

THE SOUL OF DICKENS

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The soul of Dickens by W. Walter Crotch

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W. WALTER CROTCH

**THE SOUL
OF DICKENS**

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By

W. WALTER CROTCH

Author of "Charles Dickens: Social Reformer"
"The Pageant of Dickens," &c., &c.

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TO
MY MOTHER

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface	ix
I Dickens the Englishman	3
II The Convalescence of Literature	39
III The First of the Realists	59
IV "Open Sesame !"	89
V The Ascent to Tragedy	109
VI At the Heart of Life	135
VII The Prophet and Teacher	165
VIII Dickens and English Literature	193
Epilogue	215

PREFACE

WE shall all agree, I think, that the most startling and dramatic change which has followed on the heels of the great War has been the wonderful transformation of Continental opinion in regard to the Englishman. Someone recently remarked that the War has discovered our fellow-countrymen and has revealed them not only to themselves but to the world. Certain it is that the present nations of the earth will never take again quite the same view of John Bull as that in which their fathers for so long rejoiced: the view that he was an obese, irascible, though withal a good-natured old gentleman, not perhaps too proud but certainly too self-indulgent to fight, whose occasional boastfulness and truculence did not really matter. Even were we to embark seriously upon a great campaign, our detractors asserted, we should not count. Our lack of preparation, our carelessness in detail, our disregard for efficiency—all these things would nullify any of those old qualities that once made us formidable in the eyes of men.

Strangely enough we ourselves seemed to