

BL-DI 810465

256)

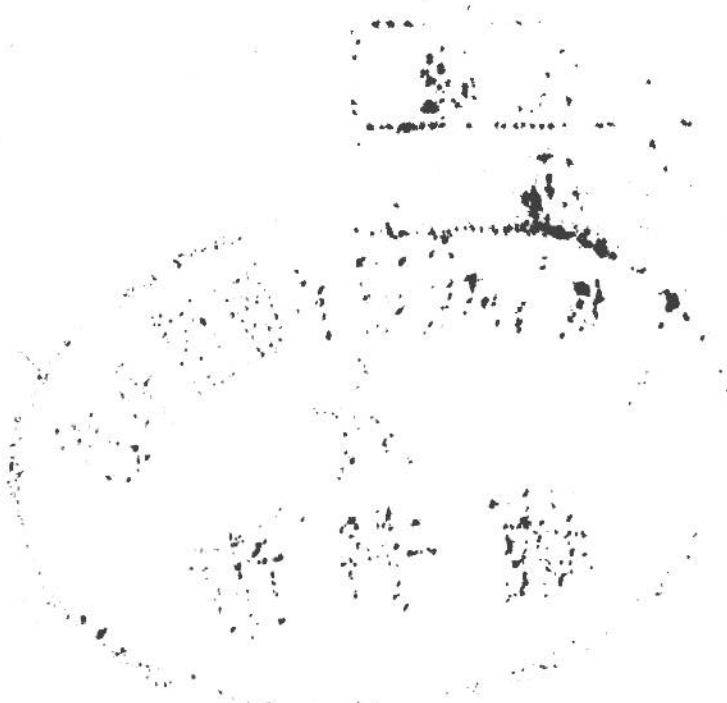
260

2

HARD TIMES



CHARLES DICKENS
1812-1870



2561.44
E6034

F5045888

~~22230~~
外文書庫

HARD TIMES

2552

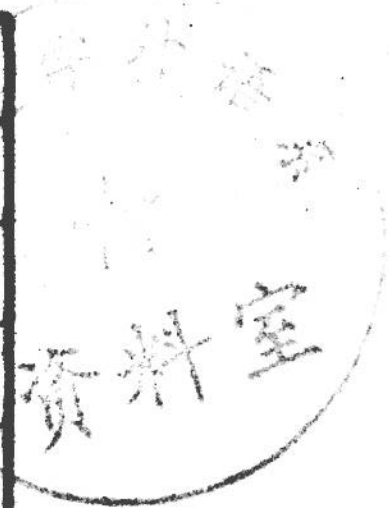
CHARLES DICKENS



with an Introduction by

FREDERICK BRERETON

李	崧	醫	生	秉	承	其
先	父	南	川	翁	遺	志
捐	贈	書	籍	與	暨	南
大	學	外	語	系	圖	書
室	為	紀	念	其	愛	國
興	學	的	先	祖	父	塘
軒	公	以	誌	不	忘	



COLLINS
LONDON AND GLASGOW

First published, 1854

This edition, 1954

Latest reprint, 1961

Printed in Great Britain by

COLLINS CLEAR-TYPE PRESS

CHARLES DICKENS

CHARLES JOHN HUFFAM DICKENS was born at Portsea on February 7th, 1812, the second child of John Dickens, a minor clerk in the Navy Pay Office (then at Portsmouth), and of his wife Elizabeth, née Barrow.

Owing to his father's congenital incapacity to manage his financial affairs, Charles Dickens' childhood was spent under the shadow of economic insecurity, a shadow that grew darker year by year as the family moved, first to London, then to Chatham and from there back to London, and which at one time (early in 1824) threatened to blot out for ever all prospects the boy might have had of a successful career. At that time the steadily declining family fortunes had reached their nadir with the arrest of John Dickens and his removal to the debtors' prison of the Marshalsea. Mrs. Dickens with four of her children went to join her husband in prison, and young Charles was sent to work at a blacking factory, where for six shillings a week he had to stick labels on pots of paste-blackening. Those few months were for Dickens a time of utter misery, humiliation and despair the memory of which, as he later confessed, he could never quite shake off. However, a timely legacy came to the rescue. It enabled John Dickens to leave prison and to send his son to a school at Hampstead—he had had some previous schooling at Chatham—where he remained for two or three years.

In 1827, at the age of fifteen, he entered a solicitor's office as a junior clerk. This position, though by no means well paid, enabled him to establish a certain independence for himself, to make his own friends and to indulge his taste for the theatre which he was to retain all his life.

Having taught himself shorthand, he became (in 1829) a reporter in one of the offices of "Doctor's Common" advancing a year later to the position of a parliamentary reporter, and further still to that of a newspaper reporter on the *Morning Chronicle* at the respectable salary of five guineas a week.

In 1833 he wrote his first sketch for the *Old Monthly Magazine*; other sketches followed quickly, and a year later the name of "Boz" was attached to them. In 1836 the

first series of *Sketches by Boz* appeared in volume form. Their success was immediate. The same year Dickens married Catherine Hogarth. The same year also Chapman & Hall commissioned him to write the letterpress for a projected series of Cockney sporting plates by the caricature artist Seymour. Dickens "thought of Pickwick" and this was the origin of the *Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* by which Dickens established his fame for all times. They appeared first in twenty monthly instalments, beginning in April 1836 and were subsequently published in book form in 1837.

Dickens' rise from obscurity and relative poverty to a position of unique eminence and of wealth was spectacular and dramatic in its suddenness. Within a very few years of the appearance of *Pickwick* he had become the most popular novelist his country had yet known ; more than that, he had become a public institution. Book followed book, and his literary activity was henceforth not to cease until the very eve of his death some thirty years later.

Oliver Twist came out in 1838 ; *Nicholas Nickleby* followed a year later. *Master Humphrey's Clock*, in three volumes containing *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* appeared in 1841.

In 1842 Dickens, accompanied by his wife, made his first tour to the United States and Canada. After his return in 1842 he published *American Notes* and in 1844 *Martin Chuzzlewit*, both works reflecting in a not very complimentary manner some of the author's impressions of America. 1843 also saw the appearance of *A Christmas Carol*, the first of Dickens' Christmas books which he continued later with *The Chimes*, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, etc.

Dickens lived with his ever growing family—in all ten children were born to him during his married life which ended in 1858 by separation from his wife—at successive residences in London, and finally at Gad's Hill near Gravesend which had been the dream place of his childhood,

He travelled a good deal abroad, staying at—among other places—Genoa (1844-45), Lausanne, Paris (1846) and Boulogne (during the summers of 1853-56).

He reached the height of his literary fame with *David Copperfield* in which he drew his father's caricatured portrait as Mr. Micawber. Shortly after its publication in 1849 Dickens re-entered journalism with the founding of the

CHARLES DICKENS

weekly magazine *Household Words* of which he was chief owner, editor and contributor. In 1859 he replaced the magazine by another almost identical one called *All the Year Round* which he continued to edit until his death.

His next main works after *David Copperfield* were *Bleak House* (1853), *Little Dorrit* (1857), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *The Uncommercial Traveller* (1860) and *Great Expectations* (1861).

In later years, under the relentless pressure of work and of the many activities which his restless nature imposed on him his health began to suffer. In 1858 he had instituted public readings of his own works on a professional basis, a venture which proved an immediate and outstanding success but which perhaps more than anything else undermined his constitution. His second American tour as reader of his own works was one long triumphal—and exhausting—march. His health broke down completely in 1869, and he died from a cerebral stroke at Gad's Hill Place on June 9th 1870, leaving behind unfinished his last work *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

H. d. R.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Charles Dickens</i>	5
<i>Introduction</i>	11

BOOK THE FIRST *SOWING*

CHAP.

1. THE ONE THING NEEDFUL	15
2. MURDERING THE INNOCENTS	16
3. A LOOPHOLE	22
4. MR. BOUNDERBY	27
5. THE KEY-NOTE	34
6. SLEARY'S HORSEMANSHIP	40
7. MRS. SPARSIT	53
8. NEVER WONDER	59
9. SISSY'S PROGRESS	65
10. STEPHEN BLACKPOOL	72
11. NO WAY OUT	77
12. THE OLD WOMAN	84
13. RACHAEL	89
14. THE GREAT MANUFACTURER	96
15. FATHER AND DAUGHTER	101
16. HUSBAND AND WIFE	108

BOOK THE SECOND *REAPING*

17. EFFECTS IN THE BANK	114
18. MR. JAMES HARTHOUSE	127
19. THE WHELP	135
20. MEN AND BROTHERS	140
21. MEN AND MASTERS	147

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
22. FADING AWAY	154
23. GUNPOWDER	165
24. EXPLOSION	177
25. HEARING THE LAST OF IT	189
26. MRS. SPARSIT'S STAIRCASE	197
27. LOWER AND LOWER	201
28. DOWN	210

BOOK THE THIRD GARNERING

29. ANOTHER THING NEEDFUL	215
30. VERY RIDICULOUS	221
31. VERY DECIDED	230
32. LOST	238
33. FOUND	247
34. THE STARLIGHT	255
35. WHELP-HUNTING	264
36. PHILOSOPHICAL	275
37. FINAL	281
<i>Bibliography</i>	287

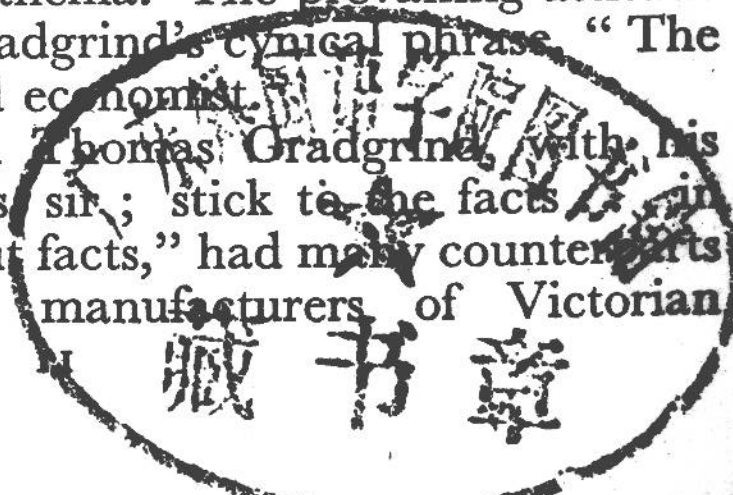


INTRODUCTION

IN these latter days we have grown accustomed to the novel which is not a novel but rather a thinly disguised treatise on psychology, sociology, or whatever other 'ology is the particular fashion of the moment. Mr. Wells set the example in this respect, and, more than any other writer, hastened the metamorphosis from novel to treatise, carrying the process so far that his characters tend to become mere insubstantial ghosts wandering inconsequently through the arid pages of a Fabian tract. But strictly speaking, the novel with a purpose is no recent development ; in our day, however, too much concentration on the " purpose " has had the natural result of rendering any attempt at a connected story well-nigh impossible. The golden age of the story-teller has passed ; our novelists now aim at being doctrinaires with panaceas for all evils, real or imaginary. But if we must necessarily view the present-day tendencies with grave misgiving, we can still console ourselves with the comforting thought that the sensible majority of readers will continue to prefer a novel wherein the development of the story has been the author's main consideration ; the purely didactic novel we can well leave to the highbrows.

In the eighteen-fifties, however, it needed no mean courage to break away from the recognised conventions of subject and setting, and to seize upon the all-pervading ugliness of a Lancashire cotton-town as a background for a penetrating study of the money-grabbing industrialists who flourished under the beneficent influence of *laissez-faire*. It was essentially a period when culture was at a discount ; when all that mattered was the insensate lust for wealth—and still more wealth ; when any attempt at ameliorating the appalling conditions that prevailed in the factories horrified the manufacturers, to whom such dividend-lowering schemes were anathema. The prevailing attitude found apt expression in Gradgrind's cynical phrase, " The Good Samaritan was a bad economist."

The eminently practical Thomas Gradgrind, with his soulless philosophy, " Facts, sir ; stick to the facts ; in this life we want nothing but facts," had many counterparts among the hard-headed manufacturers of Victorian



England. The tragedy is that the Gradgrind doctrines are still upheld by thousands of worthy citizens even in the present day. One really is forced to the opinion that progress during the past century has not been so considerable as one supposed. In education, for example, are not our schools still tainted by the Gradgrind insistence on the importance of facts? Have we yet succeeded in changing the system which produced Mr. M'Choakumchild? "He and some one hundred and forty other schoolmasters had been lately turned out at the same time, in the same factory, on the same principles, like so many pianoforte legs. He had been put through an immense variety of paces, and had answered volumes of head-breaking questions. . . . Ah, rather overdone, M'Choakumchild. If he had only learned a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more."

We fear that Dickens's apt criticism still holds true to-day. We fancy too, that it was the Gradgrinds and their type who so bitterly opposed the Bills to shorten the hours of labour in the factories; who were responsible for the iniquitous system of child slavery, the last remnants of which have disappeared only within living memory; who built those innumerable brick houses of "unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage." For there was more than a touch of savagery in the make-up of the Gradgrinds, and certainly their ignorance of any ethical code would have disgraced a Red Indian.

When first introduced to Mr. Bounderby, standing pompously on the hearth-rug, we recognise instinctively the conventional type of the self-made man, more than a little arrogant, rejoicing in his self-sufficiency and eternally boasting of his youthful poverty in the days "when he had no shoe to his foot, when he passed the day in a ditch and the night in a pigsty."

From the beginning we have an uneasy suspicion that Louisa is inevitably doomed to marry this prosaic Bounderby, unless a more romantic suitor appears and carries her off. But alas! the eligible young man whose arrival we so anxiously await never comes. Louisa is ruthlessly sacrificed on the altar of her father's ambition. The Gradgrind philosophy of life has proved too much for her: she must confess herself beaten and take the easiest way. Henceforth, as Mrs. Bounderby, she moves towards

INTRODUCTION

the inevitable end, a tragic, discontented figure, her better self crushed into a demon, oppressed by circumstances, which, through sheer lack of the necessary will-power, she cannot overcome.

Poor Louisa ! Had she been a twentieth century maiden—and Dickens a twentieth century novelist—she would have stood up to her problem and solved it in very different fashion. Perhaps Dickens puts too great a tax on our credulity when he asks us to believe that Louisa's decision was largely influenced by her affection for her despicable brother, Tom Gradgrind. It is not love but womanly pity for a poor weak thing that sustains her through the prolonged torture of marriage. Later, we see Louisa completely transformed into an unhappy discontented woman, rebelling against the bonds which hold her, yet hesitating to take the shortest road to happiness ; there follows that intensely dramatic scene when the pent-up emotions of years at last find expression ; when, exhausted by her impassioned indictment of her father and of his " practical philosophy," she sinks to the floor. Gradgrind lays her down, and, as Dickens finely puts it, " sees the pride of his heart and the triumph of his system lying an insensible heap at his feet." Thus does the wheel at last turn full circle.

The character of Louisa, though skilfully drawn in the main essentials, yet rings less true to life than that of old Gradgrind, and necessarily suffers through lack of a suitable partner to play " opposite." This rather conspicuous absence of a hero tends to produce an ill-balanced effect in an otherwise well-constructed story. One feels that Stephen Blackpool, cast as he is in the true heroic mould, has been rather shabbily treated by the author and relegated to the subsidiary plot by which Dickens, following the example of Balzac and other French writers, adds contrast and relief to the main theme ; yet the tender love-episodes between the humble lovers, Stephen and Rachael, undoubtedly constitute the finest passages in the novel. All the elements of classic tragedy are contained in the conception of Stephen, bound by every principle of Law and Mother-Church to a miserable drink-besotted creature, yet recognising his true soul-mate in Rachael the well-beloved. In that Grand-Guignol scene by the bedside of his wife, a way of escape opens to him but is closed again by the person who had most to gain by his freedom. Dickens, without any

pretence of artistic restraint, anticipates in this scene the worst horrors of Zola's *L'Assommoir* ; yet who will be so bold as to assert that the picture is exaggerated or unreal ?

As for Stephen's part in interpreting the sociological side of the novel, Dickens has put into his mouth sentiments which, on the book's first appearance, were angrily described by Lord Macaulay as "sullen socialism." Stephen was, indeed, a common enough type of artisan. Convinced that his class were the victims of "muddle," as he termed it, he groped blindly for a way out, just as he sought escape from the "muddle" of his marriage.

"I canna tell what will better aw this—but I can tell what I know will never do't. The strong hand will never do't. Vict'ry and triumph will never do't. Agreeing fur to mak' one side unnat'rally awlus and for ever right, and t'other side unnat'rally and fur ever wrong, will never, never do't. . . . Most of aw, rating 'em as so much power, and reg'latin 'em as if they was figures in a soom, or machines, wi'out souls to weary and souls to hope—this will never do't, sir, till God's work is onmade."

Perhaps one may detect in the passage quoted above traces of that sullen socialism which so irritated Macaulay, but certainly one will also perceive there the proper antidote to the Gradgrind philosophy.

"Dickens is entirely right in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written ; and all of them, but especially *Hard Times*, should be studied with close and earnest care by persons interested in social questions. They will find much that is partial, and, because partial, apparently unjust, but if they examine all the evidence on the other side which Dickens seems to overlook, it will appear, after all this trouble, that his view was the finally right one grossly and sharply told."

Such was the verdict of John Ruskin on the value of Dickens as a social historian, and with this carefully considered judgment few critics will venture to disagree. However second-rate its qualities as a story may be, *Hard Times* possesses a permanent value, not merely for the student of social conditions, but for the ordinary reader, who will recognise in this book the contribution of a master mind towards a solution of the social and industrial problems which beset Victorian England.

FREDERICK BRERETON

BOOK THE FIRST

SOWING

I

The One Thing Needful

“**N**ow, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts : nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir !”

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasised his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders—nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was—all helped the emphasis.

“In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir—nothing but Facts !”

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes



the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.

2

Murdering the Innocents

THOMAS GRADGRIND, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir—peremptorily Thomas—Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic. You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind, or Joseph Gradgrind (all supposititious, non-existent persons), but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind—no, sir!

In such terms Mr. Gradgrind always mentally introduced himself, whether to his private circle of acquaintance, or to the public in general. In such terms, no doubt, substituting the words “boys and girls,” for “sir,” Thomas Gradgrind now presented Thomas Gradgrind to the little pitchers before him, who were to be filled so full of facts.

Indeed, as he eagerly sparkled at them from the cellarage before mentioned, he seemed a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts, and prepared to blow them clean out of the regions of childhood at one discharge. He seemed a galvanising apparatus, too, charged with a grim, mechanical substitute for the tender young imaginations that were to be stormed away.

“Girl number twenty,” said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, “I don’t know that girl. Who is that girl?”

“Sissy Jupe, sir,” explained number twenty, blushing, standing up and curtsying.