

**STANDARD LITERATURE  
SERIES. PAUL DOMBEY,  
FROM DOMBEY & SON**

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**CHARLES DICKENS**

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STANDARD LITERATURE SERIES

# PAUL DOMBEY

FROM DOMBEY & SON

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

CONDENSED FOR USE IN SCHOOLS  
WITH INTRODUCTORY AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

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## INTRODUCTION.

CHARLES DICKENS was born near Portsmouth, England, February 7, 1812. He early developed a fondness for reading, and when only nine years old had read "Don Quixote," "Gil Blas," "Robinson Crusoe," and several of the early English novels.

When he was ten, his father, who was a clerk in the Navy, lost his employment, and was imprisoned for debt. The boy was placed in a blacking factory, where he pasted labels on the bottles of blacking. After a time his father, released from prison, secured an engagement as reporter on the "Morning Herald," and Charles was again sent to school. A few years later he entered a lawyer's office as clerk, but he had no taste for this work, and taught himself shorthand, with the idea of becoming a journalist. At the age of seventeen he became a reporter at Doctors' Commons, a court building of London, and at twenty-two he was employed as reporter on the staff of the London "Morning Chronicle." His work required him to travel all over England, collecting items of news and writing up such incidents as are now telegraphed to the papers daily by local reporters. As there were no railroads at the time, he went by stage-coach from place to place, and in this way he mingled with the people and saw every phase of life. While thus engaged he began to contribute original papers, under the signature "Boz," to the "Evening Chronicle." They were afterwards collected and published separately as "Sketches by Boz." In 1836 the "Pickwick Papers" appeared. These brought him fame and fortune, and he soon became the most popular writer of English fiction.

The events and surroundings of Dickens's own early life, the people he met, and the places he visited as a reporter, constantly appear in his novels and stories. It was at Camden Town, for instance, while he worked in the blacking factory, that he lived with an old lady who took children to board, and who, he afterwards said, was the original of Mrs. Pipchin in "Dombey and Son."

The most striking feature of Dickens as an author is the skill with which he seizes upon some peculiar trait or quality in one of the persons of his story, exaggerates it, and keeps it before his reader until all other traits and qualities are forgotten, and that character becomes the very personification of that one quality. This is called caricaturing, and Dickens was such a master of the art, that the very names of his lead-

ing characters have become a part of our language, and stand as synonyms for their respective peculiarities. We can to-day give no better idea of a miser than to call him a Scrooge, or of a hard master than to call him a Tackleton.

Nearly all Dickens's novels were written with some distinct good purpose. In "Dombey and Son" the pride and selfishness of old London merchants are depicted; "Oliver Twist" exposed the practice of training boys to commit crime; "Nicholas Nickleby" called attention to the cruel treatment of boys in cheap boarding-schools; "Hard Times" showed the sufferings of the factory hands; "Bleak House" pictured the position of wards in Chancery and the slow process of law in England at that time; "Little Dorrit" showed the horrors of the debtors' prisons. "David Copperfield" is supposed to refer in some parts to his own life.

"Paul Dombey" is one of the many beautiful pictures of child life and child death to be found in the works of Dickens. Lord Jeffrey, the famous editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, writing to the author, described as follows how he felt on reading the story: "I have cried over it, and felt my heart purified by those tears. Since divine Nelly<sup>1</sup> was found dead on her humble couch, there has been nothing like the dying of that sweet Paul. And the long vista that leads us so sadly, and yet so gracefully to that plain consummation! Every trait so true, and so touching—and yet lightened by that pure affection which bears the unstained spirit to its source in eternity. In reading of these delightful children, how deeply do we feel that 'of such is the kingdom of Heaven!'"

Dickens visited America first in 1842, and upon his return wrote "American Notes" and "Martin Chuzzlewit." His sarcasm and the severity with which in these two books he caricatured the people he met excited indignation among Americans. This feeling gradually passed away, however, and in 1868, upon his second visit, he was cordially received in all the larger cities of the United States. He read selections from his own works, and crowds came to hear him.

In England he was universally popular. The queen offered him a title of nobility, but he declined it, saying that he wished to be remembered by no other name than Charles Dickens. He continued to write until the very day of his death, and left unfinished "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," which promised to be one of his best novels. He died suddenly on the 8th of June, 1870, and the nation paid him homage by burying him in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

<sup>1</sup> "Little Nell," Standard Literature Series, No. 22.



# PAUL DOMBEY.

## CHAPTER I.

### PAUL IS INTRODUCED.

DOMBEY sat in the corner of the darkened room in the great arm-chair by the bedside, and Son lay tucked up warm in a little basket bedstead, carefully disposed on a low settee immediately in front of the fire and close to it, as if his constitution were analogous to that of a muffin, and it was essential to toast him brown while he was very new.

Dombey was about eight-and-forty years of age. Son about eight-and-forty minutes. Dombey was rather bald, rather red, and though a handsome, well-made man, too stern and pompous in appearance, to be prepossessing.<sup>1</sup> Son was very bald, and very red, and an undeniably fine infant. On the brow of Dombey, Time<sup>2</sup> and his brother Care<sup>3</sup> had set some marks, as on a tree that was to come down in good time—while the countenance of Son was crossed and recrossed with a thousand little creases, which the same deceitful Time would take delight in smoothing out and wearing away as a preparation of the surface for his deeper operations.

“The House,<sup>4</sup> will once again, Mrs. Dombey,” said Mr. Dombey, “be not only in name but in fact Dombey and Son; Dombey and Son!”

The words had such a softening influence, that he appended

<sup>1</sup> pleasing; agreeable.

<sup>2</sup> Time and Care begin with capitals be-

cause they are spoken of as though they were persons.

<sup>3</sup> meaning the business firm.

a term of endearment to Mrs. Dombey's name, and said, "Mrs. Dombey, my—my dear."

A transient flush of faint surprise overspread the sick lady's face as she raised her eyes toward him.

"He will be christened Paul, my—Mrs. Dombey—of course."

She feebly echoed, "Of course," or rather expressed it by the motion of her lips, and closed her eyes again.

"His father's name, Mrs. Dombey, and his grandfather's! I wish his grandfather were alive this day!" And again he said "Dom-bey and Son," in exactly the same tone as before.

Those three words conveyed the one idea of Mr. Dombey's life. The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; winds blew for or against their enterprises. Common abbreviations took new meanings in his eyes, and had sole reference to them: A. D. had no concern with *anno Domini*,<sup>1</sup> but stood for *anno Dombei*—and Son.

He had risen, as his father had before him, in the course of life and death, from Son to Dombey, and for nearly twenty years had been the sole representative of the firm. Of these years he had been married ten. There had been a girl some six years before, and the child, who had stolen into the chamber unobserved, was now crouching timidly in a corner, whence she could see her mother's face. But what was a girl to Dombey and Son! In the capital of the House's name and dignity, such a child was merely a piece of base coin that couldn't be invested.

Mr. Dombey's satisfaction was so full at this moment, however, that he said, "Florence, you may go and look at your pretty brother, if you like, I dare say. Don't touch him!"

The child glanced keenly at the blue coat and stiff white cravat, which, with a pair of creaking boots and a very loud-ticking watch, embodied her idea of a father; but her eyes

<sup>1</sup> Latin words for "in the year of our Lord."

returned to her mother's face immediately, and she neither moved nor answered.

Next moment the lady had opened her eyes and seen the child; and the child had run toward her, and, standing on tiptoe, had clung about her with affection very much at variance with her years.

"Oh, Lord bless me!" said Mr. Dombey, rising testily. "A very ill-advised and feverish proceeding this, I am sure. I had better ask Doctor Peps if he'll have the goodness to step up-stairs again, perhaps. I'll go down. I'll go down. I needn't beg you," he added, pausing for a moment at the settee before the fire, "to take particular care of this young gentleman, Mrs. —"

"Blockitt, sir," suggested the nurse, a simpering piece of faded gentility, who did not presume to state her name as a fact, but merely offered it as a mild suggestion.

"Of this young gentleman, Mrs. Blockitt."

"No, sir, indeed. I remember when Miss Florence was born——"

"Ay, ay, ay," said Mr. Dombey, bending over the basket bedstead, and slightly bending his brows at the same time. "Miss Florence was all very well, but this is another matter. This young gentleman has to accomplish a destiny. A destiny, little fellow!" As he thus apostrophized<sup>1</sup> the infant he raised one of his hands to his lips and kissed it, then went away.

Doctor Parker Peps, one of the court physicians, and a man of immense reputation, was walking up and down the drawing-room with his hands behind him, to the unspeakable admiration of the family surgeon, who had been summoned in conjunction with Dr. Parker Peps.

Mr. Dombey said it would be a satisfaction to him if Dr. Parker Peps would walk up-stairs.

"We must not disguise from you, sir," said Dr. Peps,

<sup>1</sup> addressed.