This study investigates the causes for the rise of statistical thinking during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and questions the extent to which the subsequent popular fascination with statistical studies influenced the literary art of Charles Dickens. If Dickens shared a healthy ambivalence about statistics with his Victorian readers, did that feeling shape his art in some way? Data drawn from contemporary literature, personal correspondence, and Dickens’ own work all show evidence of a progressive and parallel interest in mathematical and statistical language and themes. That is to say, as statistical inquiry grew more popular in the real world of Charles Dickens, statistical rhetoric grew in the world of his fiction. This study traces that progress through “The Mudfog Papers” (1836-37), \textit{A Christmas Carol} (1843), and \textit{The Chimes} (1844) to its culmination in \textit{Hard Times} (1854). The investigation concludes that in \textit{Hard Times} Dickens perfected the rhetoric of quantification—the use of statistical and mathematical language and imagery—and employed it as an integral satiric element. With the rhetoric of quantification as a satiric device, Dickens raised to an art form the language of numbers, or quantification, so pervasive in popular culture. Through the rhetoric of quantification Dickens expressed another unique feature of his genius for transforming real-life fact into fiction.