

MEMORIES OF IMMORTAL DICKENS

AWAKENED BY THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF THE MASTER OF THE WORLD'S TEARS & LAUGHTER



ARTHUR BOURCHIER AS CALEB PLUMMER AND VIOLET VANBRUGH AS BERTHA IN THE "CRICKET ON THE HEARTH"



SIR HENRY IRVING AS EBENEZER SCROOGE IN "A CHRISTMAS CAROL"



DE WOLF HOPPER AS MR. PICKWICK IN "PICKWICK PAPERS"



FASSALL'S POSTER FOR "THE ONLY WAY" A STAGE VERSION OF "A TALE OF TWO CITIES"

BY WARWICK JAMES PRICE.
ONE knows no anniversaries. The heart never needs to be prodded to warm remembrances by a decennial or a centenary.
That the world, then, has reached the 28th June 8th since Charles Dickens, in 1850, laid by forever the pen which had made him master of the tears and laughter of thousands, neither broadens nor deepens our love for the man, but it does impart a welcome timeliness to the retelling of his brief and brilliant story.
English fiction offers many a name lying close to the hearts of today's "Gentle Readers." Joseph Addison seems a bit far-off, perhaps a little cold in his persistent brightness, but we hold him dear. The very frailties of Goldsmith make him the more truly an object of affectionate regard. We take genuine delight in the great-heartedness of that Sir Walter who "never lost a friend." Admiration for "William Makepeace Thackeray, white waistcoat and all," grows to downright attachment. Brown-eyed, vivacious Jane Austen stirs delight no less than lasting fondness. But none of these (nor yet Robert Louis Stevenson, cherry and gallant) is so deeply loved as Charles Dickens. We know the personages of "Boz" by heart, we play games with his incidents and names, while from grateful souls we believe that there never was so much fun, and that there never will be conceived again such inimitable beings as live today, immortal, in those ever-fresh, ever-varied pages.



MADGE LESSING AS "EMILY" A RECENT DRAMATIZATION OF THE NOVEL OF DAVID COPPERFIELD

FAC-SIMILE OF THE NOVELIST'S SIGNATURE AS BOZ WRITTEN IN 1841



PEGRAM'S STATUE OF DICKENS, EXHIBITED IN THE PRESENT ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION



BRANBY WILLIAMS AS WACKFORD SQUEERS



BRANBY WILLIAMS AS URIAH HEEP

Boy's Bravery Under Hardship.
Charles John Huffham Dickens (as he was baptised) owed nothing to birth or culture. When he arrived in the world, February 7, 1812 (just as America was joining conflict for the second time with the mother country), he entered the home of a procrastinating, improvident, hand-to-mouth sort of a government clerk at Landport, near Portsmouth. That father's failings have been drawn for all time in "Micawber" and "Little Dorrit" still pictures forth vividly that Marshalsea Debtors Prison where the bankrupt parent was set to work when this second of his eight children was a lad of ten.
The family moved up to great, grand London to be near its incompetent head, and little Charles, at an age when most children are at their games, went to work, for the princely salary of six shillings the week in a blacking factory. Think of the bright, imaginative little fellow (he had actually written a "tragedy" when seven) condemned to 14 hours of miserable drudgery in every 24, mental work in surroundings that are flattered by the word ungenial. But that was to be the uncomplaining machine, the gallant endurance of hardship, the spirit of quiet heroism which the novelist was to hold up to admiration, these traits all above clear in this over-worked, under-aged factory-boy, as he "learned in suffering what he taught in song."
Later there chanced along a small legacy to the unworthy father, the care of the Marshalsea and began life anew as a reporter on the "Morning Chronicle." Then the boy was given a couple of years' schooling.
The School of the Streets.
Years after, when an acquaintance asked where the creator of Pickwick had been educated, his Micawber of a parent, gutta serena unsympathetically and ventured that "he sort of educated himself." It was as true as unfeeling. The crumbs of learning which had fallen to Charles,

just entering his teens, and earlier for a brief space at Chatham, were of scant account. Books and the London streets were his real teachers. "Don Quixote" and "Gil Bias," "The Vicar of Wakefield" and "Robinson Crusoe," "Tom Jones" and "Sir Roger de Coverley"—these had been his earliest masters, as well as glorious companions when the tedious factory hours had ended and he was again in his London garret, least alone when most solitary.
Browning once said he had graduated from the "University of Italy," and in the same sense Dickens' alma mater was the busy, heartless "University of London." The city highways and byways were his school and he became their authentic historian. Like Dr. Johnson, he bore passionate love for Fleet street and the Strand. When he depicts a country village it seems conscious dramatic, un-real; but his pictures of the bustling metropolis are perfect. To the present-day traveler, acquainted fitly with his Dickens, the whole of London is redolent of the old, especially the sections which lie along the river. His characters still are everywhere to be met with in twentieth century flesh.
The Plunge into Print.
The youth tried a brief hand at the law, but newspaperdom held more fascination for him than any barrister's office, and, studying shorthand, he became first one of the True Sun's parliamentary reporters, then serving the Chronicle in like capacity. It is interesting to note that, while studying shorthand, he became a member of the "Punch" office, and in the same way he was introduced to the columns of the evening edition of his own paper (his salary was by that raised from five to seven shillings a week), and then stood before the world "between covers," with no less an one than Crickshank's master as his illustrator.



J.L. TOOLE AS THE ARTFUL DODGER



SIR HENRY IRVING AS "BILL SYKES"

TYPICAL NOTES IN PRAISE OF DICKENS
The good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever-friendly, noble Dickens—every inch of him an Honest Man.—Carlyle.
Dickens' style is descriptive, racy and flowing; it is instinct with new images and singular illustrations.—Bagehot.
Dickens shows that the haunts of the blackest crimes are sometimes lighted up by the presence and influence of the noblest souls.—Channing.
Chief in his generation born of men
Whom English praise acclaimed as English-born,
With eyes that matched the world-wide eyes of morn
For gleam of tears or laughter, tenderest then
When thoughts of children warmed their light, or when
Reverence of age with love and labor worn,
Or God-like pity fired with God-like scorn,
Shot through the same that winged thy swift pen:
Where stars and suns that we beheld not burn,
Higher even than here, though highest was here thy place,
Love sees thy spirit laugh and speak and shine
With Shakespeare, and the soft, bright soul of Sterne,
And Fieldings' kindest might, and Goldsmith's grace;
Scarce one more loved or worthier than thine.
—Swiñburne.
How poor the world of fancy would be, how "dispeopled of her dreams," if, in some ruin of the social system, the books of Dickens were lost.—Lang.
The philosophy of Dickens is the philosophy of kindness, of a genial interest in all things great and small, of a light English joyousness, and a sunny universal benevolence.—Masson

never with success, save in Household Words, which started in 1850, climbed, at the height of its prosperity, to a circulation close upon 100,000 copies a week.
The reporter of other men's sayings and doings was soon to beget his own "shadows of the real" in a far more actual, more living than the flesh and blood beings who were getting ready to put on mourning for the Fourth William. One Autumn day of 1833 a young fellow of 21 almost stealthily dropped into a red mail box on the Strand a stouthead envelope addressed to the old Monthly Magazine. A fortnight later and the same figure was buying a copy of the current issue—looking down its table of contents, trembling, shame-facely!—and then stepping aside from the unending stream of passers-by, into some convenient vestibule, to dash from his blue eyes the tears that had sprung there at the sight of a title: "A Dinner at Poplar Walk, by Boz."
So was taken the first doubting step which was to lead along the now main-traveled road whose milestones read Pickwick and Nickleby and Dombey and Copperfield. Boz figured for a year in the Monthly's pages, then "went over" to the columns of the evening edition of his own paper (his salary was by that raised from five to seven shillings a week), and then stood before the world "between covers," with no less an one than Crickshank's master as his illustrator.
Master of Tears and Laughter.
Sketches by Boz bears date of 1836 on the title page of the much-to-be-desired first edition, and the same Spring saw the initial issue of the "Post Office Papers of the Pickwick Club." Four of the monthly numbers came out in the amber of Chapman and Hall's types; Seymour, the original illustrator, yielded to "Phiz" Browne—but "Pretty good" was the best that London was saying of the venture. Then the fifth installment introduced its readers to the inn-yard of the White Hart Tavern, and to one Samuel Weller, blacking the maidenly boots of that no-longer-young lady who had just eloped with Mr. Jingle—and success dawned clear and sure. That sun was never to set. It still shines as unwaveringly as when the 25th installment of Dickens was there introduced to fame by "Son Samivel."
The first five years of the reign of Victoria (31-4) saw "Oliver Twist" and "Nicholas Nickleby," "Old Curiosity Shop" and "Barnaby Rudge," as well as "Pickwick"; all of them in that "monthly parts" form of issue which

antedated our present-day "serial." Had Dickens never written another word, how much this world would yet owe him! There was the benevolent, verdant, elderly chairman of the Pickwick Club; the Fat Boy, and the Wellers, father and son. There were unhappy little Oliver Twist, and Beadle Bumble, and Fagin, and the charming Artful Dodger. There were Mrs. Nickleby, weak and wordy copy of the novelist's own mother, and Dick Swiveller, and Little Nell, and Dolly Vargen, and Grip the Raven—worst and best of all "nature fakes." As the literary parent of this immortal family traveled north to the Highlands, and then across seas to "The States," he might have gone assured (though, he was far too modest a man for any such thought) that his reputation was already his.
Helping the World Along.
"American Notes," "A Christmas Carol" and "The Chimes" were the next books he was to father. The keenly observant sketches of our land and life in the forties is entertaining through very contrast with today's realities, but the other two little tales are far more than this. The humanity which was, through all his work, the keynote of Dickens, here sounded most unmistakably. The tone of that carol and the tone of those chimes have rung down through all the intervening years to uplift and aid the world. Many a man has, because of them, looked about him for his own "Tiny Tim," for whom a Christmas dinner must be bought. Never a man read the "Chimes," as an old year went out, who did not at least begin the new one better.
Other holiday stories were to come—"The Battle of Life," "The Cricket

on the Hearth," "Crips the Carrier," "The Haunted Man," and all the rest—but these first two remained (and remain) unequalled.
There were to be eight more novels. "Martin Chuzzlewit" was to bring hypocritical Pecksniff; Paul Dombey was to come to claim and hold our love and pity; David Copperfield was to live again the hungry days and garret nights of Dickens' own hard boyhood; "Bleak House" was to carry us for the moment into better society than the earlier novels had introduced us to; splendid Sidney Carton was to shine out inspiringly against the dark background of "A Tale of Two Cities"; delightful little Jennie Wren was to be "dressmaker" for her doll customers in "Our Mutual Friend"; Pip's autobiography was to be written in "Great Expectations."
Attacking the "shams and wrongs of that early Victorian period, tearing off the veils that for years had concealed the cruelties and horrors and injustices of the poor laws, the workhouses, the debtors, prisons, and the public schools of the time, Dickens often takes us deep and dark. Yet he never befuddles us. We are the better for the experience he gives; uplifted by his own cheerfulness and hopefulness; strengthened by the wit, here and now, against such modern woes and wickednesses as we feel he would so bravely attack.
A Moneymaker, but Modest.
America welcomed Dickens upon his second visit here in '67, as few other notabilities have been welcomed. He came over to read "The Holytree Inn" to us, and "Dr. Marigold," as well as selections from the longer books, never to be forgotten by those whose privilege it was to sit and listen. He read well, because there was inborn in him the music of the actor, and he made from those readings full as much money as, during his lifetime, was to come in from all his 15 volumes.
The man took good care of his profits, too; the boy had had too hard a time keeping body and soul together to fail to know the value of shillings and pence. "Godshill," the roomy, comely, solid-looking place near Rochester, which he had admired and coveted from boyhood became his in fact, and there he died, on the 9th of June, just 28 years ago, leaving unfinished "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" (only the other day dragged anew into notoriety through its alleged connections with the Druce case)—ever to remain a mystery.
He left, too, the request that there should be raised no monument to him; and that neither "Mr." nor "Esq." should be carved upon his tombstone. Wherefore the heavy slab which covers his last resting-place in the "Poet's Corner" of Westminster Abbey bears only: "Charles Dickens; 1812-1870,"—an epitaph as straightforward and modest as was the whole life of the master.
The art of Dickens was close kin to that of Hogarth. Each was possessed

of a remarkable power of observation; each directed it to the study of humanity. Each, too, was constitutionally democratic, as it were; sprung from the people, and drawing for the people, the very life they knew, and with insistent sympathy. Miss Austen's country canvases are perfect; Dickens are worse than medlovers. Thackeray's lords and ladies are convincingly true; Dickens was at his worst when he left the masses for the masses. He had more of George Eliot's heart-deep skill in telling the day-to-day, hand-to-mouth struggle of the poor, and he cared little as did she for a sudden heroism, the heroic in Dickens' eyes, was the daily doing of hard duties, cheerily and uncomplainingly.
Only Shakespeare has given the language more "name-words," who needs to be told that a "Micawber" is a worthless fellow, waiting for something to turn up, and never once dreaming of doing any of the turning himself? "Quip" is as accurate a synonym for cruelty as "Othello" is for jealousy; "Jonas Chuzzlewit" is as certain through all time to convey to personality avarice as "Shylock's" self. As we call a man a "hypocrite" to his face as refer to him as a "Pecksniff" or a "Uriah Heep."
"Caricatures some of these are, undoubtedly, but the storymaker who could raise our smiles so readily with these conveyed and concave mirrors, could with equal ease hold up the truest mirror to mother nature. A score of instances bear witness that Dickens' characters lived. One reader, an invalid, told me he had only a few days more to live, declared he could die quite gladly if only his hours could be drawn out somehow all the last installment of "Pickwick" had come to him—he had only one more to read! Another saddled his horse and rode six miles at night to waken a friend with the welcome news that "that damned Carver's dead at last! Got run over by the train!" And when "Old Curiosity Shop" was appearing hundreds of letters came to the author begging that "Little Nell" be not allowed to die.
Three Million Copies a Year.
Among a certain class it has become rather "the thing" to criticize the masters of English letters. Dickens, such as they announce, lacked culture and breeding. He is downright vulgar. London as he drew it, moreover, is passing, and the dialect in which many of his creations speak is fast becoming extinct.
Would such as these rather have blue blood or a great, loving heart? Would they prefer even the wisest intellectual attainments to the praise which came to the memory of Dickens, at his death: "Every inch of him was an honest man." For one who laughs at Dickens, such as these thousand laugh with him. For a single critic to call him vulgar their name is legion who name him divine.
As to his being a novelist of yesterday, or what of the poems of Robert Burns? Is a man's vogue justly to be considered as passing when London alone sold 400,000 copies of his books in 1907?

All England, it is estimated, disposed of quite 1,500,000. In the United States probably as many more were sold. If this points to literary demise, well may an author wonder where is death's sting.
The Self-Written Monody.
Charles Dickens was buried in the Abbey on June 14, 1870, and that morning there appeared in the New York Tribune a monody in his memory, compiled from his own dearly-loved pages. No better eulogy was pronounced over those honored remains—for it was as though the voice of the man himself had spoken:
Dead, Your Majesty, Dead, my Lords and Gentlemen, Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order, Dead, men and women born with heavenly compassion in your hearts.
The spirit of the world returning innocent and radiant, touched the old man with its hand, and beckoned him away.
The Star had shown him the way to find the god of the poor; and through humility and sorrow and forgiveness he had gone to his Redeemer's rest.
—Hard Times.
died like a child that had gone to sleep.
—David Copperfield.
and began the world—not this world, but this world. The world that sets this right.
—The Chimes.
gone before the Father, he lay beyond the twilight judgments of this world, high above its mists and obscurities.
—Little Dorrit.
and lay at rest.
—David Copperfield.
Too Much Telling.
Chicago News.
There are times I have to hustle and get out and use my muscles.
It's a chub because a feller has to eat, An' I've found few ways of gettin' what I want except by sweatin'.
For the game's a-growin' mighty hard to beat.
But it seems a shame this spittin' all our bright glad days by tallow.
This exerts through our life's allotted span.
As some people struggle through it, I I have to, I will do it.
But I like to take it easy when I can.
When the boss is keepin' cases I have got to show my paces—
Make a bluff at doin' 'emself for my duty.
I must keep the dirt a-flyin', though I find it mighty tryin'.
For there doesn't seem to be no other way.
But I always feel my kickin' when I'm showin' my paces.
And I wish that there was somethin' I could plan that would keep my back from strainin', and no cussin' nor complainin'.
For I like to take it easy when I can.
It would be all right suppose I could jest like some of these doin'.
And a smokin' where a bit of sunshine fell.
With no big-mouthed drivin' bosses and no other cares nor crosses—
I believe I'd like to try it for a spell, if they'd bring the grub and feed it to a feller when he'd need it.
And stand by to keep the flies off with a fan.
With no call for any motion, that would be about my notion.
For I like to take it easy when I can.
Marryin' a girl against the wishes of her parents is next to murder, the most severe-ly punishable crime in Lapland.