Charles Dickins, His Life Essay, Research Paper

Charles Dickens

Charles John Huffman Dickens was born in Portsmouth on Feb. 7,1812. He moved with his family to London when he was about 2 years old. Many events and people in his books were based on events and people in his life. He was the son of a clerk who was imprisoned for debt. Even when his father was free, there was not enough money to support the family adequately. So Charles was taken out of school at the age of 12 to go to work in a factory pasting labels on bottles. He only had the job for a few months, but the shock affected him deeply. The images of prison life and of mistreated or lost children appeared in many of his novels.

Charles attended school off and on until the age of 15 when he left for good. He loved reading and was influenced by some of the early English writers like William Shakespeare. But most of his knowledge that he used as an author came from what he observed around him. He was a keen observer of life and had a great understanding of human nature, particularly of young people.

Dickens became a newspaper reporter in the late 1820 s. He covered debates in Parliament and wrote feature articles of the ever changing London scene. Dickens first publication was done under the pseudonym Boz in 1836. It consisted of articles he wrote for the Monthly Magazine and the Evening Chronicle. These articles surveyed manners and conditions of the time.

Dickens personal unhappiness marred his public success. In 1836, he married Catherine Hogarth. Her sister, Mary, died in 1837 and Dickens suffered great grief. This led many to believe that he loved Mary more than his wife. Although Catherine was not real intelligent, she was a good woman. She and Charles had 10 children, but they separated in 1858, after 22 years of marriage.

Dickens had a lot of mental and physical energy. He recorded his activities in thousand of letters. They were very enjoyable reading. He crowded his social life with friends from the world of art and literature. He enjoyed drama and went to the theater as much as he could. After he became rich and famous, he made a hobby of producing and acting in amateur theatrical productions. He also was successful in giving public readings of his works. He also busied himself with various charities for schools for poor children and a loan society to enable the poor to move to Australia. He came to know the streets and alleys of London better than any other person of his time. The reason being that he often walked for hours to work off energy.

In failing health, he was still able to entertain and hold his audiences and many friends with his public readings. Dickens collapsed during a reading tour. He died from a stroke in 1870 at the age of 58.

Dickens was considered by many to be England s greatest novelist and a comic genius. He was a passionate humanitarian and radical. Throughout his life he attacked snobbery, privilege, injustice, and cruelty.

Dickens won his first literary fame with The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club. The book describes the humorous adventures of a group of slightly eccentric characters in London and the English countryside. He founded and edited two highly successful weekly magazines. As a public figure, he was constantly in the news. He was recognized and honored wherever he went. He was famous in America as well as Britian.

He wrote 20 novels, not all being best sellers, but the most popular ones broke all sales records of his time. Most of his novels were published in sections. Some of the books he wrote include: Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, Barnby Rudge, The Old Curiosity Shop, A Christmas Carol, The Cricket on the Hearth, David Copperfield, Bleak House; Hard times, little Dorritt, and A Tale of Two Cities.

Nicholas Nickleby was adapted for film in 1947, The Pickwick Papers in 1954, and Little Dorrit in 1988. A TV series of Nicholas Nickleby was produced in 1983.