

Univerzita Pardubice  
Fakulta humanitních studií  
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

**The Reflection of Life of the Lower Classes in the Works  
of Charles Dickens**

Bakalářská práce

University of Pardubice  
Faculty of Humanities  
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of Charles Dickens**

Bachelor Paper

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**Zobrazení života nižších společenských vrstev v díle  
Charlese Dickense**

Bakalářská práce

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V Pardubicích dne 31.03.2005

Lucie Chrástová

## **ABSTRAKT:**

Bakalářská práce je zaměřena na výzkum života lidí z nízkých společenských vrstev v době Viktoriánské Anglie a zejména pak jeho zobrazení v knihách slavného anglického spisovatele Charlese Dickense. Práce je rozdělena do tří základních zkoumaných skupin – děti, mladí lidé a rodina. Práce se zaměřuje na zobrazení životních podmínek, dětské práce nebo porovnání života chudých mladých lidí s životem mladých lidí z vyšších vrstev.

V podstatě je zobrazen život chudých od narození až po vstup do manželství.

The bachelor paper is focused on exploring the life of the lower classes in Victorian England and primarily its reflection in the works of famous English writer Charles Dickens. The work is divided into three basic explored groups—the children, the young people and the family life. The work is focused on portraying living conditions, the child labour or comparing the life of the poor young people with the life of young people from the higher classes. In fact the reflection of life of the poor since the birth up to the marriage is given.

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## INTRODUCTION

This bachelor paper focuses on examining the life of people from the low classes in Victorian England, and mainly its reflection in selected works of Charles Dickens. It works with theoretical knowledge about the life of the lower classes in the nineteenth century Victorian England and mainly Victorian London and then explores how it is reflected in selected books (or more precisely said passages of the selected books) written by Charles Dickens.

The paper is divided into three main parts; the first part explores the life of the poor children.

In the nineteenth century, the children lived in very difficult conditions because they lived near factories and in unhealthy flats or in suburbs with poor hygiene. They had bad nutrition—they ate some bread, pork, milk, or cheese (not everyday). This all favoured quite many diseases and high infant mortality. The poor children had unhappy childhood. They worked hard to satisfy the needs of their parents because the families were very poor and they did not have enough money, so the children worked. They underwent very difficult conditions of the employment to earn some little money. Days were long for them. They worked eight or twelve hours a day, six days a week. This all for funny payments only several shillings a week.

The second part of the bachelor paper intents on the life of poor young people. The life of a poor young person was usually as difficult as the life of a poor child. Most commonly, the poor child became a poor young person and had to deal with the same difficulties as he did as a child. The life of poor young people in Victorian England depended on themselves as well as on other people (especially those from the higher classes). The level of the education was very important – it determined which work the person would be suitable for and so how his life may be in future. The poor person himself could have partly influenced the level of education, however, influence that was much more important came from other person – if any wealthy person decided to support certain poor person. Than the chance to change his lifestyle was quite big, although it took long time and big effort to get out of the low class. However, if one stayed “only a common labouring boy”, his life did not differ much from the life he lived as a child – he was just older and had more duties, he still had to work and earn

money and in addition take care of other members of the family.

The final part examines the life of poor families. The poor families in Victorian England were in a very difficult position—the families were usually quite numerous and at the same moment usually did not have either both parents or at least one of them. Thus, they got into the situation when some other member of the family (one of the children, the grandparents or some aunt or even some family friend) had to pick over all responsibility for the family and take care of it, which was quite difficult in those days and meant many duties and troubles.

Age up to 12 years old is considered a child age, older aged person up to the marriage is for purposes of this work considered a young. However sometimes a child was mentally at the same level as a young person – as he had to be highly responsible and had many duties. Thus, the age is not a strict condition but just a clue for deciding where to place the chosen character. However, nearly any poor child living in Victorian England tried the sweet and carefree childhood—they jumped from the toddler to the small young person with a big number of duties and obligations (showed below on Nell Trent's life—as her grandfather described it well: "Besides, the children of the poor know but few pleasures. Even the cheap delights of childhood must be bought and paid for." (The Old Curiosity Shop, later related to as OCS, 1995, chapter 1, page 15). Nevertheless, considering the small children, rather the age than the level of responsibility is taken as a basic feature for determining their placing into the group of poor children.

In each part, more than one book is included to be explored, but different situations to be examined are chosen from each book, so that a complete picture of the life of the selected group may be defined in the end.

In the first and third part of the paper, (the life of children and the family life), only members of the poor are explored while the second part, concerning the life of the young people, includes also the life of a poor young man moving into slightly higher society and later changes in his life caused by this movement. However, even in the case that a poor boy slightly moved up on the social ladder and it may have seemed that he had incorporated into the higher class, he was still perceived only as a poor boy from the low class, as the Victorian society usually did not accept any rise within a social class. One's life was quite difficult if he did not come from a higher class, as he had to



deal with many life troubles, which is one of the subjects of this paper. Such people lived hard lives in Victorian England.

Mainly the living conditions are explored, but it also describes and examines child labour, Victorian methods of education and bringing up—mainly, how cruel they sometimes were – the children had to face strict discipline used while bringing up (in the school as well as at home). Many Victorian parents and educators were strict disciplinarians. Corporal punishment was considered an acceptable form of the correction. Beside this all, also the behaviour of the members of the higher classes while confrontation with the poor is mentioned and showed in the second part on Estella's behaviour towards Pip after his arrival to the Manor House. Other thing, which is explored, is how the behaviour of the member of the low class may change after his moving among the members of the higher classes and how his attitude towards the “common labouring people” changed (showed on Pip's behaviour towards Joe during and after his visit to London).

As Dickens' work is too large and it is not possible to cover everything within the bachelor paper, only three books were selected to be examined—*Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* and in fact not whole books were considered but only the selected related parts of each book describing explored features of the given social group of the Victorian society were used.

The explored period is the Victorian England. Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 to 1901:

“This time was a time of huge changes in Great Britain. Britain had been through an industrial revolution; for the first time things were mass-produced in big factories rather than handmade in workshops or at home. However, the industrial revolution had also its negative sides – one of the most in lives of poor people – they never had easy lives, but in those days, it was even more difficult.” ([www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/Victorians/article.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/Victorians/article.html))

“Early Victorian society was a cruel jungle – most cruel for the plain poor who could fall no lower, but cruel enough for people like Dickens' parents, who clung with difficulty of the ornamental edge of gentility.” (Angus Wilson, 1970, page 44)

The Victorian Age was characterised by rapid change and developments in

nearly every sphere—from progress in medicine, across advances in scientific and technological knowledge to changes in population growth and location. It was an age that began with a confidence and optimism, continued by economic boom and prosperity and finally culminated by uncertainty and doubts concerning Britain's place in the world. On the other hand, there were many social problems and disagreement in what was declared and how the reality looked like. The gap between the low and the high classes and the conditions which the poor had to live in was one of the most visible problems of the Victorian society (but on the other hand the most neglected problem, the only thing, which was done in order to help solving this problem was passing the New Poor Law in 1834, which established regional workhouses created by the parishes, which was just little more than a prison for the poor). Such conditions seemed to be the most terrible in London (as London was big enough to cover all kinds of accommodation and work and “accommodated” members of all social classes).

“Victorian London was the largest, most spectacular city in the world. While Britain was experiencing the Industrial Revolution, its capital was both reaping the benefits and suffering the consequences. In 1800, the population of London was around a million souls. That number would swell to 4.5 million by 1880” (David A. Perdue, 1997:[http://www.fidnet.com/~dap1955/dickens/dickens\\_london.html](http://www.fidnet.com/~dap1955/dickens/dickens_london.html))

Thus London streets could have watched diverse fates—from those most unhappy and the poorest up to the fates of those happy people from the high classes as well as diverse dwellings with fundamentally different living conditions—from the homeless people across poor people living in rotten houses up to the wealthy manors of the rich people. Such differences in lives of those belonging to the higher classes and the poor may be well seen in Victorian London—as the homes of the high classes existed in close proximity to the areas of unbelievable poverty and misery. Rich and poor alike are thrown together in the crowded London streets.

As Dickens spent the considerable part of his life in London and as a poor child, he moved to London to then conditions typical of the poor, he was highly competent to write about such conditions. However, the main reason why he wrote about it was to warn of this problem and make somebody solve it. Life in London with its diversity as well as with the terrifying conditions served as a perfect place to set his stories in.

The life in London was quite hard also for those from the higher classes but not

high enough to live comfortable life, such as small governants servants, clergymen, inventors or small tradesmen—they were quite often fulling the debtor’s prisons.

Therefore, Dickens’ books were not only full of characters from the low classes, but he also involved those people who were not entirely poor, but who at the same moment did not belong to those “desirable” from the higher classes. Thus although such people lived in satisfying conditions, their lives resembled much more the lives of the poor than the lives of those belonging to the higher classes (such as the Micawbers in *David Copperfield* ).

However, the strange situation, which the poor had to live in, was much more distinct the way of how the higher class lived and much more terrifying. Many authors in those days wrote about the terrifying social situation in England and its problems—one of them, who experienced himself the life of a poor person (or more precisely a poor child) and so was highly competent to describe truly living conditions of the poor in London, was Charles Dickens.

Charles Dickens was one of the best and most well known authors of the world’s realism and English literature at all. He was born on February 7, 1812, as the son of a clerk at the Navy Pay Office. As a child he had to live in the poorest conditions in London. This dark experience influenced the clever, sensitive boy and also his future.

This childhood poverty and feelings of abandonment heavily influenced Dickens and his later views on the poverty in England, the social reform and the world he created through his fiction.

Dickens wrote 15 major novels and countless short stories and articles before his death on June 9, 1870.

Nearly all of his works are somehow influenced by his own life and in fact all of them somehow deal with the poor and their difficult lives—Dickens was a sympathiser to the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed. This paper shows how the life of the lower classes is reflected in the Dickens’ books.

## 2. THE LIFE OF POOR CHILDREN

The first part of the bachelor paper is focused on the reflection of life of the children from the lower classes. Two books were selected to be discussed in this part—*Great Expectations* and *David Copperfield*. Nevertheless, not whole books were considered—only those chapters where Pip and David are still the children living in low conditions, so that their lives as the children and its reflection in Dickens’s books may be explored.

### 2.1. THE REFLECTION OF LIFE OF THE POOR CHILDREN IN GREAT EXPECTATIONS

The first section of this part explores the reflection of life of the children from the lower classes in *Great Expectations* (for the plot summary see App. No. 10).

The life of a child from the lower classes is the most clearly reflected here in Chapters 1–9 as Pip describes his childhood in the poor forge in these chapters. Dickens painted an extremely vivid picture of the childhood in these chapters. The reader may see then world through Pip’s eyes and so through the eyes of a poor child as Dickens understood every simple thought and feeling of the children and applied it to whole Pip’s acting throughout the whole book. Later Pip started to visit Miss Havisham in the Satis House, which changed his life and later also his behaviour and attitude towards the beloved people quite a lot.

“The story of *Great Expectations* is set in early Victorian England, a time when great social changes were sweeping the nation. The Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had transformed the social landscape, enabling capitalists and manufacturers to amass huge fortunes. Although social class was no longer entirely dependent on the circumstances of one’s birth, the divisions between rich and poor remained nearly as wide as ever. More and more people moved from the country to the city in search of greater economic opportunity.” (Sparknotes LLC, 2005) <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/greatex/context.html>

This all influenced Pip and his family as well as other poor people living in Victorian England and can be distinguished throughout the whole book. However, the group of the people who had to face the biggest difficulties considering their age were

the poor children, who had to deal with many duties and terrible conditions unmatching their age.

The poor children living in the nineteenth century Victorian England had to face many difficulties. In addition, they also had to face the fact that other people were aware of their vulnerability and inexperience and so took their advantage of it. There existed a big number of children who did not have parents and so had to rely on getting a chance from other people to be able to survive (for the picture of waif children see App. No.9)

In the nineteenth century, the children were often mistreated as they were sent to work in dirty factories (for more see App. No. 4) from the age of 10. At the time, orphanages did not exist so the orphans were hired by the people for odd jobs and were paid funny low payments just enough to survive.

As it was already said, in the nineteenth century the poor children lived in very difficult conditions because they lived in the unhealthy flats, as Pip described it in Chapter One: “Joe's forge adjoined our house, which was a wooden house, as many of the dwellings in our country were – most of them, at that time.” (*Great Expectations*, later referred to as GE, 1962, chapter 2, page 10), alternatively they lived in the suburbs with poor hygiene. (for more see App. No.2 and 3 )

“Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard, and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond, was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea” (GE, 1962, chapter 1, page 5)

This is how Pip described his country. It was a country with lot of mud, humid, windy and foggy weather and obviously with a small chance to have good hygiene there. This is a description of the home country of Pip, but is very similar to the home countries of other poor children in the nineteenth century—if they belonged to the luckier part of the poor people and were not homeless (for the children on the street see App. No.6).

Such living conditions lead to the occurrence of many diseases and so many deaths, mainly big mortality of small children. As Pip says:

“...five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine – who gave up trying to get a living, exceedingly early in that universal struggle...” (GE, 1964, chapter 1, page 5)

It is evident that many poor children “gave up trying to get a living, exceedingly early in that universal struggle” as Pip describes it. When a poor child decided not to give up this struggle, it had to use sometimes quite strange medicines.

“Some medical beast had revived Tar–water in those days as a fine medicine and Mrs. Joe always kept a supply of it in the cupboard; having a belief in its virtues correspondent to its nastiness.” (GE, 1962, chapter 2, page 14)

Pip as well as Joe had to use it and neither of them liked it. However, they used it to protect themselves from various diseases.

Anyway, not all the poor people had this quite strange medicine at those times and so they did not have anything to protect their health with. Therefore, not only the children, who were not so immune from the diseases, but also the adults were dieing quite often.

Thus, many children had to live without their parents: “As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them”. (GE, 1962, chapter 1, page 5). Pip was not any exception in those days, there were many orphans.

As they had nobody to take care of them, they had to work already as the small children. They did not live happy and sweet childhoods with pampering and idleness.

“...When I was old enough, I was to be apprenticed to Joe, and until I could assume that dignity I was not to be what Mrs. Joe called "Pompeyed," or (as I render it) pampered. Therefore, I was not only odd–boy about the forge, but if any neighbour happened to want an extra boy to frighten birds, or pick up stones, or do any such job, I was favoured with the employment....” (GE, 1962, chapter 7, page 41)

This is an example of quite easy work, however, it is obvious that Pip had to perform his duties already as a child. This fact was quite normal in those days as it was already mentioned at the beginning.

As a poor child has always a poor parent, the children had to give all the hard-earned money to the parents or the guardians to be able at least to survive somehow:

“...In order, however, that our superior position might not be compromised thereby, a money-box was kept on the kitchen mantel-shelf, in to which it was publicly made known that all my earnings were dropped. I have an impression that they were to be contributed eventually towards the liquidation of the National Debt, but I know I had no hope of any personal participation in the treasure.” (GE, 1962, chapter 7, page 42)

This extract exactly reflects the fact that the children worked to satisfy the needs of their parents because the families were very poor and they did not have enough money to ensure the survivance without the help of the children—as it was said at the beginning. It was the biggest and the main obligation of the child to support his or her family by earning some money and also helping at home.

As the children had to work hard, they were neither able nor allowed to go to school to receive any education. The only time they could have educated themselves somehow was the winter when there was less work. Then they had some little chance to visit a ragged school. “At the time when I stood in the churchyard, reading the family tombstones, I had just enough learning to be able to spell them out,” says Pip at the beginning of Chapter Seven (GE, 1962, chapter 7, page 41). In fact whole Chapter Seven talks about education of the poor children—as also Joe remembers his childhood and trials to receive any education. It was really difficult for the poor child to gain any education as there was so much work and so little money, and so although many poor children were clever and longed for the education, they usually finished after learning several letters and some figures:

”...Much of my unassisted self, and more by the help of Bidly than of Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt, I struggled through the alphabet as if it had been a bramble-bush; getting considerably worried and scratched by every letter. After that, I fell among those thieves, the nine figures...” (GE, 1962, chapter 7, page 39)

The children longed for being able to know at least the alphabet, which is quite obviously showed in Chapter Seven when Pip writes a note for Joe:

” With an alphabet on the hearth at my feet for reference, I contrived in an hour or two to print and smear this epistle:

’MI DEER JO i OPE U R KR WITE WELL i OPE i SHAL SON B HABELL 4  
2 TEEDGE U JO AN THEN WE SHORL B SO GLODD AN WEN i M PRENGTD 2  
U JO WOT LARX AN BLEVE ME INF XN PIP.’

There was no indispensable necessity for my communicating with Joe by letter,

in as much as he sat beside me and we were alone. But, I delivered this written communication (slate and all) with my own hand, and Joe received it as a miracle of education.” (GE, 1962, chapter 7, page 43)

For Pip (as well as for Joe) it was a top achievement to write such note (Joe even rewarded this Pip’s effort by calling him a scholar). Although it was not necessary and demanded great effort, Pip took the trouble and wrote it. That reflects that the education was something that Pip and other children in Victorian England longed for and if they knew at least something they showed it to feel “highly educated“ although they did not have any chance to reach the high education. The education might have been seen by them, as a way to become reputable and one day may be rich—to get out of the conditions typical of the lives of the poor.

## 2.2. THE REFLECTION OF LIFE OF THE POOR CHILDREN IN DAVID COPPERFIELD

Although Dickens focused his books on the poor people from the lower classes, there can be seen certain differences between each of his heroes (even if they move within the same—low—class). For example two Dickens’ books where the main hero is a small boy going through the difficulties of living in poor conditions—above mentioned Pip and *Great Expectations* and *David Copperfield* (whom the next part is focused on) (for the plot summary see App. No.10). *David Copperfield* has structural similarity to the first half of *Great Expectations*. A preteenaged boy who is naive, honest, and passive and is not living with his birth parents is surrounded by interestingly eccentric adults who control his destiny, for better and for worse.

Despite evident similarity, the stories of Pip and David are quite different. Pip’s story takes place in really poor conditions while David comes from slightly higher situated family, which is perfectly described in Chapter Three of *David Copperfield* by Little Emily Peggotty who says: “Your father was a gentleman and your mother is a lady” and confirmed by Clara Peggotty and others calling him “Master Davy”. Therefore, his living conditions and life at all was quite happy and nice until Mr. Murdstone came. In fact whole Chapters One and Two are full of the maternal love, peace and home, family warm (“our little parlour was warm and bright with fire and



candle” (*David Copperfield* , later referred to as DC, 1980, chapter 1, page 14 ), which made David’s life beautiful, although he did not come from the really high class. In fact, the only thing, which could have made the poor child’s life quite happy, was the family and its love to the child. Later on David was sent to the Salem House School in London where his experience with the life of a poor boy started. And the real life in really poor conditions with all its sides can be seen much better in *David Copperfield* than in *Great Expectations* as Dickens described his own real life experience.

*David Copperfield* is Dickens’ most autobiographic book, a novel based on his early life experiences. Like Dickens, David works as a child, pasting labels on the bottles. Perfect picture of child labour in factories is reflected here (for more see App. No. 4 and 5). Later on David also becomes first a law clerk, then a reporter, and finally a successful novelist and the poor boy’s way up to the better future is well reflected here. Such descriptions are based of Dickens’ own experiences and so are highly trustworthy. Many of the secondary characters spring from Dickens’s experiences as a young man in financial distress in London. For example, Mr. Micawber is a satirical version of Dickens’s father – a man who can never gathers the money he needs, he also demonstrates a member of the higher part of the low class, who lived in quite good conditions, but not good enough to be thought the members of the higher class.

In this part of the paper exploring the life of the poor children in Victorian England and its reflection in Dickens’ books only those chapters of *David Copperfield* are included and considered, where David is still a child (chapters 1– 23, until it is resolved that David would become a proctor and so would start visiting appropriate school in London).

The fact that David was aware of the difficult life and living conditions and that he really lived in difficult conditions (after Murdstone’s coming) is clearly stated in Chapter Twelve when the Micawbers were in the prison and he was left to his own fate, when David said:

” All the sensitive feelings it wounded so cruelly, all the shame and misery it kept alive within my breast, became more poignant as I thought of this; and I determined that the life was unendurable.” (DC, 1980, chapter12, page 180)

As well as Pip, also David did not have both parents. However, there was one important difference—David had a loving mother, he lost only his father. As he said: “I was a posthumous child. My father's eyes had closed upon the light of this world six months, when mine opened on it.” (DC, 1980, chapter 1, page 14). Anyway, he was still aware of the fact that she could have died anytime, as the mortality was quite high in those days. This can be seen well in Chapter Three, when David and Peggotty returned from Dan Peggotty and David sought for his beloved mother and started to be worried that she is dead as she did not come to welcome him – which was something very abnormal for David. He was used to getting mother’s love in every moment until Murdstone came.

Murdstone’s arrival into the David’s life started his life in the poor conditions, when Murdstone decided to send him to school and later to work. David was able to read and was not absolutely uneducated—he attended school, where he learnt to write and read. However, the reader can see how it worked in a school for those from the lower classes—the Salem House School. It was evident that this school (and perhaps not only this particular one school) adopted quite strange methods of educating its pupils—in accordance to the “Victorian educating” (mentioned above). Even before David got there, he could have started to be afraid of the stay there—according to what he learnt from the waiter in the coach, which took him to the school – “that's the school where they broke the boy's ribs “ (DC, 1980, chapter 5, page 77)). Even the school buildings themselves did not look attractively.

When David first saw the Salem House School, he saw a “square brick building with wings; of a bare and unfurnished appearance.” (DC, 1980, chapter 5, page 86) The fact that strange educating methods were used in this school can be seen in many moments throughout Pip’s stay there—even Mr Creacle called himself a Tartar in Chapter Six. The fact that David and many others (including Dickens, of course) were convinced that this way of schooling (with such methods) is useless is clearly confirmed in Chapter Seven:

” In a school carried on by sheer cruelty, whether it is presided over by a dunce or not, there is not likely to be much learnt.” (DC, 1980, chapter 7, page 103) Nevertheless, his little vanity and Steerforth helped him to learn at least something. Education was quite important for both Pip and David. David declared thin in chapter eleven, when he started to work in the warehouse and felt his hopes of growing up to be

a learned and distinguished man, crushed in his bosom.

Thus, when a child from the lower class was allowed and able to attend any school, strange Victorian methods of educating and learning were used there (as showed above). However, most poor children did not attend any school (although they saw education as their way to become a distinguished man) but they had to work hard to earn some money to survive. Also David had to earn money to survive in London.

Although David comes from slightly higher situated family than Pip, David had to do much harder and much more difficult work as a child. In *David Copperfield*, the child labour is reflected much more than in *Great Expectations*. The children had to work in the old unhealthy buildings—as David described “his” warehouse in Chapter Eleven as a:

”Crazy old house with panelled rooms, discoloured with the dirt and smoke of a hundred years, decaying floors and staircase, squeaking and scuffling old grey rats down in the cellars, simply a dirt and rotten place.” (DC, 1980, chapter 11, page 162)

Although David did not have to do hard physical work (his task was to wash and rinse empty bottles or to past labels or fit corks on them), however, he had to spend several hours a day in the warehouse for only six shillings a week and live on his own account, which in fact surprised him quite a lot

“I know enough of the world now, to have almost lost the capacity of being much surprised by anything; but it is matter of some surprise to me, even now, that I can have been so easily thrown away at such an age....and I became, at ten years old, a little labouring hind in the service of Murdstone and Grinby.” (DC, 1980, chapter 11, page 161)

It was quite common that children of similar age worked in such factories, in such conditions and took care of themselves. David was not an exception. The children in Victorian England had to face many difficulties during their lives.

Besides the child work, *David Copperfield* gives vivid picture of the cruel Victorian methods of both educating and bringing up mainly by means of corporal punishments. It was considered normal to bring up a child like this.

Nevertheless, Dickens paints a portrait of Mr. Murdstone as a cruel parent who abuses his powerful position over David. Murdstone's punishments are excessive and

unearned. This all can be the most clearly seen in Chapter Four, when Murdstone asked David: "'David,' he said, making his lips thin, by pressing them together, 'if I have an obstinate horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?...I beat him.'" (DC, 1980, chapter 4, page 56). Even better example appeared only short time later, when David is beaten savagely by Murdstone. As David, in self-defence, bites Murdstone's hand, he is locked in his room alone for five days as punishment. This is obviously very strict punishment, even stricter than all the Victorian methods of bringing up.

Charles Dickens himself lived poor childhood with many duties and so he was able to describe childhood of a poor boy quite well. In *David Copperfield*, he in fact describes his own life and so the life of a poor little boy is reflected here very well. The reflection of the life of poor children (in this case Pip and David) was showed quite well, considering living conditions, work, children mortality, or education and the way of bringing up.

The poor children in Victorian England had to live in quite strange conditions with very poor hygiene, which caused occurrence of many diseases and so big infant mortality; if they survive, they had to work even in their early age under poor conditions. They had only very slight chance to obtain schooling and if they happen to attend any school, they often came across strange Victorians methods of educating and upbringing full of beating and sheer cruelty.

This all is well reflected in these two examined books.

When comparing and contrasting these two books, they have many common features; however, each of them deeply describes something else. In *Great Expectations*, poor living conditions may be seen very well, while *David Copperfield* gives better description of the child labour. Thus, after interconnecting both of them, quite complete picture of the life of poor children arises.

Charles Dickens described the life of poor children as a life full of duties and obligations. They had to live in terrible living conditions – many of them were even homeless. Such conditions only supported rise and spread of different diseases, which caused high mortality, mainly the infant mortality, but also the adults were dying very often and so another typical feature of a poor child was the fact that they usually did not have both parent and were brought up by some guardian (usually some relative, most commonly a sibling). Children had to earn money and work in strange conditions (most

commonly in the factories) for several shillings. If they were allowed to attend any school, they had to face the Victorian methods of education, typical by quite cruel and strict way of educating.

### 3. THE LIFE OF POOR YOUNG PEOPLE

For purposes of the second part focused on the life of young people in Victorian England (or in a more precise way on the reflection of life of the poor young people), related parts of all three Dickens' books were selected – *Great Expectations*, *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *David Copperfield*. It explores the life of Pip, David Copperfield, Nell Trent and Kit Nubbles. The lives of all these four people had something in common with London—all of them spent some part of their life in London and each one experienced different conditions from the poorest (Kit and Nell) across quite bad but not the worst combined with the visits to the wealthy places (Pip) up to those quite good (David). As it was already mentioned above, London was full of poor or even homeless people as well as those from the higher classes. However, the life there was difficult for all of them.

The life in London for a member of the low as well as a member of a bit higher class is very well reflected in many Dickens' books. However, for purposes of this paper only the three mentioned books were selected to show how David's and Pip's life changed after getting out from the conditions characteristic for the life of the poor people. Secondly to show how the life of a poor young person looked in Victorian England (exploring Nell Trent and Kit Nubbles in *The Old Curiosity Shop*). And finally to find out how the poor wandering young people's life was— on the basis of the life of Nell Trent in times when she was wandering with her grandfather through England escaping Mr. Quilp—escaping from London.

Life in London was quite hard for most of its inhabitants, the hardest for the members of the low classes. Thus, they run away from London and were happy to be away. As Nell's grandfather describes it after their escape from London in Chapter Fifteen: "No—never to return—never to return"—replied the old man, waving his hand towards the city. "Thou and I are free of it now, Nell. They shall never lure us back." (The Old Curiosity Shop, later referred to as OCS, 1995, chapter 15 page 117)

The life of poor young person in Victorian England depended on themselves as well as on other people (especially those from the higher classes). The level of education was very important—it determined which work the person would be suitable for and so how his or her life may be in future. The poor person himself could have

partly influenced the level of education. However, influence that was much more important came from other person—if anybody decided to support certain poor people. Than his chance to change the lifestyle was quite big, although it took long time and big effort to get out of the low class. However, if one stayed “only a common labouring boy” his life did not differ much from the life he lived as a child—he was just older and had more duties, he still had to work and earn money and in addition take care of other members of the family.

It was really important for the poor young people to be able to ensure money for their living when they were leaving the home at the age of 16, as they cannot have relied on the help of anybody from the higher class as well as to be able to gain money for their family. Thus, they had to learn to do work which might have ensured them earning some money. Works for girls and boys were very different. Girls were expected to do the work concerning the household—for example laundry work, knitting, needlework, cooking and house cleaner’s duties. Thus, it was very common in the poor families that the daughter took care of the household, as mother had to take care of many other things and this was also kind of a training for her to the future (see Nell Trent). Boys were taught to be able to do farm work, gardening, tailoring, carpentry and printing or some craft (see Pip). So not only the girl did mother’s work, but also boys had to first help their fathers and later take over their duties, which was also kind of a training for him as it was highly possible that this work will one day ensure him earning money. Both Pip and Nell underwent such training as the children and did not see anything uncommon in it.

Generally taken, the lives of a poor little boy and a poor young man resemble quite a lot— in most features excepting the age. He still lives a poor life in poor living conditions with poor hygiene and poor nutrition and does secondary work for the rich people or in worse case works under strange conditions (but not so often as the little children) for funny payments (just several shillings per week) to ensure means for living, or better said for surviving. And in addition, he usually had to take care of the rest of the family as the parents either had too many duties and the young person was expected to help or the parents were dead and the young person had to accept full responsibility for the family—which was quite often in Victorian England.

He lives the same poor life as he used to live as a child if he did not have big

luck to meet somebody from the higher class, who would help him to get out of the low class and to incorporate into a higher society class – mainly by giving him bigger amount of money or by providing him with good education or some practical training and so ensuring him well–paid work in good conditions. Only then, a poor boy from the low class may have become a respectable young gentleman belonging into the higher social class. Although he will never be really and totally respected as a member of the higher class, his life may change a lot. However, such change may have influenced the person also in the negative way, which is showed at the end of this part on Pip’s behaviour towards Joe.

Such change of the social standing after moving into the higher class meant that many differences in one’s life happen. No more shanty with strange hygiene but own house or flat sometimes even with somebody to help with the household. No more need to work hard under strange conditions for several shillings as one’s financial situation did not require it any longer (they certainly had to earn money, but not in those dirty factories where they had to work as the children, but in some office or some similarly comfortable place).

Also this (how one’s life changes with changing the social status), together with examining how poor young person’s life was, is explored in this second part of the bachelor paper.

First, Nell’s and Kit’s lives as the lives of the poor young people in poor living conditions in London in *The Old Curiosity Shop* is examined. Then Pip’s life is used to show what may happen if a poor boy gets out of the poor conditions and have a chance to receive higher social status, but does not really succeed in getting into the higher classes. Finally, fate of a young man who managed to disengage himself from the low class members’ living conditions is showed on the life of David Copperfield.

### 3.1. THE REFLECTION OF LIFE OF THE POOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

First, Dickens’ *The Old Curiosity Shop* (for the plot summary see App. No. 10) shows the life of the poor people—the life of the poor young people may be well recognized here, thus Nell’s and Kit’s lives are examined to provide an idea how then poor young



people lived, showing mainly their duties. Three different situations are considered here—the life of a poor young girl living with her grandfather (showing duties of the young girl and her relationship to her guardian). Then the life of the same poor young girl but in the situation when she is without home and wanders England (showing how the life of a homeless person could have been) and finally the life of a poor young boy (showing again his duties and relationship to his family) are examined.

### 3.1.1. NELL TRENT'S LIFE

First, Nell Trent's life is examined. Nell Trent is a thirteen-year-old girl who takes care of her old grandfather and first lives with him in London, but later becomes a homeless girl wandering the countryside of England with her grandfather. She helps him to escape from London. Such lifestyle and difficulties during their wanderings are too much for the gentle Nell and she dies in a quiet village where she and her grandfather gained employment.

Thus, Nell's life may be divided into two different parts— at first the life of a poor young girl living with her grandfather in a house in London, then the life of a poor young homeless girl. In the first part, the life of young person living in London may be examined and in addition, her life also provides a picture of the life of a homeless person.

#### 3.1.1.1 NELL AS A POOR GIRL LIVING IN LONDON

Nell's story truly describes hard deal of the poor young people in Victorian England – after reaching certain age, one had to either earn money or take care of one's family, staying still in the terrible conditions described above.

Lot of poor young people were used (or even abused) by the adults to do as much work as possible. This is quite clearly showed by the statement of Nell's brother Fred in Chapter Two

“I want to see my sister, that you keep cooped up here, poisoning her mind with your sly secrets and pretending an affection for her that you may work her to death, and add a few scraped shillings every week to the money you can hardly count. “ (OCS, 1995, chapter 2, page 16)

The fact that Nell took care of the whole household can be seen in Chapter One, when Nell returned and promptly started to work:” She busied herself immediately in preparing supper. “(OCS, 1995, chapter 1, page 15). The poor young people had to deal with many difficulties and obligations. Nell had to be very responsible and had to take care of almost everything despite of her youth. This is perfectly reflected in Chapter Fifteen in the beginning of their escape from London – although they got up and left very early, she still did not forget to prepare a basket with some food for their way (“She had had the precaution to furnish her basket with some slices of bread and meat, and here they made their frugal breakfast.”) (OCS, 1995, chapter, 15, page 116). This was very normal in those days and the children were expected (according to then principals) not to say single word against it.

Although Nell was being educated by her grandfather who loved her very much, also she had to accept some Victorian principals. She obeyed her grandfather without asking about anything. Thus, she was staying at home for the whole nights unless she knew where he was and mainly she was visiting Mr. Quilp because of the money for her grandfather’s gambling. She did not ask, she just obeyed. Therefore, although she did not experience the cruel side of the Victorian principals, she experienced these principals as well as other then young people. And in fact she lost her home and everything she had and loved because of them–if she had known about her grandfather’s ”activities”, she might have made him not to lose so much money and so not to have to leave London.

#### 3.1.1.2. NELL AS A HOMELESS WANDERING GIRL

Nell was not a typical homeless girl, like those homeless people who lived in London streets and had much more difficult lives, as Nell used to have her home. In those days, she was kind of a wanderer without home more or less not of her own free will.

Leaving London was not Nell's wish as she felt

“...a mingled sensation of hope and fear as in some far-off figure imperfectly seen in the clear distance, her fancy traced a likeness to honest Kit. ... if she had not dreaded the effect, which the sight of him might have wrought upon her fellow traveller, she felt that to bid farewell to anybody now, and most of all to him who had been so faithful and so true, was more than she could bear. It was enough to leave dumb things behind, and objects that were insensible both to her love and sorrow.” (OCS, 1995, chapter 15, page 113)

However, she stood by her grandfather and went with him without saying single word. This moment meant great change in her lifestyle, as she was suddenly a homeless girl. Nevertheless, she followed her grandfather and did her best to serve him on this way and help him as much as possible. This refers to quite close relationship of the poor young people and their guardians as well as typical feature of behaviour of then poor young people towards their guardians – serving to them and taking great care of them. This can be seen throughout whole book, for example, when they were on their way away from London in Chapter Fifteen, when Nell sprayed the water on her grandfather with her hands, and dried it with her simple dress. Alternatively, during the first day of their travel, when they stopped to have a rest, as they were very exhausted and after quite short time Nell's grandfather decided to continue. Nell, although she was really tired and would have preferred to stay longer, she said only: “‘We must go on, indeed’, said Nell, yielding to his restless wish.” (OCS, 1995, chapter 15, page 120) Such behaviour was perceived very normal in those days.

Nell and her grandfather (as well as other wandering people) had to at least partly rely on the help of other people (usually as poor as they were). Nevertheless, although these people were poor, they were willing to help and sometimes even provide something more (such as washing Nell's little blistered feet and applying some simple remedy).

Nell's life after leaving London and becoming homeless was suddenly full of nights under the stars and full of necessity to rely on other's people willingness to help them and moreover without that spirit of home-home warm, certainty, and most of all people she loved, mainly her Kit.

### 3.1.2. KIT'S LIFE

Kit (Christopher Nubbles) is a poor young boy who helps Nell's grandfather and Nell Trent in the old curiosity shop and with everything that they may have needed. He lives in London in conditions typical of the poor, earns money so that his family has something to live from. He is a typical representative of the happier part of the low class (happier, because he was neither homeless, nor an orphan). He is poor and has many duties and responsibilities and it seems normal to him to at first fulfil his obligations and only then do the rest

“ 'And now, mother,' said the boy, 'before I rest any more, I'll go out and see if I can find a horse to hold, and then I can buy some birdseed, and a bit of something nice for you, into the bargain.' “(OCS, 1995, chapter 13, page106)

Although Kit did not have to earn money by means of hard work in a factory, his way of earning money is a typical example of doing secondary work for the members of the higher classes for gaining money. Such work was not difficult but it was a clear proof of the fact that the poor people were taken as a cheap, easily available labour force for everything. Kit was gaining money for example by holding a horse. Although this was not hard work typical of the poor young people (in fact this was very easily earned money), this was the right example of work which should have shown the poor people why they were born (to serve the rich), where they belong (to the street) and that they are absolutely inferior to the rich and should be happy that the rich allow them to do such work. Anyway, the poor did not take it as a humbling exploitation, but even as a favour.

“‘I beg your pardon, sir,’ said Kit. ‘I’m sorry you stopped, sir. I only meant did you want your horse minded.’

‘I’m going to get down in the next street,’ returned the old gentleman. ‘If you like to come on after us, you may have the job.’” (OCS, 1995, chapter14, page 109)

Moreover, such work provided by the poor was seen as something sure and something which the rich people could have counted upon and taken it into account. As Kit's “employer” Mr. Abel confirmed it in Chapter Fourteen by saying:”, 'I'm coming here again next Monday at the same time, and mind you're here, my lad, to work it out.'

(OCS, 1995, chapter 14, page 112).

Every earned shilling was a big success and a joyful event, although this money was not for their personal use, but mainly for the family use.

“Having expended his treasure in such purchases, as he knew would be most acceptable at home, he hastened back as fast as he could, so elated with his success and great good fortune ...” (OCS, 1995, chapter 14, page 112)

In fact, Kit’s life (and so the life of a poor young person in general) was mainly full of obligations and duties, however, they appreciated even simple things, such as earning several shillings, the fact that the sun shines in the morning and often had quite good mood, despite all their life troubles.

## 3.2. THE REFLECTION OF LIFE OF THE POOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN GREAT EXPECTATIONS

*Great Expectations* provided an idea of the life of a poor person who managed to get out of the low class and nearly got into the higher society, however in the end returned to the low class and also perfectly showed the change in one’s behaviour after such social movement.

### 3.2.1. PIP’S LIFE

In this part, changes in Pip’s life (connected with his instantaneous social standing) are explored. The first radical change in his life happened after his moving to Miss Havisham, as he got into diametrically different world, started to realize his poverty and commonness, and thus became a young man not a child any longer. The second change came with his moving to London. Pip’s life after these two changing moments is examined.

Moving to Miss Havisham meant big change in Pip’s life. He moved from Joe’s forge into the Satis House, although he did not move there totally, he tried how the life in a manor is and tasted some of its advantages. Furthermore, even this was taken as big luck and chance and movement in the momental standing, as Miss Havisham was expected to help Pip to get higher from the beginning of her entering the plot –as it was

clearly stated in Chapter Nine: “They had no doubt that Miss Havisham would "do something" for me; their doubts related to the form that something would take. My sister stood out for "property." Mr. Pumblechook was in favour of a handsome premium for binding me apprentice to some genteel trade” (GE, 1962, chapter 9, page 65). In fact, the poor saw big chances to change their lives in every contact with the people from the higher classes.

Although Pip was allowed to visit the Satis House, the manor’s inhabitants (mainly Estella), still perceived him as only a poor boy belonging to the low class and coming from the marsh. As Estella described it perfectly in Chapter Eight when she called him” a common labouring–boy” and later said „And what coarse hands he has! And what thick boots!“ (GE, 1962, chapter 8, page 57). This showed evident despise towards Pip and all “common labouring–boys” as they were not good enough for her and for her social standing.

Pip even got something to eat in the Satis House. While in Joe’s forge he ate just bread with a slight layer of the butter , here he got bread, meat, and a little mug of beer. This all only for fulfilling Miss Havisham’s wish to see him playing – this reflects that when anybody from the higher classes happened to have some vagary, there were the poor to come and fulfil it for a minimal reward. Then the poor people were taken into the higher society but it was regarded only as a kind of visit, not as incorporation. In the eyes of the rich, they were still just the poor. However, the poor did not see it as an abuse but as a feature of good will from the certain member of the higher classes for the poor person to gain better social standing.

In fact, a poor boy of Pip’s age lived the same life as a poor little boy (as it was already mentioned above–he had to live in poor conditions and work or earn money somehow). And if Pip had not started visiting Miss Havisham, he would have probably continued the same way–and in the end would have become a village blacksmith as his brother-in-law Joe and lived the same difficult poor life. However, he was visiting the Satis House and one difference in his behaviour (or better–said mind) appeared. He started to be aware of his social standing, he was quite ashamed of it and started to feel that he would like to belong to the higher classes and suffered from feeling of inferiority–

“I had never thought of being ashamed of my hands before; but I began to consider them a very indifferent pair. Her contempt for me was so strong, that it became infectious, and I caught it. ...I wished Joe had been rather more genteelly brought up, and then I should have been so too” (GE, 1962, chapter 8, page 57).

This moment indicated how Pip’s view on the poor would change after his getting into better conditions. Later, after his arrival to London and getting lessons how to behave in the “better” society– Pip, now a gentleman, has been uncomfortably embarrassed by both Joe’s commonness and his own opulent lifestyle. He adopted the supercilious approach towards the poor as Joe indicated in Chapter Twenty–seven

“Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings welded together, as I may say, and one man’s a blacksmith, and one’s a whitesmith, and one’s a goldsmith, and one’s a coppersmith. Divisions among such must come, and must be met as they come.” (GE, 1962, chapter 27, page 206)

However, just few days later, it is showed that Pip still has a piece of the “common labouring boy” inside of him as he decided to apologise Joe for his behaviour. This shows that deep inside the poor stayed the same although it may seem that the social jump changed them and their view on the rest of the poor people.

After moving to London, Pip was accommodated in typical London district for the poor – in “Barnard’s courtyard”, which he described as “the collection of shabby buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner as a club for Tom–cats” (GE, 1962, chapter 21, page 159) and later in Mr Pocket’s flat. Nevertheless, the main change for him was the way of getting money – until that day he must have worked to gain some little money, now he got them without having to do anything

“Also, I was told what my allowance was to be – it was a very liberal one – and had handed to me from one of my guardian's drawers, the cards of certain tradesmen with whom I was to deal for all kinds of clothes, and such other things as I could in reason want.”(GE, 1962, chapter 20, page 156)

The place, where he was accommodated signifies that although Pip moved to London and felt to be a young gentleman, he was still seen as only a poor member of a low class being sponsored by some benefactor. If he had been perceived as a member of the higher class, he would have never been accommodated in such place as the

“Barnard’s courtyard” was. In fact a big part of Chapter Twenty-one and mainly page 159 describes the conditions in which the poor people had to live in London and where also Pip was to live for some time. Pip described it as a “mere dust-hole with the dismal trees in it, and the most dismal sparrows, and the most dismal cats, and the most dismal houses attired by a frouzy mourning of soot and smoke full of rot of rat and mouse and bug and coaching-stables near at hand besides.” (GE, 1962, chapter 20, page 156) This is the description of many similar places where the poor had to live.

So although he got out of the poor living conditions in the marsh country and went to make luck to London, he got to almost the same environment as he had just escaped from—as Wemmick described it in Chapter Twenty-one:” ...’the retirement reminds you of the country. So it does me.” (GE, 1962, chapter 21, page 159) It clearly proved that one cannot become respected member of the higher class just by gaining some money and getting to London and that Pip’s expectations to change his way of life fundamentally did not come true as he expected after meeting Mr Jaggers. The poor young people caught at every chance to get out of the low class and put big and great expectations into every such chance by means of getting in touch with the members of the higher classes, at any price—even if it was derogatory for them. However, it usually crashed and they stayed in the low class, just like Pip. Nevertheless, they did not give up their fight for getting into the higher class.

Although Pip was perceived only as a member of the low class by the members of the higher classes, the same Pip with the same standing was perceived as a sir by the poor. This reflects that if some poor person slightly improved his standing (although he was still seen as a member of the low class by the people from the higher class) the poor saw him as a gentleman. This can be well seen in Bidley’s and Joe’s approach toward Pip after his arrival to London—they called him a gentleman and regarded him a gentleman although he did not become a real gentleman.

Even after coming to London, Pip continued in educating himself as it was still way to the better future for him—although he got out of the bad life situation in which he was living with his sister as a child, he was still aware of the fact that his situations is far away from being good enough.

It reflects that Dickens wanted to show by means of his heroes that education is the best way to get rid of the label of the low class member. Moreover, it is also the



reflection of the fact that education was very important in Victorian England and that the poor young people perceived education as a possible way to get out of the poor conditions they had to live in.

### 3.2.2 THE CHANGE IN PIP'S BEHAVIOUR AFTER GETTING INTO THE "BETTER" SOCIETY AND THE CHANGE IN JOE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS PIP

Evident change in Pip's behaviour (or to say it more precisely in his attitude towards the poor and their commonness) happened after his arrival to London and mainly after gaining knowledge how to behave among the „better” people. In fact, he was ashamed for Joe and his behaviour and if Joe had not told Pip about Estella, Pip would have felt unpleasant about Joe's visit. Pip started to be ashamed for what he used to be, how he used to live and where he comes from and forgot of all of his long past friends from the marsh, just as if he was afraid of a possibility, that he would have to return back from London to the marsh, if he endorsed these friends.

The same change happened in Joe's behaviour towards Pip, as he suddenly perceived Pip as a gentleman. Pip was no longer called by Joe “dear Pip, old chap”, but “sir”. Moreover, Joe was not angry about Pip although his behaviour was not good. Joe even decided to leave Pip at the end of the story, so that Pip could stay in the higher society as Joe thought that he might have harmed Pip's chance to become a respectable member of the higher-class society.

This proves that the poor people perceived every little step up to the higher class as a big jump and the person who did such step as a member of the high class, although he was still perceived as a member of the low class by all the others.

The fact that this change in Pip's behaviour was not definite may be well seen when Pip decided to return to the marsh after his illness. He decided to apologise Joe for his behaviour and to marry Bidly. This proves that not only the high class did not entirely accept an outcomer as its member, but also the poor people never lost their natural character and habits.

### 3.3 THE REFLECTION OF LIFE OF THE POOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN DAVID COPPERFIELD

The third part of the section concerning the life of young people explores the change in David's life after coming to London (exactly in chapters 19–48). He started the new epoch of his life far away from the old days of his childhood. Contrariwise to Pip, David reached quite higher position—he worked as a law clerk, preparing himself to become a lawyer one day, he had a leased flat to live in on his own, he was more or less accepted into the higher class—he was being invited to the parties, where he was introduced to the important people.

However, his incorporation was not really total, which could be well seen in the moment when Mr Spenlow learned about David's love towards Dora. If he had been thought to be the real member of the higher class, there would have been no problem in David's love to Dora. However, he was perceived only as a young man coming from the low class, but not a perspective husband-to-be.

He was not seen as a suitable husband-to-be, mainly because he did not have enough money and established practise and if Dora's father had not died, David and Dora would have probably never got married, however, they married, thus exploring David as a young man stops here.

Again, different life stories were described in these books. However, if they are put together and the important information is selected, quite coherent picture of how a poor child's life in Victorian England might have continued arose.

### 3.4 THE COMPARISON OF THE POOR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE LOWER AND THE HIGHER CLASSES

As the picture of life of a poor young person was already showed, it may now be compared to the life of a person from the higher social class.

Two young women (Little Emily Peggotty and Dora Spenlow) were selected for

this comparison. The most visible difference is in the kind of their accommodation. While Dora spent her whole life in the beautiful comfortable house with everything, she may have needed or wanted, Emily lived in the wrack of a boat near the sea, humid place with bad hygiene and only little comfort.

Second quite distinctive difference was amount of their duties: while Dora had her own confidential friend and had nearly no duties, Emily had to live on the sea coast with crazy Mrs. Gummidge and take care of the whole household. While Dora could have read many books, Emily did not have any chance to even get in touch with the same books so far from reading them. This (besides her origin) predestined Emily to stay only a poor fishing girl and could have only dreamed about being a lady.

The fact that Emily desired to be like Dora – to be a lady – was clearly said in Chapter Three. All the poor people perhaps dreamed of being wealthy.

The next different feature appeared in choosing the spouse for both women. The basic quality for the poor people to allow a marriage was diligence, stoutness, skills and fidelity. Simply assurance of the possibility of good life for the daughter (assurance of ability to earn some money and so ability to ensure survivance of his wife and his children). While for the rich people (such as Mr. Spenlow), the basic feature to allow marriage of his daughter was the social standing, kind of job and wealth. In fact, the members of both classes wanted the same—to ensure good life for their daughters, but each of them saw it in different values and levels. Thus, it was much easier for a poor girl to marry a boy, who she loved, than for a girl from the high class. As a girl from the high class had to first narrow the group of the potential husbands, so as only the wealthy and well-situated men stayed, and only then started to choose (and only in case that a suitable husband had not been chosen long time ago).

Thus, it may seem that in certain things the poor young people were even happier than those from the higher classes were. Although they had only little money and their lives was quite hard and difficult, they were much freer than the young people who had to behave according to the required etiquette, live according to the required principals and marry a socially suitable man, which all might have made them quite unhappy.

#### 4. FAMILY LIFE

The third part of the bachelor paper focuses on the life of poor families in Victorian England and its reflection in Dickens' books *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Great Expectations*.

A family in Victorian England was regarded as the base of the society and so as a basic and the most important thing.

The fact that the families usually were not complete is reflected in all of the three selected books—David, Pip as well as Nell lived without parents. It was common that at least one of the parents was dead. Some other member of the family— most commonly a sibling or some other relative, brought up the orphans (Pip was brought up by his sister, David by his aunt, Nell by her grandfather). So the family was often not a family to all intents and purposes (mother, father, children), but guardian and some children. This was very common mainly in the low classes. Such incomplete families were in very difficult position, their situation was much more complicated than the situation of those whose family was complete and whose parents were able to earn money. These incomplete poor families had to deal with very difficult situation, the main problem was the financial situation, but also the question of dwelling. In order to survive, children had to earn money.

Although each member of the family earned some money, poor Victorian family lived on the edge of survivance and they could have thought themselves to be very lucky to live in own room or even flat and not on the street or in a workhouse.

For the poor families their greatest fear was to end up in the workhouse (for more see App. No. 7 and 8), where thousands of homeless and penniless families were forced to live. Thus, mentioned heroes were in fact lucky to have their own place to live, no matter how strange it may have been. Although Nell with her grandfather were for some time in fact homeless, their conditions were not so bad to go to the workhouse.

“Poorer families lived in large, old houses occupied by a number of families, or back to back houses. Frequently housing for the poorest in society was shoddily built on bad foundations. Six thousand people in Hackney Wick in 1879 were reported to be housed in slums on top of a rubbish pit.”

(<http://www.brickfields.org.uk/index.php/victorian/homes>)

Families were very important to the Victorians. They were large – in 1870, the average family had five or six children – and the homes of the poor working families were small and often overcrowded. As there were quite many people in the family, each member had to observe certain principals.

The Victorian principals were highly respected and so certain things and certain behaviour were expected from certain group of people—for example women had quite determined position in the society as well as in the family in the Victorian era. Their place was thought to be in the home, pretty, obedient, timid and loving (as Mr Quilp described his wife in *The Old Curiosity Shop* in Chapter Three). Nevertheless, this (being always pretty) did not apply to the poor women – they had to take care of the household and had neither time nor money to keep themselves pretty. However, they were still expected to be obedient (just like Mrs Micawber who would never leave Mr Micawber despite his financial difficulties). Not only women but also children had to be obedient, which was being ensured sometimes quite cruelly.

Each member of the family had its own place and especially children were taught to "know their place". The already mentioned Victorian discipline was quite commonly used also in the family life. The children were brought up quite strictly (for example Pip and his sister, who was bringing him up by means of corporal punishments. This can be well seen in Chapter Two of the *Great Expectations*, when Pip claimed about his sister Mrs. Joe Gargery that she had brought him up “by hand” and that her hand was hard and heavy, and she was much in the habit of laying it upon her husband as well as upon Pip.) In the poor families, it was quite usual to bring up “by hand”.

As the living conditions of the poor children and the poor young people were already mentioned and families lived in the same conditions, there is no need to describe them again. They were as poor as the above described. However, there is a perfect description of a typical place where the poor families lived in Chapter Fifteen of *The Old Curiosity Shop*

” Damp rotten houses ...children, scantily fed and clothed, spread over every street, and sprawling in the dust—scolding mothers, stamping their slipshod feet with noisy threats upon the pavement—shabby fathers, hurrying with dispirited looks to the occupation which brought them 'daily bread' and little more— mangling—women, washer—women, cobblers, tailors, chandlers...” (OCS, 1995, chapter 15, page 115).

Many poor families could not have lived anywhere else than in slums or any other dwelling with terrible conditions as they had money just enough to survive.

As it was mentioned above the financial situation of the families from the low classes demanded the children to support their families by earning money in the factories. Also the parents (or guardians) had to work to earn money. The members of the low classes usually did a hard or some other secondary work. Just like Joe Gargery, who worked as a blacksmith, Clara Peggotty who worked as David's devoted nurse or Peggotty's husband-to-be Barkis– a carrier. However, these are examples of those “better” works, most poor people did much worse and much more secondary works.

As Dickens called them concisely “the humble followers of the camp of wealth, who pitch their tents round about it” (OCS, 1995, chapter 15, page 115). Although this was just secondary work with funny payments and sometimes full of misuse, it ensured the family means to survive and (if one had luck) also dwelling (*The Old Curiosity Shop* Chapter Fifteen:”...some houses, one by one, of goodly size with lawns, some even with a lodge where dwelt a porter and his wife”).

This was very important for the poor families thus they ignored and underwent all the difficulties connected with such work (just as all kinds of misusing or very low payments) and were very happy to work and not to be homeless and penniless. The employers were aware of this fact and so could have set so bad working conditions as they were sure, that the poor would work there anyway.

Many other poor people did not have such luck and so the happier of those less happy families had to live in quite terrible conditions (“... the mean houses parcelled off in rooms, and windows patched with rags and paper, told of the populous poverty that sheltered there.”(OCS, 1995, chapter 15, page 115)

The happier part of the low class was not homeless. Nevertheless, they had to live in quite strange conditions. The most terrible living conditions for the poor were in London. The family could have lived in a house or in a tenement.

„The housing was unbelievably bad during the 19th century. Some houses were badly built, which meant they were damp and unsafe. The rooms were lightless, and unventilated, with sometimes up to ten people to a room, which supported the spreading of diseases. The diseases were rife at that time, with outbreaks of cholera, typhoid and typhus, which led to life expectancy with, not many people living over 40 years old of

age. The interior of the houses were very bare with hardly any furniture, the families had a room each with one bed, which they all slept in together, The fire that was used was multi-purpose as it was used for cooking and drying, with a table and chair in the middle of the room. That was called a house.” (Mcintyre, Lara, 1996–8:

<http://www.lexcie.zetnet.co.uk/livingcond.htm>)

However, the families in London lived more often in the tenements.

“The tenements were crowded with families. Each family was only able to afford the rent if at least one person in the family worked. That person had to work very hard to earn a wage.”(Mcintyre,Lara,1996-8: <http://www.lexcie.zetnet.co.uk/livingcond.htm>)

Thus families living out of London and out other big cities as well, were much happier and also healthier, although definitely neither their living conditions were satisfactory enough, in comparison with other families living in London, they lived quite good life. Dickens showed such families in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, when Nell with her grandfather wander through England and they visited many poor families in their houses. One of them was described in *The Old Curiosity Shop* in Chapter Fifteen:

“The furniture of the room was very homely of course— a few rough chairs and a table, a corner cupboard with their little stock of crockery and delf, a gaudy tea-tray, representing a lady in bright red, walking out with a very blue parasol, a few common, coloured scripture subjects in frames upon the wall and chimney, an old dwarf clothes-press and an eight-day clock, with a few bright saucepans and a kettle, comprised the whole. But everything was clean and neat, and as the child glanced round, she felt a tranquil air of comfort and content” (OCS, 1995, chapter 15, page 119)

It was evident that although they lived in very modest conditions, they were happy as they had a warm place to live, something to eat and most of all that they were together as a family.

In *The Old Curiosity Shop* , the poor families were also described as very hospitable towards the wanderers and other poor people. Although they did not have much themselves, they always found something for somebody who happened to need it and provided as much help as possible, although they did not have to and sometimes it was a bit difficult for them.

Other typical feature of the Victorian family was the fact that the children behaved with great respect towards their parents/guardians. The children were obedient and always followed their guardians as well as their wishes, even if it might have

changed their lives very much (Nell Trent).

#### 4.1. DAN PEGGOTTY'S FAMILY

The family of Dan Peggotty in *David Copperfield* is shown as a typical Victorian family belonging to the low class. The typical features of a poor family appear in this family. Its members are not parents and children, but children and their guardians and one more member in addition— a widow of a companion of Dan Peggotty.

The typical poor Victorian family was an incomplete family living in poor living conditions. It usually had more than just one child and the children had to work hard either helping their parents/guardians with the work at home (Ham Peggotty who helped Dan with fishing) or earning money in some factory or working for some richer people (Kit, earning money by working for other people) .



## 5. CONCLUSION

This paper clearly proved that the life of the lower classes is very much and very often reflected in the works of Charles Dickens. As Dickens himself came from the low classes, his stories largely drew from his own real life experience, thus the life of the low classes is described very well and quite authentically.

In the concrete, very poor conditions, which the poor had to live in, were showed. The life of the children was described the most widely as Dickens devoted considerable part of his work to the children, however, also the life of young people and the family life and its reflection in the selected works of Charles Dickens were described.

In the first part of the paper, the life of children was explored. It showed that poor child's life was very difficult which was only confirmed by quite high children mortality. The children had to work hard until very low age, either at home or in dirty factories, which combined with terrible living conditions, bad nutrition and non-availability of medicine made children's lives sometimes too difficult to survive, and so it was quite often that children had some dead sibling (for example Pip). If the child was strong enough to survive, it had to deal with very difficult life full of obligations.

In the second part, examining the life of poor young people showed three various possible ways of the life of a young man coming from a low class. Which one he goes on depended upon many circumstances, but the main two circumstances in the Dickens' times was the level of education and some supporter from the higher class. However, one could have entirely incorporate into the higher class only by connecting these two elements and have luck in addition. However, Nell's life story was the most common—most poor children became the poor young people. Some of them had luck to try how the life in the higher class tastes, but they did not succeed in incorporating into the higher class (just like Pip). Only a small part succeeded in getting out of the low class—like David. However, it took long time until they were taken as real members of the higher class. Simply the most usual case was the Nell's one—when a poor boy or girl grew up into a poor man or woman. But also Pip's or in the most lucky case David's life stories might have happened.

The third part of the paper explores the family life. It was demonstrated that the poor families had quite difficult life and had to deal with many troubles. The families were very often incomplete and so had to solve even more problems. Lot of families had to live in workhouses, but not such example was mentioned in the paper. However, lot of poor families seemed to be quite happy—if they had at least a place to live, they lived quite happy, although difficult and hard lives. As the family in the Victorian era was seen as something nearly sacred, it was common that the parents or guardians were quite highly respected by the children.

The bachelor paper provides a description of the life of a member of the low class from the child to the family life. When one was born into a poor family—quite commonly as an orphan—, he was predetermined to live very difficult life full of duties and hard work, under strange and sometimes even very cruel Victorian methods of bringing up or educating. He lived in such conditions unless he had met some benefactor who would provide him with money or education, thus he has a chance to escape from the low class conditions. Nevertheless, most commonly, the poor child grows up into a poor young man and his life does not change— he had to support his poor family (either by earning money or by taking care of the family instead of the dead parents or both). Then he marries a girl (usually as poor as he) and continues his poor difficult life in quite strange living conditions. In the case that he has any home, he usually lives in a small dirty flat with his numerous family. The only thing he can do is to hope that his children will have big luck and meet some benefactor who will help them with getting out of the low-class-conditions and so ensure them better life than that his was.

Dickens's books are full of such fates of the poor people, which was clearly proved by this bachelor paper.

## 6..RESUMÉ

Bakalářská práce se zabývá zobrazením života lidí z chudých vrstev společnosti Viktoriánské Anglie v díle světoznámého anglického prozaika Charlese Dickense.

Charles Dickens se sám pohyboval mezi lidmi z nízkých společenských vrstev a na vlastní kůži si takový život vyzkoušel. Proto jsou jeho knihy považovány za autentický a věrohodný obraz života těchto lidí. Míra zobrazení života těchto lidí je předmětem bakalářské práce.

Pro potřeby práce byly vybrány pouze tři Dickensovy knihy-Nadějně Vyhlídky (Great Expectations), David Copperfield a Starožitníkův Krám (The Old Curiosity Shop)

Práce je soustředěna na tři věkové skupiny lidí z chudých společenských vrstev-zabývá se životem dětí, životem mladých lidí a životem rodin.

Hlavními zkoumanými jevy jsou zejména životní podmínky lidí z nižších společenských vrstev, pohled na dětskou práci nebo tehdejší způsob výchovy (Victorian educating and bringing up)

První část práce je věnována zobrazení života dětí z chudých vrstev Viktoriánské Anglie a zkoumá zobrazení jejich života v Dickensových knihách Nadějně vyhlídky a David Copperfield. Kniha Nadějně Vyhlídky a jeho hlavní hrdina Pip poskytují zejména zobrazení životních podmínek a také se zabývají otázkou vzdělání chudých dětí. David Copperfield naopak zobrazuje spíše dětskou práci ve špinavých továrnách a zároveň poskytuje zobrazení toho, jak byly děti vychovávány-často pomocí tělesných trestů a jiných nezdělaných velmi krutých trestů. Zkoumání těchto knih dokázalo, že život chudých dětí byl velice těžký. Spousta dětí umírala ve velmi nízkém věku, jelikož nedostatečná hygiena spolu s ubohými životními podmínkami podporovaly vznik a šíření nejrůznějších nemocí, které vzhledem k malé dostupnosti léků, tvrdé práci a dalším vysokým nárokům kladeným na malé děti často vyhrávaly tento nerovný boj. Avšak nejenom děti podléhaly těmto nemocem. I spousta dospělých chudých lidí umírala na následky výše zmíněných jevů, proto bylo mnoho chudých dětí již od narození sirotky, což jejich situaci ještě ztěžovalo. Už od útlého dětství museli vydělávat peníze a pomáhat s domácími pracemi. Jejich dětství rozhodně nebylo

bezstarostným obdobím jejich života, ale obdobím plným povinností a práce, většinou neodpovídajícími jejich nízkému věku.

Druhá část bakalářské práce se zabývá životem chudých mladých lidí. Pro účely této kapitoly byly užity tři Dickensovy knihy-*Starožitníkův krám*, *Nadějné vyhlídky* a *David Copperfield*. Jsou zde nastíněny tři možná pokračování životní cesty chudého dítěte. První možnost vychází z životů Nell Trentové a Kita Nubblese, z knihy *Starožitníkův krám*. Životy těchto dvou Dickensových hrdinů poskytují obraz nejčastějšího pokračování života chudého dítěte, které většinou pokračovalo svůj život jako chudý mladý člověk žijící ten samý těžký život plný práce a povinností. Navíc zde bylo poskytnuto zobrazení života chudého člověka bez vlastní střechy nad hlavou. Druhou možností pokračování života chudého dítěte je život Pipa, který sice okusil život vyšších vrstev, nicméně neuspěl v plném zapadnutí do této společnosti. Navíc je zde zkoumán vliv změny společenského prostředí na chování jedince pocházejícího z chudých vrstev (Pip), stejně tak jako změna chování ostatních členů chudých vrstev (Joe Gargery, Biddy) vůči tomuto jedinci. Na životě Davida Copperfielda je možno sledovat cestu mladého muže, který měl to štěstí a vymanil se z okovů života charakteristického pro chudé vrstvy. Na závěr této části je srovnán život mladého člověka z vyšších vrstev (Dora Spenlow) a mladého člověka z nižší vrstvy (Emily Peggotty), aby vyšlo najevo, že chudí lidé, ačkoliv jejich život byl velice složitý a těžký, jsou leckdy mnohem šťastnější a spokojenější než jsou jejich vrstevníci z vyšších vrstev.

Třetí zkoumanou skupinou nižších vrstev je rodina. Život rodin stejně jak dětí a mladých lidí patřících do nižších vrstev společnosti Viktoriánské Anglie byl velmi složitý a plný povinností, práce a starostí. Nemalá část chudých rodin byla neúplná-nebylo výjimkou, že jeden nebo oba rodiče byli mrtví. O přežití těchto neúplných rodin se většinou staral některý z dalších členů rodiny, nejčastěji nejstarší děti, někteří jiní blízcí příbuzní (prarodiče, sourozenci rodičů), nebo někdo blízký (společník, blízký přítel). Pro Viktoriánskou Anglii byla rodina základním kamenem společnosti. Každý její člen měl jasně stanovené postavení, nejvýrazněji je to vidět na postavení dětí, které byly od malička vedeny pevnou rukou k tomu, aby byly poslušné a „znaly své místo“. Naprostý respekt k rodičům nebo opatrovníkům byl považován za naprosto samozřejmý. Podobné místo měly v rodině a ve společnosti celkově ženy, jejich místo bylo v domácnosti a u dětí.

Tato práce v podstatě zobrazuje život člověka z chudých vrstev Viktoriánské Anglie od jeho narození až po rodinný život. Všechny jeho fáze však byly plné povinností a práce. Přes to všechno bylo prokázáno, že chudí lidé se uměli radovat z maličkostí, ke štěstí jim stačilo mít střechu nad hlavou něco málo k snědku a hlavně rodinu pohromadě a spolu. Jejich život byl pak leckdy šťastnější než život lidí z vyšších vrstev.

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## 8. APPENDICES

App. no.1:



Charles Dickens

App.no.2:



<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/college.saintebarbe/victoria/children.htm>

*In this picture, we can see a dark, a poor street. People lived in very dangerous conditions because they did not have hygiene. There were many people in this street.*



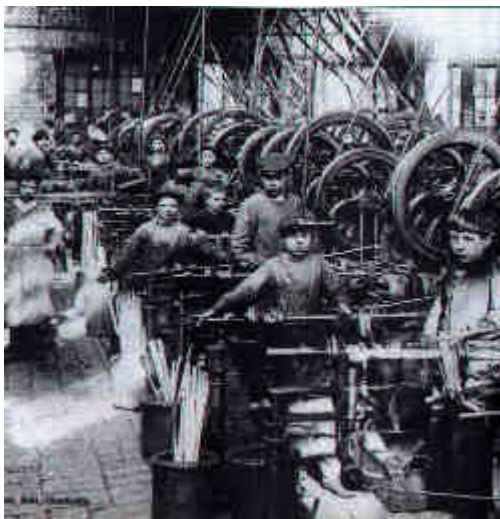
App.no.3:



<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/college.saintebarbe/victoria/children.htm>

In this picture, we can see a dirty and a poor home because they did not have hygiene. They were many in their home; we can see five children. We think they were very sad and sorry. It was one room for seven persons.

App.no.4:



<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/college.saintebarbe/victoria/children.htm>

*In this picture, we can see many children at work in a manufactory. We think they were very sad and weren't happy..*

App. No. 5



<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/college.saintebarbe/victoria/children.htm>

App. No. 6



<http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/articles/poverty.html>

*Children of the street; the streets were a dangerous place to live, and homeless children would gather together for safety and comfort.*

App. No. 7



<http://history.powys.org.uk/school1/llanfyllin/building.shtml>

*Workhouse, historical picture*

App. No. 8



<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/>

*Workhouse in Beaminster, Dorset, present picture*

App. No. 9

Waif children



[http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/learning\\_materials/poverty/choose.html](http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/learning_materials/poverty/choose.html)

## App. No. 10:

Plot summaries:

### ***David Copperfield***

(taken from [www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com))

Now a grown man, David Copperfield tells the story of his youth. As a young boy, he lives happily with his mother and his nurse, Peggotty. His father died before he was born. During David's early childhood, his mother marries the violent Mr. Murdstone, who brings his strict sister, Miss Murdstone, into the house. The Murdstones treat David cruelly, and David bites Mr. Murdstone's hand during one beating. The Murdstones send David away to school.

Peggotty takes David to visit her family in Yarmouth, where David meets Peggotty's brother, Mr. Peggotty, and his two adopted children, Ham and Little Em'ly. Mr. Peggotty's family lives in a boat turned upside down—a space they share with Mrs. Gummidge, the widowed wife of Mr. Peggotty's brother. After this visit, David attends school at Salem House, which is run by a man named Mr. Creakle. David befriends and idolizes an egotistical young man named James Steerforth. David also befriends Tommy Traddles, an unfortunate, fat young boy who is beaten more than the others.

David's mother dies, and David returns home, where the Murdstones neglect him. He works at Mr. Murdstone's wine-bottling business and moves in with Mr. Micawber, who mismanages his finances. When Mr. Micawber leaves London to escape his creditors, David decides to search for his father's sister, Miss Betsey Trotwood—his only living relative. He walks a long distance to Miss Betsey's home, and she takes him in on the advice of her mentally unstable friend, Mr. Dick.

Miss Betsey sends David to a school run by a man named Doctor Strong. David moves in with Mr. Wickfield and his daughter, Agnes, while he attends school. Agnes and David become best friends. Among Wickfield's boarders is Uriah Heep, a snakelike young man who often involves himself in matters that are none of his business. David graduates and goes to Yarmouth to visit Peggotty, who is now married to Mr. Barkis, the carrier. David reflects on what profession he should pursue.

On his way to Yarmouth, David encounters James Steerforth, and they take a detour to visit Steerforth's mother. They arrive in Yarmouth, where Steerforth and the Peggottys become fond of one another. When they return from Yarmouth, Miss Betsey persuades David to pursue a career as a proctor, a kind of lawyer. David apprentices himself at the London firm of Spenlow and Jorkins and takes up lodgings with a woman named Mrs. Crupp. Mr. Spenlow invites David to his house for a weekend. There, David meets Spenlow's daughter, Dora, and quickly falls in love with her.

In London, David is reunited with Tommy Traddles and Mr. Micawber. Word reaches David, through Steerforth, that Mr. Barkis is terminally ill. David journeys to Yarmouth to visit Peggotty in her hour of need. Little Em'ly and Ham, now engaged, are to be married upon Mr. Barkis's death. David, however, finds Little Em'ly upset over her impending marriage. When Mr. Barkis dies, Little Em'ly runs off with Steerforth, who she believes will make her a lady. Mr. Peggotty is devastated but vows to find Little Em'ly and bring her home.

Miss Betsey visits London to inform David that her financial security has been ruined because Mr. Wickfield has joined into a partnership with Uriah Heep. David, who has

become increasingly infatuated with Dora, vows to work as hard as he can to make their life together possible. Mr. Spenlow, however, forbids Dora from marrying David. Mr. Spenlow dies in a carriage accident that night, and Dora goes to live with her two aunts. Meanwhile, Uriah Heep informs Doctor Strong that he suspects Doctor Strong's wife, Annie, of having an affair with her young cousin, Jack Maldon.

Dora and David marry, and Dora proves a terrible housewife, incompetent in her chores. David loves her anyway and is generally happy. Mr. Dick facilitates a reconciliation between Doctor Strong and Annie, who was not, in fact, cheating on her husband. Miss Dartle, Mrs. Steerforth's ward, summons David and informs him that Steerforth has left Little Em'ly. Miss Dartle adds that Steerforth's servant, Littimer, has proposed to her and that Little Em'ly has run away. David and Mr. Peggotty enlist the help of Little Em'ly's childhood friend Martha, who locates Little Em'ly and brings Mr. Peggotty to her. Little Em'ly and Mr. Peggotty decide to move to Australia, as do the Micawbers, who first save the day for Agnes and Miss Betsey by exposing Uriah Heep's fraud against Mr. Wickfield.

A powerful storm hits Yarmouth and kills Ham while he attempts to rescue a shipwrecked sailor. The sailor turns out to be Steerforth. Meanwhile, Dora falls ill and dies. David leaves the country to travel abroad. His love for Agnes grows. When David returns, he and Agnes, who has long harbored a secret love for him, get married and have several children. David pursues his writing career with increasing commercial success.

### ***Great Expectations***

(taken from [www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com))

Pip, a young orphan living with his sister and her husband in the marshes of Kent, sits in a cemetery one evening looking at his parents' tombstones. Suddenly, an escaped convict springs up from behind a tombstone, grabs Pip, and orders him to bring him food and a file for his leg irons. Pip obeys, but the fearsome convict is soon captured anyway. The convict protects Pip by claiming to have stolen the items himself.

One day Pip is taken by his Uncle Pumblechook to play at Satis House, the home of the wealthy dowager Miss Havisham, who is extremely eccentric: she wears an old wedding dress everywhere she goes and keeps all the clocks in her house stopped at the same time. During his visit, he meets a beautiful young girl named Estella, who treats him coldly and contemptuously. Nevertheless, he falls in love with her and dreams of becoming a wealthy gentleman so that he might be worthy of her. He even hopes that Miss Havisham intends to make him a gentleman and marry him to Estella, but his hopes are dashed when, after months of regular visits to Satis House, Miss Havisham tells him that she will help him fill out the papers necessary for him to become a common laborer in his family's business.

With Miss Havisham's guidance, Pip is apprenticed to his brother-in-law, Joe, who is the village blacksmith. Pip works in the forge unhappily, struggling to better his education with the help of the plain, kind Biddy and encountering Joe's malicious day laborer, Orlick. One night, after an altercation with Orlick, Pip's sister, known as Mrs. Joe, is viciously attacked and becomes a mute invalid. From her signals, Pip suspects that Orlick was responsible for the attack.

One day a lawyer named Jaggers appears with strange news: a secret benefactor has given Pip a large fortune, and Pip must come to London immediately to begin his education as a gentleman. Pip happily assumes that his previous hopes have come true—that Miss Havisham is his secret benefactor and that the old woman intends for him to marry Estella.

In London, Pip befriends a young gentleman named Herbert Pocket and Jaggers's law clerk, Wemmick. He expresses disdain for his former friends and loved ones, especially Joe, but he continues to pine after Estella. He furthers his education by studying with the tutor Matthew Pocket, Herbert's father. Herbert himself helps Pip learn how to act like a gentleman. When Pip turns twenty-one and begins to receive an income from his fortune, he will secretly help Herbert buy his way into the business he has chosen for himself. But for now, Herbert and Pip lead a fairly undisciplined life in London, enjoying themselves and running up debts. Orlick reappears in Pip's life, employed as Miss Havisham's porter, but is promptly fired by Jaggers after Pip reveals Orlick's unsavory past. Mrs. Joe dies, and Pip goes home for the funeral, feeling tremendous grief and remorse. Several years go by, until one night a familiar figure barges into Pip's room—the convict, Magwitch, who stuns Pip by announcing that he, not Miss Havisham, is the source of Pip's fortune. He tells Pip that he was so moved by Pip's boyhood kindness that he dedicated his life to making Pip a gentleman, and he made a fortune in Australia for that very purpose.

Pip is appalled, but he feels morally bound to help Magwitch escape London, as the convict is pursued both by the police and by Compeyson, his former partner in crime. A complicated mystery begins to fall into place when Pip discovers that Compeyson was

the man who abandoned Miss Havisham at the altar and that Estella is Magwitch's daughter. Miss Havisham has raised her to break men's hearts, as revenge for the pain her own broken heart caused her. Pip was merely a boy for the young Estella to practice on; Miss Havisham delighted in Estella's ability to toy with his affections.

As the weeks pass, Pip sees the good in Magwitch and begins to care for him deeply. Before Magwitch's escape attempt, Estella marries an upper-class lout named Bentley Drummle. Pip makes a visit to Satis House, where Miss Havisham begs his forgiveness for the way she has treated him in the past, and he forgives her. Later that day, when she bends over the fireplace, her clothing catches fire and she goes up in flames. She survives but becomes an invalid. In her final days, she will continue to repent for her misdeeds and to plead for Pip's forgiveness.

The time comes for Pip and his friends to spirit Magwitch away from London. Just before the escape attempt, Pip is called to a shadowy meeting in the marshes, where he encounters the vengeful, evil Orlick. Orlick is on the verge of killing Pip when Herbert arrives with a group of friends and saves Pip's life. Pip and Herbert hurry back to effect Magwitch's escape. They try to sneak Magwitch down the river on a rowboat, but they are discovered by the police, who Compeyson tipped off. Magwitch and Compeyson fight in the river, and Compeyson is drowned. Magwitch is sentenced to death, and Pip loses his fortune. Magwitch feels that his sentence is God's forgiveness and dies at peace. Pip falls ill; Joe comes to London to care for him, and they are reconciled. Joe gives him the news from home: Orlick, after robbing Pumblechook, is now in jail; Miss Havisham has died and left most of her fortune to the Pockets; Biddy has taught Joe how to read and write. After Joe leaves, Pip decides to rush home after him and marry Biddy, but when he arrives there he discovers that she and Joe have already married.

Pip decides to go abroad with Herbert to work in the mercantile trade. Returning many years later, he encounters Estella in the ruined garden at Satis House. Drummle, her husband, treated her badly, but he is now dead. Pip finds that Estella's coldness and cruelty have been replaced by a sad kindness, and the two leave the garden hand in hand, Pip believing that they will never part again. (Note: Dickens's original ending to *Great Expectations* differed from the one described in this summary. The final Summary and Analysis section of this SparkNote provides a description of the first ending and explains why Dickens rewrote it.)



### ***The Old Curiosity Shop***

(taken from <http://www.bibliomania.com/0/0/19/41/frameset.html>)

*The Old Curiosity Shop* was published in full as a separate volume in 1841 but was originally supposed to be part of the *Master Humphrey's Clock* series and is indeed narrated at the start by Master Humphreys. A curiosity shop was, in Dickens' time, a place where one could buy second hand goods of a precious, ornamental or antique variety. Little Nell Trent looks after her grandfather in the gloomy environs of such a shop and she is one of many Dickens heroines to be utterly devoted and kind. Their fortunes go sharply downhill as the grandfather's money is wasted by a spendthrift son-in-law and Fred Trent, Nell's brother. In this unfortunate situation, the grandfather borrows money from the appalling Daniel Quilp, an unpleasant-looking dwarf. He attempts to gamble it into a larger sum for Nell's sake but fails and Quilp, realising where his money has gone, seizes the shop. This leaves the old man and Nell to flee and face the torments of life wandering the country to avoid the vengeful and malicious Quilp. There is something of an improvement in their fortunes, but eventually both die, in Nell's case in a particularly sentimental way that Dickens is often criticised for. There is also some justice however, for Quilp, and the minor characters such as Kit Nubbles (who adores Nell) provide some relief from the grimness of the novel's portrait of the world.

## ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

Název práce	The reflection of the life of the lower classes in the works of Charles Dickens (Zobrazení života nižších společenských vrstev v díle Charlese Dickense)
Autor práce	Lucie Chrástová
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