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Charles Dickens

*A Tale of
Two Cities*



Famous

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راج برائے خواتین مظفر گڑھ
CHARLES DICKENS

A Tale of Two Cities

Complete and Unabridged
With
Introduction and Notes



Link Road, Model Town, Lahore.
Ph: +92-42-3588-5211, 3585-5670-Mob: 0300-437-2172
E-mail: famouspk@brain.net.pk

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INTRODUCTION

CHARLES DICKENS— THE VICTORIAN NOVELIST

When Charles John Huffham Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, the great nineteenth century of political, social and literary change was only beginning. The Victorian Age, when Dickens was to reach his greatness as a novelist lay ahead; and in the year of his birth, Napoleonic France received its first setback at the gates of Moscow, which was followed in 1817, 1830 and 1848 with the liberal movements that overthrew some of the revolutionary message, of the French Revolution. But France remained nonetheless continually in men's minds throughout his life. In 1837, *Thomas Carlyle's History of the French Revolution* had a profound impact on English thought and made a specially deep impression upon Dickens, and it is on this dramatic episode that his *A Tale of Two Cities* came to be written.

The *Tale of Two Cities*—London and Paris—shifts, as its name suggests, from England to France, and back again settling down finally in France. In its English episodes, Dickens tells us something of the condition of England at the time of George III: the squalor of everyday life—which grew considerably worse in Victorian England as the industrial revolution gathered momentum—the conduct of justice—and injustice—as administered in the London courts; the close-packed, haphazard, drunken London of old times. Through one of his characters in this novel, Jerry Cruncher the bank messenger and 'Resurrectionist', Dickens even gives a glimpse of the illicit violation of the hallowed churchyards and sale of dead bodies for the dissection table of the doctor. Dickens does not bring out the sordidness of Victorian England to the extent he does in *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* but he does tell us

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THIS TALE IS INSCRIBED
TO THE
LORD JOHN RUSSELL
IN REMEMBRANCE OF
MANY PUBLIC SERVICES AND
PRIVATE KINDNESSES

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Book the First
RECALLED TO LIFE

I

The Period

IT WAS the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

There were a king with a large jaw, and a queen with a plain face, on the throne of England; there were a king with a large jaw, and a queen with a fair face, on the throne of France. In both countries it was clearer than crystal to the lords of the State preserves of loaves and fishes, that things in general were settled for ever.

It was the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Spiritual revelations were conceded to England at that favoured period, as at this. Mrs. Southcott had recently attained her five-and-twentieth blessed birthday, of whom a prophetic private in the Life Guards had heralded the sublime appearance by announcing that arrangements were made for the swallowing up of London and Westminster. Even the Cock-lane ghost had been laid only a round dozen of years, after rapping out its messages, as the spirits of this very year last past (super-naturally deficient in originality) rapped out theirs. Mere messages in the earthly order of events had lately come to the English Crown and People, from a congress of British subjects in America: which, strange to relate, have proved more important to the human race than any communications yet received through any of the chickens of the Cock lane brood. France, less favoured on the whole as to matters spiritual