

CONDENSED CLASSICS

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

By CHARLES DICKENS

Continuation by Miss Sara A. Hamlin

Charles John Huffam Dickens was born Feb. 7, 1812, at Porten, England, where his father was a clerk in the Navy Pay office. He died at Gadshill Place, in Kent, on June 9, 1870.



His dreams of writing came to him early when as a boy he read breathlessly the battered novels in his father's library. He became a reporter on the London newspaper press, and wrote (1833) "Sketches by Boz," wherein are, in miniature, all the abounding virtues of his novels.

The "Pickwick Papers" (1837) were a great success. Their inimitable rollicking humor captivated the English reading world. His first extended novel was "Oliver Twist" (1838), followed by "Nicholas Nickleby" (1838-39), "Old Curiosity Shop" and "Barnaby Rudge" (1840-41). He produced some 16 major novels, the last, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" (1870) being unfinished. "David Copperfield" (1850-52), held by many to be his masterpiece, and by not a few to be the greatest story ever written, is supposed to be semi-autobiographical. Many of his novels were published in installments, and never before or since has any literary publication excited such a furore.

After his initial successes, Dickens' life was a triumphal procession, saddened only by domestic unhappiness. He visited America, where his works were even more popular than in England, in 1842 and 1867-68.

He wrote in his will his own best epitaph, "I rest my claims to the remembrance of my country on my published works." He might well have substituted "the world" for "my country."

Perhaps the quality that distinguishes his novels among all others is their abounding humor.

On a cold November night, in the year 1775, the English mail coach, on its way from London to Dover, was carrying among its passengers a Mr. Jarvis Lorry, a London banker of the well-known firm of Tellson & Co. As the coach stumbled along in the darkness, there arose before him the vision of an emaciated figure with hair prematurely white. All night between him and the spectre the same words repeated themselves again and again.

"Buried how long?"
"Almost eighteen years."
"I hope you care to live?"
"I can't say."

About eighteen years before the story opens, Dr. Manette, a prominent young physician of Paris, had suddenly disappeared. Everything was done to discover some trace of him, but in vain. The loss of her husband caused his wife such anguish that she resolved to bring up her little daughter in ignorance of her father's fate; and when in two years she died, she left little Lucie under the guardianship of Tellson & Co., to whose care Dr. Manette for many years had entrusted his financial affairs.

Strange tidings concerning the Doctor had just come from Paris, and Mr. Lorry was on his way to meet his ward, and explain to her the facts of her early life. This was a duty from which the kind-hearted banker shrunk, and when he saw the slight golden-haired girl who came to meet him, his heart almost failed him; but his task was accomplished at last.

"And now," concluded Mr. Lorry, "your father has been found. He is alive, greatly changed, but alive. He has been taken to the house of a former servant in Paris, and we are going there. I to identify him, you to restore him to life and love."

The servant that sheltered Dr. Manette was a man by the name of Defarge who, with his wife, kept a wine-shop in the obscure district of St. Antoine. The banker and Lucie were taken to an attic where a haggard, white-haired man sat on a low bench, making shoes, a wreck of a man, obvious of all around him.

Again was the Channel crossed, and again the old inquiry whispered in the ear of Jarvis Lorry:

"I hope you care to be recalled to life?"
"I can't say."

Five years later, in the court room of the Old Bailey in London, a young Frenchman was on trial for his life. Near him sat an untidy looking individual by the name of Sydney Carton. With his eyes fixed on the ceiling, he was unobtrusive, apparently, of all that passed around him; but it was he, who, first noticing the extraordinary resemblance between the prisoner and himself, rescued Charles Darnay from the web of deceit which had been spun around him.

Between these two young men, the striking resemblance was in outward appearance only. Charles Darnay was of noble birth; but his ancestors had for many years so cruelly oppressed the French peasantry that the name of Evremonde was hated and despised. Wholly unlike them in character, this last descendant of his race had given up his name and estate, and had come to England as a private gentleman, eager to begin life anew.

Sydney Carton was a young English lawyer, brilliant in intellect, but steadily deteriorating through his life of dissipation, able to advise others but unable to guide himself, "conscious of the blight on him and resigning himself to let it eat him away."

He and Darnay soon became frequent visitors at the small house in Soho square, the home of Dr. Manette and his daughter. Through Lucie's care and devotion, the Doctor had almost wholly recovered from the effects of his long imprisonment, and it was only in times of strong excitement that any trace of his past insanity could be detected. The sweet face of Lucie Manette soon won the hearts of both the young men, but it was Darnay to whom she gave her love.

And so that interview between Lucie and Sydney Carton has a pathos that wrings our hearts. He knew that even if his love could have been returned, it would have added only to his bitterness and sorrow, for he felt it would have been powerless to lift him from the slough of selfishness and sensu-

ality that had engulfed him. But he could not resist this last sad confession of his love; and when she weeps at the sorrow of which she has been the innocent cause, he implores: "Do not weep, dear Miss Manette; the life I lead renders me unworthy of your pure love. My last supplication is this: Think now and then that there is a man who would give his life to keep a life you love beside you."

But dark days were to come. In the year 1793, the downtrodden French peasantry turned upon their oppressors. The streets of Paris were filled with crowds of people whose eager cry was for "blood." Madame Defarge no longer sat behind the counter of her small wine-shop, silently knitting into her work the names of her hated enemies, but axe in hand and knife at her belt, headed a frenzied mob of women on to the Bastille. The French Revolution had actually begun.

Madame Defarge was one of the leading spirits of the Revolution. Early in life she had seen her family fall victims to the tyranny and lust of the cruel nobility and from that time her life had been devoted to revenge.

Three years of crime and bloodshed passed, and in 1792, Mr. Jarvis Lorry and Charles Darnay landed in Paris, the former to protect the French branch of Tellson & Co., and the latter to befriend an old family servant who had besought his help. Not until they had set foot in Paris did they realize into what a caldron of fury they had plunged. Mr. Lorry, on account of his business relations, was allowed his freedom, but Darnay was hurried at once to the prison of La Force, there to await his trial. The reason given for the outrage was the new law for the arrest of all returning French emigrants, but the true cause was that he had been recognized as Charles Evremonde.

These tidings soon reached London, and Dr. Manette, with his daughter Lucie, hastened to Paris, for he felt sure that his long confinement in the Bastille would win for him the sympathy of the French people, and thus enable him to save his son-in-law. Days and months passed, and although the Doctor succeeded in gaining a promise that Darnay's life should be spared, the latter was not allowed to leave his prison.

At last came the dreadful year of the Reign of Terror. The sympathy which at first had been given to Dr. Manette had become weakened through the influence of the bloodthirsty Madame Defarge. Also, there had been found in the ruins of the Bastille a paper which contained Dr. Manette's account of his own abduction and imprisonment, and pronouncing a solemn curse upon the House of Evremonde and their descendants, who were declared to be the authors of his eighteen years of misery. Charles Darnay's doom was sealed. "Back to the Conciergerie and death within twenty-four hours."

To Sydney Carton, who had followed his friends to Paris, came an inspiration. Had he not promised Lucie that he would die to save a life she loved? By bribery, he gains admittance to the prison; Darnay is removed unconscious from the cell, and Carton sits down to await his fate.

Along the Paris streets six tumbrils are carrying the day's wine to its gullet. In the third car sits a young man with his hands bound. As the cries from the street arise against him they only move him to a quiet smile as he shakes more loosely his hair about his face.

Crash! A head is held up and the knitting-women who are ranged about the scaffold count "One."

The third cart comes up and the supposed Evremonde descends. His lips move, forming the words, "a life you love."

The murmuring of many voices, the upturning of many faces, then all dashes away.

"Twenty-three!"
"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

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CONDENSED CLASSICS

THE NEWCOMES

By WILLIAM M. THACKERAY

Continuation by Charles K. Selas, Librarian of the Boston Athenaeum

William Mahopave Thackeray, son of a civil servant in India, was born July 18, 1811, in Calcutta. He died Dec. 24, 1863, in London, where most of his life was spent. From 1840 on his wife was insane, so there lived in his heart, as in that of the other great humorist of his time, Dickens, constant sorrow.



Thackeray began in school days rather to absorb life than to attain scholarship. He delighted even then to reproduce it in comic verse and caricature. At Cambridge, in Weimar, in Paris art schools and London law school, he went gayly on his way, indolent in study but eager in friendship, ardent in life. At 21, he owned and managed a London newspaper, at 25 he was penniless, after scattering a comfortable fortune. But he had bought experience invaluable to the young journalist, priceless to the novelist.

Thackeray's astonishing versatility was early realized. He aspired to illustrate Dickens' novels; he wrote travel sketches, stories, ballads and burlesques. "Barry Lyndon," his first notable novel, was the history of a rascal; but, in the most fascinating of feminine rascals, Becky Sharp, Thackeray first brilliantly showed himself master in the creation of living character ("Vanity Fair," 1848-49). "Pendennis" (1849-50) was, like Dickens' "David Copperfield," in essence autobiographical. The need of money drove Thackeray reluctantly to the lecture field. His course on Eighteenth Century Humors, popular in England and America (1851), prepared the ground for "Edmond" (1852), his unsurpassed historical novel. "The Newcomes" (1854), "The Virginians" (1859), and the unfinished "Dennis Duval," complete the list of his best novels.

Col. Thomas Newcome, the hero of Argon, and of Bhartpour, had loved the beautiful Leonore de Blois, but having incurred the wrath of his step-mother, he fled to India to carve out his career. There he had married the widow, Mrs. Casey, and a few years later sent their son Clive to England. He regaled the ladies of the regiment with Clive's letters; sporting young men would give or take odds that the colonel would mention Clive's name once before five minutes, or three times in ten minutes. But those who laughed at Clive's father laughed very kindly.

At last the happy time came for which the colonel had been longing, and he took leave of his regiment. In England, he had in his family circle two half brothers, Sir Brian, who had married Lady Ann, daughter of the Earl of Kew, and Hobson Newcome. One morning at breakfast while Sir Brian chumped his dry toast, Barnes, the son, said to his sister Ethel: "My uncle, the colonel of sepoy, and his amiable son have been paying a visit to Newcome."

"You are always sneering about our uncle," broke in Ethel, "and saying unkind things about Clive. Our uncle is a dear, good, kind man, and I love him."

At Hobson Newcome's and elsewhere the family party often assembled, the colonel, his friend Mr. Binnie and Binnie's sister, Mrs. Mackenzie with her daughter Rosey, Sir Brian and Lady Ann, and Clive who had become a painter. From one of these parties Clive and I, his friend Arthur Pendenant, walked with the usual Havana to light us home. "I can't help thinking," said the astute Clive, "that they fancied I was in love with Ethel. Now, I suppose, they think I am engaged to Rosey. She is as good a little creature as can be, and never out of temper, though I fancy Mrs. Mackenzie tries her."

Time passed and our Mr. Clive went to Baden, where he found old Lady Kew with her granddaughter Ethel. "You have no taste for pictures, only for painters, I suppose," said Lady Kew one day to Ethel. "I was not looking at the picture," said Ethel, "but at the little green ticket in the corner. I think, grandmamma," she said, "we young ladies in the world ought to have little green tickets pinned on our backs, with 'sold' written on them."

Barnes Newcome, too, was at Baden, for he was to marry pretty little Lady Clara Puley, free at last from that undesirable Jack Belsize, Lord Highgate's son. Lady Kew had plans which Clive's growing regard for his cousin Ethel put in jeopardy.

"My good young man, I think it is time you were off," Lady Kew said to Clive with great good humor. "I have been to see that poor little creature to whom Captain Belsize behaved so cruelly. She does not care a fig for him—not one fig. She is engaged, as you know, to my grandson Barnes; in all respects a most eligible union; and Ethel's engagement to my grandson, Lord Kew, has long been settled. When we saw you in London, we heard that you too were engaged, to a young lady in your own rank of life—Miss Mackenzie."

Clive's departure led to more flirtations by Ethel than old Lady Kew could countenance, but Ethel had found out how undesirable a man Lord Kew was, and broke the engagement so dear to her grandmother's heart.

When Clive heard that the engagement was over between Kew and Ethel he set out in haste for London. I was installed as confidant, and to me Clive said: "Mrs. Mackenzie bothers me so I hardly know where to turn, and poor little Rosey is made to write me a note about something twice a day. Oh Pen! I'm up another tree now!"

Clive met his cousin Ethel at a party or two in the ensuing weeks of the season, and at one of their meetings Ethel told him that her grandmother would not receive him. It was then that Clive thought Ethel worldly, although much of her attitude was due to the keen and unrelenting Lady Kew. The colonel and James Binnie during all this time put their two fond heads together, and Mrs. Mackenzie flattered both of them and Clive as well.

Meanwhile the Lady Clara was not

happy with her Barnes. All the life and spirit had been crushed out of the girl, consigned to cruel usage, loneliness, and to bitter recollections of the past. Jack Belsize, now Lord Highgate, could stand the strain no longer, and took Lady Clara away from her bullying but cowardly husband. The elopement of Clara opened Ethel's eyes to the misery of loveless marriages, and the maims of her new lover, the Marquis of Farintosh, already distressed over the unpleasant notoriety of the proposed Newcome alliance, received a letter from Ethel which set her son free.

Ethel then turned to the lonely, motherless children of her brother Barnes, and found comfort in devoting herself to them. Clive married his Rosey, and his father determined to become a member of parliament in place of Sir Barnes. One night—the colonel, returning from his electioneering, met Clive, candle in hand. As each saw the other's face, it was so very sad and worn and pale, that Colonel Newcome with quite the tenderness of old days, cried "God bless me, my boy, how ill you look! Come and warm yourself, Clive!"

"I have seen a ghost, father," Clive said, "the ghost of my youth, father, the ghost of my happiness, and the best days of my life. I saw Ethel today."

"Nay, my boy, you mustn't talk to me so. You have the dearest little wife at home, a dear little wife and child."

"You had a wife; but that doesn't prevent other—other thoughts. Do you know you never spoke twice in your life about my mother? You didn't care for her."

"I did my duty by her," interposed the colonel.

"I know, but your heart was with the other. So is mine. It's fatal, it runs in the family, father."

The shares of the Bundesland Banking company in which the colonel had made his fortune now declined steadily, and at last the crash came, wiping out all the colonel's money and with it all Rosey's fortune. The impoverished Newcomes settled down first at Boulogne, and then in London, the colonel weary, feeble, white haired, Mrs. Mackenzie a perfect termagant, Rosey pale and ailing, and little Tommy, the baby, a comfort and a care to the hard-worked Clive.

The colonel, no longer able to live under the same roof with Mrs. Mackenzie, found a home with the Grey Friars, and here I saw him.

When the colonel's misfortunes were at their worst, Ethel in reading an old book, found a letter from the colonel's stepmother between the covers. It was a memorandum of a proposed bequest to Clive. Ethel at once determined to carry out this intended bequest, and so she and I hastened to Clive's home; but not even good news could soften Mrs. Mackenzie's evil temper. That was a sad and wretched night, in which Mrs. Mackenzie stared until the poor delicate Rosey fell into the fever to which she owed her death. We soon repaired to the Grey Friars where we found that the colonel was in his last illness. He talked loudly, he gave the word of command, spoke Hindustanee as if to his men. Then he spoke words in French rapidly, seizing a hand that was near him, and crying, "tousjours, toujours!" Ethel and Clive and the nurse were in the room with him. The old man talked on rapidly for awhile, then again he would sigh and he still once more I heard him say, hurriedly, "Take care of him when I'm in India!" and then with a heart-rending voice he called for the love of his youth "Leonore, Leonore!" The patient's voice sank into faint murmurs; only a moan now and then announced that he was not asleep.

At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat a time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said "Ad-um," and fell back. It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo, he whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of the Master.

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