

# **Magwitch's Revenge on Society in *Great Expectations***

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## **Introduction**

By the light of torches, we saw the black Hulk lying out a little way from the mud of the shore, like a wicked Noah's ark. Cribbed and barred and moored by massive rusty chains, the prison-ship seemed in my young eyes to be ironed like the prisoners (Chapter 5, p.34).

The sight of the Hulk is one of the most impressive scenes in *Great Expectations*. Magwitch, a convict, who was destined to meet Pip at the churchyard, was dragged back by a surgeon and solders to the hulk floating on the Thames. Pip and Joe kept a close watch on it.

Magwitch spent some days in his hulk and then was sent to New South Wales as a convict sentenced to life transportation. He decided to work hard and make Pip a gentleman in return for the kindness offered to him by this little boy. He devoted himself to hard work at New South Wales, and eventually made a fortune.

Magwitch's life is full of enigma. We do not know much about how he went through the hardships in the hulk and at NSW. What were his difficulties to make money? And again, could it be possible that a convict transported for life to Australia might succeed in life and come back to his homeland? To make the matter more complicated, he, with his money, wants to make Pip a gentleman, a mere apprentice to a blacksmith, partly as a kind of revenge on society which has continuously looked down upon a wretched convict. But even so, can a gentleman be created by money alone? With these of questions in mind, I would like to look into hulks and transportation to Australia, with due attention to Magwitch's life and his expectations, and then discuss what results from 'expectations', and what a gentleman is.

## Chapter 1

### Hulks and Transportation

The origin and history of hulks and transportation can be summarized as follows: in the highest stage of development of the United Kingdom, from the 18th century to the middle of the 19th, excessive growth of London<sup>1</sup> brought about many cruel crimes, and as being a hotbed of depravity, London was full of offenders. In addition to a rise in criminal population, another cause of a sudden increase of convicts was extreme strictness and faithfulness on the customary law. According to the rule of those days, almost two hundred offenses were treated as capital punishment. So, people were declared guilty of capital punishment even because of a trivial violation; stealing of a little money, a suit of clothes, a handkerchief, a pair of glasses and etc.<sup>2</sup> It was difficult to house all these offenders in the prisons within U.K.

This urgent, serious problem was solved by colonies of U.K. Transportation to colonies was the best idea to get rid of criminals, harmful insects in society, without the need to keep them in prisons at public expense, and to use their work force to make up for the labour shortage in colonies for economic exploitation of them. Indeed, transportation began in the 17th century as an alternative punishment to imprisonment. An act of Elizabeth I in 1597 had allowed for rogues and vagabonds to be 'banished out of this realm',<sup>3</sup> and if any one returned to his native land without permission, he was to be hanged. The earliest destination for those so banished was the New World. The system was extended by an Act of 1718<sup>4</sup> which provided for offenders who would normally be flogged and branded, and those whose death sentences were commuted to be shipped to the American colonies for seven and 14 years respectively. Large-scale transportation suddenly seemed a wonderful new solution to the major problem.

However, on the breaking out of the American War of Independence in 1775, the transportation of convicts to transatlantic possessions became an impossibility. When U.K. lost the war, she not only got a sense of humiliation of defeat but lost a huge natural prison.

At last, U.K. came up with the last resort, *Hulks Act* (June, 1776), 16 Geo. III, c. 43.<sup>5</sup> It was the beginning of using hulks as prisons. It had been available for 82 years as converting overage men-of-war into prisons. At first, it was an act valid for a specified period of time, for only two years, which the government permitted convicts to get on the "Justitia", (1776-1791)<sup>6</sup> at Woolwich, a trade ship between India and U.K. But soon hulks were moored at several places; the "Tayloe" (1776-77)<sup>7</sup> and the "Stanislaus" (1780-1802)<sup>8</sup>

at Woolwich, the “Chatham” (1778-83)<sup>9</sup> at Plymouth, the “Lion” (1788-1800)<sup>10</sup> at Gosport and so on.

As to the looks of hulks, they were large vessels without masts that had been battleships or frigates, which were fitted up for receiving male convicts sentenced to be transported. Those floating prisons were securely moored near a dockyard or arsenal, so that they had good effects to turn convict labour to account, for cleansing the Thames and other navigable rivers and applying to other public services in addition to relieving the crowded jails. They looked so horrible that they became one of attractions in Thames. Sightseers would often participate in ‘Tours of hulks’: they would go down the river by boats and go near the hulks to have a good look at them and the prisoners.<sup>11</sup>

The hulks were filled with prisoners for a time, but they had gradually proved out of use since Australia became a new place of exile in 1787.<sup>12</sup> In general, approximately one third of those on the hulks actually went to Australia. For the safety of the hulks, usually those guilty of the most violent crimes were actually transported.

However the heyday of transportation to Australia did not last long. New South Wales refused to accept convicts in 1840 and Van Diemen’s Land did in 1853, too.<sup>13</sup> The government had no choice but to abolish the institution of transportation. (In fact, however, some offenders were sent to Western Australia after that. So, it was in 1868<sup>14</sup> that it came to an end completely.) As a result, the system of hulks was formally done away with in 1858,<sup>15</sup> and the last hulk was burnt up at Woolwich.<sup>16</sup>

The total number of convicts transported to Australia is 163,021 of whom 24,960 were women between 1787 and 1868. (To New South Wales between 1787 and 1840 went 67,980 men and 12,460 women, a total of 80,440 persons).<sup>17</sup>

## **Chapter 2**

### **Hulk and Magwitch**

Why was Magwitch sentenced to transportation? He confessed to Pip and Herbert in this way: “At last, me and Compeyson was both committed for felony – on a charge of putting stolen notes in circulation – and there was other charges behind” (Chapter 42, p.311).

Compeyson was both his partner and his enemy throughout his life. He took advantage of Magwitch’s anxiety about Molly’s trial, his wife, who was accused of having killed a

woman and her child (afterward Pip knew she was Estella), and kept him in poor and wretched circumstances, making him work all the harder (Chapter 50, pp.362-363). Magwitch and Compeyson were tried and sentenced to transportation fourteen and seven years respectively. Compeyson was so evil but ingenious in behaving like a gentleman and drawing others' sympathy. He won lighter punishment at the first hearing, for he was good at getting others' favour, and then also at the second one when he and Magwitch broke out of their hulk. He took much lighter penalty than before, while Magwitch was sentenced to life transportation.

How would they be dealt with after they were sentenced to transportation at the first trial? The summary was as follows: at the termination of the assizes, the keepers of the various gaols throughout the kingdom were required to transmit to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, a list of prisoners who had received sentence of transportation, and an order was then forwarded, directing to which of the hulks they were to be conveyed. On their arrival, prisoners were immediately stripped and washed, clothed in coarse gray jackets and breeches, and two irons about 14 pounds (Magwitch seemed to have an iron on his leg, judging from Chapter 1, p.2) placed on one of the legs, to which degradation everyone had to submit, whatever might have been his previous rank and station in the world. The fetters were peculiar to hulks. They prevented convicts from escaping. They were allowed to unfasten them only during the time of working.

The hulk from which Magwitch escaped seemed to be moored in north Cooling in Kent, that is, the lowest course of Thames, because in *Great Expectations*, his hulk was laid over the marshes.<sup>1</sup> Angus Calder says in the notes of Penguin Classic edition that the scene was changed by Dickens for his work, but his hulk was indeed in the offshore of Upnor, the mouth of the Medway. At least, it is in or around Chatham. David Paroissien says it was Christmas Eve in 1803 that Magwitch met Pip. His hypothetical dating is based on historical information given in the text; he pays attention to two one-pound notes mentioned in Chapters 10, 28, and 39. His substantiation of assumption is as follows: 'the Bank of England had first issued one-pound notes in 1797 and later instructed a Select Committee in 1819 to find a way to reduce the number of forgeries prompted by the issue of notes in small denominations. No 'true expedient' for decreasing the capital crime of forgery was adopted until 1821. That year, the issue of small notes 'was wholly discontinued' and the Bank reintroduced the circulation of gold sovereigns, making one-pound notes illegal tender'<sup>2</sup>(Parroissen, 423).

However, there were in U.K. some other banks than the Bank of England. If Pip's

two-pound notes were issued by the Bank of England, we could accept his hypothetical dating as true, but the fact was not mentioned clearly. According to Hachiro Hidaka, a translator of *Great Expectations*, the incident happened during 1810-1830s. On the other hand, Robin Gilmour says it happened from approximately 1807-10 to 1823-6. ("Introduction" to The Everyman Dickens edition) In addition to them, historical documents prove that the first hulk in Medway was the "Zealand" (1810-1813),<sup>3</sup> two reports at Chatham and Sheerness. In fact, there were some hulks for prisoners of war at Chatham before 1810. In them were found Danes, Swedes, Frenchmen, and Americans. Magwitch and Compeyson might have been thrown into one of them. But the purpose and character of hulks for prisoners were quite different from those of civil convicts. It is not to be supposed that Magwitch and Compeyson were put into them as special cases. So, I guess the name of their hulk would be none other than "Zealand", and it was Christmas Eve during 1803-1813<sup>4</sup> that Magwitch met Pip.

Now let us look at his life as a convict. Firstly, as to works in hulks, the convicts were assigned to public service. The kind of work performed by them was chiefly labourers' work, such as loading and unloading vessels, moving timber and other materials, and stores, cleaning out ships, and dredging at the dockyard; 'whilst at the royal arsenal the prisoners were employed at jobs of a similar description, with the addition of cleaning guns and shot, and excavating ground for the engineer department' (Mayhew, 203). Besides the above labours, offenders were employed as cooks, bakers, washers, shoemakers, tailors, and others. Those labours were hard, irksome and brute. Prisoners generally worked willingly at a glance, but they might resign to work or desire lighter punishment under the severe discipline.

Magwitch's labour in his hulk was indicated in the following dialogue: 'So he says', resumed the convict I had recognized – 'it was all said and done in half a minute, behind a pile of timber in the Dockyard – "You're a going to be discharged!" Yes, I was. Would I found out that boy that had fed him and kept his secret, and give him them two one-pound notes? Yes, I would. And I did' (Chapter 28, p.203).

Pip overheard the dialogue when he met by chance two convicts in a coach. He knew one of them. He was the convict who had given Pip the two-pound notes in his childhood. He realised by hearing their conversation that it was Magwitch who gave him the money.

The dialogue reveals that he had worked at dockyard. The work was of the most severe kind and gave convicts the highest wage in all the labours of a hulk. Indeed, convicts received beer and other extras to the total value of from 2d to 4 1/2 a day

according to his labour at Woolwich and Portsmouth.<sup>5</sup> But unfortunately, nothing at all was allowed on board the “Zealand”. Judging from this fact, there was a possibility that Magwitch had already had some money or two-pound notes. Even so, it was very difficult for him to keep them. He would be required patience and attentiveness at all time. For the sake of deceiving officers’ eyes, he would have to obey orders of officers thoroughly and to be easily amenable to discipline. Sometimes his good intention and industry might bring him rewards and gratuities. Indeed, ‘nowhere does good behaviour meet its reward more than on board the hulks. A correct chronicle is kept of the conduct of each, and the Captain and Chaplain have the privilege of recommending annually a certain number as fit objects for a mitigation of punishment, so that it frequently occurs that a man sentenced to seven years transportation, serves only three years and a half or four years; there are also other inducements to orderly conduct, such as having the irons lightened and being promoted to little appointments which relieve from severe labour’ (“What happened to your ancestor after being convicted and sentenced to transportation?” on the Internet). In addition to these rewards, there was a fact that each prisoner was entitled to his conduct gratuity and gratuity of industry in the “Defence” (at Woolwich, 1850-57).<sup>6</sup>

It was sure that Magwitch had a hard time on board the hulk, and therefore the two-pound notes might have been what little money he had had or earned. He would deny himself even the bare necessities of life in order to save money for Pip.

As for food, the stipulated ration was very scanty, but of even a part of that convicts were defrauded. Their provisions being supplied by contractors, and not by government, were of the worst kind, such as would not be considered eatable or wholesome elsewhere.

The food in the “Retribution” (at Woolwich / Sheerness, 1803-1835)<sup>7</sup>, in the opening years of the nineteenth century, for instance, was as follows: ‘the allowance of bread is said to be about 20 oz per day. Three days in the week they have about 4 oz of cheese for dinner, and the other four days a pound of beef. The breakfast is invariably boiled barley, of the commonest kind imaginable. For supper, on meat days, the water in which the beef was boiled is thickened with barley, and the beef consists generally of old bulls, or cows which have died of age or famine’ (Branch-Johnson, 33-34).

Lastly, sanitary and discipline conditions in hulks are to be considered. As to sanitation, it was poor. Hulks had much more prisoners than the maximum permissible numbers. Besides the windows were closed, or there were few openings, if any. So, the air was bad and foul. Each convict could not have his own hammock and blanket. They were insufficient as well as other everyday goods. Those who could not have them must resign

themselves to sharing them with someone, or doing without them. As a result, it was natural that illness and disease should be spread all over the hulks, such as venereal disease, a skin disease, scurvy, tuberculosis, typhus (jail fever), dysentery, cholera and so on. Under these conditions, Magwitch would require plenty of physical strength. Indeed, he had it, for he was so energetic that he could fight with Compeyson and defeat him at sixty, though.

As to discipline, it often came in the form of corporal punishments. Officers were tyrants and they wielded their authority, often irrationally.

When Magwitch was taken to his hulk, Pip saw a crew of convicts in a boat, pick him up, and station him in among them. 'No one seemed surprised to see him, or interested in seeing him, or glad to see him, or sorry to see him, or spoke a word, except that somebody in the boat growled as if to dogs, "give way, you!"' (Chapter 5, p.34). Their behaviour was typical in indicating their indifference or resignation, or a desire to escape punishment by obeying orders. Hulks were hells in which prisoners were not treated as humans, and they would deteriorate themselves mentally and physically. It was natural that Magwitch and Compeyson should try to escape from their hulk. Magwitch miraculously survived the ill conditions and months later, he was sent to New South Wales.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Australia and Magwitch**

The internal conditions of transport ships seemed to be similar to those of hulks, excepting that the convicts were free from labours. It took them about six months to go to New South Wales. *Household Words* expressed concern that 'hardened ruffians of the deepest dye were chained hand to hand, during the voyage, with simple country poachers, pickpockets of tender age, and sailor smugglers' ("Transportation 1788-1868" on the Internet). All prisoners were treated alike, and conditions were harsh; appalling living conditions, disease, hunger, floggings and general neglect were prevalent and many convicts died en route or upon arrival.

To save expenses, captains gave convicts the very lowest food to live. Under the condition, even if prisoners managed to reach alive Australia fortunately, some could not work long hours for the sake of poor health, some were chronic invalids, and others died as soon as they arrived there. Death was occurred from disease, over crowding, willful neglect by ship's masters, doctors lacking in ability, and crewmen using violence.

In 1802, the colonial administrative agency began to give some money to a ship's doctor who had kept convicts in good health ready to labour, while giving a bonus of 50 pounds to a captain who had maintained good condition,<sup>1</sup> as it was clear that those who could not work were a burden on the developing colony. Since that year, the situation of transport ships was improved, and the death rate was decreased gradually. According to *The Convict Settlers of Australia*, on the way to Australia, 'only 1.8 percent of the men and women transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were lost in the period between 1787 and 1852' (Robson, 4). Abel Magwitch might get on board one of the transport ships in 1803-1813, as I mentioned in Chapter 2. Magwitch's ship didn't come under the category of high mortality ships<sup>2</sup> described in the book. But, actually, the situation would be much worse in his ship than was reported, because the improvement in the system of transport just began riding the boom, and because the statistics were valid only during the voyage, counting even dying convicts as sound and healthy.

What we have to pay attention to is the fact that most of the convicts were young. The average age was twenty-six years old.<sup>3</sup> The eighty percent of the criminals were from sixteen to thirty-five years old.<sup>4</sup> Magwitch was about 44 years old at that time. It is not too much to say that life on the transport ship was much more difficult and severe for him as regards his physical strength.

As for convicts' life and labour, the following statement of NSW would explain what it was. The working hours were 9 hours from Monday to Friday, and 5 hours on Saturday with a morning and noon recess to dine each day.<sup>5</sup> Their work force was divided into government agencies, service persons, civilians and settlers, but government offices had the priority to pick them up at first. Most of the prisoners worked for government-managed farms, road constructions and government office buildings until 1810, for necessities for living and controlling were in sufficiency in those days.

Each offender could work for his or her own employer by hourly wages beyond their regular working hours. To work under more than two employers was forbidden. Those who worked for government agencies were provided with meals and clothes<sup>6</sup> at government expense, but those privately employed by their own employers. Convicts' discipline depended on their own employers. It was like a lottery. The cat-o'-nine tails would often be used to punish them. A man out of six was flogged averaged 35 times every year.<sup>7</sup> If a criminal committed a crime there again, he or she was sent to places of exile for felons.<sup>8</sup>

In 1810, Colonel Lachlan Macquarie was inaugurated as Governor-in-Chief in NSW.



He came to be known as the founding father of Australia afterwards. He preached Evangelicalism and adapted favourable policies for emancipists<sup>9</sup>; well-behaved prisoners should be accepted as upper classes and appointed to official positions, even if they were formerly convicts. This line of policy spurred convicts to work on their own initiative. In addition, it stimulated them to own their plots of land which were granted by former provisions<sup>10</sup> to model prisoners. NSW had already laid the foundations, and some emancipists made their fortune and became respectable by 1810. Besides, John Macarthur succeeded in producing Merino wool in the Cowpastures (Candem), and its production increased. After 1815, one fertile land after another was found around Bathurst.

On the other hand, the first trade firm was established in 1798,<sup>11</sup> and the NSW Bank in 1817<sup>12</sup> (Magwitch might have opened an account at the bank to send Jagger's money for educating Pip). NSW was in the process of losing the function of a penal colony. Magwitch was one of the fortunate. There were chances to make fortune at the time he came there. He shrewdly seized the opportunity. In fact, 'of the men transported prior to 1821 16 percent became something more than labourers. Included in this 16 percent are such persons as brewers, carpenters, tinsmiths, and harness-makers, as well as those who are noted landholders or merchants. It is noteworthy that of the men on strength at 1810 50 percent did well, to the extent of becoming landholders, merchants or tradesmen' (Robson, 102).

The convicts were assigned to either the government or to trades as labour-force, under the assignment system in place until 1840. Magwitch might have been engaged in official and public constructions at first, and then was assigned to his employer, an emancipist who turned to be an established sheep-owner, or he might have worked under him from the beginning. He would work hard beyond his regular working hours, and learn how to raise sheep. All this he did simply to repay Pip for his kindness and at the same time to realise his dream of making a gentleman by his own hands. His resolution was so firm like a diamond that he had resisted and overcome temptation of rum. Rum was the only comfort in NSW, a penal colony. In fact, many emancipists and prisoners gave way to it, threw their money on it and were corrupted again.

Fortunately, Magwitch has capital, for his master had left a fortune to him. Magwitch might have been high in his master's favour for his loyal and industrious attitude to the work. In addition to it, his master would have sympathized with him, for he himself was once a convict, too. So Magwitch would hardly have unreasonable punishments given him. He said to Pip, "I got money left me by my master (which died, and had been the same as me), and got my liberty and went for my self" (Chapter 39, p.286). I suppose that his rank

was the second out of the seventh.<sup>13</sup> To get his liberty he might have bought a ticket-of-leave<sup>14</sup> with money, and became an emancipist, the first rank. This happened occasionally. In fact, criminals were discharged if only they paid some money in hulks. Magwitch's ticket-of-leave was conditional on his permanent residence in Australia.

It deserved capital punishment if he returned his homeland. He set up in business on his own, using his inherited fortune. He told Pip about his occupation in NSW as follows: "I've been a sheep-farmer, stock-breeder, other trades besides, away in the new world" (Chapter 39, p.283). Presumably his main work was production of wool. He might be a stock farmer, keeping cattle, horses, pigs and sheep dogs except sheep, and be a corndealer<sup>15</sup> at the same time. He tried every possible means to achieve success.

Magwitch dropped a hint about his working place in Chapter 40, p.295, "A.M. (Abel Magwitch) come back from Botany Bay." I suppose that he lived near Botany Bay, that is to say, he did business in the suburbs of Sydney: Camden, Bathurst, Parramatta and so on. According to *The Tyranny of Distance*, seven sheep and eight cows out of ten in Australia were kept within 40 miles from Sydney in 1821.<sup>16</sup> It was because the transport was very expensive and the road conditions were very bad at that time. The charge for conveying on land routes was 20 times as expensive as on the sea.<sup>17</sup> If you wanted to buy a carriage with 3 cows in 1820s, you should pay 90-120 pounds, besides covering the cost of feeding them.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, the nearer the sea you lived, the more you were able to look after your own interests. It would be one of the main causes of his success that Magwitch lived near the sea, thus not spending great deal of money to transport his wool.

Another main cause of Magwitch's success was that wool was very valuable in those days. For ten years from 1811 to 1820, wool of the average quality had been estimated at two shillings per one pound in U.K., and the price usually stayed at 224 pounds a ton or more and seldom went below it.<sup>19</sup>

He afforded to send to Pip 500 pounds 'in earnest of his expectations' (chapter 36, p.257), and besides promised to give 500 pounds for yearly living expenses when he was 21 years old. His income would be 500-1000 pounds a year at least. If all these expenses, personal expenses and maintenance costs, were covered by livestock, not including sheep, dairy products made from sheep's milk, and others, he must have kept 313-626 Merino sheep (this figure is based on the supposition that Merino wool was traded at four shillings a pound, for it was one of the first rate kinds of wool; so he would be supposed to have gained 448 pounds a ton; supposing his Merino sheep being of Spanish origin, the average wool sheared from a sheep was about eight pounds).<sup>20</sup> As for the size of his land, a sheep

needing an acre under the climate of Australia,<sup>21</sup> he would have possessed about 500-800 acres.

Lastly, let us turn our eyes to Magwitch's life as a shepherd. The shepherds' schedule for the year is roughly as follows: in October, you shear sheep with an instrument – a pair of scissors at that time; they are much less useful and secure than a pair of hair clippers. In November, you usually begin to put sheep to pasture. December is the weaning period. February is for pairing, and in April, you prepare the sheep shed for them. In May, you finish grazing them on the pasture. June and July are the time to prepare for child-bearing. August and September are the season for having lambs, suckling them, cutting their tails and castrating rams. These months are the busiest time in a year, for you usually have to stay up all night to help the mother sheep with their safe delivery. Throughout the year, of course, you keep paying attention to their cleanliness and health by brushing and cutting their dirty wool.

Magwitch would come back under the false name of Provis through illegal channels. On the surface he seemed to have come to see Pip, a gentleman, but clearly he returned at the risk of his life when Pip was 23 years old; he had accumulated sufficient fortune to live with Pip. Another cause for Magwitch to come home was the New South Wales Act of 1821, which confirmed all past pardons, but which limited the governor's powers for the future. Macquarie's permissive policy on prisoners was done away with. It prohibited granting small plots of land to emancipists, or placing them at public offices, and tightened the control over convicts as severely as prisons in U.K. And besides, the law was revised in about 1825 as follows: immigrants had the priority about the right to use land and convicts over successful emancipists. Emancipists could not get a head in the economic, social, political, and business world. These things were a source of friction between convicts and immigrants. Magwitch might have despaired and decided to forsake 'The New World'. Anyway, he arrived at London in November at the age of 60 to see Pip whom he made a gentleman of by his means.

However, Magwitch was informed against to the police by Compeyson, his old enemy. Compeyson wanted Magwitch to be sentenced to death and besides to receive 'blood-money'<sup>22</sup> as an informer. At last, Magwitch was arrested and Compeyson was dead, for a while, Magwitch was also killed by serious wound he got when he struggled with Compeyson on the board.

## Chapter 4

### A Genuine Gentleman

All the truth of my position came flashing on me; and its disappointments, dangers, disgraces, consequences of all kinds, rushed in in such a multitude that I was borne down by them and had to struggle for every breath I drew. (Chapter 39, p.284)

To his greatest consternation, Pip knew that the benefactor of his great expectations was not Miss Havisham but Magwitch. These words reflect what blow Pip received from the revelation.

The fact and reality of his expectations destroyed all his dreams: to be a gentleman, to get married to Estella, and to give Joe a good education to 'remove him into a higher sphere' (Chapter 19, p.132). He ought to have looked forward to seeing his donor. He ought to have thanked his benefactor for his or her kindness. Instead, Pip gave up all hope, and felt a twinge of remorse over having deserted Joe for a despicable convict, Magwitch. He did not realise how blind and false a gentleman he had been until he lost all his expectations.

Magwitch said, "I'm making a better gentleman nor ever *you'll* be!" (Chapter 39, p.287) – this pride and hope was Magwitch's purpose to live for. He had devoted himself entirely to the dream, simply to return Pip's kindness. His whole life depended on making Pip a genuine gentleman.

Magwitch might have had his own definition of a gentleman – a man of money and good manners. This was formed by his two past events. One was his ragged and miserable childhood. His shabby appearance made other people avoid and suspect him. As a result, he came to trust nobody. In his deserted circumstances, he could not help scratching a living by committing crimes.

Another was Compeyson. Magwitch had worked under Compeyson for a few years in order to protect Molly, as he knew that Compeyson gathered evidence of her having murdered a woman and her child, as I mentioned in Chapter 2. Magwitch described to Pip and Herbert what Compeyson was as follows: "he set up fur a gentleman, this Compeyson, and he'd been to a public boarding-school and had learning. He was a smooth one to talk, and was a dab at the ways of gentlefolks. He was good-looking too" (Chapter 42, p.308). "He had a watch and a chain and a ring and a breast-pin and a handsome suit of clothes" (*ibid.*). Compeyson's nice looks and glib tongues gave other people an impression that he

was good and honest. Even when Magwitch and Compeyson were arrested for putting stolen notes in circulation as felons, and brought to trial, Compeyson was regarded as a much lighter criminal than Magwitch, because of his respectable appearance, behaviour and character. Magwitch realised acutely that all things depended on money, and people judged a person only from his appearance, that is to say, whether he or she had money or not.

Thus Magwitch decided to take revenge on Compeyson and those who had criticised and derided him, but he had not taken the opportunity to do so. On that day of Christmas Eve in the opening chapters of the novel, he was shown kindness for the first time by a little boy, Pip. This incident moved him, and something 'clicked in his throat' (Chapter 3, p.15). Thanks to Pip, he got a chance to regain human heart and feelings.

Pip overlapped Magwitch in his miserable childhood: he was a poor orphan. Magwitch loved Pip all the better because he seemed to be as old as his daughter (Estella), if she had been alive. So he found in Pip a suitable tool for revenge. He thought that by making him a true gentleman by his means he would be able to revenge on Compeyson, a bogus gentleman, and those whose discernment and judgment depended on appearance, not reality.

Magwitch headed straight for his goal. He bore up what life he had in a hulk and in Australia. He would often remember Pip when he had much harder time. Pip was the only emotional support to him, and nothing else. His passion for making him a gentleman supported him through hard conditions, and saved him from falling into vice. At last, he succeeded in his business and he sent Pip his money to be a gentleman.

In London, however, charm of money had corrupted Pip. He was not what he was. Kind, innocent and tenderhearted Pip had gone, who had once said to Magwitch, "I am glad you enjoy it" (Chapter 3, p.15). He wiped off his disgusting past dressing up like a fashionable man, and deserting Joe when he came all the way up to London to see him. However the more he looked like a gentleman, the farther away he was from the true heart of a gentleman.

Pip realised that his rank was lower than that of a blacksmith when he knew that Magwitch's money had made him a gentleman. He regretted that he paid dearly for what he had achieved in life. He profoundly felt sorry for Joe and Biddy. If a gentleman could have been made by money, Pip would have felt glad to meet Magwitch who made him a gentleman. It was a pity that Pip also believed; if only he had much money, he could be a gentleman. But the revelation came to him all of a sudden that money was not everything

for a gentleman. Money could never buy friendship and love.

Magwitch took a big risk in coming back to see Pip. He did not care he would be killed in realising that purpose. He wanted Pip “to know as that there hunted dunghill dog wot you kept life in, got his head so high that he could make a gentleman”(Chapter 39, p.285). To see the gentleman Pip again was, to Magwitch, the realisation of his long-cherished desire, and when this was done, he achieved his fulfillment of life. He thought that his hard life was duly rewarded by Pip, and he was unable to control his emotions. In a sense, he was innocent. He simply took it for granted that money would make Pip a gentleman. He knew nothing of the world. As a result, Magwitch made a bogus gentleman of Pip (he assumed Pip to be a gentleman), but his pureness, innocence, naiveté and ignorance would later bring about pangs of conscience in Pip, and make him a true gentleman.

The great change in Pip’s sensibility occurred with the return of Magwitch. Leon Litvack keeps his eyes on Pip’s terms of reference for Magwitch (See table).<sup>1</sup> After Pip met him again, he called him ‘Provis’ in most cases, for he wanted to keep a distance between Magwitch and himself by not using his real name, rather than to harbor and protect Magwitch. Pip was bound to Magwitch through a code of honor among thieves. For a long time, he had felt ‘the guiltily coarse and common thing it was, to be on secret terms of conspiracy with convicts’ (Chapter 10, p.68).

Pip called him by the name ‘Magwitch’ only nine times. As far as I counted, seven out of nine were used after Magwitch was captured and shackled at his wrists and ankles. He looked back over the moment of Magwitch’s arrest as follows: ‘when I took my place by Magwitch’s side, I felt that that was my place henceforth while he lived’ (Chapter 54, p.398). His change indicated that he resigned himself to his fate and accepted Magwitch as a person.

Pip did all he could for Magwitch; he earnestly desired Magwitch to die without receiving a death sentence; that was, he hoped he would die as a human. He also wrote out petitions to the Home Secretary of State, to such men in authority as he hoped were the most merciful and drew up one to the Crown itself (Chapter 56, p.409). In addition to them, he called on him everyday. When his death was approaching, he called him “Dear Magwitch”, and removed his anxiety and regret about his daughter, Estella. He suggested Magwitch that he would get married with Estella and make her happy. Thanks to his gentlemanly behaviour, Magwitch’s last moment was peaceful and he died happy.

The definition of a gentleman is given as follows: he is one who never inflicts pain.

He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd. He is patient, forbearing, and resigned, on philosophical principles; he submits to pain, because it is inevitable, to bereavement, because it is irreparable, and to death, because it is his destiny [*The Idea of a University*, by John Henry Newman (1865)]. If I may add to the definition, I want to propose three elements.

Firstly, he has strength to accept his fate. When he accepts it, his worldview will change. It was not until Magwitch was captured that Pip accepted his destiny. He recollected: ‘my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted wounded shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously, towards me with great constancy through a series of years. I only saw in him a much better man than I had been to Joe’ (Chapter 54, pp.398-399). At last, he began to love Magwitch and express his profound gratitude to him. Here he recovered his former innocent, kind-hearted self, which might parallel with the real merit of Joe, who was, in the true sense of the word, a genuine gentleman throughout the story of *Great Expectations*. He was of the working class, but he loved his blacksmith work, and prided himself on it. He was noble even though he did not have much money.

Secondly, he has strength to forgive errors of another person and protect his or her weakness. Pip forgave Miss Havisham and Magwitch who respectively used him as a tool for revenge on men and society. He never put them into a corner and behaved respectfully toward them when they were in difficult situation.

Lastly, he wants to do what he should do. This is the most important element. Pip’s behaviour for Magwitch showed this precisely when he was on his death-bed. He did what he should do then on his own initiative, for he appreciated and loved him, in the same way as, Joe shouldered Pip’s debts out of sheer desire to help him.

A gentleman is something in your heart. You can cultivate your manners and culture of a gentleman to a certain extent. They are like a piece of plywood which varnishes the real stuff within. But that real stuff will come out when exposed to crises of life in which nobility of heart and beneficent deed are freely revealed to others. In such moments a man could be called “a gentleman”.

In *Great Expectations*, the definition of a gentleman depends on his heart and soul. Dickens did not put emphasis on social standing or fortune but on inner qualities of man in calling him a true gentleman. By writing the vicissitudes of life Pip had experienced, he

tried to show readers that a man who had profound kindness and inner strength should be respected and called “a gentleman”.<sup>2</sup>

## **Conclusion**

### **Magwitch’s Revenge on Society**

It was almost a miracle that Magwitch had borne all difficult and severe conditions in a hulk and in Australia. The life in a hulk and in Australia was beyond our imagination. Under the conditions in which many felons were found everywhere, convicts might be required to possess tough mental strength as well as tough physical strength. Temptations of vice always waited for them. Human beings are easy to corrupt, but once corrupted, it is very difficult for them to come up to the normal. It is like an ant-lion larva.

Magwitch’s success was due to his dream that he would make Pip a gentleman by his hands. His expectation of seeing Pip, a gentleman, had kept him above temptations. In addition, it had been his only support and comfort, and encouraged him in his hard life. At last, he earned his fortune by honest labour.

Magwitch, though he might have achieved success on the periphery, could not hope to be welcomed in England and by Pip. With money coming from the sweat and labour of a convict, Pip would never be a true gentleman, as no credit and reputation came out of it. Thus Pip failed to be a tool for revenge on society, as Magwitch had desired.

However, it is also true that Pip could not have become a genuine gentleman without Magwitch. Though Magwitch’s money helped him towards that ideal, it did not achieve its end. It supplied Pip with a longing for what he was not, and brought him back to a matured self. He was terribly shocked at Magwitch’s confession. Meeting Magwitch again gave him an opportunity to shake himself free from the blind ideas he had entertained towards a gentleman. Through that incident, Pip came to learn that money would never pay friendship and love, and he cultivated the inner strength to protect others when they were in adversity and put up with his own frustration. In addition, Magwitch’s pureness, innocence and devotion to Pip taught him how important it was to understand things not by logic, but by heart. In a sense, Magwitch helped Pip to become noble and honorable.

By reading *Great Expectations*, we come to realise that we need to cherish a passion to live on, whether it takes a form of dream or a form of revenge. It will support us when we are in trouble because we are sure to overcome our troubled circumstances in order to



realise the far more important thing; a passion, a dream or an expectation. We need it in life.

Another thing we learn from this novel is that we constantly come across irreparable errors, but these errors may prove opportunities to change ourselves. If we cultivate our inner strength to admit them as errors, we may prove ourselves nobler and reveal the true property of our deeper self.

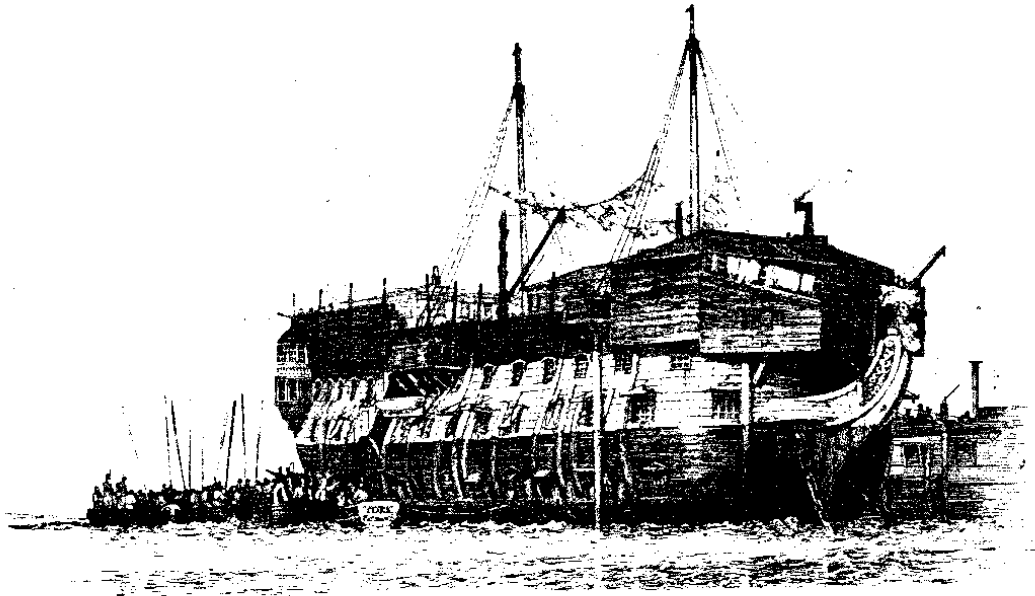
## Notes

### Chapter 1

1. 'Population of London ran into about seven hundred thousand in 1700. It had increased from about a million to 1.5 million for the first thirty years in 19th, and reached 2 million in 1840, and then 5 million in 1880s' (Ando and *et.al.*eds. p.75, 81).
2. Masako Endo, *Osutorariamonogatari (The story of Australia)*, p.54.
3. Geoffrey Bailey, *The Tyranny of Distance (Kyori no Bogyaku)*, p.197.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore: A History of the Transportation of Convict to Australia, 1787-1868*, p.38.
6. Jenny Fawcett, "A List of Known Hulks" on the Internet.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. Unknown authorship, "Hulks" on the Internet.
12. Brain Bailey, *The Guinness Book of Crime*, p.197.
13. *Ibid.*, 198.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Unknown authorship, "Hulks" on the Internet.
16. The last hulk was the "Defence". On the 14th of July, 1857, it was destroyed by fire.
17. L.L. Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia*, p.4.

## Appendix

### Hulk



*H.M.S. York* as a hulk at Portsmouth, 1828

Source: W. Branch-Johnson, *The English Prison Hulks*. The frontispiece.

## Chapter 2

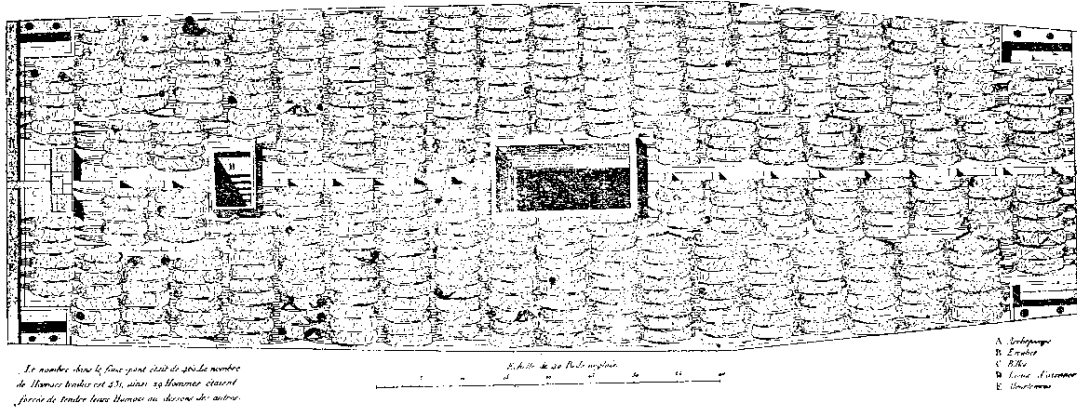
1. Toshikazu Nakanishi, *Igirisubungaku to kangoku (English Literature and Prison)*, p.36.
2. According to Thelma Grove, the dates for the issue – from 1797 to 1821 with a further issue from 1825-26, helps to date the action of the novel as starting somewhere between 1805-9. [*The Dickens Magazine*, 1 (2) (2000): 11]
3. W. Branch-Johnson, *The English Prison Hulks*, p.36.
4. In fact, we are not told what bank had issued notes. However, I infer that there was every possibility that Magwitch saw Pip in 1810, if Magwitch was imprisoned in the “Zealand” in 1810, and Pip’s two-pound notes were issued by the Bank of England in 1826 as Thelma Grove mentioned.
5. Branch-Johnson, 39.
6. Henry Mayhew and John Binny, *Criminal Prison of London*, pp.205-206.
7. The “Retribution” was moored at Sheerness (Medway) in 1829 after having served at Woolwich since 1803.

## Appendixes

### 1. Hammock plan

Hulks were overcrowded with convicts as shown in the following illustration. Hammock plan was practiced by Aaron Graham, a young magistrate.

VUE DE L'INTÉRIEUR DU PONTON LE BRUNSWICK.



Hammock plan, Orlop deck of *Brunswick* prisoner-of-war hulk at Chatham, 1813

Source: W. Branch-Johnson, *The English Prison Hulks*, p.49.

### 2. Week-day schedule of convicts

The following summary of a week-day in the 1830s on board the “Leviathan” (1816-46) at Portsmouth may be accepted as typical of the day on board all other hulks.

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 3.00 a.m. | Cooks rise to prepare prisoners' breakfast.  |
| 5.30 a.m. | All hands called.  |
| 5.45 a.m. | Muster on deck; breakfast; “then one of the three decks is washed, which is done every morning alternately.”   |
| 6.45 a.m. | Each prisoner brings his hammock, stows it away on deck, and proceeds to labor. “On leaving the hulk their irons are examined by the guards, who also search their persons to prevent anything improper being concealed; and in order that they may be more strict in the execution of this duty, in the event of anything being afterwards found upon a prisoner, the guard that searched him is made responsible.... The prisoners are divided into sections of ten, each of which is subdivided as occasions, to make them more efficient, may require, and delivered into the charge of dockyard labourers.... The prisoners are overlooked by the First and Second Mate, who patrol the yard not only to prevent them from straying, or attempting to escape, but to make all parties attend strictly to their duties.” |

At a quarter of an hour before the return of the prisoners on shore from labour, those employed on board are mustered to ascertain whether the number is correct.

- 12.00 noon Prisoners return for dinner, and are searched to prevent any public stores being brought out of the dockyard; after which a general muster takes place. Dinners are served by officers, and the prisoners are locked up in their wards to eat it. A watch, consisting of an officer and half the ship's company, is set on and between decks, where they remain until 12.40, when the other half relieves them.
- 1.20 p.m. Prisoners return on shore for labour.
- 5.45 p.m. On board again. Irons are examined, and their persons searched as in the forenoon.
- 6.30 p.m. School commences.
- 7.30 p.m. Players in the chapel; then all prisoners mustered and locked in their wards for the night.
- 9.00 p.m. Lights out.

Source: W. Branch-Johnson, *The English Prison Hulks*, pp.101-102.

### 3. The Comparison between summer and winter in schedule of convicts.

The working hours in summer were longer than in winter. Another hulk's schedule is as follows.

THE DAILY DISTRIBUTION OF TIME ON BOARD THE "DEFENCE" HULK.						
Occupation.	In Summer (longest day).			In Winter (shortest day).		
	(In intermediate seasons, the hours vary according to light).					
	A.M.	A.M.	Hrs. Min.	A.M.	A.M.	Hrs. Min.
Prisoners rise, wash, and roll up hammocks.....	5 30	6 0	0 = 0 30	5 30	6 0	0 = 0 30
Breakfast (officers and servants).....	6 0	6 30	0 = 0 30	6 0	6 30	0 = 0 30
Cleaning classes.....	6 30	7 15	0 = 0 45	6 30	7 15	0 = 0 45
In readiness to turn out to work (preparing the boats, &c.).....	7 15	7 30	0 = 0 15	7 15	7 30	0 = 0 15
Labour, including landing and marching to and from working ground.....	7 30	12 noon	= 4 30	7 30	12 noon	= 4 30
Dinner for officers and prisoners.....	12 noon	1 P.M.	= 1 0	12 noon	1 P.M.	= 1 0
Labour, including mustering and marching to and from working ground.....	1 P.M.	5 30	= 4 30	1 P.M.	4 0	= 3 0
Prisoners are mustered, wash, and prepare for supper....	5 30	6 0	0 = 0 30	4 0	4 45	= 0 45
Supper, washing-up, &c. ....	6 0	6 45	= 0 45	4 45	5 30	= 0 45
Evening prayers, school, and those not at school repairing clothing, &c., mustered intermediately.....	6 45	8 30	= 1 45	5 30	7 30	= 2 0
Sling hammocks.....	8 30	9 0	0 = 0 30	7 30	8 0	0 = 0 30
All in bed.....	9 0			8 0		
	Total from 5.30 A.M. to 8.0 P.M. 15 30			Total from 5.30 A.M. to 8.0 P.M. 14 30		
ABSTRACT OF THE ABOVE.						
Meals.....	2 15			2 15		
Labour, including mustering, and moving to and from.....	9 0			7 30		
In-door occupation, evening instruction, &c., &c. ....	4 15			4 45		
	In Summer..... 15 30			In Winter.... 14 30		

Source: Henry Mayhew and John Binny, *Criminal Prisons of London*, p.212.

### Chapter 3

1. *Zusetsu Sekaibunkachiri daihyakka (World, Cultural and Geographical encyclopedia Illustrated)*, General editor. Akio Watanabe, p.150.
2. 'For example, the Second Fleet set out in 1790 with 1,017 convicts, of whom no less than 267 died on their way to Sydney. There was also heavy mortality because of typhoid on board the *Hillsborough* in 1798, which lost 95 out of 300 men, and on the *Royal Admiral (II)*\* in 1800, 43 men out of 300; the *Atlas (I)* in 1801, lost 65 out of 179 men because of overcrowding' (L.L. Robson, *The Convict settlers of Australia*, p. 4).
- \* Voyages made by ships of the same name were numbered to distinguish them.
3. Robson, 8.
4. *Oseaniashi (The history of Oceania)*, Editor. Matori Yamamoto, p.93.
5. Manning Clark, *A short History of Australia (Osutoraria no rekishi)*, Trans. Mioko Takeshita, p.29.
6. They were called "Magpie", showy uniforms in Australia. Their colour was yellow and black. When convicts worked for road construction and other public utilities, they had to be in fetters as a symbol of prisoners.
7. Yamamoto, 93.
8. Moreton Bay, Port Macquarie, Newcastle, Norfolk Island, Port Arthur and so on.
9. Emancipist: a well-behaved prisoner who was given the Ticket-of-Leave.
10. 'Those who had completed their terms were granted small plots of land, with the aim of boosting the local economy and ensuring that these undesirable – regardless of whether their crimes were 'worked out and paid for' – did not return to British shores' ("Transportation 1788-1868" on the Internet).
11. Clark, 26.
12. *Ibid.*, 51.
13. All convicts were judged according to their records of labour, their industry and reliance as follows.

#### [The classification of male convicts in Australia]

The first rank: a convict who is given the Ticket-of-Leave by the viceroy. He can receive a reward for his work, possess his fortune and live in a hut by himself. He is the freest convict even though he is under probation. If he commits a crime again, his ticket is taken up.

The second rank: a convict who is assigned free immigrants. He can work for them under their reliance and protection.

The third rank: a convict with a chain who engages in public construction work under the government direct orders.

The fourth rank: a convict with a chain who belongs to a team of road works.

The fifth rank: a convict with a chain of iron who labours as hardly as a human can.

The sixth rank: a convict on the blacklist who commits a crime in a penal colony again. He must work with one or two great irons and chain of iron under surveillance in criminal establishments.

The seventh rank: a special long-term felon who needs strict watching. He must labour putting one or two great irons and chain of iron.

Source: Kazuyoshi Shigematsu, *Zusetsu Sekai no kangokushi (World Prisons Illustrated)*, p.158.

14. Ticket-of-Leave: the deed of conditional release.

15. Corn was the most expensive of agricultural products at that time.

16. Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance (Kyori no bougyaku)*, Trans. Toshihisa Nagasaka and Hiroshi Kobayash, p.99.

17. *Ibid.*, 100.

18. *Ibid.*, 101.

19. *Ibid.*, 103.

20. Ryoza Mizuno, *Men, Yomo, Kinu Tokuhon (The Book of Cotton, Wool, and Silk)*, p.127.

21. *Ibid.*, 145.

22. People were rewarded for informing a criminal or suspicious person. It was called 'blood-money'.

The name signified money given in exchange for the life of another. Compeyson would have received 20 pounds if he had been successful in informing Magwitch who returned home even though he was sentenced to life transportation.

## Appendix

### Ticket-of-Leave

D. 17.

**TICKET OF LEAVE PASSPORT.**

The Bearer Thomas Griffiths No. 45  
Convict by the Ship Anna 10/ 1837 holding a  
Ticket of Leave No. 44/253 for the District of Paterson  
which is deposited in the Police Office at do  
and whose personal Description and Signature are on the other side, has obtained  
the permission of His Excellency the Governor to proceed to the  
Barren River in the service of  
Mr David Ryan  
for twelve months, from the date hereof, conforming himself in every  
respect, according to the regulations laid down for the guidance of Convicts of his  
class.

Given at the Office of the Principal Superintendent of Convicts,  
Sydney, this thirtieth Day of May  
One Thousand Eight Hundred and forty five

Registered  
Thomas Ryan  
Chief Clerk.

M. H. G. L.

Philip Gidley King, Governor-in-Chief (Sept. 1800 – Aug. 1806), introduced the system of Ticket-of-Leave in 1801. If a criminal took it, he or she could work as a wage earner. The issue of it was set severe conditions and annulled at any time.

Source: *Zusetsu Sekaibunkachiri daihyakka (World, Cultural and Geographical encyclopedia Illustrated)*, General editor. Akio Watanabe, pp.158-159.

## Chapter 4

1.

### Table

#### Terms of Reference for Magwitch

Table					
Terms of Reference for Magwitch					
Used by	'Convict' <sup>1</sup>	'My Convict'	'Provis'	'Mr Campbell'	'Magwitch'
Pip	8	17	42	1	9
Herbert Pocket	—	—	11	3	—
Jaggers	—	—	7	—	6
Magwitch	—	—	1	—	6
Orlick	—	—	3	—	2
Joe	3	—	—	—	—
Mr Wosple	2	—	—	—	—
Compeyson	—	—	—	—	1
Sergeant <sup>2</sup>	1	—	—	—	—
Man who held the lines <sup>3</sup>	—	—	1	—	1

1. Includes cases where Magwitch is referred to in conjunction with Compeyson as 'convicts'.  
 2. See volume 1, chapter 5 (single volume chapter 5).  
 3. See volume 3, chapter 15 (single volume chapter 54).

Source: *The Dickensian*, 95 (1999): 127

2. 'A "gentle" man for Dickens himself is exactly that: a kind, considerate, courteous individual, sensitive to the feelings of others, respectful of people in all walks of life, and admiring of talent and achievement wherever it shows itself' (Newlin, 49).

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