

THE POSTHUMOUS
PAPERS OF THE
PICKWICK
CLUB

BY
CHARLES DICKENS



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P R E F A C E

It was observed, in the Preface to the original Edition of the "Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club," that they were designed for the introduction of diverting characters and incidents; that no ingenuity of plot was attempted, or even at that time considered very feasible by the author in connexion with the desultory mode of publication adopted; and that the machinery of the Club, proving cumbrous in the management, was gradually abandoned as the work progressed. Although, on one of these points, experience and study afterwards taught me something, and I could perhaps wish now that these chapters were strung together on a stronger thread of general interest, still, what they are they were designed to be.

I have seen various accounts of the origin of these Pickwick Papers, which have, at all events, possessed—for me—the charm of perfect novelty. As I may infer, from the occasional appearance of such histories, that my readers have an interest in the matter, I will relate how they came into existence.

I was a young man of two or three-and-twenty, when MESSRS. CHAPMAN and HALL, attracted by some pieces I was at that time writing in the Morning Chronicle newspaper, or had just written in the Old Monthly Magazine (of which one series had lately been collected and published in two volumes, illustrated by MR. GEORGE CRUIKSHANK), waited upon me to propose a something that should be published in shilling numbers—then only known to me, or, I believe to anybody else, by a dim recollection of certain interminable novels in that form, which used to be carried about the country by pedlars, and over some of which I remember to have shed innumerable tears before I had served my apprenticeship to Life.

When I opened my door in Furnival's Inn to the partner who represented the firm, I recognised in him the person from whose hands I had bought, two or three years previously, and whom I had never seen before or since, my first copy of the Magazine in which my first effusion—a paper in the "Sketches," called MR. MINNS AND HIS COUSIN—dropped stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, into a dark letter-box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street—appeared in all the glory of print; on which occasion I walked down to Westminster Hall, and turned into it for half-an-hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride, that they could not bear the street, and were not fit to be seen there. I told my visitor of the coincidence, which we both hailed as a good omen; and so fell to business.

The idea propounded to me, was, that the monthly something should be a vehicle for certain plates to be executed by MR. SEYMOUR; and there was a notion, either on the part of that admirable humorous artist, or of my visitor, that a "NIMROD Club," the members of which were to go out shooting, fishing, and so forth, and getting themselves into difficulties through their want of dexterity, would be the best means of introducing these. I objected, on consideration, that although born and partly bred in the country I was no great sportsman, except in regard of all kinds of locomotion; that the idea was not novel, and had been already much used; that it would be infinitely better for the plates to arise naturally out of the text; and that I would like to take my own way, with a freer range of English scenes and people, and was afraid I should ultimately do so in any case, whatever course I might prescribe to myself at starting. My views being deferred to, I thought of Mr. Pickwick, and wrote the first number; from the proof sheets of which, MR. SEYMOUR made his drawing of the Club, and his happy portrait of its founder:—the latter on MR. EDWARD CHAPMAN'S description of the dress and bearing of a real personage whom he had often seen. I connected Mr. Pickwick with a club, because of the original suggestion, and I put in Mr. Winkle expressly for the use of MR. SEYMOUR. We started with a

Number of twenty-four pages instead of thirty-two, and four illustrations in lieu of a couple. MR. SEYMOUR's sudden and lamented death before the second number was published, brought about a quick decision upon a point already in agitation; the number became one of thirty-two pages with only two illustrations, and remained so to the end.

It is with great unwillingness that I notice some intangible and incoherent assertions which have been made, professedly on behalf of MR. SEYMOUR, to the effect that he had same share in the invention of this book, or of anything in it, not faithfully described in the foregoing paragraph. With the moderation that is due equally to my respect for the memory of a brother-artist, and to my self-respect, I confine myself to placing on record here the facts:

That, MR. SEYMOUR never originated or suggested an incident, a phrase, or a word, to be found in this book. That, MR. SEYMOUR died when only twenty-four pages of this book were published, and when assuredly not forty-eight were written. That, I believe I never saw MR. SEYMOUR's handwriting in my life. That, I never saw MR. SEYMOUR but once in my life, and that was on the night but one before his death, when he certainly offered no suggestion whatsoever. That, I saw him then in the presence of two persons, both living, perfectly acquainted with all these facts, and whose written testimony to them I possess. Lastly, that MR. EDWARD CHAPMAN (the survivor of the original firm of CHAPMAN and HALL) has set down in writing, for similar preservation, his personal knowledge of the origin and progress of this book, of the monstrosity of the baseless assertions in question, and (tested by details) even of the self-evident impossibility of there being any truth in them. In the exercise of the forbearance on which I have resolved, I do not quote MR. EDWARD CHAPMAN's account of his deceased partner's reception, on a certain occasion, of the pretences in question.

"Boz," my signature in the Morning Chronicle, and in the Old Monthly Magazine, appended to the monthly cover of this book, and retained long afterwards, was the nickname of a pet child, a younger brother, whom I had dubbed

Moses, in honour of the Vicar of Wakefield; which being facetiously pronounced through the nose, became Boses, and being shortened, became Boz. Boz was a very familiar household word to me, long before I was an author, and so I came to adopt it.

It has been observed of Mr. Pickwick, that there is a decided change in his character, as these pages proceed, and that he becomes more good and more sensible. I do not think this change will appear forced or unnatural to my readers, if they will reflect that in real life the peculiarities and oddities of a man who has anything whimsical about him, generally impress us first, and that it is not until we are better acquainted with him that we usually begin to look below these superficial traits, and to know the better part of him.

Least there should be any well-intentioned persons who do not perceive the difference (as some such could not, when *OLD MORTALITY* was newly published), between religion and the cant of religion, piety and the pretence of piety, a humble reverence for the great truths of Scripture and an audacious and offensive obtrusion of its letter and not its spirit in the commonest dissensions and meanest affairs of life, to the extraordinary confusion of ignorant minds, let them understand that it is always the latter, and never the former, which is satirised here. Further, that the latter is here satirised as being, according to all experience, inconsistent with the former, impossible of union with it, and one of the most evil and mischievous falsehoods existent in society—whether it establish its head-quarters, for the time being, in Exeter Hall, or Ebenezer Chapel, or both. It may appear unnecessary to offer a word of observation on so plain a head. But it is never out of season to protest against that coarse familiarity with sacred things which is busy on the lip, and idle in the heart; or against the confounding of Christianity with any class of persons who, in the words of SWIFT, have just enough religion to make them hate, and not enough to make them love, one another.

I have found it curious and interesting, looking over the sheets of this reprint, to mark what important social im-

provements have taken place about us, almost imperceptibly, since they were originally written. The license of Counsel, and the degree to which Juries are ingeniously bewildered, are yet susceptible of moderation; while an improvement in the mode of conducting Parliamentary Elections (and even Parliaments too, perhaps) is still within the bounds of possibility. But legal reforms have pared the claws of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg; a spirit of self-respect, mutual forbearance, education, and co-operation for such good ends, has diffused itself among their clerks; places far apart are brought together, to the present convenience and advantage of the Public, and to the certain destruction, in time, of a host of petty jealousies, blindnesses, and prejudices, by which the Public alone have always been the sufferers; the laws relating to imprisonment for debt are altered; and the Fleet Prison is pulled down!

Who knows, but by the time the series reaches its conclusion, it may be discovered that there are even magistrates in town and country, who should be taught to shake hands every day with Common-sense and Justice; that even Poor Laws may have mercy on the weak, the aged, and unfortunate; that Schools, on the broad principles of Christianity, are the best adornment for the length and breadth of this civilised land; that Prison-doors should be barred on the outside, no less heavily and carefully than they are barred within; that the universal diffusion of common means of decency and health is as much the right of the poorest of the poor, as it is indispensable to the safety of the rich, and of the State, that a few petty boards and bodies—less than drops in the great ocean of humanity, which roars around them—are not for ever to let loose Fever and Consumption on God's creatures at their will, or always to keep their jobbing little fiddles going, for a Dance of Death.

CHARACTERS

MALE

SAMUEL PICKWICK, Founder of the Pickwick Club.

AUGUSTUS SNODGRASS	} Members of the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club.
TRACY TUPMAN	
NATHANIEL WINKLE	

BENJAMIN ALLEN, a medical student,

JACK BAMBER.

ANGELO CYRUS BANTAM, Esq.

MASTER TOMMY BARDELL.

CAPTAIN BOLDWIG.

COLONEL BULDER.

SERGEANT BUZFUZ.

THE CHANCERY PRISONER.

SIR THOMAS CLUBBER.

MR. DODSON, an attorney.

CAPTAIN DOWLER.

DUBBLEY, a police officer.

HORATIO FIZKIN, Esq.

MR. FOGG, an attorney.

DANIEL GRUMMER.

JACK HOPKINS, a medical student.

ANTHONY HUMM.

MR. LEO HUNTER.

JEM HUTLEY ("Dismal Jemmy").

MR. JACKSON.

ALFRED JINGLE, a strolling actor.

MR. JINKS.

JOE, the Fat Boy.

MR. LOWTEN.

PETER MAGNUS.

MR. MALLARD.

MR. MARTIN.

MR. MILLER.

MR. MIVINS ("The Zephyr").

MR. JONAS MUDGE.

MR. MUZZLE.

NEDDY.

GEORGE NUPKINS, Esq.

DOCTOR PAYNE.

MR. SOLOMON PELL.

MR. PERKER.

MR. PHUNKY.

MR. POTT.

MR. RADDLE.

MR. TOM ROKER.

BOB SAWYER, a medical student.

DR. SLAMMER.

THE HON. SAMUEL SLUMKEY.

MR. SLURK.

SMANGLE.

JOHN SMAUKER.

SERGEANT SNUBBIN.

MR. JUSTICE STARELEIGH.

THE REV. MR. STIGGINS ("The Shepherd").

LIEUT. TAPPLETON.

JOB TROTTER.

MR. TRUNDLE.

MR. WARDLE.

SAMUEL WELLER.

TONY WELLER.

MR. WINKLE, senior.

FEMALE

ARABELLA ALLEN.
MRS. MARTHA BARDELL.
MRS. COLONEL BULDER.
LADY CLUBBER.
MRS. BETSY CLUPPINS.
MRS. CRADDOCK.
MRS. DOWLER.
MRS. LEO HUNTER.
MARY, a servant-girl.
MRS. NUPKINS.
MISS HENRIETTA NUPKINS.

MRS. POTT.
MRS. MARY ANN RADDLE.
MRS. SUSANNAH SANDERS.
LADY SNUPHANUPH.
MISS EMILY WARDLE.
MISS ISABELLA WARDLE.
MISS RACHEL WARDLE.
MRS. WARDLE.
MRS. SUSAN WELLER.
MISS WITHERFIELD.
MRS. COLONEL WUGSBY.

CHARACTERS IN THE INTRODUCED STORIES

PRINCE BLADUD.
JOHN EDMUNDS.
MR. EDMUNDS.
GABRIEL GRUB.
HENRY.
GEORGE HEYLING.
MR. JINKINS.
JOHN, a pantomime actor.

OLD LOBBS.
JACK MARTIN.
NATHANIEL PIPKIN.
TOM SMART.
MRS. EDMUNDS.
MARY HEYLING.
KATE.
MARIA LOBBS.

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POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF THE PICKWICK CLUB

CHAPTER I

The Pickwickians

THE first ray of light which illumines the gloom, and converts into a dazzling brilliancy that obscurity in which the earlier history of the public career of the immortal Pickwick would appear to be involved, is derived from the perusal of the following entry in the Transactions of the Pickwick Club, which the editor of these papers feels the highest pleasure in laying before his readers, as a proof of the careful attention, indefatigable assiduity, and nice discrimination, with which his search among the multifarious documents confided to him has been conducted.

“ May 12, 1827. Joseph Smiggers, Esq., P.V.P.M.P.C.,¹ presiding. The following resolutions unanimously agreed to:—

“ That this Association has heard read, with feelings of unmingled satisfaction, and unqualified approval, the paper communicated by Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C.,² entitled ‘ Speculations on the Source of the Hampstead Ponds, with some Observations on the Theory of Tittlebats; ’ and that this Association does hereby return its warmest thanks to the said Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C., for the same.

“ That while this Association is deeply sensible of the advantages which must accrue to the cause of science from

¹ Perpetual Vice-President—Member Pickwick Club.

² General Chairman—Member Pickwick Club.

the production to which they have just adverted,—no less than from the unwearied researches of Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C., in Hornsey, Highgate, Brixton, and Camberwell,—they cannot but entertain a lively sense of the inestimable benefits which must inevitably result from carrying the speculations of that learned man into a wider field, from extending his travels, and consequently enlarging his sphere of observation, to the advancement of knowledge, and the diffusion of learning.

“That, with the view just mentioned, this Association has taken into its serious consideration a proposal, emanating from the aforesaid Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C., and three other Pickwickians, hereinafter named, for forming a new branch of United Pickwickians, under the title of the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club.

“That the said proposal has received the sanction and approval of this Association.

“That the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club is therefore hereby constituted; and that Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C., Tracy Tupman, Esq., M.P.C., Augustus Snodgrass, Esq., M.P.C., and Nathaniel Winkle, Esq., M.P.C., are hereby nominated and appointed members of the same; and that they be requested to forward, from time to time, authenticated accounts of their journeys and investigations, of their observations of character and manners, and of the whole of their adventures, together with all tales and papers to which local scenery or associations may give rise, to the Pickwick Club, stationed in London.

“That this Association cordially recognises the principle of every member of the Corresponding Society defraying his own travelling expenses; and that it sees no objection whatever to the members of the said society pursuing their inquiries for any length of time they please, upon the same terms.

“That the members of the aforesaid Corresponding Society be, and are, hereby informed, that their proposal to pay the postage of their letters, and the carriage of their parcels, has been deliberated upon by this Association: that this Association considers such proposals worthy of the great