

"The Old Curiosity Shop"

"The Denominational Garden"

THE first sketch, "The Denominational Garden," is from "Lovey Mary," companion book to the famous "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," by Alice Hegan Rice.

It has been said that one is nearest to God when wandering in a flower garden, and this expresses precisely the philosophy of that quaint character Miss Viney, who didn't believe in flowers being caged up in shop windows any more than she believed in belonging to one church. So she made her garden and created all churches within it, giving a little time to each. To her, Christianity, which she interpreted largely to mean charity, was above all religions.

It is a quaint and charming story, with a certain whimsical humour running through it.

The next sketch is from "The Old Curiosity Shop." No book of Dickens's attracted so much attention when it came out in serial form as did this. The character of Little Nell made such an impression on the reading public of the world—in London, in the mining camps of California, among the gold-diggers of Australia; in fact wherever the British people read, in parts, the story as it appeared. It seemed to grip them like a living thing, for letters poured in from all parts of the world to Dickens imploring that, whatever he did with the end of the story, he was not to let Little Nell die. However, Dickens, like the true artist he was, could end the book in no other way than that in which he was impelled.

The ending is best described in Dickens's own words, in a letter to Mark Lemon, his old friend and critic; written when he laid down his pen, after the last word. He wrote thus:

"Dear Mark,—The child is dead. There was no alternative. I feel as if I had lost one of my own. I have wept.—Dickens."

As George Gissing once said, this child was more of a spirit than an actual person, whom Dickens created in his wonderful brain to take the old man away from the Old Curiosity Shop and its sorry environment into the open spaces of God's creation, and so to forget the sordid things of this material world.



Next Thursday evening, January 26, 1YA listeners are to hear Clement May before their own microphone in his first appearance from that station. This well-known 2YA personality, whose regular performances have earned him the highest praise as a radio entertainer, is especially noted for his very fine Dickensian character studies—a fact which is not at all surprising, for Mr. May has twice travelled the world as a Dickensian actor, giving recitals in all parts of the British Empire. In his recital next Thursday he is presenting the three sketches named above.

"Hoodoo McFiggan's Christmas"

To this day thousands of people, visitors to London, go down to Lincoln's Inn Fields, behind Kingsway, to visit that quaint shop which Dickens immortalised as the Old Curiosity Shop.

In sharp contrast to this sketch is the following one, "Hoodoo McFiggan's Christmas," a delightful little tale of a child, written by that prince of humourists, Stephen Laycock. The story is justly described as a pathetically humorous one. There is no doubt about it being true to life, for it is just what happens to many children during the festive season.

Poor Hoodoo, who became greatly excited as Christmas drew near, when it arrived found that he had got everything but what he wanted and nothing he had anticipated. To tell more of the story would spoil listeners' enjoyment of it, but there is a moral in it for parents. It is this: If you want to please a child, don't give him something he would have to have sooner or later—a necessity—give him something he wants.

To Hoodoo, a popgun would have been infinitely more precious than a new suit of clothes.

"DAN'L PEGGOTTY," the first of a second series of sketches which

Clement May will present from 1YA on Monday, January 30, is from "David Copperfield," by Charles Dickens. Dan'l Peggotty lived with old Mrs. Gummage, his housekeeper, in a houseboat in the old English fishing town of Yarmouth. There is a houseboat there to this day, which the thousands of visitors who go to see it each year are told is Dan'l Peggotty's, but the oldest inhabitants know that the original fell to pieces many years ago.

The next sketch, "Ethelred," has been acclaimed as one of the finest pieces of humour in verse form ever written. It is perfect in rhyme, rhythm, and metre.

The third and concluding sketch is an adaptation of a short story by O. Henry, "The Double-Dyed Deceiver."