

БИБЛИОТЕКА ИНОСТРАННОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

CHARLES
DICKENS

*Posthumous Papers
of the Pickwick Club*



АТЕЛЬСТВО ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ НА ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКАХ

THE
POSTHUMOUS PAPERS
OF THE
PICKWICK CLUB

BY
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POSTHUMOUS PAPERS
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DEDICATION TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION

TO

MR. SERJEANT TALFOURD, M. P.,

ETC. ETC.

My Dear Sir,

If I had not enjoyed the happiness of your private friendship, I should still have dedicated this work to you, as a slight and most inadequate acknowledgment of the inestimable services you are rendering to the literature of your country, and of the lasting benefits you will confer upon the authors of this and succeeding generations, by securing to them and their descendants a permanent interest in the copyright of their works.

Many a fevered head and palsied hand will gather new vigour in the hour of sickness and distress from your excellent exertions; many a widowed mother and orphan child, who would otherwise reap nothing from the fame of departed genius but its too frequent legacy of poverty and suffering, will bear, in their altered condition, higher testimony to the value of your labours than the most lavish encomiums from lip or pen could ever afford.

Beside such tributes, any avowal of feeling from me, on the question to which you have devoted the combined advantages of your eloquence, character, and genius, would be powerless indeed. Nevertheless, in thus publicly expressing my deep and grateful sense of your efforts in behalf of English literature, and of those who devote themselves to the most precarious of all pursuits, I do

but imperfect justice to my own strong feelings on the subject, if I do no service to you.

These few sentences would have comprised all I should have had to say, if I had only known you in your public character. On the score of private feeling, let me add one word more.

Accept the dedication of this book, my dear Sir, as a mark of my warmest regard and esteem—as a memorial of the most gratifying friendship I have ever contracted, and of some of the pleasantest hours I have ever spent—as a token of my fervent admiration of every fine quality of your head and heart—as an assurance of the truth and sincerity with which I shall ever be,

My Dear Sir,

Most faithfully and sincerely yours,

Charles Dickens

*48 Doughty Street,
September 27, 1837.*

PREFACE TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION

THE author's object in this work was to place before the reader a constant succession of characters and incidents; to paint them in as vivid colours as he could command; and to render them, at the same time, life-like and amusing.

Deferring to the judgment of others in the outset of the undertaking, he adopted the machinery of the club, which was suggested as that best adapted to this purpose: but, finding that it tended rather to his embarrassment than otherwise, he gradually abandoned it, considering it a matter of very little importance to the work whether strictly epic justice were awarded to the club, or not.

The publication of the book in monthly numbers, containing only thirty-two pages in each, rendered it an object of paramount importance that, while the different incidents were linked together by a chain of interest strong enough to prevent their appearing unconnected or impossible, the general design should be so simple as to sustain no injury from this detached and desultory form of publication, extending over no fewer than twenty months. In short, it was necessary—or it appeared so to the author—that every number should be, to a certain extent, complete in itself, and yet that the whole twenty numbers, when collected, should form one tolerably harmonious whole, each leading to the other by a gentle and not unnatural progress of adventure.

It is obvious that in a work published with a view to such considerations, no artfully interwoven or ingeniously complicated plot can with reason be expected. The author ventures to express a hope that he has successfully surmounted the difficulties of his undertaking. And if it be objected to the *Pickwick Papers*, that

they are a mere series of adventures, in which the scenes are ever changing, and the characters come and go like the men and women we encounter in the real world, he can only content himself with the reflection that they claim to be nothing else, and that the same objection has been made to the works of some of the greatest novelists in the English language.

The following pages have been written from time to time, almost as the periodical occasion arose. Having been written for the most part in the society of a very dear young friend who is now no more, they are connected in the author's mind at once with the happiest period of his life, and with its saddest and most severe affliction.

It is due to the gentleman, whose designs accompany the letter-press, to state that the interval has been so short between the production of each number in manuscript and its appearance in print, that the greater portion of the illustrations have been executed by the artist from the author's mere verbal description of what he intended to write.

The almost unexampled kindness and favour with which these papers have been received by the public will be a never-failing source of gratifying and pleasant recollection while their author lives. He trusts that, throughout this book, no incident or expression occurs which could call a blush into the most delicate cheek, or wound the feelings of the most sensitive person. If any of his imperfect descriptions, while they afford amusement in the perusal, should induce only one reader to think better of his fellowmen, and to look upon the brighter and more kindly side of human nature, he would indeed be proud and happy to have led to such a result.

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.* 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.,† 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 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

* Perpetual Vice President—Member Pickwick Club.

† General Chairman—Member Pickwick Club.

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 proposal worthy of the great minds from which it emanated; and that it hereby signifies its perfect acquiescence therein.”

A casual observer, adds the secretary, to whose notes we are indebted for the following account—a casual observer might possibly have remarked nothing extraordinary in the bald head,