

LITTLE DORRIT

With Illustrations by
HABLÔT KNIGHT BROWNE ('PHIZ')



THE STORY OF THE PRINCESS

THE WORKS OF CHARLES DICKENS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



LITTLE DORRIT PARTS ONE AND TWO

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DEDICATED

TO

CLARKSON STANFIELD, R.A.

BY

HIS ATTACHED FRIEND



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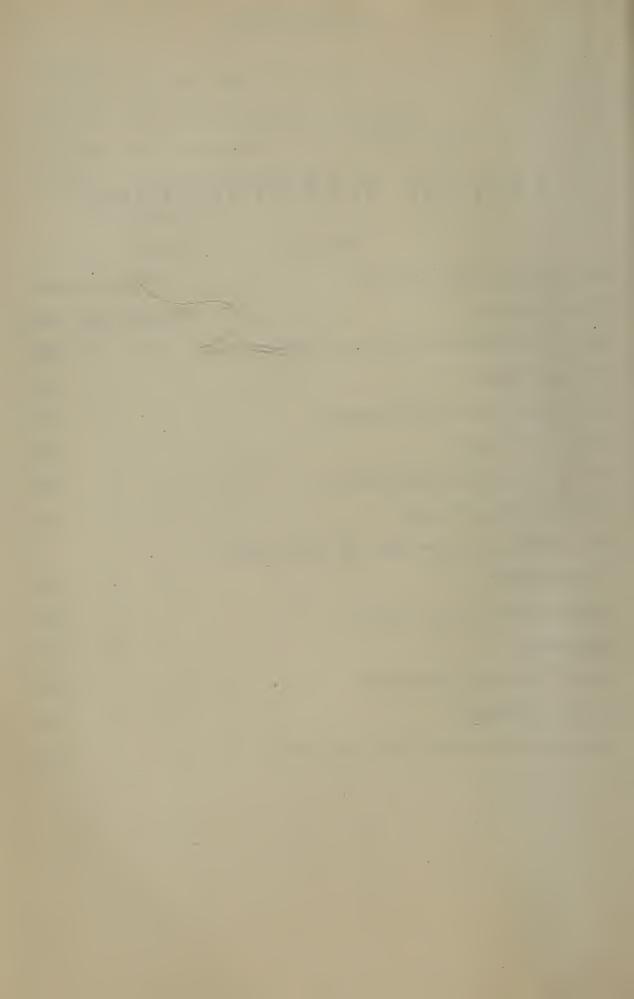
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PREFACES

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

I have been occupied with this story, during many working hours of two years. I must have been very ill employed, if I could not leave its merits and demerits as a whole, to express themselves on its being read as a whole. But, as it is not unreasonable to suppose that I may have held its various threads with a more continuous attention than any one else can have given to them during its desultory publication, it is not unreasonable to ask that the weaving may be looked at in its completed state, and with the pattern finished.

If I might offer any apology for so exaggerated a fiction as the Barnacles and the Circumlocution Office, I would seek it in the common experience of an Englishman, without presuming to mention the unimportant fact of my having done that violence to good manners, in the days of a Russian war, and of a Court of Enquiry at Chelsea. If I might make so bold as to defend that extravagant conception, Mr. Merdle, I would hint that it originated after the Railroadshare epoch, in the times of a certain Irish bank, and of one or two other equally laudable enterprises. If I were to plead anything in mitigation of the preposterous fancy that a bad design will sometimes claim to be a good and an expressly religious design, it would be the curious coincidence that it has been brought to its climax in these pages, in the days of the public examination of late Directors of a Royal British Bank. But, I submit myself to suffer judgment to go by default on all these counts, if need be, and to accept the assurance (on good authority) that nothing like them was ever known in this land.

Some of my readers may have an interest in being informed whether or no any portions of the Marshalsea Prison are yet standing. I did not know, myself, until the sixth of this present month, when I went to look. I found the outer front courtyard, often mentioned in this story, metamorphosed into a butter-shop; and I then almost gave up every brick of the jail for lost. Wandering, how-

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