

...with a sudden jerk as if some one had given him a violent push from behind and commenced reading immediatly without recognizing his audience in the least. He read Nickolas Nickelby at Squeers School and Boy Sawyers party- His rendering of Mr Squeers was pretty good [of] in Fanny Squeers when she went to Nicholas to have her pen mended and in her quarrel with "Tilda" he was capital. His lisp when Fanny begged to have the nib of her pen "as soft as possible" brought down the house- His repretation of John Browdie flattening his own nose at the tea party - by way of practise till he should have an oppurtunity to try his hand on some body elses was also excellent. Smike was perfect. It brought tears to a good many eyes - but he did not seem to appreciate Nicholas at all - His indignant remonstrance with Squeers just before he flogged him was utterly tame and the narrative reading throughout was it seemed to me positively bad. He clings to the rising inflection with the most persistent affection and never lets his voice fall in narration if he can possibly avoid it. His best points in Bob Sawyers party were Mrs Raddles and the servant girl. I hope you are not tired of this long description- If you see him it will be superfluous of course; but if you dont, and there seems to be a good deal of doubt about his going west, I thought you might like to hear how he appeared to us.

Saturday - both the Mr Walkers (Stephen and Aldace) took tea with Aunt Rebecca and spent the evening. They both appeared very well. I liked Mr Aldace very well but nevertheless with a vague sort of Impression, all the while, that I might not like him so well if I knew him better. Charlie was just as good to us as he could be all the time we were there. He came over to see us every evening except Christmas when he had another engagement of long standing. Mattie and I both thought we never liked him so well as this time. Frank Winslow is to be married sometime this week if he is not already to a lady in Washington. Dana Winslow called at Aunt R's Sunday night. He was on his way to the wedding.

George Walker is in New York receiving treatment for his knee. He is preaching at New Haven going out Saturday and coming in Monday. I am conscience smitten that I forgot to tell you that Prof. Tenney told me before he went a way that he thought it very doubtful whether he should be able to stop in Detroit- as nearly as I can recollect at this distance of time- he said that it would lie between stoping at Detroit and seeing his consequently sister- at that "though he should be delighted to see you all - yet if he could make connections at Detroit he should go straight through without stopping.

I dont know what I have done with Hattie's letter and the only Christmas presents that I remember were Will's to Hattie and yours to Mrs. Ballard; both of which I approve of highly. They gave no Christmas presents at Auntie's and I was very glad of it since I had neither time to make anything sumptions, nor money to buy any thing very grand- Please excuse this scrawl and write to me as soon as you can Auntie gave us some doughnuts and taffy to take back with us. Your aff. daughter Helen.