

**SHORT PLAYS FROM
DICKENS FOR THE USE OF
AMATEUR AND SCHOOL
DRAMATIC SOCIETIES**

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Short Plays from Dickens for the Use of Amateur and School Dramatic Societies by Horace B. Browne

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HORACE B. BROWNE

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"It's a Poor Heart That Never Rejoices."

SHORT PLAYS FROM DICKENS

FOR THE USE OF AMATEUR AND
SCHOOL DRAMATIC SOCIETIES

ARRANGED BY
HORACE B. BROWNE, M.A.
ASSISTANT MASTER *H* HYMERS COLLEGE, HULL,
AND
PRESIDENT (1907-1909) OF THE HULL BRANCH
OF THE
DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY 'PHIZ,' GEORGE CRUIKSHANK,
GEORGE CATTERMOLE, AND MARCUS STONE, R.A.*

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE twenty *Short Plays* included in this little volume have been prepared to meet a growing demand for short actable plays adapted from the works of Charles Dickens. They are taken from some of the principal episodes in seven of his Books, and they will be found to contain, among the eighty-eight Characters introduced, some of the best known of Dickens' creations.

The order in which the Plays are arranged is, in the first place, that of the publication of the Books from which they are taken, and, in the second place, that of the occurrence in each Book of the episodes of which use has been made.

The aim that I have endeavoured to follow out in their construction has been to make as few alterations as possible in the text of Dickens, and to choose such episodes as bring out strongly the characteristics of the persons represented. At the same time I have sought to make the whole clear and serviceable by adopting the method of giving, in connection with each Play—

- (1) *A short description of each Character*—again, as far as possible, in Dickens' own words;
- (2) *Reproductions of the original Illustrations* by "Phiz," Cruikshank, Cattermole, and Marcus Stone; or, failing these, *references to such Illustrations in the Biographical Edition of the Works of Charles Dickens* as will be of use to the Players;
- (3) *An indication of the Arrangement of the Stage* necessary for its production, and of the Time taken by its performance.

To these I have added a few hints on general Stage-management, Costumes, Make-up, etc.—for which reference should be made to the Introduction.

The number of Characters introduced in each Play varies from two to ten, sufficient scope being thereby allowed for many different tastes and circumstances. The Plays can all be acted on a small stage, and it will be found possible to adapt for their production the end of any good-sized room. Some have been produced, with success, on a stage measuring no more than fifteen feet by six feet. Scenery, as such, is nowhere required, and the Properties necessary are limited to the minimum in number.

It is an obvious fact that there is more likelihood of success attending the efforts of a band of Amateurs, and that greater interest is created, when an evening's performance is divided among several players than when it depends entirely on the efforts of a few. For this reason it is hoped that these "Short Plays from Dickens" may be found useful to the members of *School Dramatic Societies*, as well as to the members of *Amateur Dramatic Societies*, and, in particular, of those *Societies* formed in connection with the various **Branches of the Dickens Fellowship**, at home and in our British Colonies.

I wish to express my grateful thanks to Mr. B. W. Matz, Editor of the *Dickensian*, for his kindly interest and some valuable suggestions; and to Mr. G. E. Tindal, Hon. Secretary of the Hull Branch of the Dickens Fellowship, for his kindness in revising the proof-sheets.

HORACE B. BROWNE.

Hull,
October 1908.

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