

FIRST EDITION OBITUARY.

CHARLES DICKENS.

Death of the Great Novelist, Yesterday Afternoon, Near London, at the Age of 58.

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

His Career as a Journalist, Novelist, and Playwright—The Immortal Mr. Pickwick, and His Other Household Characters.



CHARLES DICKENS As He Appeared in 1842, During His First Visit to the United States.

part in the piece, rendered highly amusing by his admirable acting. On March 6, 1837, was brought out, at the St. James Theatre, a farce called 'Is She His Wife; or, Something Singular, in which Harley played the principal character, "Felix Tapkins," a flirting bachelor, and sang a song in the character of Pickwick, "written expressly for him by Boz."

LONDON, June 10.—Charles Dickens, the eminent author, died yesterday afternoon, at the age of fifty-eight.

Later Particulars.

LONDON, June 10.—Charles Dickens died at twenty minutes past six o'clock last evening, of paralysis.

THE CAREER OF CHARLES DICKENS.

The announcement which the above cable despatch makes will create a sensation no less profound in this country than in England. The voluminous writings of Mr. Dickens were so well known throughout the length and breadth of the land, his books have been for years in the hands of so many, such eager multitudes have thronged the halls in which his readings have been delivered, that his death will come home to hundreds of thousands, and will be mourned as would be the death of a near and valued personal friend.

His Early Life.

Charles Dickens was born at Landport, Portsmouth, England, on the 7th of February, 1812, and had, therefore fully completed his fifty-eighth year at the time of his death. His father, John Dickens, had for many years held a position in the pay department of the navy, from which he retired in 1815, on a pension. He was a man of considerable literary acquirements, and, removing to London after his resignation, he became connected with one of the daily papers of the English metropolis as a reporter of Parliamentary debates. His son Charles he intended for the profession of the law, and accordingly placed him at an early age in an attorney's office as a clerk. In this position he was by no means idle, but acquired a thorough knowledge of the complicated machinery and technical phraseology of the law, which he was enabled in after years to turn to such excellent use. The drudgery of the work, however, weighed heavily upon his spirit, as a taste for literary pursuits was developed, and manifested chiefly at first by an indiscriminate reading of novels and plays.

He Becomes a Journalist.

Happily, his father's journalistic associations enabled him to exchange his distasteful pursuits for a more congenial occupation. He became attached to the True Sun, a daily London journal, as a reporter, and soon after transferred himself to the Morning Chronicle, a paper which at that time possessed a large circulation and was at the very height of its popularity, under the management of Mr. John Black. It was in 1834 that he had begun to contribute to the Old Monthly Magazine, his first paper in that periodical being "Mrs. Joseph Porter over the way." This was followed by "Horatio Sparkins," and "The Boarding House," and it was not until the publication of the second paper under the last title that he assumed the pseudonym of "Boz," as may be found by reference to the Old Monthly for August, 1834. Mr. Black soon recognized the ability of the young man, and gave him an opportunity to exercise it to the best advantage by publishing a series of "Sketches of English Life and Character," in which were displayed his versatility and piquancy of style. These sketches were published in the evening edition of the Chronicle, over the signature of "Boz,"

Early Dramatic Triumphs.

While writing the "Sketches," a strong inclination towards the stage induced Mr. Dickens to test his powers as a dramatist, and his first piece, a farce called The Strange Gentleman, was produced at the St. James Theatre on the opening night of the season, September 29, 1835. The late Mr. Harley was the hero of the farce, which was received with great favor. This was followed by an opera, called The Village Coquette, for which Mr. Harley composed the music, and which was brought out at the same establishment, Tuesday, December 6, 1836. The quaint humor, unaffected pathos, and graceful lyrics of this production found prompt recognition, and the piece enjoyed a prosperous run. The Village Coquette took its title from two village girls, Lucy and Rose, led away by vanity, coquetting with men above them in station, and discarding their humble though worthy lovers. Before, however, it is too late, they see their error, and the piece terminates happily. "Miss Mainforth," and "Miss Julia Smith" were the heroines, and "Mr. Bennett" and "Mr. Gardner" were their betrothed lovers. "Braham" was the Lord of the Manor, who could have led astray the fair "Lucy." There was an capital scene where he was detected as "Lucy's" father, played by Strickland, urging an elopement. Harley had a trifling

Indeed, it is noticeable that in most of his novels he has battled with some covert wrong against society, and, while adding to literature a crowd of imperishable creations, has taught the world the most thorough lessons in human charity and love.

"Nicholas Nickleby" and its Successors.

"Oliver Twist" appeared collectively in 1838, and 1839 the "Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby" was completed and given to the world entire. In 1840 Mr. Dickens undertook, and completed in the succeeding year, the production of a series of tales in weekly numbers, under the general title of "Master Humphrey's Clock." It was in this series that "The Old Curiosity Shop" and "Barnaby Rudge" were first given to the world. While "Master Humphrey's Clock" was still running, he edited the "Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi," the celebrated clown.

Mr. Dickens' First Visit to the United States.

On finishing "Master Humphrey's Clock" Mr. Dickens sailed from England for the United States, to gather material for a volume upon the men and manners of the New World. He arrived in Boston on January 23, 1842, and sailed for England again on June 3 of the same year. During this brief sojourn he travelled extensively through the Northern and Eastern States, and was everywhere received with great enthusiasm. After his return to England, he published in 1842, the result of his observations in a work entitled "American Notes for General Circulation." This work, however, added but little to his reputation, and many of his observations and criticisms drew from those who had been his warm admirers heretofore earnest and decided protests. After his second visit to this country, however, he made a rather unsatisfactory apology for his unkind allusions, by stating that he had found so many improvements since his first visit as to render his adverse criticisms uncalled for at present, and that all future editions of the "American Notes" would contain a statement to that effect.

The Establishment of the London "Daily News."

"Martin Chuzzlewit" appeared in numbers in 1844, and in the summer of that year the author visited Italy. He returned home after an absence of several months to assist in founding a cheap daily newspaper on liberal principles. Having organized a large literary staff, and enlisted the services of many of the ablest writers of the day, he issued in January, 1846, the first number of the Daily News, acting as editor-in-chief, and contributing to its columns the results of his Italian journey, subsequently reprinted in book form as "Pictures from Italy." The Daily News went under way, Mr. Dickens retired from the editorial management in order to devote himself to pursuits more congenial and to the world at large, not less than to himself, more important.

His "Christmas Stories."

It was in 1843 that he gave us the first of his inimitable Christmas books—"A Christmas Carol;" the second, "The Chimes," in 1845; and the third, "The Cricket on the Hearth," in 1846. To this catalogue can be added the title of many a charming holiday volume, wholly or in part from Mr. Dickens' pen. It has been pleasantly said that Christmas in England owes most of its cheer and kindly usage to Charles Dickens—that it is his good heart which beats in England's bosom at Christmas time.

"Household Words" and "All the Year Round."

In 1847 Mr. Dickens published "Dombey and Son" in 1849-50. "David Copperfield," "Sketch Home" in 1853; "Hard Times" in 1854; and "Little Dorrit" in 1856. In 1850 Mr. Dickens started Household Words, a weekly miscellany of popular literature, which he conducted until 1859, when, in consequence of a misunderstanding that had arisen between him and his publishers, he discontinued the journal, and in its place established All the Year Round, which he continued to edit to the time of his death. In Household Words first appeared his "Child's History of England," republished separately in 1852, and his story of "Hard Times." In All the Year Round first appeared "A Tale of Two Cities," "The Uncommercial Papers," and "Great Expectations."

His Latest Works.

In 1864 Mr. Dickens published "Our Mutual Friend" in serial form, but after that wrote nothing except brief sketches or occasional essays for his journal, until the appearance, about two months ago, of the first instalment of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

His Second Visit to the United States

was of such comparatively recent occurrence that but little need be said concerning it. He landed at Boston on November 19, 1867, having been preceded by some months by Mr. George Dolby, his advance agent, who made all the necessary arrangements for the reading tour upon which he was to enter. He had attained a high reputation as a reader of his own works in England, and this circumstance, taken in connection with his great popularity, created an unparalleled furor in all the American cities which he was destined to visit. So great, indeed, was the demand for tickets, that the adventurous speculators rushed in between him and the public, and the manner in which the tickets were disposed of, and the extortionate premiums frequently paid, created not a little scandal and sadly marred the success of his visit.

His first reading in the United States

was given in Boston, at the Tremont Temple, on the evening of December 3; on December 9, he made his first appearance in New York, at Steinway Hall, and on January 13, 1868, he appeared for the first time before a Philadelphia audience, at Concert Hall. His tour was extended only to Baltimore and Washington, in addition to the cities above named, all profers for a visit to Chicago and other Western cities being steadily refused, and in the summer of 1868 he returned to England.

His Farewell to the Public.

After his return home he continued to give readings in different parts of England, but on the evening of March 10th last he brought to a close at St. James' Hall, in London, the memorable series of readings which had for fifteen years proved to audiences unexampled in numbers, a source of the highest intellectual enjoyment. In the remarks which he made on this occasion he said in conclusion:—"I have thought it well, at the full flood-tide of your favor, to retire upon those other associations between us, which date from much further back than these, and henceforth to devote myself exclusively to the art that first brought us together, (great applause.) Ladies and gentlemen, in but two short weeks from this time I hope that you may enter, in your own houses, on a new series of readings, at which my assistance will be indispensable; but from these parish lights I van'ish now for evermore, with a heartfelt, grateful, respectful, and affectionate farewell."

His Domestic Relations.

In 1858 Mr. Dickens separated from his wife amicably, after having lived with her for twenty years, several children being the fruits of the marriage. Great scandal, of course, was attached to this event, but Mr. Dickens has himself explained that the cause which led to it was an uncongeniality of temper, which implied no dishonor to either party.

For some years before his death he resided at Gad's Hill, Kent, about an hour's ride by railway from London, on the road to the beautiful old cathedral town of Canterbury, celebrated for its historical associations, and for being the metropolitan seat of all England. The house is described as being one of those comfortable old-fashioned mansions which seem to have taken root nowhere but in the most picturesque parts of rural England, and are the brick and mortar embodiment of the idea of home.

A Review of Mr. Dickens' Literary Career.

It is scarcely possible now to make a perfectly just and critical estimate of the genius of Mr. Dickens, or to prejudice the verdict of posterity. The crucial test of time, and the calm judgment of another generation that will know the man merely as one among the illustrious concourse that have made the fame of English literature, will determine the artistic value of his labors and his proper place in the role of honor that is headed by the names of Shakespeare and Milton. Whatever posterity may think of Mr. Dickens, however, it is undeniable that he was a power in his own day, and no fiction-writer that has ever lived has ever exerted the same influence or produced the same decisive results in promoting the reform of abuses, or in exciting a sympathy for the poor and oppressed. It is a question whether the principal end and aim of true art should be the reform of social and political abuses, and upon this to a great extent depends the probability of the works of Mr. Dickens maintaining the same hold upon the public of a hundred years hence that they do upon that of the present day. It is certain that many abuses can be attacked successfully in a work of fiction that it would be impossible to reach in any other way, and the endeavors of Mr. Dickens to carry out important measures of reform by means of his novels are entitled to receive, as they have received, a most cordial recognition. It is the fate of such works, however, to be more or less ephemeral; and looking at the matter from an artistic standpoint—and it is only from such a standpoint that the real value of a work of art can be determined—we cannot but think that Mr. Dickens' writings are too much of the time and for the time to secure for them that lasting favor that is accorded to the works of men who were distinctively artists. Thackeray has been frequently alluded to as a disciple of Fielding, but in reality Dickens, much more than his distinguished contemporary, was the legitimate successor of Fielding and Smollett, and his writings, like theirs, will probably in future years rather engage the attention of the students of literature than that of general readers. The life described by Fielding and Smollett was something remote from that of our days, and it had but little in it that we especially we of the New World, can heartily sympathize with. As clearly drawn pictures of a certain development of civilization and certain conditions of society, the works of the novelists named will always have a certain value that will give them a place in literature; and so will those of Mr. Dickens, for the same reason.

Mr. Dickens has just died, having scarcely passed that age, and yet, such humor and wit in his earlier efforts is almost as remote from remoteness that which engaged the attention of Fielding and Smollett. It is this impression of remoteness that the early writings of Dickens leave upon the readers of this day that gives force to the thought that succeeding years will scarcely add to his fame, and that another generation will be unable to understand the enormous popularity he enjoyed with the people of to-day.

In referring to Mr. Dickens as a novelist of the school of Fielding and Smollett, we of course do not mean to intimate that he was in any respect a copyist of these writers. Indeed, it was the marked originality of his genius that made his first literary efforts so enormously popular, and that gave him the leading position among the English fiction-writers of the age that he held without dispute to the day of his death. His first sketches of life and character published under the nom de plume of "Boz," and afterwards his "Pickwick," made their mark instantly, because they were fresh and original, and because they revealed a new vein of rich and racy humor. The public were beginning to tire of the fashionable novels of high life, and the humorously exaggerated descriptions of low life and the respectable middle class society hit their fancy exactly. It has repeatedly been remarked that no writer since Shakespeare has created so many characters that appear like living men and women, as Dickens. There is this important difference, however, between the two writers: Shakespeare was above all things an artist. He had no other end in view than to produce perfect works of art; and while his characters are all intellectual analyses, those of Mr. Dickens are merely described by the grotesque exaggeration of their outward appearance, their physical defects, their clothing, and their bodily habits. It is scarcely necessary to point out that this distinction makes all the difference in the world with regard to the art value of the work performed by the two writers, and is no capable of expressing an opinion on the subject would ever think of placing Dickens by the side of Shakespeare as a creative artist.

When "Pickwick" made it Mr. Dickens found the way to fame and fortune open to him, and he marked out a line of work that he adhered to resolutely during the rest of his career. "Pickwick" was quickly followed by "Oliver Twist," "Nicholas Nickleby," "The Old Curiosity Shop," and "Barnaby Rudge," all of which brought him both wealth and honor, and extended his fame on both sides of the Atlantic. The immense circulation that his writings enjoyed in the United States made the lack of an international copyright law appear very much in the light of a personal and special grievance. He therefore determined to visit this country for the double purpose of seeing the people and of proving the justice of the claims of British authors. It is not to be denied that a great many people in the United States made consummate fools of themselves in their efforts to be hospitable on this occasion, and there were grotesque features in the various receptions given to Mr. Dickens that at this day appear excessively comical. However absurd were the



CHARLES DICKENS As He Appeared in 1868, During His Second and Last Visit to the United States.

attentions paid, there was a sincerity and genuine heartiness about the welcome extended to Mr. Dickens that a man of really fine feelings could scarcely have failed to appreciate at its real value in spite of the absurdities that surrounded it.

As the adulations bestowed upon him had been fulsome, the indignation was overpowered when it was found that this over-welcomed guest turned the whole thing into ridicule as soon as he had reached home, and that both in his "American Notes" and in his novel of "Martin Chuzzlewit" he had little else but abuse and sarcasm to bestow upon either the country or the people. Of late there has been an attempt to condone Mr. Dickens' offense on this occasion, and to take all the blame for the unfortunate misunderstanding upon ourselves. We cannot look upon the matter in this light, and no candid reader of "The American Notes" or "Martin Chuzzlewit" can say that they are not malicious and intentionally insulting. The real offense of Mr. Dickens was not that he freely criticized what he thought wrong in the manners of the people of the United States or their institutions, but that from the first time of his landing upon these shores he was in a bad humor with himself and with everybody about him, and he was unable consequently to see any good thing. He had been seen plenty of opportunities for good-natured caricature and humorous description; but throughout the whole of the "American Notes" there is only one example, so far as we can recollect, of a humorous character that he seemed to appreciate, and that is the "Brown Forester" that he met on a canal-boat in this State, and even the "Brown Forester" he seems to have considered as more of a personal grievance than as a subject for artistic treatment. The rough-and-ready style of travelling that was characteristic of the old canal packets did not suit him at all, and he seemed to think that it had been invented especially for his personal annoyance; and yet any person who has ever travelled in one of these boats would imagine that a humorous writer of all others would have endured all the inconveniences for the sake of racy and original specimens of American men and women with whom he would be thrown in contact. Mr. Dickens did not like the railroads any better than the canals, and when a writer represents himself as looking out of a car window, and mistaking the spittle ejected by independent American citizens for thick flying bits of cotton, it is evident that his statements of fact and opinion are scarcely entitled to respectful consideration. In writing as he did about this country, Mr. Dickens proved that he was lacking in the finer gentlemanly instincts, and that, so far from taking a manly and independent view of things, he was content to follow in the wake of other British shobs who find a cheap sort of popularity at home by abusing a people, institutions, and manners that they cannot and do not care to understand. After "Martin Chuzzlewit" came his "Christmas Stories," "Dombey and Son," and "David Copperfield," in which his genius reached its climax. Mr. Dickens himself acknowledges this work to be his masterpiece, and his own opinion is supported by that of a majority of his readers. In the works that succeeded "David Copperfield" there is a gradual but visible decline, until in his latest efforts a noticeable falling off of the old power is observable. It is true that these later works are all distinctly marked by the characteristics of his genius, but the humor is often forced, the sentiment more mawkish than ever, and there is a tendency to prosiness that distinctly indicates the falling artist. Let any one read "Oliver Twist," "Dombey and Son," and "David Copperfield," and then attempt "Great Expectations" and "Our Mutual Friend," and the immense difference will be apparent at once. His last novel, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," has not sufficiently advanced to form a just opinion of it, but the opening chapter shows more of the old fire than any of his other recent efforts. It is sincerely to be hoped that the death of the author has not left this story a mere fragment like the "Denis Duval" of Thackeray, but that ere he was called away he finished it, and rounded off his life's labors with a last work that will be worthy to be placed beside those that have for so long delighted millions of readers.

If Mr. Dickens had not taken up authorship as a profession, he would probably have made one of the first histrionic artists of the day. His talents as an actor were undoubtedly of the first order, and those who had heard of his performances in private hailed with delight the announcement of his intention to give public readings from his own works. These readings were immensely successful in England, and the recent professional tour of Mr. Dickens in this country is still fresh in the minds of the public. Merely as an elocutionist he had many palpable faults, but for humorous and pathetic expressions in his reading, and for a power of representing the various characters introduced in the stories selected for his entertainments, he surpassed any reader of the present day. These readings were a source of genuine delight to thousands, as they not only gave the public an opportunity to see the great writer who had afforded them so many pleasant hours, but conferred the unique pleasure of hearing the most original and racy humorist of the day embody his own creations. In making a summary estimate of the genius and labors of Mr. Dickens it seems to us that

his highest and lowest moral influences arise from the same cause, his wonderful genius for caricature. All vices arising from simple motives he makes contemptible and hideous—avarice, cruelty, selfishness, hypocrisy, especially religious hypocrisy. But then he has a great tendency to make the corresponding virtues ludicrous too by his over-colored sentiment. The brothers Cheeryble always seem to be rubbing their hands from intense brotherly love; the self-abandonment of Tom Pinch is grotesque; the elaborate self-disgrace of Mr. Botkin as a miser, in order to ward off the danger of her danger, is an insult to both the reason and conscience of the reader; and Mr. Dickens' saints, like that Agnes in "David Copperfield" who insists on pointing upwards, are invariably detestable. His morality concentrates itself on the two strong points we have named, a profound horror of cruelty and a profound contempt for humbug; but Mr. Dickens has no fine perception for the inward shades of humbug—relaxed and cosseted emotions.

His greatest service to English literature will, after all, be not his high morality, which is altogether wanting in delicacy of insight, but in the complete harmlessness and purity of the immeasurable humor into which he moulds his enormous stores of acute observation. Almost all creative humorists tend to the impure—like Swift and Smollett, even Fielding. On the other hand, there are plenty of humorists who are not creative, who take the humor out of themselves and only apply it to what passes, like Charles Lamb and Sydney Smith. But Dickens uses his unlimited powers of observation to create for himself original fields of humor, and crowds grotesque and elaborate detail around the most happy conceptions, without ever being attracted for a moment towards any prurient or unhealthy field of laughter. Thus, as far as the most popular and amusing of all English writers, he provides unlimited food for a great people without infusing any really dangerous poison into it. In this way, doubtless, he has done a service which can scarcely be overestimated.

Cable Despatches.

Late and Fuller Particulars.

Mr. Dickens is Seized with His Fatal Illness at Diner on Wednesday, and Dies on Thursday Evening—Profound Expressions of Grief in the English Journals.

LONDON, June 9-10 P. M.—The London Globe, in its last edition this evening, startled the community with the announcement that Charles Dickens had been seized with paralysis, and was lying insensible at his residence, at Gadshill, near Rochester, in Kent.

The news spread rapidly and created the most profound regret; but the worst was still to come. Telegrams have since been received announcing the death of the great novelist at quarter past 6 this evening.

Dickens was at a dinner on Wednesday, when he was seized with the fit. Dr. Steel, of the village of Stroud, who was for many years the family physician of Mr. Dickens, was immediately called in, and remained till nearly midnight.

The condition of the patient becoming worse and worse it was deemed advisable to summon physicians from London. Telegrams were promptly despatched, and this morning several London physicians arrived at Gadshill. A consultation was held, and the case at once pronounced hopeless. The patient sank gradually, and died at fifteen minutes past 6 o'clock this evening.

Mr. Dickens has been ill for several days, but not seriously. He had even visited Rochester and other points during the present week.

Remarks of the London Journals.

LONDON, June 10.—The death of Dickens has plunged the nation into mourning. All the London papers have obituary articles this morning.

The Times says:—"Ordinary expressions of regret are now cold and conventional. Millions of people feel a personal bereavement. Statesmen, savans, and benefactors of a race, when they die, can leave no such void. They cannot, like this great novelist, be an inmate of every house."

The Daily News says:—"Without intellectual pedigree, his writings form an era in English literature. He was generous, loving, and universally beloved. He leaves, like Thackeray, an unfinished story."

The Morning Post says:—"Charles Dickens did more than any contemporary to make English literature loved and admired."

The Telegraph regards the distinguished dead as a public servant whose task was nobly fulfilled.

EXTRAORDINARY INSANITY.

Unaccountable Action of a Jersey Policeman. Newark, the attention of the venerable Ben Gott was attracted to a large crowd in the square, and pushing his way through, he discovered a woman struggling violently with two men, one of whom wore the uniform of a Philadelphia policeman. On inquiry it was discovered that the woman was a raving maniac, named Caroline Smith, Philadelphia. Further inquiry developed the fact that the officer had been instructed to bring her to Newark, and there turn her over to the community; that on the way thither she had become so violent in the case that a second officer had to be called in at Elizabeth; and that an abortive attempt had been made to get her out of the cars at the Chester street depot in Newark, the plan being apparently to place her on the platform and then leave her to the mercy of strangers, or rather place strangers at her mercy. The unfortunate woman scratched, tore, and bit whenever she got a chance. Uncle Ben insisted that the Philadelphia man should not leave his charge, and ordered him to take her to the station house, which he did, giving his name as John H. Baker, No. 1. He left the woman in charge of the Newark authorities, with the understanding that as soon as he could get back home he would consult with his superiors about the woman. Nothing had since been heard of the officer or from the Philadelphia authorities. In the meantime Caroline tore every stitch of her back and persisted in remaining in her cell throughout Wednesday night in pure naturalness. She refused everything in the way of food and drink, and behaved most violently to the prison attendant. Yesterday afternoon she was placed in a strait jacket and removed to the county jail. Her case and the action of Baker is to be officially inquired into.—N. Y. Herald, to-day.