

Dombey and Son: An Inverted Maid's Tragedy

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Abstract

Ross Dabney, J. Butt & K. Tillotson, and others think that Dickens revised the role of Edith in the original plan of *Dombey and Son* upon the advice of a friend. I tend to believe that Dickens's swerve from his course was prompted by two motives, his relish for grand scenes, and his endeavour to engage the reader's sympathies for a character who was a victim of a social practice which he was trying to condemn. Dickens's humanitarian attitude sought to redeem the sinner and condemn the sin. In engaging the reader's sympathies, Dickens had entrapped his own. Both Edith and Alice are shown as victims of rapacious mothers who sell anything, or anybody for money. While Good Mrs Brown sells Alice's virtue and innocence for cash, Mrs Skewton trades on Edith's beauty in the marriage market to secure fortune and a good establishment. Edith and Alice's maturity and moral growth and their scorn and anger at their mothers' false teaching come in line with public prudery. Moreover, their educators in the principles of Mammonism have not succeeded altogether in stifling their innate feminine tenderness and capacity for affection, the thing that draws them near their reader's heart and wins them love and sympathy.

Keywords: Money, transaction, victims, saleable, Mormonism, greedy, rapacious.