Dickens: Hard Times Essay, Research Paper

Dickens: Hard Times

By

Jason Gentry

In this paper I would like to discuss the possibly affects that this book might have had on the world, the time around Charles Dickens, and the fact that Charles Dickens paid close attention to the world around him. Charles Dickens, born Charles John Huffman Dickens, was born on Feb. 7 1812 in Portsmouth where his father was a clerk at the Naval Pay Office. Four years later his family moved to Chatham and then later moved to London. In 1824 Charles Dickens father went to Debtor’s Prison. In 1833 Charles Dickens published his first story “A Dinner at Poplar Walk”. In 1838 one of Dickens most popular stories, Oliver Twist, was published in three volumes. In 1851 Charles Dickens father passed away. Next in 1861, another Dickens classic was published, Great Expectations. On June 9 Charles Dickens dies, at the age of fifty-eight. And was buried in Westminster Abbey. This is the Penguin Classics version of Hard Times by Charles Dickens that has been edited by Kate Flint, who also added the introduction. I was unable to find any information about the editor, other than her name.

I believe that Charles Dickens books, this one included, have had a great affect on the world. Not only in the fact that some of the books that he has written are considered to be classic or in the fact that some of these books are required reading in many high schools through out the U.S.. But also in the fact that I believe some of his books had an influence in the way the some of the laws in his time where formulated. The way that Charles Dickens go about doing this is by writing about the social problems within the government or just problems with the way that thing are being done in general. One example that I have found was in chapter 11, page 77, and footnote number 8. The line says “I ha’ coom to ask yo, sir, how I am to be ridded o’ this woman.” When you look at the footnote it says that this line in the book is speaking of a problem that was quite common during Charles Dickens time period. The problem that this line speaks of is that it was all but impossible for a person who was of lower class to get a divorce. But in 1854, which was about the same time that Charles Dickens Hard Times was appearing, a Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill appeared in the House of Lords. Although that bill was struck down, a bill that was very similar bill was passed in 1857. One of the people who were seated on The Royal Commission was a friend of Dickens, Lord Campbell.

Another example of this fact is in the second book and in the first chapter on page 115 on footnote 1. This line states “A blur of soot and smoke, …”. This line speaks of the problem that came during the starting of the industrial revolution, this problem was that with many factories came, comes a lot of smoke and soot from the smoke stakes of the factories. This problem was looked at in 1853 when Lord Palmerston presented a bill that would limit the amount of smoke and soot that was emitted in London. This bill was passed that year and put into affect on the 1 of august 1854.

Another example that shows that Dickens paid attention to the world and people around him was earlier in the book on page 48, where Dickens talks about “Insolvent Debtors Court”. I believe that this shows Dickens concerns for the common person. Because in this section of the book, this is a person of the upper crust talking about this as though it is a lowly thing. And that it would never happen to anyone who was the kind of person who could trace there heritage back so far back that they could lose themselves in the fact of who they are and who there family is suppose to be. I also think that this shows how Dickens can some times let people into his personal life and into his past. I think this because that we know that his father was put in Debtors prison for six months.

I believe that this book shows very well that Charles Dickens did not only paid attention to the world and the people around him, but it also shows that Dickens wanted to make a change in the world for the better of the common people. These examples showed that Charles Dickens want a better life for common people by pointing out that flaws in the way that people had been living there lives and the way the that had let people around them treat them. I also believe that Charles Dickens book Hard Times, shows that he might have had an affect on the way that some of the laws of his time came about. And that his book might have even showed that there were reasons for these laws to be made and to be passed. Not only for the good of the people but for the good of the whole society, because after all a society basis on the factory life isn’t much good without the factory works.