

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58604-8 - The Mystery in the Drood Family
Montagu Saunders
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

**THE MYSTERY IN THE
DROOD FAMILY**

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-58604-8 - The Mystery in the Drood Family

Montagu Saunders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58604-8 - The Mystery in the Drood Family
Montagu Saunders
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

THE MYSTERY IN THE
DROOD FAMILY

BY
MONTAGU SAUNDERS

Cambridge :
at the University Press
1914

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58604-8 - The Mystery in the Drood Family
Montagu Saunders
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107586048

© Cambridge University Press 1914

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1914

First paperback edition 2015

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-58604-8 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58604-8 - The Mystery in the Drood Family
Montagu Saunders
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

TO

A. K. S.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-58604-8 - The Mystery in the Drood Family

Montagu Saunders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58604-8 - The Mystery in the Drood Family
Montagu Saunders
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFACE

IT needs a considerable amount of assurance to add yet another book to the comparatively long list of those which have been written upon the subject of Dickens's unfinished story, and it is no sufficient justification to assert that the writer is sincerely convinced that his contribution to the discussion will afford some assistance in the solution of the problem, seeing that practically everyone who has ventilated his ideas upon the subject has expressed a similar conviction. Proctor, for instance, who was the first to examine *Edwin Drood* in a quasi-scientific way, was absolutely satisfied that in identifying Datchery with Edwin, he had discovered the "mystery" which Dickens had taken such pains to hide, and so strongly did he feel that his solution was correct, that he exhibited considerable impatience with those who failed to swallow it whole. Mr J. Cuming Walters, again, the originator of the highly ingenious

Helena-Datchery theory, is equally convinced that he has unearthed Dickens's secret, and, like Proctor, he has supported his views by means of numerous arguments drawn from the text, which, if they do not carry conviction to every mind, are nevertheless sufficiently weighty to call for very careful examination, more particularly as they have succeeded in securing as adherents of the theory two such acute critics and eminent scholars as Dr Henry Jackson and Sir W. R. Nicoll. In these circumstances the present writer considers that it would be presumption on his part to express any definite opinion as to the accuracy of his own conclusions, and he feels that some apology is needed for the dogmatism which, upon a re-reading of this little essay, seems to him at times to be only too apparent. His excuse must be, that when an idea takes possession of the mind so completely as to become almost an obsession, it is liable to warp the judgment to such an extent that even the possibility of any other view being reasonably entertained seems too remote to require serious consideration, and as this book was written red-hot under the influence of

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58604-8 - The Mystery in the Drood Family
Montagu Saunders
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface

ix

such an idea, it is inevitable that it must be tainted with the fault of over-assurance. The same cause has also led him to criticise the work of other enquirers more freely than he otherwise would have done, and certainly more confidently than his literary inexperience warrants, and accordingly he hastens to assure those who may think it worth while to examine and dissect his own arguments, that he will not resent any strictures, however severe, that they may feel called upon to pass on the views which he has enunciated or developed. It is hardly necessary for him to state that he is painfully aware of his literary short-comings, and that he asserts no pretensions to style, being satisfied if he has succeeded in expressing his views clearly, and in bringing out the full force of the arguments which he believes can be adduced in their support; he trusts, therefore, that such criticisms as may be expressed with reference to his work, will be addressed rather to the matter than the form of it, and he will sincerely welcome criticism of this nature, as tending to test and evaluate the strength of his arguments and the validity of his various

Preface

theories. However confidently he may appear to have expressed the views which he has advanced, he hopes that he has a sufficiently open mind fully to appreciate the force of the objections which may be urged against them, and he is not so strongly wedded to any particular theory as to be desirous of supporting it against the weight of evidence. His sole desire is to discover, or to assist in discovering, the true solution of Dickens's puzzle, and if his own ideas are shown to be untenable, he will have no hesitation in abandoning them.

If, however, it should be considered that he has been fortunate enough to have hit upon the true solution of any of the numerous problems which *Edwin Drood* presents, he would point out that he has enjoyed the immense advantage of being in a position to profit by the work of prior investigators, by whom the ground has been so thoroughly surveyed and minutely examined as in several cases almost to compel him, by the mere process of exhaustion, to adopt the conclusions at which he has arrived. As one instance of this may be cited the identification

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58604-8 - The Mystery in the Drood Family
Montagu Saunders
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface

xi

of Datchery, and as another, his interpretation of the enigmatic picture forming the lower part of the original wrapper of the monthly *Parts*, which has given rise to almost as many readings as there have been commentators. The suggestion now advanced with regard to this picture is not, and, in the circumstances, could not be, original, but in the opinion of the writer it gains greater probability both from the fact that it is the logical outcome of the main plot which he has outlined, and from the circumstance that it explains and justifies the much-debated title of Chapter XIV. In the same way, many of the arguments which he has employed to support his own theories, or to combat those of earlier enquirers, have no doubt been presented before, and probably with far superior clarity and greater cogency, and he accordingly hesitates to advance a claim to originality in respect of any one of them, but as his first-hand acquaintance with the literature upon the subject does not extend beyond the magazine articles of Proctor, and the works of Sir W. R. Nicoll and Dr Henry Jackson, he may perhaps be acquitted of having consciously plagiarised

the ideas of other writers. He desires, however, to acknowledge his very great indebtedness to Sir W. R. Nicoll, without the aid of whose scholarly and exhaustive book this little essay could hardly have been written, and although the conclusions at which he has arrived are in most instances totally at variance with those adopted by Sir William, yet his obligations to that work are in no wise diminished on that account.

It is only due to the "Dickens Fellowship" to state that this essay owes its origin to the fact that the writer's attention was drawn to the fascinating problem of the discovery of Dickens's secret by the press notices of the mock trial of John Jasper for the murder of Edwin Drood, which that society organised in January last. While obviously it would not be fair to try and shift on to other shoulders the responsibility which naturally devolves upon a writer who is venturesome enough to advance a new theory concerning Dickens's plot, it is impossible to dispute the fact that the society must be held accountable for the interest in the problem which the trial aroused, and to that extent, therefore, it must

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58604-8 - The Mystery in the Drood Family
Montagu Saunders
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface xiii

be prepared to accept responsibility for the natural consequences of its act.

Lastly, the author wishes to express his gratitude to the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press for having kindly undertaken the publication of this book.

M. S.

Sept. 1914.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
DICKENS'S NEW IDEA	1
CHAPTER II	
DATCHERY	35
CHAPTER III	
WAS EDWIN MURDERED ?	92
CHAPTER IV	
PRINCESS PUFFER, AND OTHERS	109
CHAPTER V	
MINOR MATTERS	131