ignorance, been in love with each other, the author was held to have committed a grievous offence against moral standards.

Wilkie Collins' powers of evoking atmosphere were developing; here is Baregrove Square on a wet Sunday :

The garden in the middle of the Square—with its close-cut turf, its vacant beds, its brand-new rustic seats, its withered young trees that had not yet grown as high as the railings around them—seemed to be absolutely rotting away in yellow mist and softly-steady rain, and was deserted even by the cats. All blinds were drawn down for the most part over all windows; what light came from the sky came like light seen through dusty glass; the grim brown hue of the brick houses looked more dirtily mournful than ever; the smoke from the chimney-pots was lost mysteriously in deepening superincumbent fog; the muddy gutters gurgled, the heavy raindrops dripped into empty areas audibly.

Here and there he allowed himself a tilt at one of the conventions.

The smug human vultures who prey commercially on the civilised dead, arranged themselves, with black wands, in solemn Undertakers' order of procession on either side of the funeral vehicles. Those clumsy pomps of feathers and velvet, of strutting horses and marching mutes, which are still permitted among us to desecrate with grotesquely-shocking fiction the solemn fact of death, fluttered out in their blackest state grandeur and showed their most woeful state paces, as the procession started magnificently with its meagre offering of one dead body more to the bare and awful grave.

With *Hide and Seek* off his hands Wilkie felt entitled to enjoy two months of 'Elysian laziness' with Dickens at the Villa du Camp de Droite. The house stood upon a hill overlooking Boulogne; as he approached Wilkie saw fluttering from its flagstaff the Tricolor and the Union Jack side by side in honour of the recently-concluded Alliance between the two countries. All around were French soldiers, ten thousand of them, waiting to take part in manœuvres before the Emperor. They were remarkable, he told his mother, for 'good breeding and quiet behaviour,' a marked contrast to the British Grenadiers. The diversions of Dickens' house-party during the next week or two took on something of the prevailing military atmosphere. They attended a Military Mass performed in the open by a 'meek-looking old curé who came shambling in through all the magnificent military preparations, with his rusty black cassock trailing in the dust, and his green umbrella under his arm.' Wilkie strolled into the market-place to find 'a whole regiment in it, with a real live *vivandière* serving out drams to the men in the most operatic manner possible.' The arrival of the Emperor was celebrated by illuminations all over the town, to which Dickens made a typical contribution. He ordered a candle to be fixed in each of the 114 window-panes of the villa, and so arranged his household that at the ringing of a bell every candle was lit in less than a minute. The evening concluded with a brilliant display of fireworks.