

SELECTED SPEECHES



Emery Walker Ph 50

Edward Clarke

From a photograph by H. F. Crote

SELECTED SPEECHES

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WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTES

BY

SIR EDWARD CLARKE, K.C.

M.P. FOR SOUTHWARK, 1880

PLYMOUTH, 1880-1900; AND THE CITY OF LONDON, JANUARY TO JUNE, 1906

H.M.'S SOLICITOR-GENERAL, 1886-1892

WITH A PORTRAIT

LONDON

SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE, S.W.

1908

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Note.—The speeches contained in this volume have all been previously published, and with the exception of those on 'Tariff Reform' and 'Free Trade and Fair Trade' and those delivered at the 'Boz' Club and Asquith dinners were included in the volumes of 'Public Speeches,' which appeared in 1890, 1894, and 1900.

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PREFACE

My first political speech at a public meeting was made on an interesting occasion. In November 1867 the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations was established, and one of its objects was to supply speakers for the meetings of local associations.

The earliest request came to the Council, of which I was a member, from the York Conservative Association; and I was deputed to attend the meeting, which took place on January 8, 1868. Some extracts from this first speech delivered by a representative of the National Union were published as the first pamphlet of the Union, and I began at that meeting an active political career which lasted nearly forty years, and included twenty years in the House of Commons and six years of office as Solicitor-General.

It would be strange if during that long period I had not succeeded in making some speeches which deserve to be remembered; for with high ideals before me, ideals never reached but never forgotten, I have spared myself no labour in their preparation both in substance and in form.

It is often, but not quite truly, said that no one reads old speeches. Students of political and social questions do study them with great advantage, and find in them the cause and explanation of the movements of public thought and the course of national policy.

And no young man can properly equip himself for public life without studying rhetoric in the best examples he can find of that valuable but neglected art.

But there is something more than this, for, indeed, the ultimate value of a speech does not depend on the correctness of its conclusions or the felicity of its phrase, or even on the clear and harmonious structure of its argument, but on the spirit which informs and enlightens it, and the dignity of the principles and aims which are governing the mind of the speaker and colouring his language. A speech is a spoken essay cast in a special form to answer an immediate purpose, but containing, if it is worth

making at all, substance which will interest and instruct when the immediate purpose has been fulfilled.

And if there is even a possibility that the speeches here collected may be found worthy of being remembered, I shall be easily forgiven for the presumption of putting forth this book, and hoping that it may serve as a memorial of my life and work.

Here I confess the chief object of its publication.

We all wish to leave behind us the memorial more lasting than brass of which the poet speaks, and I think we would all prefer to be remembered by a portrait rather than by an epitaph. This book is my portrait. I have put all of myself into these speeches, and I would like to think that when I am dead those who come after me and are for any reason interested in the story of my life will be able to form a judgment for themselves about me, and so far as possible judge me by my own words and actions.

I must add a word as to the forensic speeches. A speech in a criminal or civil case is meant to secure a particular result, the verdict or the judgment, as the case may be; and its purpose is wholly fulfilled when that result is obtained. Here the art of rhetoric is at its highest; but it is not easy to choose forensic speeches for reproduction.

Many are so full of detail which was well understood by the judge or jury to whom they were addressed that they cannot be appreciated or enjoyed by those who have not heard the evidence; others contain comment and criticism, which it was justifiable to utter but would be ungenerous to reproduce. In the four which I have here reprinted there is not, I think, anything which can be objected to upon this ground.

It may be that to those who think that the publication of this volume needs excuse the reasons I have given will seem insufficient.

But it seems to me reasonable that I should try to prolong the life of these children of my brain; of which I can say that there is not an opinion expressed which was not my own personal opinion, honestly formed and plainly set forth, nor any speech which was not carefully prepared with the object of giving to my thoughts their most effective and artistic form.

October 1908.

EDWARD CLARKE.

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PORTRAIT OF SIR EDWARD CLARKE, K.C. *Frontispiece*
From a photograph by E. P. Coats.

constituency which has honoured me so long by its confidence, and at the meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of that constituency. Our Chambers of Commerce ought to be agencies of peace. Many of us cherish the hope that now, as we are nearing the end of the century, there may be some assuagement of the terrible evils that are cast upon the world by the extravagant and unnecessary military and naval preparations of the peoples of the globe, but if there is anything that would put far off the hope of universal peace—and that would disappoint the best expectations we may have formed of some relief of the nations—the industrial peoples—from these great burdens, it would be the acceptance by Chambers of Commerce, and by the commercial world, of mistaken and misguided schemes for the advancement of commerce. Do not let it be said of us in the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce that we have been untrue to the great principles of Commercial Chambers. The idea of a Commercial Chamber is to organise and regulate the commerce and industry of the world; and by doing that it should weave as closely as possible those blessed ties of peaceful intercourse and mutual interdependence which we hope will help to bring about the pacification of the world and the relief of our people from the burdens of taxation. Plymouth, lying as it does close to the great harbour associated with the naval and military strength of the country, may seem the most likely place in which these mischievous doctrines should find their acceptance. But I pray that as the years go by the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, while it will know and will prize as the guardians of our freedom and honour the naval and military resources which make this country great and powerful to-day, will know at the same time how to carry forward in its peaceful mission the work of extending the commerce of the world.

THE CHURCH AND ITS WORK.

AN ADDRESS TO MEN, DELIVERED AT THE MASS MEETING OF
THE CHURCH CONGRESS, AT THE ALBERT HALL,
OCTOBER 13, 1899.

MY LORD BISHOP,—It is about four months ago that you invited me, in terms which made your letter a command, to come and speak at this great gathering of the Church Congress, and I do not think that many days have passed since then without there

coming to my mind the great responsibility that I had undertaken, and without my thinking very earnestly what I might be able to say of use. It is an opportunity given to few—an opportunity I am never likely to have again. If I, a layman, a Churchman, have anything worth saying to my fellow-Churchmen, I must say it to-night, for this is my time. I am not going to try to please you by a speech of pleasant things. Though I am a politician, it is my habit to speak what is in my mind. I do not ask for your assent or your approval, I ask only for your attention and your thought. There is much temptation at such a gathering as this, in such a Congress, to dwell upon the great progress, material and moral, which has been made by the Church during the century which is nearing its close. But I put that aside. It would be pleasing, but I am not sure that it would be very useful. It has been said by that great writer and teacher, whose name the Dean of Canterbury has just mentioned, John Ruskin, that the world would be a great deal better if we occupied ourselves in finding fault with our own class and not with other classes, and I think that it is well to ask, and to ask with frankness and with courage, What is the view that is held by others about the Church to-day? What is the favourite caricature that we find in outside descriptions of the Church? One can learn much from a caricature, though it is always unfair. It is the extravagant exaggeration of real defects. I look at the literature of to-day, and I ask what is the opinion of the Church, that is represented or indicated by those who are outside? It is said—and let us ponder over what is said of us—it is said that the Church is an ecclesiastical body of fashionable or feeble prelates and of wrangling priests. It is said that there is a self-complacent laity having fragmentary beliefs and occasional devotion. It is severely respectable, extremely conservative, ready always to listen to judicious platitudes upon the Christian life, but resenting the intrusion of Christian doctrine into the actual and practical affairs of the world, and inclined to tell a preacher to mind his own business if he ventures to refer to the large questions of social purity and the national welfare. I say that that is a caricature. We know that it is a caricature. But is it not worth while to look at it for a moment and ask how it comes to pass that this can be said or thought concerning that Christian society, the Church? The Church has done, and is doing, as we all know, splendid work. In the darker times that have gone by the Church has been the only teacher of the people. It is to-day the teacher of the larger part of the children that are

being brought up; and, while it has secured to the great majority of our children the blessing of a Christian atmosphere and Christian teaching in the schools, it has given to them—hundreds and thousands and millions of them—the higher privilege and blessing of which the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke to-night—the Christian home, with the mother's teaching and the father's guidance. The Church is one of the greatest—I think the greatest—of the missionary societies of the world. The Church is not actually the greatest, but it is one of the greatest, temperance societies to be found amongst us. The Church is sometimes—I wish it were always—the greatest peace society of the world, proclaiming in season and out of season the lessons and teachings of its Divine Master in the unwilling ears of a passionate and covetous world. But with all these things to think of, how is it that we have to confess that a large part of the intellect of the country has been alienated from our creed, and that the greater number by far of the hardworking toilers of this land never enter a temple of Christian worship? It is a terrible thought. Is not the meaning of it that the Church has lacked something of its work, that it has been in some degree wanting to the great opportunity of the great mission that it has had? Let us think what is the motto and the rule of the highest Christian government, 'To keep the simple folk by their right, to defend the children of the poor, and to punish the wrongdoer.' That should be the rule of a Christian State. How far are we failing to act up to that rule of teaching? We cannot, by a word or by an Act of Parliament, or by a treatise, get rid of poverty from the world. We cannot. And our people, the great mass of the working-men of this country, have gradually turned away from the idea that it is possible for any sort of legislation or of teaching to establish an artificial equality of social conditions which would last for a single week. Socialism indeed has given that up. But it is not inequality of condition that brings sorrow and misery to the world. I do not doubt that the well-paid servants of Dives were at least as happy as Dives himself. But Lazarus was at the gate and wanted so little. And the Lazarus that is at our gate always wants so little of relief and of help to raise him to a higher standard and to a happier life. We cannot solve—I do not imagine that anyone can solve—the eternal problem of poverty. But are there not many things among us which tend to produce poverty, and to bring the shame and suffering which is worse than poverty itself, which we could prevent and should prevent

if we were true to our ideals and duties as members of a Christian Church? Let me speak to you of one or two instances. The Dean of Canterbury has referred to the horrible overcrowding of our great city, in the dismal dens of which men, women, and children, huddled together, as Tennyson said, each sex like swine, live in an atmosphere of brutalism and degradation from which it is hardly possible there should rise the flower of a Christian life. I speak not of them. Let me speak of two or three others. When you leave this place to-night, if you go about two miles to the east, and linger awhile till midnight has come, you will see a sight which is a disgrace to our city and our country, the like of which can be seen in no other capital of Europe. There you will see the terrible procession of the ruined daughters of the poor—for nine-tenths of the prostitution of England is from the seduced daughters and sisters of working-men. You will see that procession going along the streets of our city, the women offering their bodies and their souls for sale, and, not only with no check or hindrance, but the uniformed servants of the city—the constables, and the superintendents, and the inspectors—are waiting upon the goblin market and regulating the traffic of vice. It is a spectacle of shame which is a disgrace to Christian England. But if we do not defend the children of the poor, do we punish the wrongdoer? How is it that the notorious swindler who has ruined hundreds of homes lives in luxury at his country house, with his French cook, while you drag to prison the untaught outcast who, for hunger's sake, has stolen a loaf of bread?

There is another thing that I want you to think of. Intemperance has been spoken of by the Dean, and I am not going to speak of that. Intemperance, indeed, is terrible in its effects, but intemperance is diminishing in this country, and has been diminishing for years. But there is growing up in large areas of our population, not so much in the south as in the midlands and the north, a vulgar and sordid vice—the vice of gambling, which has many of the effects of intemperance. It ruins homes; it destroys the instincts of thrift; and it breaks a man's life up by filling his mind with a passion for getting money for which he has never worked. And this vice is growing in England, and doing incalculable harm to the life and the manhood of our people, and corrupting every manly sport among us. This vice is sanctioned by the example and the tolerant words of those who ought to be helping to keep the nation clear from degradation. How do we deal with it? If

the man who keeps a little confectioner's shop puts an occasional shilling into his sweetmeat packet to tempt the children to come and buy, he is summoned before the police magistrates and fined under the Lottery Act. But the gambling clubs are in full vogue and are unchecked. Your newspapers are filled with the information which enables the gambling to go on. I heard the other day—I hope that it is not true—that a member of our aristocracy, one of the guarantors of this Church Congress, had said that he saw no harm in betting if you did not bet beyond your means. And he was a millionaire. If he said that, he could never have known the mischief that is being done in our great manufacturing towns. We fine the confectioner, but I saw that the highest court of justice not long ago condescended to hear an argument in a collusive action brought to establish the legality of the betting ring at a suburban racecourse. When I think of these things, there come to my mind the lines of Charles Kingsley:—

‘ Who would sit down and sigh for a lost age of gold
 When the Lord of all ages is here?
 True hearts will leap up at the trumpet of God,
 And those who can suffer can dare.
 Each old age of gold was an iron age too,
 And the meekest of Saints may find stern work to do
 In the day of the Lord at hand.’

Could these things be if we had done our duty as Churchmen with the strength and force of the Church? We have heard a great deal—I think too much—of the catholic revival. Is it not time that there was something said of a Christian revival, a revival that would awaken us to a sense of our duty, our influence, and our capacity, and help us to make the Church of England to which we belong a more potent factor in all the moral and social movements that affect our country? There has been during the latter part of this century a great revival—outside the Church. The Salvation Army has been the greatest religious phenomenon of the century. It is the largest temperance society in the world. It is, I think, the largest religious body I ever heard of, the membership of which rests simply on personal holiness; whose every member is bound to constant self-denial; and whose obligations can only be enforced by exclusion from the body. I wish the enthusiasm and earnestness which have animated the Salvation Army had been found

inside our Church. (A Voice: 'The Church Army.') I support the Church Army, but there are differences between the two. I am not speaking of a revival in personal holiness. Upon such a topic as that I should not presume to speak. But I am speaking of a revival which would make the great mass of our people understand that the Church was something better than a speculative society with a turn for charity organisation, and that it really was a strong and living power, entitled to their affection by the Protestant purity of its faith, and by the universal sympathy of its manifold activities for good. There is an alliance, honourable and helpful to both, I think, between Church and State. God grant that it may long continue. Only bring the Church and the people into closer contact and a closer union. This is a great opportunity, this Congress, this great meeting. Here are thousands of Churchmen come from every county and belonging to every calling, and each one of you has around him in the world a group of men who listen to his words and live by his example. Can we not go out from this place to-night determined for ourselves to give assurance to the toiling millions of this country that we desire to understand their needs, and to work with them and for them in every movement of social and material progress, and in that way cannot the Church and the people, no longer separate, but one in faith and doctrine, in charity and in hope, go forward in the century which will soon dawn upon us to the noblest victories of freedom and of faith?

CHARLES DICKENS.

SPEECH IN PROPOSING THE TOAST OF 'THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF CHARLES DICKENS' AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE 'BOZ' CLUB, FEBRUARY 7, 1908.

My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I rise to invite you to drink, upstanding, and in reverential silence, the toast of 'The immortal memory of Charles Dickens.' We are met here to-night not as critics, even the most friendly of critics, to discuss a literary career. We are here to revive in our own minds, and as far as we can to keep fresh and living, the memory of an illustrious

Englishman, of a brilliant humorist, and of one of the most kindly, generous, and noble gentlemen who ever stepped on English soil. We are not here to discuss literary questions, still less are we here as a literary clique, to defend a memory that may be decaying, or to explain obscurities which the ordinary mind is not strong enough to pierce. Nor are we here in formal commemoration of some departed worthy whose great deeds run the risk of being forgotten if his admirers do not from time to time endeavour to recall them. No; there is a more personal tone about our gathering to-night; it is the man of whom we are thinking when I propose or when we drink this toast. And the personal note is struck very sharply by the fact that the title of our Club is not the name which is written on the formal roll of history and English literature, but is that affectionate name by which the English people first learned to love and to honour the illustrious man whose memory we recall on this, his birthday. There were many sides to that character; I may be allowed to touch on one or two to-night.

No thought of eulogium comes to me when I rise to propose this toast, for eulogium would be, as you all would think, unnecessary and certainly inadequate. But I turn to think of the time when Charles Dickens came to the fulness of his power. That magic age, thirty-seven, which marks the attainment by any and every man of the full intellectual power of his life, came to Charles Dickens just before the beginning of the wonderful Golden Decade of English literature in the nineteenth century which was adorned by so many brilliant names, and for a parallel to which England may long have to wait. It began with the beginning of the year 1850. When that year opened Charles Dickens was at the magic age of thirty-seven, and there was round him a remarkable group of brilliant men, who had either just reached that age, or would reach it in the course of the ten years which he helped so to ennoble. Alfred Tennyson was forty, William Makepeace Thackeray was thirty-nine, Robert Browning was thirty-seven, Charles Reade was thirty-five, Anthony Trollope was thirty-four, John Ruskin and Charles Kingsley were thirty-one. It is a wonderful group of names!

And when I mention the books which were published in 1850 you will realise what a wealth of intellectual power and inspiration was poured into the life of England at that time, 1850—'David Copperfield,' 'Pendennis,' 'In Memoriam,' 'Christmas Day and Easter Eve,' 'Alton Locke,' 'Harold'—what a list

for a year! What a beginning of that wonderful decade which to Charles Dickens began with 'David Copperfield' and ended with that which I shall always think his masterpiece, 'The Tale of Two Cities.' What a wonderful list with which to begin that glorious decade. I should like to linger on these associations, but there is only one aspect in which I permit myself to mention again these years from 1850 to 1859; I have never seen it noticed, and I commend it to someone who has more leisure and more capacity than I have to follow it out; the remarkable coincidence of the brilliant manifestation of Charles Dickens at his best with the pre-Raphaelite revival in the art of our country. Above all things Charles Dickens was a pre-Raphaelite. There is a sharpness of outline, an intensity of colour, a clearness of composition about his works which remind one of the pre-Raphaelite painters, for I know not in the world of art anything with which the finished work of Charles Dickens can be so well compared as with those pictures of extraordinary detail and finish which still delight us in the works of Van Eyck and Hans Memling. The clearness, the definition, the brilliancy, the exactness of colouring in those works have lasted four centuries, and they find their literary reflection in the wonderful descriptive passages of Charles Dickens, in which there is never a slur or a blur, but in which everything is as clear and as strongly marked as if the minutest detail of the picture were the foremost outlines one had to remember.

Charles Dickens' genius came to its full development at the time of the pre-Raphaelite revival. It was a few years before 1850, in the years 1846, 1847, or 1848, that young John Millais was working at 16 Stratford Place, in Oxford Street, painting pictures and backgrounds for a member of the legal profession, Mr. Ralph Thomas, who afterwards became Serjeant Thomas, and has occasionally been mentioned as the possible antetype of one of the distinguished people mentioned in Dickens' books. Mr. Ralph Thomas, who was then a junior barrister practising at the Central Criminal Court, assisted himself by carrying on at 16 Stratford Place the occupation of a dealer in pictures and violins. He did not become Serjeant Thomas until some years afterwards. While he carried on that double occupation at Stratford Place young Millais, first for two guineas and then for three guineas a week, painted little pictures for Thomas to sell, and filled in the backgrounds of possible antiques. During the ten years between 1850 and 1860 John Millais came to be the

exponent, the first and finest exponent, of pre-Raphaelite art. I always like to connect those two names; I know they were great friends. I know that years afterwards it was John Millais who told Charles Dickens that there was a young artist whose drawing of the people waiting for the casual ward had lately appeared in an illustrated paper, one Luke Fildes, and I know from John Millais' own lips that he told Dickens that the man who could draw that could draw anything. It was through that that the name of Luke Fildes has been most honourably associated with Dickens and with Dickens' works. I cannot follow out these thoughts, but this comparison, this illustration of pre-Raphaelite work, is one which perhaps might repay a little more careful study.

Let me pass to another aspect of Dickens' life. I wonder whether there is anyone in this room who ever heard Charles Dickens make a political speech? If so, let him hold up his hand. (Laughter. Three hands were held up.) I remember well enough the 23rd June, in the year 1855, when Charles Dickens made his first political speech, and as far as I know his only one, at Drury Lane Theatre. I was a little boy—emphatically a little boy at that time—and the Administrative Reform Association had opened an office in King William Street, City, where I was born, and where I was then in my father's shop, and an announcement was made that Charles Dickens would speak at Drury Lane Theatre. I went to the office of the Administrative Reform Association and, as far as my height would allow me, looked over the counter and asked for a ticket. I remember the person in attendance went and fetched the Committee, or so many of them who were at the moment in the office, in order that they might see what public enthusiasm really meant, how the youth of the country was aroused on the question of administrative reform. But I did not care for administrative reform; I cared for Charles Dickens. It had been my habit for years, even then, to get hold of the green covered parts as they came out, and having devoured the inside then to study the cover in an endeavour to make out what the story was coming to afterwards. I did not care about administrative reform; I wanted to hear Charles Dickens.

I got my ticket; it was a gallery ticket, and I remember struggling up a long way to that Drury Lane gallery, and getting somehow or other into it to hear this speech. I have had experience of public meetings since, and I have never seen a meeting

of such intense and angry enthusiasm, and certainly never heard a speech which had more tremendous effect. With a magnificent ringing voice, with a strength of dramatic gesture that drove home the points of an elaborately prepared and most brilliant epigrammatic speech, Charles Dickens stood there, and the great house shook with the roar of applause, or rattled with the laughter, as he made his attack on the Ministry of the day, on Lord Palmerston, the 'comic old gentleman' who was shortly to be put in rehearsal for the pantomimes, and his description of Austin Henry Layard (I have not seen it in print for fifty years, but I think I remember the speech well), showing that the difference between the bull-fight in Spain and the bull-fight in England was that, whereas in Spain the bull rushes at the scarlet, in England the scarlet rushes at the bull. I remember well the passage in which he told how centuries ago, before arithmetic was invented, it had been the habit to keep our public accounts on pieces of wood, in which notches were cut, called Exchequer tallies. Said Charles Dickens: 'The years passed by, Cocker was born and died, Walsingham was born and died, and at last some adventurous genius suggested that instead of using tallies they should keep the national accounts with pen and paper. It was a novel, revolutionary suggestion, fraught with mischief to the State, but after great debate it was adopted. Then the question was what to do with the tallies. They never had been of any real use, and it was obviously impossible that they should be put to any real use now; so they were stacked below the Houses of Parliament; a flue was overheated, there was plenty of wood in the Exchequer tallies to carry on the fire, the Houses of Parliament were burnt down, the national architect was called in, and'—said Charles Dickens—'we are in the second million of our expenditure on the new palace; the national pig has not yet got over the stile, and the little old woman, Britannia, will not go home to-night.' Ah! it is an old recollection; but I have never known a meeting so full, as I said, of angry and intense enthusiasm.

I often wondered that Charles Dickens did not follow up that political line. It must have been a great temptation to him. The man who has once in his life known what it is to feel that a great audience is hanging on his words, following his thought, governed by the movement of his mind, and ready to answer to anything that he may say, has enjoyed so intense an excitement and delight that it is scarcely possible he should deny himself the opportunity of its repetition. But Charles Dickens did deny himself,

and, fortunately for the world, he did. He was too great a man to be harnessed to a political party. He was larger than any political party. His teachings were too great to be regulated by the interests of a political party. Do not misunderstand me. There are many of us, the smaller men, who have felt, as I feel, that the best work of their life would be done in serving, in whatever capacity might be allowed to them, in that political party which to their belief represented the highest and deepest interests of the community to which they belonged. But that service has its limitations; it obliges one to half-truths. It obliges one to the suppression of thought and suggestion which might for the moment throw difficulties in the way of political action. The man who joins a political party has to consider, and rightly does consider, what the effect on the interests of that party may be, rather than simply what his own unlimited and unbound opinion would induce him to say. But it was a great thing for the world that Charles Dickens resisted that temptation, because outside the lines of political party and outside its limitations he was able to say and do things which have worked more good in this community of ours than he would ever have worked if he had been the servant of a political party and bound to them.

How much has he done? Well, there are a few names that come from the list of his characters which just remind us of what he has done: Chadband and Stiggins, Montague Tigg, Gradgrind, Tite Barnacle, Smike. Does not every one of those suggest a cause in which Charles Dickens fought for all that was best in humanity and in life, and fought all the more strongly and all the more effectively because he was not bound in any alliance with political parties?

Let me turn—I do not want to keep you—to just one other aspect. I do not know any books in the reign of English literature which more bring home to one the truth of Milton's statement that books are living things. The books of Charles Dickens are living things, not merely because they record life with a clearness, a brilliancy, a definition which I do not know of in any other writer, but because there is a companionship in them which does not belong to other writers. Heaven forbid that I should make this an occasion to speak of Charles Dickens and of his genius in terms which would appear to mean that one thought little of other great writers, who in their different classes and in their different works have given us so much happiness. But there is a life in Charles Dickens' books which seems to me not to belong to others.

It is not only because they so accurately and closely represent the facts and the associations of our own life; indeed, they so closely represent the life with which we are familiar that it has appeared sometimes to certain critics as if they were defective in what those critics have called the higher qualities of artistic fiction.

It has been said—there is some truth in it—one does not realise how much truth unless one tries to translate one of Charles Dickens' books into a dramatic form, in which case the truth is realised—that there are not in his books any heroes or heroines. Well, that is true. I do not know any heroes or heroines, with the one exception on which my mind will dwell, Sydney Carton. I do not know heroes and heroines in Charles Dickens' books, but then I do not know them in real life. I do not think that I ever shook hands with a hero, and if I have thought of a heroine I am afraid it has rather been in the momentary compliment that her personal fascinations have imposed upon me. But it is precisely for that reason that Charles Dickens' books are so true, that you cannot translate them on to the stage. They cannot be translated on to the stage. The thing becomes a different thing. When the hero of the novel is put upon the stage and relentlessly pursued by the limelight you feel that that is not the hero of Charles Dickens. He did not specialise the hero or the heroine, and for this most delightful of reasons, he found a hero and heroine in everyone. There is nothing more delightful in Charles Dickens than the fact that as you pass through the multitude of characters in one of his books you come upon the humbler obscure characters of the book, and you find there comes out in a moment an element of heroism, of true kindness and charity, and of the lovely life of the Christian soul in the humblest of the characters represented by Dickens. And that is true of life. It is Charles Dickens' great claim, which he has made and which is accepted universally to-day, upon the homage and the sympathy of all of those who read, and of those who study human life, that he was so keen to discover and to describe in every condition of life the tone, the indication of the heroism that lay underneath it; the patience, the marvellous charity of the poor, the fellowship that suffering brings in those who are humblest amongst us; the way in which the poorest bear up against their troubles, is shown in Charles Dickens' books in a way that cannot be found in any other set of books in English literature.

Well, they are living in that way. But they are living in another and even a higher way. I hope that we try as best we

can in our own ways of life to do some good among our fellows. I hope that we count the days lost or wasted in which we have not, as far as opportunity has been given us, helped some sorrowing soul, removed some poverty or distress, tried to give courage to some sorely oppressed one. But if we individually are doing this work, what can we think of one who is doing it to thousands in every day that passes by? These books of Charles Dickens are not dead books, but living books in the minds and in the lives of the people wherever the English tongue is spoken and read, and no one can read one of them without feeling the beating of the writer's heart in every chapter of every book.

I speak as one who has long known and loved and revered Charles Dickens, as one who looks back, as I daresay we all do, to our boyhood as a time when we enjoyed the appearance of the monthly parts of the book. But it is not simply a recollection that we have. It is a fellowship and friendship that is living as truly to-day as if Charles Dickens, instead of having passed beyond the veil, were now simply in some other part of our world travelling in some distant country. He is no more dead to me or to those who thus have learned to love him than if he were now travelling on the other side of the globe.

It is true that his books are the delight of youth: I used to think so when I was a boy. They are an inspiration to manhood: I thought so when I was coming into the full work of manhood's life. There is no book that I know which has a better lesson in it of patient, persevering, ultimately successful work, no book which is a better companion and inspirer to the young man, than 'David Copperfield.' I loved it. I loved the books when I was a boy, they inspired me on my way to the work of manhood. There is no diminution in their charm as I come now to a quieter time, towards the repose of life. And why is that? When our work in life is practically done, when years pass and we can no longer hope to impress ourselves by personal authority or influence on those amongst whom we live, we pass gradually but quite happily to the society of our oldest friends. As time goes on and years increase, the personal friends we know and with whom we have lived and worked pass away one by one. Their places will not be filled. But there are some friends who will never fail us, and they are the books in which those men live, whose spirits have influenced and affected ourselves, and in the companionship of whose great spirits we have spent the happiest part of our lives.

I said the books were living things, and it is often said that the

books of Charles Dickens are living things because he sketched with so firm a hand, painted with so vivid a colouring, the life which he depicted that we realise it as the life that is present to ourselves. There is a greater charm than that. I do not ask a modern scientist, even if modern theology is associated with his work, to find for me, through the epileptic trance of a medium, the power to hear a tapping at the other end of a tunnel which may never be pierced to assure me of communication with the spirit of the man who has gone. That is not needed. I sit in my chair; I take the volume of Charles Dickens in my hand; I read the story. But I seem to hear the story told to me by the man who wrote it; and from time to time there come into my ear the words of reminder, of sympathy, of generous life, which he adds to the story which he tells. And Charles Dickens and I are together, and I am hearing from his lips, as it were, the words always generous, always kindly, always pure, always full of the noblest enthusiasm for the people among whom he lived, and especially for the suffering ones amongst them, which give me fellowship with him and make me learn to value, not as literary treasures, but as the companionship of a great mind, the books which he has left to us.

I give you 'The immortal memory of Charles Dickens.'