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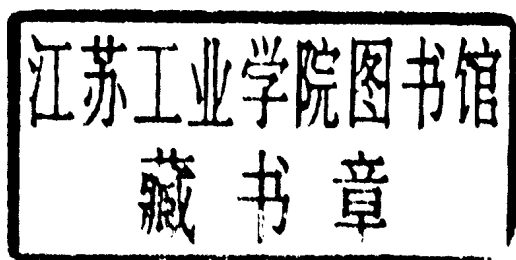


CHARLES
DICKENS

Edited by John O. Jordan

THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
CHARLES DICKENS

EDITED BY
JOHN O. JORDAN



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The Cambridge Companion to Charles Dickens contains fourteen chapters by leading international scholars, who together provide diverse but complementary approaches to the full span of Dickens's work, with particular focus on his major fiction. The essays cover the whole range of Dickens's writing, from *Sketches by Boz* through *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Separate chapters address important thematic topics: childhood, the city, and domestic ideology. Others consider formal features of the novels, including their serial publication and Dickens's distinctive use of language. Three final chapters examine Dickens in relation to work in other media: illustration, theatre, and film. Each essay provides guidance to further reading. The volume as a whole offers a valuable introduction to Dickens for students and general readers, as well as fresh insights, informed by recent critical theory, that will be of interest to scholars and teachers of his novels.

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NOTES ON REFERENCES AND EDITIONS

So many editions of Dickens's works are in use that the most useful citations are simply parenthetical references to chapter numbers (e.g., *BH* 35) or book and chapter numbers in the case of *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Our Mutual Friend* (e.g., *OMF* 2.5). Title and chapter numbers are not included where the context makes them clear.

The best modern editions of Dickens's works are generally those of the Clarendon edition of the novels, published by Oxford University Press. These also appear (without textual notes) in the more recent volumes in the Oxford World's Classics editions. The Norton Critical editions of *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times*, *Bleak House*, *David Copperfield*, and *Great Expectations* are excellent, and the Penguin editions are usually the next best, though these are being challenged by a new series of Everymans and volumes published by Bedford/St. Martin's and Broadview that, like Norton Criticals, include much supplementary material. In quoting from the novels, contributors to this volume have relied principally on Clarendons, Norton Criticals, and Penguins. Quotations from the minor works have been taken from the New Oxford Illustrated Dickens (Oxford University Press, 1947–58).

For letters, we have used the now authoritative Pilgrim edition where possible, citing by date (British format, as in Pilgrim). Quotations from Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens* are cited by book and chapter.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	<i>A Christmas Carol</i>
AYR	<i>All the Year Round</i>
BH	<i>Bleak House</i>
BR	<i>Barnaby Rudge</i>
DC	<i>David Copperfield</i>
DS	<i>Dombey and Son</i>
GE	<i>Great Expectations</i>
HT	<i>Hard Times</i>
HW	<i>Household Words</i>
LD	<i>Little Dorrit</i>
MC	<i>Martin Chuzzlewit</i>
MED	<i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i>
NN	<i>Nicholas Nickleby</i>
OCS	<i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i>
OMF	<i>Our Mutual Friend</i>
OT	<i>Oliver Twist</i>
PP	<i>The Pickwick Papers</i>
SB	<i>Sketches by Boz</i>
TTC	<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>
Forster	<i>The Life of Charles Dickens</i>
Pilgrim	<i>The Letters of Charles Dickens</i> . The Pilgrim edition. Madeline House, Graham Storey, Kathleen Tillotson, et al. (eds.). Clarendon Press, 1965 to present. Currently in 10 volumes. References are to volume and page.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1812 Born in Portsmouth (7 February) to John and Elizabeth Dickens.
- 1817 Family moves to Chatham, near Rochester in Kent.
- 1821 Dickens begins education at William Giles's School. Writes the tragedy, *Misnar, the Sultan of India*.
- 1822 John Dickens transferred to London (summer). Family moves to Camden Town.
- 1824 John Dickens imprisoned for debt in the Marshalsea Prison (20 February–28 May). The young Charles Dickens is sent to work at Warren's Blacking Factory (late January/early February–June).
- 1825 Attends Wellington House Academy.
- 1827 Family evicted for non-payment of rates (March). Dickens leaves school and becomes a clerk at Ellis & Blackmore, solicitors.
- 1828–29 Learns shorthand and works as a freelance reporter at Doctors' Commons.
- 1830 Falls in love with Maria Beadnell.
- 1831–34 Works as a parliamentary reporter.
- 1832 Considers a career in acting but fails, on account of illness, to keep his appointment for an audition at Covent Garden Theatre.
- 1833 Publishes first story, "A Dinner at Poplar Walk," in *The Monthly Magazine*.
- 1834 Becomes reporter for *The Morning Chronicle*. Meets Catherine Hogarth (August). Publishes stories in various periodicals.
- 1836 Collects previously published stories into his first book, *Sketches by Boz* (First Series, 8 February). Marries Catherine Hogarth (2 April). Serialization of *Pickwick Papers* (April 1836–November 1837). *The Strange Gentleman* produced at the St. James's Theatre (29 September) followed by *The Village Coquettes* (22 December). *Sketches by Boz*, Second Series published (17 December). Resigns from *The Morning Chronicle* to assume editorship of *Bentley's Miscellany*.

- 1837 First number of *Bentley's Miscellany* (1 January). The first of his ten children is born (6 January). Moves to 48 Doughty Street (April). Death of Mary Hogarth (7 May). First visit to Europe (July). *Oliver Twist* serialized in *Bentley's* (February 1837–April 1839).
- 1838 Edits and publishes *Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi*. *Nicholas Nickleby* serialized (April 1838–October 1839).
- 1839 Resigns editorship of *Bentley's Miscellany* (31 January).
- 1840 *Sketches of Young Couples* (10 February). *Old Curiosity Shop* serialized in *Master Humphrey's Clock* (25 April 1840–6 February 1841).
- 1841 *Barnaby Rudge* serialized in *Master Humphrey's Clock* (13 February–27 November).
- 1842 Visit to America (January–June). *American Notes* published (19 October).
- 1843 *Martin Chuzzlewit* serialized (January 1843–July 1844). *A Christmas Carol* published (19 December).
- 1844 Lives one year in Italy with his family (from July). *The Chimes* published (16 December).
- 1845 Returns to London (June). Directs and acts in Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*. *The Cricket on the Hearth* published (20 December). Begins composition of the autobiographical fragment (c. 1845–48).
- 1846 Edits *The Daily News* (21 January–9 February) and lives part of the year in Switzerland and Paris. *Pictures from Italy* published (18 May). *Dombey and Son* serialized (October 1846–April 1848).
- 1848 *The Haunted Man* published (19 December).
- 1849 *David Copperfield* serialized (May 1849–November 1850).
- 1850 Founds and edits the weekly journal *Household Words* (until May 1859).
- 1851 Dickens family moves to Tavistock House (November).
- 1852 *Bleak House* serialized (March 1852–September 1853).
- 1854 *Hard Times* serialized in *Household Words* (1 April–12 August).
- 1855 Meets Maria Beadnell (now Mrs. Winter) again. Lives in Paris (October 1855–April 1856). *Little Dorrit* serialized (December 1855–June 1857).
- 1856 Purchases Gad's Hill Place, near Rochester in Kent.
- 1857 Directs and acts in Wilkie Collins's *The Frozen Deep*. Meets Ellen Ternan.
- 1858 Gives his first public readings for profit (29 April–22 July). Legal separation from Catherine (May). First provincial reading tour (2 August–13 November).

CHRONOLOGY

- 1859 Founds and edits *All the Year Round*. *A Tale of Two Cities* serialized in the new weekly journal (30 April–26 November).
- 1860 *Great Expectations* serialized in *All the Year Round* (1 December–3 August 1861).
- 1864 *Our Mutual Friend* serialized (May 1864–November 1865).
- 1865 Staplehurst train wreck (9 June). Dickens sustains minor injuries and long-lasting trauma.
- 1867 American reading tour (November 1867–April 1868).
- 1870 Twelve farewell readings in London (January). Received by Queen Victoria (9 March). Begins serializing *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (April). Dies on 9 June at Gad's Hill of a cerebral hemorrhage.

PREFACE

Dickens is unusual if not unique among canonical English-language authors in remaining at once a vital focus of academic research and a major figure in popular culture. Only Shakespeare, Mark Twain, and perhaps Jane Austen can compare with him in terms of their ability to hold the attention of both a scholarly and a general audience. The range of Dickens's appeal throughout the English-speaking world can be measured not only by his regular presence on school reading lists and in university courses, but by the frequency with which his novels continue to be adapted for the stage, for television, and for feature-length films. In Britain, where his image has appeared on postage stamps and on the ten-pound note, Dickens has become a staple of the national culture, a commodity available for export as well as for internal circulation. In North America, where hardly a day goes by without some Dickens reference appearing in the local or national press, *A Christmas Carol* has attained virtually the status of myth and elicits parodies, piracies, and annual theatrical performances with increasing frequency. Extending Paul Davis's apt phrase about the *Carol*, one might say that Dickens has become a "culture-text" for the world at large.

Meanwhile, Dickens's reputation in the academy continues to rise.¹ No longer dismissed as a mere comic entertainer, he is widely recognized as the preeminent novelist of the Victorian age and a major figure in world literature. Recent criticism has come to value not only the journalistic and documentary side of his work, but the very qualities of excess – sprawling melodramatic plots, larger-than-life characters, verbal extravagance – that earlier critics had identified as signs of artistic weakness. His novels provide a fertile testing ground for new theories and methodologies. They attract the attention of scholars coming from a wide variety of critical approaches: feminist, new historicist, psychoanalytic, and deconstructionist, as well as from more traditional historical and formalist perspectives.

The Cambridge Companion to Charles Dickens takes cognizance of the diverse audiences to which Dickens appeals and of the different approaches