

I have no doubt I shall . . . begin to be more beforehand with the world, and to live in a perfectly new manner, if - if, in short, anything turns up.

My favorite character in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* is Mr. Wilkins Micawber, played in the old film version by W. C. Fields (if anyone remembers him).

Micawber was an enterprising man. He undertook business ventures in coal and corn, which never paid off. Or he would rent a house to take in boarders, only to find himself, his family and boarders evicted because he had fallen behind in the rent. Creditors like the milkman and shoemaker used to post themselves outside his house at seven o'clock in the morning to catch him before he went out, not that they ever could, because at such times he would hide in the shadows of an upstairs room until they left. Actually, his usual way of meeting a debt was to write an I.O.U. and deliver it in such a sincere and solemn manner that the creditor almost felt he had been paid.

Given his inability ever to make ends meet, the economic status of his large family was always precarious and this would deeply depress the man. But he was at heart an optimist, ever expectant - as David Copperfield notes: *I have known him to come home to supper with a flood of tears and a declaration that nothing was now left but a Debtors' Prison; and then go to bed making a calculation of the expense of putting a bay window in the house in case anything should turn up.*

Indeed, that phrase - in case anything turn up - or some variation of it - was Micawber's favorite. For example again, when considering emigrating to Australia, he consoles his wife with his conviction *that under existing circumstances, Australia is the land, the only land, for myself and my family; and that something of an extraordinary nature will turn up on that shore.*

And so what happens in the course of the novel? We meet that villain Uriah Heep who has become administrator of the business of Mr. Wickfield, the future father-in-law of David Copperfield. While feigning humility, Heep slowly takes advantage of Mr. Wickfield's ineptitude until he controls the firm and aspires to marry Wickfield's daughter Agnes. And whom should Heep hire as his clerk but Mr. Micawber, who over time discovers Heep's false accounting and exposes the man, redeeming the happiness of all the major characters in the novel! For all his expectation that something will turn up, who is it that finally turns up but Mr. Micawber himself!

Isn't it about time that *you* turned up? We somehow spend our lives expectantly - trusting that someone, something will appear upon the horizon of space and time and turn the tide of history - some event - which event you fail to see because you yourself were created to be an event like a sunrise - to cast light and warmth - to illuminate your environment out of the very source of your Being. So when are you going to begin to happen?

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