

Mr. Bates introduces us to reality of another sort. The scene of *Charlotte's Row* is set at once :

"A close, pestilential stench hung over the row, a smell of humanity living in a congested space, a stale odour of cooking and rotting filth, a breath of leather from a boot factory, a musty, powerful smell of malt from a brewery standing on the bank of the canal beyond the railway-arch, a stench of smoke, poverty, and sordid living."

Mr. Bates lets us off nothing. His characters are continually being sick, spitting blood, or illustrating even less attractively the mechanics of their disordered lives. The central character, a small boy, dodges his way from clout to whipping, from brawl to cesspool, varied by an occasional fishing expedition in the company of the miserably-married Socialist who runs off with Pauline. *Charlotte's Row* is disappointing, not because it is squalid, but because it is unimaginative. Sweat, tuberculosis, and the odours which Mr. Bates so conscientiously describes, are the logical consequences of poverty and over-crowding. We did not need Mr. Bates to tell us this ; and *Charlotte's Row* tells us nothing more—except that its author can write : which, also, we already knew.