

public: while I strive to narrate as pleasingly, and describe as vividly, as I can, let truth, not fiction, be my walk; and if I succeed in uniting the novel to the true, in provinces of more general interest than the very humble one in which I have now partially succeeded, I shall succeed also in establishing myself in a position which, if not lofty, will yield me at least more solid footing than that to which I might attain as a mere *litterateur*, who, mayhap, pleased for a little, but added nothing to the general fund. The resolution was, I think, a good one;—would that it had been better kept! The following extracts may serve to show that, humble as my new subject may be deemed, it gave considerable scope for description of a kind not often associated with herrings, even when they employed all Grub Street:—

“As the night gradually darkened, the sky assumed a dead and leaden hue; the sea, roughened by the rising breeze, reflected its deeper hues with an intensity approaching to black, and seemed a dark uneven pavement, that absorbed every ray of the remaining light. A calm silvery patch, some fifteen or twenty yards in extent, came moving slowly through the black. It seemed merely a patch of water coated with oil; but, obedient to some other moving power than that of either tide or wind, it sailed askant our line of buoys, a stone-cast from our bows,—lengthened itself along the line to thrice its former extent,—paused as if for a moment,—and then three of the buoys, after erecting themselves on their narrower base, with a sudden jerk, slowly sank. ‘One—two—three buoys!’ exclaimed one of the fishermen, reckoning them as they disappeared;—*there* are ten barrels for us secure.’ A few moments were suffered to elapse; and then, unfixing the haulser from the stem, and bringing it aft to the stern, we commenced hauling. The nets approached the gunwale. The first three appeared, from the phosphoric light of the water, as if bursting into flames of a pale green color. Here and there a herring glittered bright in the meshes, or went darting away through the pitchy darkness, visible for a moment by its own light. The fourth net was brighter than any of the others, and glittered through the waves while it was yet several fathoms away; the pale green seemed as if mingled with broken sheets of snow, that—flickering amid the mass of light—appeared, with every tug given by the fishermen, to shift, dissipate, and again form; and there streamed from it into the surrounding gloom myriads of green rays, an instant seen and then lost,—the retreating fish that had avoided the meshes, but had lingered, until disturbed, beside their entangled companions. It contained a considerable body of herrings. As we raised them over the gunwale, they felt warm to the hand, for in the middle of a large shoal even the temperature of the water is raised,—a fact well known to every herring fisherman; and in shaking them out of the meshes,