

**THE DICKENS READER: SELECTED
PASSAGES FROM THE WORKS OF
CHARLES DICKENS,
ARRANGED AND ANNOTATED FOR
CLASS READING; WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL
NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR**

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The Dickens Reader: Selected Passages from the Works of Charles Dickens, Arranged and Annotated for Class Reading: With a Biographical Notice of the Author by Charles Dickens

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PREFACE.

The desire for the introduction into school reading-books of passages from the pens of the best humorists has been frequently expressed.

To meet this desire, and to place in the hands of young readers a book which will make class reading pleasant, the present selection has been made from the works of Charles Dickens, whose writings, while overflowing with humour, are well calculated to suggest to young folks lessons of kindness and good-will.

Many teachers will welcome this opportunity of setting before their scholars diverting pages of fiction well within juvenile comprehension, as a relief from historical and geographical reading, and may be constrained to say with Thackeray, "I am grateful for the innocent laughter which the author of *David Copperfield* gives to my children."

The extracts are abridged where abridgment seemed advisable, and occasionally "Sam Wellerisms," &c., have been toned down.

CONTENTS.

	Page
THE LIFE OF CHARLES DICKENS,	9
1. Early Life. 2. Work in the Warehouse. 3. Youthful Responsibilities. 4. Dickens as a Reporter. 5. Dickens as an Author. 6. Personal Characteristics. 7. Death of Dickens.	
THE PICKWICK PAPERS,	23
I. An Afternoon on the Ice:—8. Mr. Winkle Skates. 9. Mr. Pickwick Skides. II. A Day's Shooting:—10. Mr. Winkle's Gun. 11. The Wheelbarrow. 12. Fancy Shooting.	
THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF NICHOLAS NICKLEBY,	41
Nicholas and the Brothers Cheeryble:—13. Meeting a Friend. 14. The Brothers Cheeryble. 15. Tim's Objections. 16. Nicholas begins Work. 17. Tim's Flowers.	
THE ADVENTURES OF OLIVER TWIST,	58
18. The Beadle. 19. The Board. 20. A General Start. 21. Oliver's New Home. 22. Oliver's Anger. 23. Oliver's Flight. 24. A Sad Adventure. 25. "Stop Thief!" 26. Good Friends. 27. Oliver getting Better. 28. The Beautiful Portrait. 29. Oliver's Recovery. 30. Mr. Brownlow's Kindness. 31. Mr. Grimwig. 32. Oliver's Errand. 33. An Unlucky Meeting. 34. Mr. Bumble's Report. 35. A Happy Life. 36. A Disappointment. 37. Oliver's Gratitude.	
CHRISTMAS TALES—THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH,	117
Chirp the First,	117
38. A Singing Match. 39. The Carrier's Arrival. 40. Unloading the Cart. 41. The Strange Passenger. 42. Caleb Plummer Calls. 43. Gruff and Tackleton. 44. Dot's Surprise. 45. The Carrier's Vision.	
Chirp the Second,	142
46. Caleb's Home. 47. Caleb's Greatcoat. 48. Tackleton and Bertha. 49. Bertha questions her Father. 50. Dressing the Baby. 51. The Picnic. 52. May and Dot. 53. Bertha's Hard Fate. 54. John's Return. 55. What John saw.	

	Page
Chirp the Third, - - - - -	- 171
56. John's Thoughts. 57. Fairy Voices. 58. The Disappearance.	
59. What John decides. 60. Dot's Request. 61. The Blind Girl	
undecided. 62. Caleb's Son. 63. Everything Explained. 64.	
Everybody Happy.	
List of the more Difficult Words, - . - . -	- 198
Meanings of the more Difficult Words and Phrases, - . -	- 212

THE DICKENS READER.

THE LIFE OF CHARLES DICKENS.

1. EARLY LIFE.

CHARLES DICKENS, the popular novelist, who, up to the time of his death in 1870, had for thirty-five years delighted his readers with entertaining stories and an un-failing store of humour and fun, was the son of John Dickens, a clerk in the Navy Pay-office. He was born in the year 1812, at Landport, in Portsea, where his father was at that time stationed.

When Charles was four years of age his father's duties forced him to remove to Chatham, and there the family lived for about five years. The early impressions received at this time had a marked and lasting effect on the mind of the child; and it is interesting to bear in mind that it was in this district that, as a prosperous man, he spent the latest years of his life.

On the road between Chatham and Gravesend might be seen a very pretty house and grounds, known as "Gadshill Place;" and in early boyhood Dickens often went past it with his father, who, seeing the boy's admiration of the pretty place, one day said to him: "If you were to be very persevering and were to work very hard, you might some day come to live in it."

That this might come to pass was for a long time the boy's ambition; and in after years, so successful was he in his labours, that the day did come when he was the