

## What Dickens Made Out of His Work.

### INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE GREAT NOVELISTS' EARNINGS.

All lovers of the great novelist must regret to hear that some of Dickens' descendants were, till the fund raised on the occasion of his centenary this year, in necessitous circumstances. Yet the novelist was not underpaid for his work. As the records of the Probate Court show, he left over £80,000; and it is an exaggeration to say that he was the best-paid writer of his time. In the last years of his life Thackeray declared that he had never made as much as £5,000 by any book that he had ever written; yet Dickens was to have been paid £7,500, with a share in after profits, if he had lived to finish "Edwin Drood."

Of course, like Thackeray, Dickens made big sums by his lectures or readings. The sum set down by one authority for the readings between 1853 and 1859 is £30,000, but that must be an under-estimate. The figure was probably nearer £45,000. Dickens himself, writing in 1868, says: "I made £33,000 as a reader in two years; £13,000 of this Mr. Chappell and his father supplied, while America had been good for the rest. Beginning at £50 a night, the Chappells increased the figure to £100, and eventually £300." It was evidently good business for both parties, as some early takings—at Liverpool, for example—were over £300 nightly.

#### £ s. d. OF "PICKWICK."

But what about the novels? Take "Pickwick," the first great success. The amount agreed upon for each monthly part was £14. This was afterwards increased to £15; and, as the popularity of the work increased, the publishers, at intervals, presented Dickens with several cheques, amounting in the aggregate, as they computed, to £3,000, and as Forster computes to about £2,500. This the author considered a very inadequate percentage on the publishers' gains, forgetting, perhaps, that the risk had been wholly theirs, and that he had been more than content with the original bargain.

With Maerone he was no better pleased. Maerone had given him about £400 for the "Sketches by Boz," and made about £4,000 for himself out of the book. Later, the enterprising gentleman threatened a reissue in monthly parts, and to prevent this Dickens was compelled to buy back the copyright for £2,000.

#### £10,000 A YEAR.

With "Oliver Twist," published in 1838, the year after "Pickwick," he had a somewhat similar experience. For writing the novel he at first agreed to accept from Bentley £500, which was afterwards increased to £750. Dickens described this as "a paltry, wretched, miserable sum"; and, surmising that Bentley was profiting very considerably by the sale of the book, he determined to repurchase the copyright, to which proposal Bentley magnanimously consented. This was the more curious, seeing that Bentley had offered to pay him £40 a month for merely lending his name to the Bentley "Miscellany" for two years, with no writing or editing—an offer which Dickens accepted, too.

"Nicholas Nickleby" was published in 1839. After a careful investigation of accounts, Talfourd made a calculation during the publication of this novel, by which it appeared that for three years previously Dickens must have been making, one way and another, £10,000 a year. The payment originally agreed upon (based on the sales of "Pickwick") was made in twenty monthly instalments of £150, that being the fee for each number. The copyright was to revert to the author in five years; but notwithstanding this, at the conclusion of the story the publishers sent Dickens an honorarium of £1,500 over and above the sum named in the bond.

#### "THE CHRISTMAS CAROL."

"Barnaby Rudge" (1840) brought him something like £3,000, which again left no room for complaint. It was different with "The Christmas Carol," which followed in 1843. The first edition of 6,000 copies was sold on the day of publication, and as many more would seem to have been disposed of before the end of February, 1844. But Dickens had set his heart on a profit of £1,000, whereas in February he did not see his way to more than £400, and his unpaid bills for the previous year he described as "terrible." The profits on the "Carol"

by the close of 1844 had run up to £726, but this did not help him much. A change of front became imperative, and he accepted the offer of Messrs Bradbury and Evans to advance him £2,800 for a fourth share in whatever he might write during the ensuing eight years.

#### "MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT" AND "DOMBEY."

Then came "Martin Chuzzlewit," the least successful of all his larger works on first publication. The monthly parts of "Pickwick" and "Nickleby" had sold to the number of about 40,000 each, but there was a drop to about 25,000 with "Chuzzlewit." There were twenty monthly parts, and the agreement had been for £200 a month, in addition to a substantial share of the profits. A clause had been inserted in the agreement to the effect that £50 of the £200 to be paid monthly might be withheld if the book did not prove remunerative. After the publication of the seventh part there was a threat to enforce this clause, which led to a rupture between author and publishers. However, when "Chuzzlewit" appeared in volume form the demand for it became almost as great as that which greeted "Pickwick," the half-year's profits of the author amounting to £750.

"Dombey and Son" (1848) also proved a pecuniary success. The sale of the first number exceeded that of the first of "Chuzzlewit" by 12,000 copies. The profits for the half-year were brilliant; deducting the £100 a month which, for six successive months, Dickens received from Bradbury and Evans, there was due to him the sum of £2,200, which he thought "pretty tidy." The next considerable story was "David Copperfield," and that also ran well into the four figures for the author.

There is no occasion to go into detail regarding the smaller works. They, too, were all highly paid, Dickens getting as much as £1000 for a short story.

## The Man Who Never Thinks.

In the February "Pearson's Magazine" there appears an article entitled "The Perils of Thoughtlessness," which ought to startle the most careless into realising his misdeeds.

"Every day six people meet their death owing to accidents caused by somebody's carelessness. In other words, the idiot who 'never thinks' is accountable for nearly two thousand deaths annually. How much suffering and inconvenience, from minor accidents, can be traced to the same cause it is impossible to estimate.

"A fool with a loaded gun is a dangerous person. A fool with a gun which he supposes to be unloaded is only a few degrees less dangerous. Cases are continually occurring where some idiot points an 'unloaded' weapon at somebody, pulls the trigger and finds, too late, he has inflicted a ghastly, often a fatal, wound.

The would-be humorist who dresses up as a ghost, and tries to frighten nervous people, is another dangerous individual. His efforts are often so successful that many victims have been rendered insane, and some even scared to death, by this particular form of thoughtless jest. His actions are the more to be condemned as his victims are usually women and children.

"The person who indulges in the dangerous habit of alighting from a moving train is a fruitful cause of accidents. Over fifty deaths in one year resulted from falls from trains. Nothing short of a public nuisance is the thoughtless person who scatters orange peel or banana skin on the pavement, and he should be treated very drastically. Countless accidents can be traced to this practice. Over fifteen hundred persons were killed in one year by falls of various kinds.

"The clumsy individual who blunders against a lighted lamp and brings the whole thing crashing to the floor gives us yet another instance of criminal carelessness. There were forty-two deaths last year caused directly from burns resulting from lamp accidents.

English Tourist (in Bloody Gulch hotel): "By the way, old top, is the grizzly bear common round here?" Landlord: "Used to be, but it's extinct now. Why, even Three-Fingered Ike won't allow it in his dance hall!"

## A Thrifty Plan.

Attention is called in a recent Consular report to the thrifty plan followed in the province of Hanover, Germany, of planting the roadsides with fruit trees, the produce of which is sold at auction for the benefit of the local government, the revenue thus obtained going a long way towards the upkeep of the roads. Hanover has some 7000 miles of country highways thus bordered. This year some of the roads yielded a revenue from this source at the rate of 595 dollars a mile. The fruit is protected by law and during the season of ripening the roads are patrolled by sharp-eyed watchmen on bicycles, so that little, if any, of the fruit is diverted from its proper destination.

## DRIFTING INTO A DECLINE.

This Woman, Weak, Ill and Miserable, made Hearty and Strong by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.

Mrs. Thomas Weir, of Christchurch, became so weak and ran down, through not having sufficient blood, that she felt away till she looked like a walking ghost, and was in despair that she was drifting into a decline. After reading in the newspapers of cures by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, Mrs. Weir decided to try them, with the happy result that this blood maker has given her better health than she ever enjoyed in her life before. Mrs. Weir was seen at her home, Mitre-street, Spreydon, Christchurch, by a reporter, and she gave the following statement for publication for the benefit of other sufferers.

"I enjoyed excellent health as a young girl, but as I started to grow up Anæmia attacked me. My cheeks got as white as could be. You could barely see my lips, they were so colourless, and my gums, too, were blanched. I was like a walking ghost. My face grew sallow and wasted and I became so thin you could count every bone in my body. I hated to look in the mirror I looked so ghastly ill. I ate fairly well and yet the food gave me no nourishment. I was just an invalid about the house. I could not even wipe a dish for my mother; I could not stand to do a thing. If a door slammed I trembled; every nerve was on edge. Shocking headaches came on and quite prostrated me. I simply could not hold up against the beating and throbbing that seemed to lift the top of my head off. I used to lie in bed with wet cloths tied round my temples for hours. I often dozed in the day, but I could not sleep at night, and if a little noise woke me I would be awake for hours. If I caught a cold it hung on me for weeks. How I kept alive was a miracle. I can only thank Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for curing me, and they did that thoroughly. Everyone thought I was going into a decline. Neighbours used to shake their heads in pity, for I faded more every day, but after I had started the second box I actually felt brighter. I was only too delighted to keep on, and presently began to eat heartily and you could see a little colour stealing into my lips and cheeks. I kept on slowly improving, and presently I was able to give a hand about the house at intervals. It was a joyful surprise both to my folk and myself. My perfect recovery is due entirely to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I fully and firmly believe I would have been in my grave but for them."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are sold by all dealers, but if in doubt send to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co. of Australasia, Ltd., Wellington, 3/ one box, six boxes 10/6.

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