Dickens on the Move
Travels and Transformations
Charles Dickens Bicentenary
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Preface

„I have read the Pickwickians by Dickens”, Flaubert wrote to George Sand on 12th July 1872. “Do you know it? There are wonderful parts in it, but what a deficient sort of composition! It’s like that with all English writers, except for Walter Scott, they don’t have any idea of structure. For us Romans, this is insupportable.”

It is exactly this, however, which interests us today in Dickens: his apparent lack of form and elusiveness in terms of fixing characters, plots and settings. Or to put it more positively, his flexibility (responding to both commercial needs and those of the readership), his sense of movement, is decisive, whether in his fictional characters or in himself. Ignoring the classical unities that had already been undermined by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, Dickens seems to continue a British tradition in which dynamism and movement are central.

This is why we decided to celebrate Dickens’s bicentenary in 2012 with lectures and essays on aspects relating to the author (and his characters and fictions) ‘on the move’. Obviously, we also wanted to point out his enormous topicality. Simply – the fact that he has reached the 21st century without the loss in stature of many other classic authors – implies that he is still (maybe even more so today than ever), speaks to us, whether we discuss the financial crises, pollution or, indeed, travel.

We asked our contributors to shed light on Dickens’s own movements in geographical terms. Where and how did he travel? Does this enrich our understanding of his works? How are France, the United States of America, or Italy represented? But Dickens is much more than a tourist; he also travels between the social classes and is able to do this due to his extreme empathy. In his works, the classes come into contact with each other and this makes ‘travel’ between them necessary, especially if the Victorian compromise is to be achieved. This kind of imaginary movement crosses fossils and stratifications produced by neglect and ignorance or hardheartedness. Legal systems collide with the needs of life and emotions, as in Bleak House. Commercialism and philanthropy are juxtaposed and clash with simplicity and innocence. And this movement also holds true for genres: Fairy tales permeate the city, the essay starts walking or reflects on its own nature, journalism informs the imagination and vice versa. And, everywhere, there is movement, motion between characters and readers, as they are appalled or mesmerised. In this sense, we should like to explore a fundamental aspect of Dickens’s work – the idea of movement – across classes and countries, characters and texts.
Dietmar Böhnke

The Lost Leipzig Letters: Charles Dickens, Bernhard Tauchnitz and the German Connection

Introduction

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, [...] it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us [...] (Dickens, 1)

The opening words of Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities* refer to the period leading up to the French Revolution in 1789, but the characterization seems equally pertinent to that other Great Revolution of ’89 – the upheavals and changes that engulfed Eastern Europe in 1989, and particularly Leipzig, situated in what was then the German Democratic Republic and rapidly becoming one of the centres of the *friedliche Revolution*. To speak with Dickens, this was the time when great expectations were raised for many, but hard times lay ahead for many others, including the publishing houses of the GDR, very few of which would survive the following years intact. In this time of uncertainty and upheaval, a former staff member of one of those companies started to investigate the archives of publishing and printing firms in Leipzig that were in the process of being dismantled or liquidated. In one of these, he made a stunning discovery: a pile of well-preserved letters from the middle of the nineteenth century bearing the signature and the distinctive flourish of none other than Charles Dickens himself. These letters were part of the remains of the archives (hitherto presumed lost) of one of the greatest publishing houses in Leipzig and indeed Germany in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the firm of Bernhard Tauchnitz.¹ Photocopies of these letters were duly made and transcriptions produced, before they were handed back. Inquiring after them only months later, our literary detective was

¹ In the literature on Tauchnitz, the assumption is that most or all of the archive was destroyed in the bombing of Leipzig on 3 and 4 December 1943, when the firm of the then owner of the company, Oscar Brandstetter, suffered major damage. See Nowell-Smith, 428: "Unfortunately all the many hundreds of letters preserved by the firm, together with their stock of publications, stereotype plates and printing plant, were destroyed in an air-raid on Leipzig in 1943."
told everything had been taken away by people whose identity is unknown but who had the authority of the Treuhändler — nothing has been heard since of these letters, and they are most likely lost; they are certainly not contained in the few remains of the Tauchnitz archive at the Staatsarchiv Leipzig. Fortunately, the investigator in question happens to be the father of the present author, Gunter Böhnke, 3 so that the photocopies are still in our family’s possession. In this contribution, therefore, I will first survey the scope of these letters, briefly introduce the Tauchnitz enterprise and then describe Dickens’s relationship with Tauchnitz and with Germany in more general terms, including the little-known episode of his sending his son Charles Dickens Jr (better known as Charley) to Leipzig for almost two years in 1853-4.

The Lost Letters

The correspondence between Bernhard Tauchnitz and Charles Dickens spans the period from 1843 to 1870. According to the Pilgrim Edition of Dickens’s letters (the most recent and complete edition, containing over 14,000 letters; hereafter referred to as PE), 31 of their letters are known. However, all of them are quoted after the 1912 Festschrift of the Tauchnitz firm edited by Curt Otto (cf. Der Verlag) and not after the original letters. We now have in our possession 34 copies of letters by Dickens, of which 14 are not contained in the PE, and another six only in short extracts. Moreover, one of the letters is wrongly included under two different dates (8th and 18th April 1856). In addition to these letters, there are a further 30 letters from Dickens’s publishers and his journals, from his son, his daughter, his sister-in-law and his biographer John Forster, among others, spanning the period 1843 to 1881 (all of which I presume to be unpublished/unknown, though I have not yet been able to ascertain this). The new letters by Dickens will be made available in their entirety in the near future. 4 Suffice it here to say that the letters are for the largest part receipts of sums paid by Tauchnitz for Dickens’s works, and announcements of new work forthcoming. A few of them concern the question of translation (even though the Tauchnitz Edition itself was in English, of course), and some others Charley’s stay in Leipzig. While they are perhaps not groundbreaking, they illustrate Dickens’s interest in the publication of his works abroad, and in questions of copyright and distribution. More generally they are proof of Dickens’s high regard for Germany and particularly for Leipzig, and especially for the integrity and nobility of Bernhard (later Baron) Tauchnitz himself, who became an actual friend to Dickens rather than merely a business partner. Here is a characteristic extract from an (unpublished) letter of 16th June 1857: “It caused me much disappointment to have missed you when you were in London; I hope to be more fortunate next time. Mrs Dickens and all my family beg to be kindly remembered to Madame Tauchnitz and all your family. Pray believe me Very faithfully yours, Charles Dickens”. Incidentally, this is the last letter which refers to “Mrs Dickens”. The next letter (3rd April 1858, unpublished) has the ambiguous “We are all well here, and unite in kindest regard and remembrance to Madame Tauchnitz and all your family.” (This was exactly at the time of the final marital crisis — cf. Slater, 447ff.) Finally, after Dickens’s official separation from his wife, the letter of 31st March 1859 (also unpublished) reads: “My daughters and their aunt beg to be kindly remembered to all your family; in which I cordially join.” (Dickens’s sister-in-law, Georgina Hogarth, chose to remain with him and the children after the separation.) A similar phrasing is used in all remaining letters. While this demonstrates the relevance and use of the letters to biographers and Dickens specialists, I will be more interested in the following lines in the development of the firm of Bernhard Tauchnitz and the famous Tauchnitz Edition, before outlining his connections with Dickens in particular.

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2 The Treuhändleranstalt, set up in June 1990, was the agency responsible for privatizing state-owned businesses in the late GDR and after its demise.
3 Gunter Böhnke used to be foreign-language editor with the Leipzig publisher Edition Leipzig, worked as a literary translator and went on to become a well-known actor and comedian with one of the Leipzig Kabarett (political-satirical theatres), the “academixers”. He published two separate articles on Bernhard Tauchnitz in 1990 (one of these in two parts), as a result of which he made the discovery that concerns us here.
4 A selection of the unpublished letters will be published in the German journal Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, Vol. 250/II (2013), and all the letters will successively be made available either as supplements to the Dickensian or on the website of the Dickens Fellowship. I would like to thank Mark Dickens, the current head of the Dickens family and President of the International Dickens Fellowship (as the owner of the copyright for the letters) for his permission to publish the transcriptions.
Bernhard Tauchnitz and the Collection of British Authors

In many ways, the year 1837 was an *annus mirabilis*, both generally for Britain, and particularly for Tauchnitz and Dickens. It was the year of the accession to the throne of Queen Victoria, who would give her name to the whole historical period and in many ways symbolizes “Britain’s century”, as it is sometimes called. For Dickens, it was the year when *Oliver Twist* was published, of his rapid increase in fame, and his first child’s birth. Closer to our topic, it was also the year in which the first German translation of a work by Dickens (which was also the first translation anywhere, as far as I know) was published – in Leipzig, of course, though not by Tauchnitz: *Die Pickwickier (The Pickwick Papers)*. Most importantly, though, it was the year when the firm of Bernhard Tauchnitz junior, publisher and printer, was founded in Leipzig. So in 2012 we celebrate not only Dickens’s bicentenary, but also Tauchnitz’s 175th anniversary (both in early February). Taking into account that every 25 years (at least since 1887), there have been important publications on the Tauchnitz firm in celebration of the anniversaries, I would like to see this contribution as a humble tribute to his achievements, too. Tauchnitz founded his firm at the young age of 20, after his uncle Karl, to whose firm he had been apprenticed, had died the year before (this was the reason for the “jun.” in the name, which was dropped a few years later). Very soon after setting up his company, Tauchnitz had the brilliant idea that would make him a household name all over the world: in 1841, he founded a series with titles in English called “Collection of British Authors” for sale on the Continent, often known simply as “Tauchnitz Edition”. Similar attempts had been made by other publishers before him, but his advantage was both a lower price (at 1/2 Thaler, later 1 Mark 60), a better quality and higher capacity to print huge numbers quickly, and, from 1843, – perhaps most importantly – the explicit sanction of the authors he printed for Continental republication and distribution. To understand why this was revolutionary, one has to look at the copyright situation at the time: there did not exist any copyright protection beyond state boundaries, and even within countries it was not yet fully established – very much to Dickens’s and many other writers’ dismay. So Tauchnitz’s offer in an 1843 circular to British writers asking their permission to reprint their works for the Continent for payment was quite unprecedented. However, it is only right to say that Tauchnitz, at this point, had already been publishing his series for two years, and thus, the question of whether his approach was made out of moral motives or was simply a clever business strategy is open to debate. What is clear, however, is that many British authors happily accepted the offer and that Tauchnitz came to be held in the highest esteem by most of them, even becoming friends with several. Partly because of this clever move, which gave Tauchnitz an advantage once bilateral copyright treaties were signed (e.g. between Britain and Saxony in 1846, and Britain and France 1852), he managed to corner first the Continental market for English-language books and later the American and global one (except for the British Empire, where the sale of his books was expressly prohibited). It is not surprising, therefore, that in the second half of the nineteenth century, more than half of the Continental production of English-language books came from Leipzig, with Tauchnitz contributing over 60% to this figure (Jansohn, 155-6). John Sutherland illustrates this situation as follows:

Theorists in England pointed enviously to Leipzig [sic] in the 1860s: a town of 66,000 inhabitants and no less than 120 publishers and booksellers, a commercial centre dominated by the Börse-Gebäude, a kind of stock exchange for books. In Germany, it was said, a publisher took precedence over a prince. But the cool, rational agency houses of Leipziger do not seem to have encouraged the growth of fiction in the same way as the hot-house atmosphere of London’s Paternoster Row. Book production in general was roughly twice what it was in London (10,000 titles as opposed to 5,000 in 1862). Of these 10,000, however, by far the greatest single variety were theological works; novels came well down the list. In England novels came equally at the top of the list with theology. In fact Germany’s most famous fiction publishing house was benignly parasitic on the English trade. When Tauchnitz in 1841, at the age of twenty-five, brought out his first ‘Tauchnitz Edition’ (Lytton’s *Pelham* – that ubiquitous bestseller) he started a list which by 1860 had grown to 500 volumes. Using Leipzig’s distributive skills Tauchnitz managed to establish a firm hold on the English-speaking market abroad, so denying it to home-based business. (Sutherland, 69-70)

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5 There is a small, but growing, body of literature on the Tauchnitz firm, to which I am indebted in the following: next to the original celebratory publications of the firm in 1887, 1912 and 1937 (cf. Fünfzig Jahre, Der Verlag, The Harvest) and my father’s articles, I would like to single out Jansohn, Keiderling, Nowell-Smith, Pressler, and of course the monumental “bibliographical history” by Todd and Bowden (for details see the bibliography, where I have given preference to English-language publications, wherever available).

6 For the actual wording of the circular, see Todd/Bowden, 4.

7 For some of the praise directed at Tauchnitz by his authors, cf. the various Festschriften. The following, not coincidentally by Dickens (though not among our letters), may serve as a characteristic example: “I cannot consent to name the sum you shall pay for ‘Great Expectations’. I have too great a regard for you and too high a sense of your honourable dealing, to wish to depart from the customs we have always observed. Whatever price you put upon it will satisfy me.” (The Harvest, 16)
Tauchnitz is also seen as one of the pioneers of the paperback format, even though this had long been popular in similar forms. The particular oblong format and later coloured wrappers to distinguish different series and genres are his innovations. The Tauchnitz Edition grew quickly. The 500th volume was published in 1860, the same year that Tauchnitz was made Baron by the Saxon king, the 1,000th followed a mere nine years later, and he lived to see the publication of the 3,000th volume in 1894 (he died the following year). By the end of the main series in the 1930s, it contained over 5,000 volumes printed in more than 40 million copies and distributed globally - the firm had contacts with circa 6,000 booksellers worldwide, and copies have been traced to 56 countries.$^8$ With this sort of global reach, it is not surprising that Tauchnitz books have been regarded as a veritable reference library for English literature in the nineteenth century and beyond (increasingly including American authors, and therefore renamed into “Collection of British and American Authors” in 1900). Some of the most illustrious names published in the series include Brontë, Browning, Bulwer Lytton, Byron, Carlyle, Collins, Conrad, Dickens, Disraeli, Doyle, G. Eliot, Galsworthy, Gaskell, Haggard, Hardy, Hawthorne, Irving, James, Jerome, Longfellow, MacDonald, Melville, Poe, Rossetti, Ruskin, Scott, Stevenson, Swinburne, Tennyson, Thackeray, Trollope, Twain, Wells, Wilde, Wordsworth etc., even Queen Victoria and Prince Albert are among its authors. The Tauchnitz Edition is particularly interesting, however, for the fact that it also includes less well-known writers that were very popular at the time (many of them women), such as Ainsworth, Betham-Edwards, Corelli, Craik, Crawford, Forrester, Fulerton, Harte, Hungerford, Lever, Marrayt, Marshall, Oliphant, Ouida, Payn, Yonge, Wood etc. Many authors have therefore expressed their debt to and high estimation of the Tauchnitz series, and it can be said to form part of the (global) British cultural memory. Todd and Bowden quote a 1928 essay by Frank Swinnerton on Tauchnitz’s significance:

The list reveals the fact that the Tauchnitz editions constitute what is practically a survey of English and American fiction of the last hundred years. [...] I believe that any historian of nineteenth century fiction should be greatly stimulated by contemplation of this list, on account not only of its conservatism and its inclusions, but also of

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$^8$ Cf. Todd/Bowden on these numbers and a wealth of bibliographical details about the Tauchnitz Edition. They list one major Tauchnitz collection in Leipzig, at the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek (formerly Deutsche Bücherei) with circa 900 volumes. In fact, there are at least two others, at the Universitätlibriothek (circa 750 volumes) and at the English Department of the University (circa 600 volumes). These cannot compete with Todd/Bowden’s own collection, of course, which amounts to circa 6,700 volumes and is now at the British Library in London, or with the collection at the Landesbibliothek Coburg with nearly 5,000 volumes.

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$^9$ This is probably the case for both A Christmas Carol and Martin Chuzzlewit, and perhaps also for at least some of the volumes of Dombey and Son, David Copperfield, Bleak House, Little Dorrit, Our Mutual Friend and Edwin Drood. cf. Pressler, 71; Todd/Bowden, 27, 40; 64; 75; 95; 156; 209; 775; see also PE III, 579, fn.

Tauchnitz and Dickens

Dickens was one of the central authors in the Tauchnitz Edition from the very start: he provides volumes 2 and 3 of the series with his Pickwick Papers (still as “pirated” editions), and all of his works after 1843 were published simultaneously with their British release by Tauchnitz – in one or two cases even slightly earlier, making the Tauchnitz edition a genuine first edition of Dickens in book form.$^9$

In addition to these works, there were many volumes (as many as 50) of material reprinted from Dickens’s journal Household Words, taking the overall number of Dickens volumes in the series close to 100. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that all the anniversary publications of the Tauchnitz firm give pride of place to Dickens as their most prominent author. One hundred years ago, in Dickens’s centenary year, Curt Otto (then head and co-owner of Tauchnitz Verlag) writes on the occasion of the company’s 75th anniversary:

Es ist ein freundlicher Zufall, dass das 75jährige Jubiläum unseres Hauses nur ganz wenige Tage dem 100jährigen Geburtstage des Mannes vorausgeht, der der wärmste Freund unseres Verlages war, und dessen unsterbliche Werke, in lückenloser Folge, ein Hauptfundament unserer Collection bilden. Gerade die herzliche Verehrung für Dickens, die in unserem Vaterlande ebenso ausgebreitet ist wie in England selbst, bildet ein Bindeglied zwischen beiden Nationen auf geistigem Gebiete und ist ein schlagender Beweis der Stammes- und Geistesverwandschaft. (Der Verlag, 31)

There is certainly some irony in the fact that this comes only two years before the First World War would irreparably damage those connections between Britain
and Germany and would incidentally spell the beginning of the end of the Tauchnitz success story. What becomes obvious, however, is the special position commanded by Dickens for this particular publisher. Dickens was among the first authors approached by Tauchnitz in 1843, and given his concern over pirated editions at the time and generally his ambition to maximize his profit from his writings, he responded eagerly and benevolently to the proposal: "In reply to your letter I beg to say that if you will favour me with any distinct proposition [...] I shall be happy to give it immediate consideration." – this is the first record we have of Dickens's communication with Tauchnitz (9th October 1843, cf. PE III, 579; not contained among our letters). Clearly, Tauchnitz did make a distinct proposition, and Dickens accepted it, so that in December of that year A Christmas Carol could be advertised as an "edition sanctioned by the author" (similar formulations were now printed on all volumes of the Tauchnitz Edition). The usual remuneration by Tauchnitz for exclusive publication rights outside the British Empire seems to have been £30-50, which was quite generous for the time. However, our letters show that the sum for a single new book could be as high as £150 (letter of 22nd February 1864: "I have the pleasure of readily accepting your offer of £150 Sterling, for the usual right of republishing my new book."), and that there were frequent additional payments based on sales: in an unpublished letter of 16th June 1857, Dickens acknowledges the completion of payment for Little Dorrit, while ten months later receiving another £20 for the same book (3rd April 1858, also unpublished). In the literature, one even finds total sums paid to authors as high as 50,000 M (Macaulay, overall sum), or 8,000 M for a single book (Bulwer Lytton for Kenelm Chillingly) – but these are clearly exceptions and seem higher because of exchange rates (roughly: £1 = 20 M). The question arises whether Tauchnitz could actually make a profit from these publications, competitively priced as the books were. Gunter Böhme doubts this and thinks Tauchnitz's interest was mostly cultural and driven by bourgeois or humanist values:

[Er] mochte […] als Vertreter des progressiven Leipziger Börsenvereins wohl eher daran interessiert sein, dem um seine Rechte gegen absolutistische Beschränkungen kämpfenden Bürgertum die bedeutenden Werke angelsächsischer Schriftsteller zugänglich zu machen. Nicht umsonst stammte eine Eingabe, die Gewerbefreiheit forderte und die Zensur verdamme, von den Leipziger Buchhändlern. (Böhme 1990c, 58)

This is certainly correct to a point, and explains the respect paid to Tauchnitz by most of his authors (and perhaps his being appointed British consul in Saxony in 1872), but it is also clear that Tauchnitz became phenomenally rich by the end of the century. Thomas Keiderling notes that in 1912 his son was a multi-millionaire and the sixth-richest person in Saxony, ahead of almost all industrialists at the time. (Keiderling, 95) Tauchnitz was knighted in 1860 and became a member of the Saxon Parliament in 1877. He bought a country house in Kleinschlocher near Leipzig and rebuilt it, being interested in a multitude of social causes as well. It is interesting to note the similarities to Dickens at this point – both men were born only four years apart (Tauchnitz in 1816), came from a not particularly well-off middle-class family, aspired to and achieved a gentlemanly lifestyle with their own family home and land ownership (Gad's Hill in Dickens's case), became rich in the literary and publishing world (especially making clever use of the many nineteenth-century innovations in this field), and were committed to charitable causes. It is therefore perhaps not too surprising that, soon after their first business deal, the two men were on very friendly terms, and Dickens’s letters are clearly expressive of his esteem and regard for Tauchnitz. Here is another example, from a letter of 23rd January 1854 that is partly published in the PE:

It was a matter of real regret to me that I was abroad when you were in London. For it would have given me true pleasure to have taken your hand and thanked you with all heartiness for your friendship. I hope to do so on the occasion of your next visit, and also that it will not be long before you return here. (PE VII, 256)\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{10}\) There is no room here to go into the later decline and fall of the Tauchnitz firm, especially after the death of Curt Otto in 1929, which has been outlined elsewhere: cf. Böhme 1990c; Todd/Bowden (esp. chapters 6-8).

\(^{11}\) i.e., Our Mutual Friend (cf. also the version printed in PE X, 360 – without the sum, but hinting in a footnote that £75 was paid to Dickens through a bank bill on 3rd May; it is clear from the unpublished letter of 8th November 1865, however, that this was only the first of two instalments). The reason for the higher sum, however, seems to have been the length of the proposed book, which was finally published in four volumes, bringing the payment per volume down to well under £40. This is also the amount mentioned by Todd and Bowden (120-21) in their detailed discussion of the various sums paid to different authors (depending on the respective reputation and selling power and ranging from £25 to £100 per volume). Nowell-Smith (432ff.) puts the range at £15 to £100, pointing out that it became customary for Tauchnitz to start with a payment of circa £20 for a younger or unknown writer (the example here is R. L. Stevenson in 1884). This is also backed up by the only three existing contracts in the Staatsarchiv Leipzig: two with John Galsworthy for The Man of Property (1909, £25) and Plays Vol. 1 (1912, £20), and one with Edgar Wallace for The Ringer (1928, £50).

\(^{12}\) cf. e.g. Böhme 1990c; Todd/Bowden, 120-121.

\(^{13}\) About a year earlier, he had written to his friend and benefactor, the wealthy heiress Angela Burdett Coutts: "I know a certain Chevalier Bernhard Tatichnitz [sic], at Leipzig […]"
Tauntnitz and Dickens met at least twice, once in London in 1855 and once in Paris in 1856, as far as I could ascertain, and there are several such passages in the letters in which Dickens regrets having missed Tauntnitz when he was in London (cf. the one quoted earlier). There was also an agent for Tauntnitz in London, Sidney Williams, with whom Dickens often communicated (one of our earliest letters is to him) and who helped to arrange deals with Tauntnitz. Increasingly, Dickens asks Tauntnitz about things outside their purely professional relationship, such as translations of his works into French and how much one should charge for that (letter of 12th December 1855, cf. PE VII, 764), or even forwarding a query by his friend Wilkie Collins about a similar matter to Tauntnitz (letter of 6th December 1856) — this second letter being absent from the PE and its content wrongly surmised in a footnote to a later letter by Dickens on the topic (cf. PE VIII, 237). As it is pointed out in the entry on “publishing, printing, bookselling” in Schlicke (480ff.), this is an exception to the rule of increasing professionalization rather than personalization in publishing in general and in Dickens’s relations with his publishers in particular (which were often strained and repeatedly severed) — which emphasizes the unusual friendship between Dickens and Tauntnitz. As Tauntnitz wrote to John Forster after Dickens’s death: “Our long relations were not only never troubled by the least disagreement, but were the occasion of most hearty personal feelings, and I shall never lose the sense of his kind and friendly nature.” (cf. in Todd/Bowden, 912) It is against this background that we have to see the story about Dickens’s son’s stay in Leipzig.

Dickens in Leipzig

Dickens himself never made it to Leipzig (indeed, he only ever passed through Germany twice, on his way back from Italy and travelling to Switzerland, in 1845 and 1846 respectively), even though he wrote to Tauntnitz on 8th April 1856 that “Leipzig is at present among my castles in the air, mes châteaux en Espagne, but perhaps Germany and I may make a personal acquaintance yet.” However, one Charles Dickens did come to Leipzig for almost two years in 1853: his first-born son Charles Culliford Boz Dickens (Jr), better known as Charley. Several of the letters, including some of the unpublished ones, refer to this episode, which is hardly commented on in the biographies and writings about Dickens. In most accounts, there is at best a brief mention of a short stay of “some months”. It is another sign of the exceptional friendship with Tauntnitz that Dickens decided to send his son to Leipzig, but it also highlights some interesting points about Dickens’s children, the view of Germany, and education. Charley’s education was paid for by Angela Burdett Coutts, and he had been to Eton for several years at this point (he was 16 in 1853). However, he seems to have wanted to go into business (or at any rate this was what Dickens apparently wanted him to do), and it was considered important to know German for this profession at the time — which, in itself, is interesting, given that most of British business must have been with the British Empire or the United States rather than with Germany. Dickens writes to Mrs Richard Watson on 22nd November 1852 that Charley “came to the conclusion that he would rather be a merchant […] We have arranged therefore, that he shall leave Eton at Christmas and go to Germany after the holidays to become well acquainted with that language — now most essential in such a walk of life as he will probably tread.” (PE VI, 808) In general, one notices a very high opinion of German scholarship, education and learning in these letters (although sometimes mocked by Dickens), which is probably fairly typical for the mid-Victorian age. John R. Davis writes in his study on The Victorians and Germany (which does not mention Tauntnitz, surprisingly) that “by the 1840s [there was] widespread interest in German culture among the educated classes, and the widely held belief […] that Germany led Europe intellectually. […] In education, commerce, medicine and military organization, reformers argued that the Germans were do-

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15 cf. also PE VIII, 93, where this passage is wrongly allocated the date 18th April 1856, and separated from the extract from the same letter printed correctly under 8th April 1856.
16 cf. Slater, 365 (only a half-sentence); Tomalin, 246-7; Gottlieb, 36-7; even PE VI, 833, fn1 (although the later volumes clearly show the length of the stay). The lack of detail on this episode in Gottlieb’s recently published group biography of Dickens’s children is the most surprising, in my opinion, since his book has two whole chapters on Charley alone; he does not even mention Tauntnitz’s name and gives no indication of the length of Charley’s stay, let alone the impact it might have had on his development.
17 The overall cost of the Leipzig stay amounted to circa £300. (cf. PE VII, 244; 553)
18 Gottlieb (36) wrongly gives the correspondent as Burdett Coutts in this case; there are generally no exact references in his book (not even with the many verbatim quotations as in this case), only a brief list of sources at the end including the PE.
ing it better.” (Davis, 9-10) Most interestingly, Davis goes on to show in his chapter on education and reform how compulsory education in the German states (particularly Prussia and Saxony) became a model to British reformers in the 1840s and 50s, and that these included Dickens, who in the 28th December 1850 issue of *Household Words* co-wrote an article with Henry Morley satirizing ‘Our National Defences Against Education’, in which “Dickens the liberal reformer, quite obviously supported Prussian state interventionism.” (280) Against this background, it is easy to see why he should have decided only two years later to send his son to Saxony, not Prussia. Early in 1853, he starts to inquire about suitable places and contacts for his son, soon focusing on Leipzig and Taunus – not, however, before having assured himself with his brother-in-law, Henry Austin, “whether Leipzig is a pretty healthy place? I am thinking of sending Charley there, but first wish to know something on this important point.” (10 January 1853, *PE VII*, 6) In the longest of all our letters from Dickens to Taunus (four pages, of which three sentences are printed in *PE VII*, 11), on 14 January 1853 he details his wishes concerning Charley and asks Taunus for help:

My dear Sir, I am very truly obliged to you for your kind letter, and for the comforting assurances you give me of your hospitable intentions towards my dear boy. I shall certainly, on your advice, send him to Leipzig, if I can through your friendly means find a tutor and a friend for him there, with whom while he is improved he may be confidential and happy. Excuse me if I trouble you by stating exactly what I wish. I wish to place him in a house where he will not lose the classical and other knowledge he has gained, and where he can acquire German *thoroughly*. [...] While he is well looked after (as all boys require to be) I wish him to be not too obviously restrained, and to have the advantages of cheerful and good society. Such little comforts as a room to himself etc. (I mean a bedroom) he has been used to at Etten, where he was high in the school, and would of course require in this new position. I want him to have an interest in, and to acquire a knowledge of, the life around him, and to be treated like a gentleman *though pampered in nothing*. By punctuality in all things, great or small, I set great store. If your kindness can recommend a good home for him of this kind, he will do honor to it hereafter [...] Charley (for he bears my name) is an affectionate boy of an excellent disposition, quick, and of great natural abilities. He is lively, easily makes friends, and is pleasant-looking, and has pleasant and frank manners. I forget whether I told you his age – 16. I should have him home for five or six weeks in the summer, and also at Christmas time. If, on inquiry, you can find a gentleman whom you rely on, for such a trust – and if you further do me the great favor of obtaining me all necessary particulars respecting him and his terms and charges – I will speedily consider and decide. I think I mentioned to you in my former letter that Charley wishes to devote himself hereafter, to commercial pursuits. I am always, Dear Sir, Yours very faithfully Charles Dickens

This is an interesting letter, both for the intimacy with Taunus that it shows and for Dickens’s descriptions of Charley (a little later and to other correspondents he would speak much less well of him: cf. *PE VII*, 244-6). From a modern perspective, it is intriguing how quickly such a momentous decision could be taken and put into practice in a time when globalization was still in its infancy. Until the middle of February 1853, Dickens had not even heard from Taunus regarding the above inquiry (this is clear from a second letter he wrote on 15th February inquiring after the receipt of the first one), and yet by early March Charley was on his way to Leipzig, to stay there until December 1854 with one longer interruption over Christmas 1853 and January 1854 (whether he went home for the summers, I could not ascertain). Spontaneity and organization, two of Dickens’s strengths, and of course money, seem to have pulled off the trick – but it is still impressive. There is very little detailed information on what exactly Charley did in Leipzig during those two years (also because most of the letters to and from Dickens involving family matters were destroyed). He stayed with a Professor Dr. O.C. Müller (though perhaps rather a school master) at Taucher Str, 6, and was taught German and various other, mostly technical, subjects by him and some other teachers, including Dr. Otto Fiebig of the famous Nikolauschule. He was certainly not apprenticed to Taunus in any way, as some texts suggest. Dickens seems to have been content with the teachers, even though he and Charley mocked them at times. He was less happy at Charley’s progress, especially when Dr.

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19 Dickens did get a reply to this second letter immediately, since he refers to a “very satisfactory” answer from Germany to a letter to Burdett Coutts on 18th February (*PE VII*, 26). On 2nd March 1853, he says Charley is on his way to Leipzig (letter to R. H. Horne, 37). If he came home for the summer, it must have been a short stay, since there are references to him being in Leipzig in letters of 10th July and 27th August 1853, the latter mentioning a walking tour by Charley in the [sic] Mountains (111-2; 134). Several letters between November 1853 and January 1854 show that Charley met Dickens in Paris, presumably on 10th December 1853, to go back to London with him, and that he was still in London by the end of January 1854, but planning to go back to Leipzig very soon – he was definitely there by early March (cf. e.g., 255; 287). Finally, in a letter to Arthur Ryaland of 6th December 1854, Dickens writes of Charley’s imminent return and states that he “has lived two years in Germany” (478).

20 On 21st September 1853, Dickens quotes Charley in a letter to Mrs Watson: “He says his professor ‘is very short-sighted, always in green spectacles, always drinking weak beer, always smoking a pipe, and always at work’. The last qualification seems to appear to Charley the most astonishing one.” (*PE VII*, 155) And a few months later, he writes to Burdett Coutts: “I rather think the Professor is a regular stoil German grub, and that he and Charley have got to the best understanding of which they are capable together. His books, his piano, and his pipe, seem to shut out the prospect of their ever coming any closer.” (252)
Müller suggested he might not actually be suited to a business career after all. It seems Charley showed some ability in the field of literature and translation, in fact, and one of the results of his stay were editions of plays by Schiller and Goethe with translations and comments for English pupils or students (in cooperation with Fiebig, cf. PE VII, 478, fn; 910). That Charley may have had cultural rather than commercial ambitions is also suggested by his friendship with a musician (probably a student in Leipzig at the time), Francesco Berger, who was later to come to England and write the music for Dickens’s productions of Wilkie Collins’s plays *The Lighthouse* (1855) and *The Frozen Deep* (1856). Another reason why Charley might have socialized with musicians could have been the fact that Leipzig at this time was one of the musical capitals of Europe, and that the Conservatory founded by Mendelssohn in the 1840s drew many talented English students to Leipzig (incidentally, only three years after Charley’s stay, Arthur Sullivan was one of them). Charley did become a businessman later, but never a successful one; indeed, he was most successful when he was finally allowed into the world of letters as a sub-editor and later owner of Dickens’s periodical *All the Year Round*. Since the story is very similar to Dickens’s other children’s (or sons, at any rate, excepting Henry Fielding Dickens), one starts to wonder whether Dickens’s meddling in their education and decisions for a career had anything to do with it.

**Conclusion: Dickens and Germany**

What is clear from the above episode is that Dickens must have had some rather detailed knowledge of Leipzig and Germany through his son’s stay here. Charley wrote back home frequently, it seems, and sometimes sent whole journals, for example on his trip to the Harz mountains (PE VII, 134). Since Dickens had always been interested in Germany and had voiced his desire to visit the country at various points since at least the early 1840s, it is to be presumed that he was highly interested in what his son wrote to him, and even perhaps that he planned to visit him at some point. As far as we know, he never did so. However, the wish to come to Germany for some longer time obviously never left Dickens: there are some suggestions that he might have planned a longer stay in Germany, and most probably in a region quite close to Leipzig, such as Thuringia. The entry on “Germany” in Schlicke says that “Dickens’s sons Charles and Francis went to Berlin [in fact, Leipzig] and Hamburg to learn German for business purposes […]” and in 1870 Dickens intended to do likewise.” (248) Against this background, it is not surprising to read Dickens’s enthusiastic praise of the Germans in a letter to Johann Heinrich Künzel of 13th September 1841:

> Believe me, my dear Sir – and I say it most unafraidly – that next to the favor and good opinion of my own countrymen, I value, above all price, the esteem of the German people. I honor and admire them past all expression. I know them to be, in their great mental endowments and cultivation, the chosen people of the Earth; and I never was more proud or more happy than when I first began to know that my writings found favor in their eyes. […] I wish to Heaven I could speak German, though never so badly. If I could, I would be among you in six months. (PE II, 381)

It is certainly true that some later comments by Dickens on Germany slightly qualify this statement, but it has often been shown that Dickens’s works have indeed “found favour” with the Germans and had a significant impact on Germany. They have been translated from the very first and many times since then, have always been popular and were put to different uses by readers, writers and critics over the centuries (cf. e.g. Gummer; Welz). Among them, they have influenced Germans’ ideas of the Victorian Age in general, of the character of London, of a ‘proper’ English Christmas, and even of what it means to be English. Perhaps we will, in due time, begin to see a little more clearly whether there was also a reciprocal relationship by which Dickens was influenced by Germany and perhaps especially Leipzig to some extent – his relationship with Bernhard Tauchnitz and his son’s stay here will lead us a little further in that direction, I trust. Let me give the last word to Dickens himself, writing to Friedrich Ludwig Seiler at the time Charley was staying in Leipzig:

> I believe I have few English prejudices which prevent me from respecting all that is to be respected in other countries. I have a particular regard for Germany, and interest in the noble German people. My eldest boy is now in a Professor’s house at Leipzig; one of my great desires being that he should perfectly understand the rich language in which you write to me so pleasantly. (PE VII, 159)

21 cf. Gottlieb on the various careers and failings of the Dickens children. It is interesting to see how Dickens was keen to send most of his sons abroad very early on, for example to school at Boulogne. Four of his seven sons later emigrated more or less permanently, two to India (one of them died there soon after, the other went on to Canada) and two to Australia.

22 This was suggested by Claire Tomalin in a talk at the British Council Literature seminar “What Would Dickens Write Today?” in Berlin on 27 January 2012.

23 In fact, he seems to have had a rather shaky start in that respect, since Dickens writes to Burdett Coutts about “Charley being much dismayed both by the German language, and
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by my giving him ‘two or three months’ to learn it in.” (PE VII, 60) He did master the language in the end, apparently, but had some difficulty in later years to recall it sufficiently to use it in his correspondence with Tauchnitz. He writes to him on 8th March 1880, for example: “You must excuse my writing in English. Alas! the German has almost entirely left me except for the simplest colloquial purposes.”