

# DOWNLOAD PDF CHARLES DICKENS AND THE YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS, WITH HIS LETTER TO MRS. HALL

## Chapter 1 : Characters of Nicholas Nickleby: Dotheboys Hall.

*The description Dickens gives Mrs. Hall of his interview with the Yorkshire attorney and the latter's earnest warning against his own county's schools, is practically identical with the author's account of this same incident as he related it ten years later in one of his Prefaces to "Nickleby," where, as we shall presently see, he tells the.*

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### Chapter 2 : Will the real Wackford Squeers step forward? | Books | The Guardian

*Charles Dickens and the Yorkshire schools: with his letter to Mrs. Hall* Item Preview.

You may use them without prior permission for any scholarly or educational purpose as long as you 1 credit the photographer and 2 link your document to this URL in a web document or cite the Victorian Web in a print one. Click on all images, even the bigger ones, to enlarge them. Education Yorkshire schools have had an awful press in Victorian fiction: As for the former, there had been a long established network of cheap Yorkshire boarding schools since the mid-eighteenth century, and Dickens himself went to see some of them on a "swift fact-finding mission" Slater 9 , basing the cruel establishment run by Mr Squeers on schools like the Bowes Academy near Greta Bridge, which advertised the fact that it gave no holidays. This does not appear to have been a special case, certainly not the worst: Squeers and Family, both by Phiz Hablot K. But there were some fine schools too, and some good educational initiatives during the period. Dent National School, This little school with the rather grand name was one of those founded by the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. Headquartered in London, the society aimed to provided basic schooling, as well as religious education, for the children of the poor in every parish. But funds were scarce at such schools, so, although the National Society undertook to train a certain number of teachers, they employed the monitorial system developed by Andrew Bell for use in India, which entailed assigning pupils from the highest class to pass on their lessons to those beneath them see Meiklejohn This had obvious disadvantages: With its commanding position at the top of the hill in the busy market town, Hawes County Primary School, as it was then known, announced the arrival of a whole new era in the history of education. It was not yet compulsory, even up to the age of ten " that would come the following year, And it was not yet free: Elementary education would become completely free only in See entries under these years in Victorian Legislation: But the groundwork for both these advances was now laid. Sedbergh School, now the school library building, from Thompson Granite Memorial Fountain to Adam Sedgwick Ironically, the extension of the National School in Dent is mentioned in an article about the closure of another school there " one that catered for the better off. This was the old Free Grammar School near the parish church. The word "Free" in its name was misleading, because parents had to pay for tuition in anything besides the classics see "Dent Grammar School History". Its roots were ancient: The latter was another ancient foundation for the children of richer families, and it was now thriving despite having recently gone through a similar period of decline. The star pupil of these two older institutions was Adam Sedgwick , who was to become the long-serving and influential Woodwardian Professor of Geology at Cambridge. Then he went as a boarder to Sedburgh, before going up to Trinity College, Cambridge. For all his importance as a geologist and in the university, Sedgwick was to remain in many ways a son of the Dales. Not only did he first collect rock and fossil specimens there as a boy, but he nurtured an Evangelical fervour that made him reject Darwinism and oppose Utilitarianism ; and promote education in science for the working-classes. It comes as no surprise to learn that he remained deeply attached to his hometown, and is still remembered there today see Secord. The grey stone building is mildly Gothic in style, with a central tower Bell, facing p. This strikingly ecelctic building is in banded sandstone with a copper dome and Gothic elements Bell, facing p. The chapel is richly decorated with mosaics, scrafitto work, sculpture by George Frampton etc. A few other "Yorkshire Schools" in the Dales deserve a mention. The excellent Free Grammar School in Richmond, Swaledale, was another "offspring of an earlier foundation" Speight 77 , now a comprehensive. This was the alma mater of the future Prime Minister, Earl Grey. Another pupil here was Charles Dodgson Lewis Carroll , son of the Rector of nearby Croft, who put his son here for a couple of years before sending him to Rugby see Lewis Carroll: Aysgarth School in Wensleydale, founded in , is still one of the finest prep schools in the land. But perhaps the best-known Dales school, and certainly the most distinguished architecturally, is Giggleswick in the heart of the Pennines near Settle, founded in the early sixteenth century, and the proud possessor of an astonishing late Victorian chapel designed by Sir Thomas

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Graham Jackson , best known for his Oxford Examination Rooms of The school was fortunate to have the educationist Sir James Kay Shuttleworth on its board of governors latterly as its chairman from , and its success at this time was said to be largely due to his "broad-minded sagacity" Bell The Literary Institute, Muker, Swaledale, The Literary Institute from the side. A number of similar institutes were founded in the Dales, including the one in Muker, built by public subscription at a time when the village was still prosperous from lead-mining see under "Work" in Part I of this series.

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### Chapter 3 : The Yorkshire Dales in Victorian Times, Part III

*Excerpt from Charles Dickens and the Yorkshire Schools: With His Letter to Mrs. Hall It has always been a subject of keen discussion as to whether Dickens drew the character of Wackford Squeers from a real individual or not, and the question has been ably argued from either side ever since the book first appeared; the balance of opinion.*

He returned to his favourite publishers and to the format that was considered so successful with *The Pickwick Papers*. The story first appeared in monthly parts, after which it was issued in one volume. The style is considered to be episodic and humorous, though the second half of the novel becomes more serious and tightly plotted. Dickens began writing *Nickleby* while still working on *Oliver Twist* and while the mood is considerably lighter, his depiction of the Yorkshire school run by Wackford Squeers is as moving and influential as those of the workhouse and criminal underclass in *Twist*. The tone of the work is that of ironic social satire, with Dickens taking aim at what he perceives to be social injustices. Ralph, a cold and ruthless businessman, has no desire to help his destitute relations and hates Nicholas, who reminds him of his dead brother, on sight. He gets Nicholas a low-paying job as an assistant to Wackford Squeers, who runs the school Dotheboys Hall in Yorkshire. Nicholas is initially wary of Squeers a very unpleasant man with one eye because he is gruff and violent towards his young charges, but he tries to quell his suspicions. A once-wealthy businessman, Noggs lost his fortune, became a drunk, and had no other recourse but to seek employment with Ralph, whom he loathes. The letter expresses concern for him as an innocent young man, and offers assistance if Nicholas ever requires it. Once he arrives in Yorkshire, Nicholas comes to realise that Squeers is running a scam: Squeers and his monstrous wife whip and beat the children regularly, while spoiling their own son. Lessons are no better; they show how poorly educated Squeers himself is and he uses the lessons as excuses to send the boys off on chores. While he is there, Nicholas befriends a simple boy named Smike, who is older than the other "students" and now acts as an unpaid servant. After being accosted by Fanny again, Nicholas bluntly tells her he does not return her affections and wishes to be free of the horrible atmosphere of Dotheboys Hall, earning her enmity. Nicholas astonishes Mr Squeers and family Fanny uses her new-found loathing of Nicholas to make life difficult for the only friend he has at the school: Smike, whom Squeers takes to beating more and more frequently. One day Smike runs away, but is caught and brought back to Dotheboys. Squeers begins to beat him, but Nicholas intervenes. Squeers strikes him across the face and Nicholas snaps, beating the schoolmaster violently. During the fight, Fanny steps in and attacks Nicholas, hating him for rejecting her love. Nicholas ignores her and goes on to beat Squeers bloody. Quickly packing his belongings and leaving Dotheboys Hall, he meets John Browdie on the way. Browdie finds the idea that Squeers himself has been beaten uproariously funny, and gives Nicholas money and a walking staff to aid him on his trip back to London. At dawn, he is found by Smike, who begs to come with him. Nicholas and Smike set out towards London. Among other things, Nicholas wants to find out what Squeers is going to tell his uncle. Meanwhile, Kate and her mother are forced by Ralph to move out of their lodgings in the house of the kindly portrait painter Miss LaCreevy and into a cold and draughty house Ralph owns in a London slum. Ralph finds employment for Kate working for a fashionable milliner, Madame Mantalini. Her husband, Mr Mantalini, is a gigolo who depends on his significantly older wife to supply his extravagant tastes, and offends Kate by leering at her. Kate proves initially clumsy at her job, which endears her to the head of the showroom, Miss Knag, a vain and foolish woman who uses Kate to make herself look better. This backfires when a client prefers to be served by the young and pretty Kate rather than the ageing Miss Knag. Kate is blamed for the insult, and as a result, Kate is ostracised by the other milliners and left friendless. Nicholas seeks out the aid of Newman Noggs, who shows him a letter that Fanny Squeers has written to Ralph. It viciously exaggerates the events of the beating and slanders Nicholas. Noggs tells Nicholas, who is intent on confronting his uncle, that Ralph is out of town and advises him to find a job. Nicholas goes to an employment office, where he encounters a strikingly beautiful girl. His search for employment fails, and he is about to give up when Noggs

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offers him the meagre position of French teacher to the children of his neighbours, the Kenwigs family, and Nicholas is hired under the assumed name of "Johnson" to teach the children French. Ralph asks Kate to attend a dinner he is hosting for some business associates. When she arrives she discovers she is the only woman in attendance, and it becomes clear Ralph is using her as bait to entice the foolish nobleman Lord Frederick Verisopht to do business with him. She flees the table, but is later accosted by Hawk. He attempts to force himself on her but is stopped by Ralph. Ralph shows some unexpected tenderness towards Kate but insinuates that he will withdraw his financial help if she tells her mother about what happened. The next day, Nicholas discovers that his uncle has returned. He confronts his uncle, who vows to give no financial assistance to the Nicklebys as long as Nicholas stays with them. His hand forced, Nicholas agrees to leave London, but warns Ralph that a day of reckoning will one day come between them. The next morning, Nicholas and Smike travel towards Portsmouth with the intention of becoming sailors. At an inn, they encounter the theatrical manager Vincent Crummies, who hires Nicholas still going under the name of Johnson on sight. Nicholas and Smike make their debuts in *Romeo and Juliet*, as Romeo and the Apothecary respectively, and are met with great acclaim from the provincial audiences. Nicholas enjoys a flirtation with his Juliet, the lovely Miss Snevellici. Madame Mantalini is forced to sell her business to Miss Knag, whose first order of business is to fire Kate. She finds employment as the companion of the social-climbing Mrs Wittiterly. Meanwhile, Sir Mulberry Hawk begins a plot to humiliate Kate for refusing his advances. He uses Lord Frederick, who is infatuated with her, to discover where she lives from Ralph. He is about to succeed in this plot when Mrs. Wittiterly grows jealous and admonishes Kate for flirting with the noblemen. The unfairness of this accusation makes Kate so angry that she rebukes her employer, who flies into a fit of hysterics. With no other recourse, Kate goes to her uncle for assistance, but he refuses to help her, citing his business relationships with Hawk and Verisopht. Nicholas immediately quits the Crummies troupe and returns to London. Nicholas is about to search the city for them when he accidentally overhears Hawk and Lord Frederick rudely toasting Kate in a coffeehouse. He is able to glean from their conversation what has happened, and confronts them. Hawk refuses to give Nicholas his name or respond to his accusations. When he attempts to leave, Nicholas follows him out, and leaps onto the running board of his carriage, demanding his name. Hawk strikes him with a riding crop, and Nicholas loses his temper, returning the blow and spooking the horses, causing the carriage to crash. Hawk is injured in the crash and vows revenge, but Lord Verisopht, remorseful for his treatment of Kate, tells him that he will attempt to stop him. Verisopht strikes Hawk, resulting in a duel. Verisopht is killed, and Hawk flees to France. As a result, Ralph loses a large sum of money owed to him by the deceased lord. Returning to the employment office, Nicholas meets Charles Cheeryble, a wealthy and extremely benevolent merchant who runs a business with his twin brother Ned. He attempts to blackmail Ralph with a piece of unknown information, but is driven off. Wackford Squeers returns to London and joins Ralph in his plots. Smike, on a London street, has the misfortune to run into Squeers, who kidnaps him. Luckily for Smike, John Browdie is honeymooning in London with his new wife Tilda and discovers his predicament. When they have dinner with Squeers, Browdie fakes an illness and takes the opportunity to rescue Smike and send him back to Nicholas. In gratitude, Nicholas invites the Browdies to dinner. Smike refuses to go, but the threat of legal action remains. While at work, Nicholas encounters the beautiful young woman he had seen in the employment office and realises he is in love with her. The brothers tell him that her name is Madeline Bray, the penniless daughter of a debtor, Walter Bray, and enlist his help in obtaining small sums of money for her by commissioning her artwork, the only way they can help her due to her tyrannical father. The two moneylenders persuade Bray to bully his daughter into accepting the disgusting Gride as a husband, with the promise of paying off his debts. He appeals to Madeline to cancel the wedding, but despite her feelings for Nicholas, she is too devoted to her dying father to go against his wishes. On the day of the wedding, Nicholas attempts to stop it once more but his efforts prove academic when Bray, guilt-ridden at the sacrifice his daughter has made for him, dies unexpectedly. Madeline thus has no reason to marry Gride and Nicholas and Kate take her to their house to recover. Smike has contracted tuberculosis and

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become dangerously ill. Nicholas dismisses it as an illusion but it is later revealed that Smike was right. Noggs discovers this plot, and with the help of Frank Cheeryble, he is able to recover the will and have Squeers arrested. The breaking up at Dotheboys Hall The Cheeryble brothers confront Ralph, informing him that his various schemes against Nicholas have failed. They advise him to retire from London before charges are brought up against him, as Squeers is determined to confess all and implicate Ralph. He refuses their help, but is summoned back to their offices that evening and told that Smike is dead. When he reacts to the news with vicious glee, the brothers reveal their final card. The beggar Brooker emerges, and tells Ralph that Smike was his own son. She eventually left him after bearing him a son, whom he entrusted to Brooker, who was then his clerk. Brooker now repents his action, but a transportation sentence kept him from putting the matter right. Devastated at the thought that his only son died as the best friend of his greatest enemy, Ralph commits suicide. His ill-gotten fortune ends up in the state coffers because he died intestate and his estranged relatives decline to claim it. Squeers is sentenced to transportation to Australia, and, upon hearing this, the boys at Dotheboys Hall rebel against the Squeers family and escape with the assistance of John Browdie. Noggs recovers his respectability. The major characters in Nicholas Nickleby include: The Nickleby family[ edit ] Nicholas Nickleby: The hero of the novel.

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### Chapter 4 : Charles Dickens and the Yorkshire schools, with his letter to Mrs. Hall (Book, ) [calendrierdelas

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Many of his books were "novels with a purpose," and one of his grandest crusades was that one against the iniquitous Yorkshire Schools which is found in the earlier chapters of "Nicholas Nickleby"; few of his characters are better remembered than the villainous Wackford Squeers, and few more powerful chapters can be found than those dealing with the miseries and atrocities of "Dotheboys Hall"; chapters which did more to put an end to the wicked system than a score of Acts of Parliament could have done. Squeers is the representative of a class, and not of an individual," and therefore is a composite creation, he must have had some foundation in fact, and a likely enough prototype was discovered in the person of a Mr. William Shaw, who was brought into unenviable notoriety through several actions for cruelty to his helpless charges, a few years before "Nicholas Nickleby" was written; but the controversy did not appear likely to be settled satisfactorily either way. Now, however, a remarkably interesting letter from Dickens, written whilst "Nickleby" was publishing, has come to light, which conclusively settles the question, and proves beyond a doubt that Wackford Squeers was drawn from William Shaw. The letter is addressed to Mrs. Hall, the well-known Irish novelist and writer, who is still remembered by her "Sketches of Irish Character," and other works from her own pen, besides for her collaboration with her husband in "Ireland, its Scenery, Character, etc. As a sidelight on Dickens, it is amusing to recall that this same S. But to return to our letter. It is written from Doughty Street No. The "interesting anecdote" referred to is unfortunately lost to us, but it seems highly probable that it referred to Squeers or we should say Shaw and it is not a very rash guess to opine that Mrs. The identical scoundrel you speak of I saw curiously enough. His name is Shaw; the action was tried I believe eight or ten years since, and if I am not much mistaken another action was brought against him by the parents of a miserable child, a cancer in whose head he opened with an inky penknife, and so caused his death. Look this out in the newspapers. Dickens goes on to tell of the snow-covered churchyard he wandered into, with the grave of an eighteen-year-old boy who had died "at that wretched place," and whose "ghost put Smike into my head upon the spot" we will identify both the place and the boy presently; and then he explains in a most interesting passage how he went down into Yorkshire in an assumed name to make his enquiries, "taking a plausible letter to an old Yorkshire attorney from another attorney in town, telling him how a friend had been left a widow and wanted to place her boys at a Yorkshire School, in hope of thawing the frozen compassion of her relations. One worthy, he has reason to believe, has actually consulted authorities learned in the law, as to his having good grounds on which to rest an action for libel; another has meditated a journey to London, for the express purpose of committing an assault and battery upon his traducer; a third perfectly remembers being waited on last January twelvemonth by two gentlemen, one of whom held him in conversation while the other took his likeness; and, although Mr. Squeers has but one eye, and he has two, and the published sketch does not resemble him whoever he may be in any other respect, still he and all his friends and neighbours know at once for whom it is meant, because the character is so like him. Squeers is the representative of a class, and not of an individual. Where imposture, ignorance, and brutal cupidity, are the stock in trade of a small body of men, and one is described by these characteristics, all his fellows will recognize something belonging to themselves, and each will have a misgiving that the portrait is his own. To this general description, as to most others, there may be some exceptions; and although the Author neither saw nor heard of any in the course of an excursion which he made into Yorkshire, before he commenced these adventures, or before or since, it affords him much more pleasure to assume their existence than to doubt it. He has dwelt thus long upon this point, because his object in calling public attention to the system would be very imperfectly fulfilled, if he did not state now in his own person, emphatically and earnestly, that Mr. Squeers and his school are faint and feeble pictures of an existing reality, purposely subdued and kept down lest they should be deemed impossible that there are upon record trials at law in which damages have been sought

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as a poor recompense for lasting agonies and disfigurements inflicted upon children by the treatment of the master in these places, involving such offensive and foul details of neglect, cruelty, and disease, as no writer of fiction would have the boldness to imagine – and that, since he has been engaged upon these Adventures, he has received from private quarters far beyond the reach of suspicion or distrust, accounts of atrocities, in the perpetration of which upon neglected 12 or repudiated children these schools have been the main instruments, very far exceeding any that appear in these pages. Dickens had had plenty of time to consider the criticisms showered upon him, and to weigh up the consequences of his attacks upon Squeers, Shaw and Co. This story was begun within a few months after the publication of the completed Pickwick Papers. There were, then, a good many cheap Yorkshire schools in existence. There are very few now. Of the monstrous neglect of education in England, and the disregard of it by the State as a means of forming good or bad citizens, and miserable or happy men, this class of schools long afforded a notable example. Although any man who had proved his unfitness for any other occupation in life, was free, without examination or qualification, to open a school anywhere; although preparation for the functions he undertook, was required in a surgeon who assisted to bring a boy into the world, or might one day assist, perhaps, to send him out of it, – in the chemist, the attorney, the butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker, – the whole round of crafts and trades, the schoolmaster excepted; and although school-masters, as a race, were the blockheads and imposters that might naturally be expected to arise from such a state of things, and to flourish in it; these Yorkshire schoolmasters were the lowest and most rotten round in the whole ladder. Traders in the avarice, indifference, or imbecility of parents, and the helplessness of children; ignorant, sordid, brutal men, to whom few considerate persons would have entrusted the board and lodging of a horse or a dog; they formed the worthy corner-stone of a structure, which, for absurdity and a magnificent high-handed laissez-aller neglect, has rarely been exceeded in the world. We hear sometimes of an action for damages against the unqualified medical practitioner, who has deformed a broken limb in pretending to heal it. But, what about the hundreds of thousands of minds that have been deformed for ever by the incapable pettifoggers who have pretended to form them! I make mention of the race, as of the Yorkshire school-masters, in the past tense. Though it has not yet finally disappeared, it is dwindling daily. I cannot call to mind, now, how I came to hear about Yorkshire schools when I was a not very robust child, sitting in bye-places, near Rochester Castle, with ahead full of Partridge, Strap, Tom Pipes, and Sancho Panza; but I know that my first impressions of them were picked up at that time, and that they were, somehow or other, connected with a suppurated abscess that some boy had come home with, in consequence of his Yorkshire guide, philosopher, and friend, having ripped it open with an inky pen-knife. The impression made upon me, however made, never left me. I was always curious about them – fell, long afterwards, and at sundry times, into the way of hearing more about them – at last, having an audience resolved to write about them. With that intent I went down into Yorkshire before I began this book, in very severe winter-time which is pretty faithfully described herein. As I wanted to see a schoolmaster or two, and was forewarned that those gentlemen might, in their modesty, be shy of receiving a visit from the author of the Pickwick Papers, I consulted with a professional friend here, who had a Yorkshire connection, and with whom I concerted a pious fraud. I went to several places in that part of the country where I understood these schools to be most plentifully sprinkled, and had no occasion to deliver a letter until I came to a certain town which shall be nameless. The person to whom it was addressed, was not at home; but he came down at night, through the snow, to the inn where I was staying. It was after dinner; and he needed little persuasion to sit down by the fire in a warm corner, and take his share of the wine that was on the table. I am afraid he is dead now. I recollect he was a jovial, ruddy, broad-faced man; that we got acquainted directly; and that we talked on all kinds of subjects, except the school, which he showed a great anxiety to avoid. On my reverting to some other topic that we had been discussing he recovered immediately; but, though I tried him again and again, I never approached the question of the school, even if he were in the middle of a laugh, without observing that his countenance fell, and that he became uncomfortable. At last, when we had passed a couple of hours or so, very agreeably, he suddenly took up his hat, and leaning-over the table and

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looking me full in the ace, said, in a low voice: I never saw him afterwards, but I sometimes imagine that I descry a faint reflection of him in John Browdie. Dickens followed this with a reprint of most of the first Preface which we have just been reading. It will be noticed how he amplifies the story of the Yorkshire attorney which he briefly related to Mrs. He was gifted with wonderful powers of observation, and a magnificent memory in which he stored for future reference all the thousand and one characters, scenes, and places which came into his very busy and varied life, more particularly his earlier journalistic years; as a result he seldom had to fall back upon sheer invention for a character, but could usually take down from its mental pigeon-hole some real-life character and mould it to his requirements, for it is true that he frequently altered them a little to suit his purpose, and very often would blend several actual persons into one character; but we venture to say that there is hardly one amongst the multitude of his "dramatis personae" that was not derived, at least in part, from someone whom Dickens had met, marked, and mentally "filed for reference. The visit to Yorkshire mentioned in the second preface and previously referred to in this article deserves a little further notice, as it is replete with interest, especially when we compare the details found in the biographies and letters of Dickens with the imaginary journey performed by Squeers and Nicholas in the novel. This historic journey was made in January in company with his artist friend, Hablot K. The friends set off by the Glasgow mail-coach, travelling by way of Grantham, Newark, Retford, Doncaster, Wetherby, Boroughbridge, and Catterick, to Greta Bridge, where they stayed a night before proceeding to Barnard Castle just over the Yorkshire border, the centre from which they intended to pursue their investigations. Barnard Castle was the centre of the nefarious profession which Dickens was about to expose; "all the schools are round about that place," as he wrote to Mrs. The remains of the particular building are still existing, and agree perfectly with the details described in the novel, and in the churchyard of Bowes Church "the old church near the school" described in the letter is the gravestone of "George Ashton Taylor, son of John Taylor, of Trowbridge, Wiltshire, who died suddenly at Mr. No extra charges whatever. Hall that "the rascalities of those Yorkshire Schoolmasters cannot easily be exaggerated," and that he had truly "kept down the strong truth" and thrown as much comicality over it as he could. To quote from a contemporary newspaper, the above "was an action to recover damages of a Schoolmaster in Yorkshire on account of the injury done to the health of two sons of the plaintiff, one of whom was alleged to have lost his sight from the negligence of the defendant. Sergeant Vaughan appearing for the father of the boys, Richard and William Jones; William, the blind one, gave the following evidence: Witness will be twelve years old in January; could see as well as any person when he went to Mr. The first week he was treated very well 25 D he got toast and tea for breakfast, but they then turned him among the rest of the boys and gave him hasty pudding for breakfast; for dinner the boys had meat and potatoes on Sunday, and on other days bread and cheese; when any gentlemen came to see their children, Mr. Shaw used to come down and tell the boys who had not their jackets and trousers on to get under the table and hide themselves; the boys were frequently without a jacket or trousers; they washed in a large trough; there were only two towels for all the boys, which the big boys used to pre-occupy; their supper consisted of warm milk and water and bread, which was called tea; five boys generally slept in a bed; his brother and three boys slept with him; there were thirty beds in the room; in some beds there were only three or four boys; every morning the boys used to flea the beds for which purpose they were provided with quills by the ushers, and if they did not catch all the fleas they were beaten. On Sunday they had pot skimmings for tea, in which there was vermin; the ushers offered a penny for every maggot, but on their being found, the ushers would not pay them. About nine months after he had been to the school his sight was affected; he could not see to write his copy, and Mr. Shaw threatened to beat him; the next day he could not see at all, and Mr. Shaw sent him to the wash-house, as he had no doctor, and he would not have him in his room; there were eighteen boys there besides himself, of whom two were totally blind. In November, he was quite blind, and was then sent to a private room where there were nine other boys blind, a doctor was sent for, but he had no medical aid in the wash-house; the doctor Benning then discharged him, saying, "that he was blind of one eye, but could see with the other," 26 this was what the doctor said, but he could not see through the other. Benning used to come

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to the school when the boys had nearly lost their sight. There was no difference in his fare during his illness, or his health. Shaw occasionally saw him, but gave him no assistance. The same number of boys slept in his bed during his illness as before. Richard Jones corroborated the statement of his brother, adding, that he had the itch all the time he was there; twenty other boys laboured under the same disorder. Two boys who had each lost one eye, and one quite blind were also examined. Benjamin Clatton described the mode of flea-hunting; there was a quill to each bed, which the several bed-fellows filled and emptied into the fire. Poor, miserable, little boys! And yet the defence "was prepared to show that Mr. Shaw evinced the most tender regard for the pupils of the school"! Happily the Judge did not agree with Mr. Sergeant Pell, for the defence note the name! As Shaw was said to have paid the eminent oculist. It is a curious thing that a few chapters in a work of fiction should be able to accomplish a reform that all the pomp and majesty of law was powerless to effect, but it really looks as though the Yorkshire Schools system might have lasted to this day, despite actions such as the one just described, if Dickens had not awakened the public conscience with his "Nicholas Nickleby"; this is, of course, a great tribute to the wonderful power Dickens wielded in his pen, and probably no other author of the period could have gained the ear of the public like he did. One by one the hateful Yorkshire Schools closed their doors, and their owners slunk away into obscurity; they may not all have been as bad as Shaw or Squeers, but the system was a rotten one and not fit to be tolerated in a so-called Christian country. I am exceedingly obliged to you for your kind note, and the interesting anecdote which you tell so well. I have laid it by in the MS. Depend upon it that the rascalities of those Yorkshire Schoolmasters cannot easily be exaggerated, and that I have kept down the strong truth and thrown as much comicality over it as I could, rather than disgust and weary the reader with its fouler aspects. The identical scoundrel you speak of, I saw curiously enough. The country for miles round was covered, when I was there, with deep snow. I think his ghost put Smike into my head, upon the spot. I went down in an assumed name, taking a plausible letter to an old Yorkshire attorney from another attorney in town, telling him how a friend had been left a widow and wanted to place her boys at a Yorkshire School, in hopes of thawing the frozen compassion of her relations. The man of business gave me an introduction to one or two schools, but at night he came down to the Inn where I was stopping, and after much hesitation and confusion he was a large-headed flat-nosed red-faced old fellow said with a degree of feeling one would not have given him credit for, that the matter had been upon his mind all day that they were sad places for mothers to send their orphan boys too that he hoped I would not give up him as my adviser but that she had better do anything with them let them hold horses, run errands fling them in any way upon the mercy of the World rather than trust them there. This was an attorney, a well-fed man of business, and a rough Yorkshireman! Dickens and myself will be delighted to see the friend you speak of we write in regards to yourself and Mr. Hall and I throw myself single-handed upon your good nature, and beseech you to forgive me this long story which you ought to do, as you have been the means of drawing it from me.

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*Charles Dickens And The Yorkshire Schools - With His Letter To Mrs. Hall [Cumberland Clark] on calendrierdelascience.com \*FREE\* shipping on qualifying offers. Many of the earliest books, particularly those dating back to s and before, are now extremely scarce and increasingly expensive.*

His father, John Dickens, a clerk in the navy pay office, with a salary of 80l. The wife of the first Lord Houghton told Mr. Wemyss Reid that Mrs. John Dickens had eight children by his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Charles Barrow, a lieutenant in the navy. The eldest, Fanny, was born in Charles, the second, was christened Charles John Huffam erroneously entered Huffham in the register, but dropped the last two names. Charles Dickens remembered the little garden of the house at Portsea, though his father was recalled to London when he was only two years old. In probably the family moved to Chatham. Dickens was small and sickly; he amused himself by reading and by watching the games of other boys. His mother taught him his letters, and he pored over a small collection of books belonging to his father. Lamert, an army surgeon at Chatham, had a taste for private theatricals. Lamert took Dickens to the theatre, in which the child greatly delighted. It was, however, made insufficient by his careless habits, and in he left his first house, 2 now 11 Ordnance Terrace, for a smaller house, 18 St. Dickens was then sent to school with the minister, Mr. Giles see Langton, Childhood of Dickens. In the winter of his father was recalled to Somerset House, and settled Bayham Street, Camden Town, whither his son followed in the spring. John Dickens, whose character is more or less represented by Micawber, was now in difficulties, and had to make a composition with his creditors. The uncle lodged in the upper floor of a house in which a book-selling business was carried on, and the proprietress lent the child some books. James Lamert had become manager of a blacking warehouse, and obtained a place for Dickens at 6s. Dickens was treated as a mere drudge, and employed in making up parcels. He came home at night to the dismantled house in Gower Street with a reduced old lady, a Mrs. Roylance, the original of Mrs. He felt himself degraded by his occupation. When his sister won a prize at the Royal Academy, he was deeply humiliated by the contrast of his own position, though incapable of envying her success. This was about April The family circumstances improved. His school-fellows remembered him as a handsome lad, overflowing with animal spirits, writing stories, getting up little theatrical performances, and fond of harmless practical jokes, but not distinguishing himself as a scholar. After two years at this school, Dickens went to another kept by a Mr. Dawson in Henrietta Street, Brunswick Square. He then became clerk in the office of Mr. His salary with Mr. Blackmore rose from 13s. He was determined to force his way upwards. He made an application to George Hartley [q. His powers were rapidly developed by the requirements of his occupation. He was, as he says Letters, i. Nine others followed till February His offer was accepted, and his salary raised from five to seven guineas a week. Albany Fonblanque had warmly praised them, and publishers heard of the young writer. Dickens, wishing for a freer hand, and having no special knowledge of sport, substituted the less restricted scheme of the Pickwick Club, and wrote the first number, for which Seymour drew the illustrations. Seymour killed himself before the appearance of the second number. Robert William Buss [q. Thackeray, then an unknown youth, applied to Dickens for the post of illustrator; but Dickens finally chose Hablot Knight Browne [q. The binder prepared four hundred copies of the first number, and forty thousand of the fifteenth. The marked success began with the appearance of Sam Weller in the fifth number. Sam Weller is in fact the incarnation of the qualities to which the success was due. Educated like his creator in the streets of London, he is the ideal cockney. His exuberant animal spirits, humorous shrewdness, and kindness under a mask of broad farce, made him the favourite of all cockneys in and out of London, and took the gravest readers by storm. All that Dickens had learnt in his rough initiation into life, with a power of observation unequalled in its way, was poured out with boundless vivacity and prodigality of invention. The book, beginning as farce, became admirable comedy, and has caused more hearty and harmless laughter than any book in the Language. Dickens was now a prize for which publishers might

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contend. In the next few years he undertook a great deal of work, with confidence natural to a buoyant temperament, encouraged by unprecedented success, and achieved new triumphs without permitting himself to fall into slovenly composition. Each new book was at least as carefully written as its predecessor. A short pause followed. Dickens was also showing the command of the pathetic which fascinated the ordinary reader. The critic is apt to complain that Dickens kills his children as if he liked it and makes his victims attitudinise before the footlights. He spent summer holidays at Broadstairs, always a favourite watering-place, Twickenham, and Petersham, and in the summer of made an excursion in Scotland, received the freedom of Edinburgh, and was welcomed at a public dinner where Jeffrey took the chair and his health was proposed by Christopher North. He was at this time fond of long rides, and delighted in boyish games. His buoyant spirit and hearty good-nature made him a charming host and guest at social gatherings of all kinds except the formal. Forster, whom he afterwards chose as his biographer, was serviceable both by reading his works before publication and by helping his business arrangements. Dickens made at starting some rash agreements. He received, Forster thinks, 2,1. He had meanwhile agreed with Richard Bentley [q. The close of this series of agreements freed him from conflicting and harassing responsibilities. He stipulated, however, in order to secure the much needed rest, that it should not begin until November During the previous twelve months he was to receive 1. He sailed from Liverpool 4 Jan. He reached Boston on 21 Jan. Returning to Baltimore, he started for the west, and went by Pittsburg and Cincinnati to St. He returned to Cincinnati, and by the end of April was at the falls of Niagara. He spent a month in Canada, performing in some private theatricals at Montreal, and sailed for England about the end of May. The Americans received him with an enthusiasm which was at times overpowering, but which was soon mixed with less agreeable feelings. His speeches on this subject met with little response, and the general opinion was in favour of continuing to steal. As a staunch abolitionist he was shocked by the sight of slavery, and disgusted by the general desire in the free states to suppress any discussion of the dangerous topic. To the average Englishman the problem seemed a simple question of elementary morality. He differed from ordinary observers only in the decisiveness of his utterances and in the astonishing vivacity of his impressions. The Americans were still provincial enough to fancy that the first impressions of a young novelist were really of importance. Their serious faults and the superficial roughness of the half-settled districts thoroughly disgusted him; and though he strove hard to do justice to their good qualities, it is clear that he returned disillusioned and heartily disliking the country. The feeling is still shown in his antipathy to the northern states during the war Letters, ii. Four large editions were sold by the end of the year, and the book produced a good deal of resentment. The book shows Dickens at his highest power. Whether it has done much to enforce its intended moral, that selfishness is a bad thing, may be doubted. But the humour and the tragic power are undeniable. He showed also a lively interest in benevolent enterprises, especially in ragged schools. He was always ready to throw himself heartily into any philanthropical movement, and rather slow to see any possibility of honest objection. His impatience of certain difficulties about the ragged schools raised by clergymen of the established church led him for a year or two to join the congregation of a unitarian minister, Mr. For the rest of his life his sympathies, we are told, were chiefly with the church of England, as the least sectarian of religious bodies, and he seems to have held that every dissenting minister was a Stiggins. It is curious that the favourite author of the middle classes should have been so hostile to their favourite form of belief. He was, however, greatly disappointed with the commercial results. Fifteen thousand copies were sold, and brought him only 1. Dickens expressed a dissatisfaction, which resulted in a breach with Messrs. He had many claims to satisfy. His family was rapidly increasing; his fifth child was born at the beginning of Demands from more distant relations were also frequent, and though he received what, for an author, was a very large income, he thought that he had worked chiefly for the enrichment of others. He also felt the desire to obtain wider experience natural to one who had been drawing so freely upon his intellectual resources. He resolved therefore, to economise and refresh his mind in Italy. Turner attended and Lord Normanby took the chair, he started for Italy, reaching Marseilles 14 July On 16 July he settled in a villa at Albaro, a suburb of Genoa, and set to work learning Italian. He

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afterwards moved to the Peschiere Palace in Genoa.

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*Charles Dickens and the Yorkshire Schools, with his letter to Mrs Hall. London: privately printed, London: privately printed, "Dent Grammar School."*

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*Nicholas Nickleby was the third novel of Charles Dickens. The first installment was published on March 31, and the last installment was published on October 1, The first installment was published on March 31, and the last installment was published on October 1,*