



The Old Curiosity Shop: Extended Annotated & Illustrated Edition

Charles Dickens

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This is the illustrated and annotated edition including an extensive biographical essay about the author and his life as well as a wealth of original illustrations. You will also find a detailed introduction (which is not included in other editions) regarding the history of the title and many insights.

A whole generation, on either side of the Atlantic, used to fall sobbing at the name of Little Nell, which will hardly bring tears to the eyes of any one now, though it is still apparent that the child was imagined with real feelings, and her sad little melodrama was staged with sympathetic skill. When all is said against the lapses of taste and truth, the notion of the young girl wandering up and down the country with her demented grandfather, and meeting good and evil fortune with the same devotion, till death overtakes her, is something that must always touch the heart. It is preposterously overdone, yes, and the author himself falls into pages of hysterical rhythm, which once moved people, when he ought to have been writing plain, straight prose; yet there is in all a sense of the divinity in common and humble lives, which is the most precious quality of literature, as it is almost the rarest, and it is this which moves and consoles. It is this quality in Dickens which Tolstoy prizes and accepts as proof of his great art, and which the true critic must always set above any effect of literary mastery. "The Old Curiosity Shop" makes strong appeal to a youthful imagination, and contains little that is beyond its scope. Dickens's sentiment, however it may distress the mature mind of our later day, is not unwholesome, and, at all events in this story, addresses itself naturally enough to feelings unsubdued by criticism. His quality of picturesqueness is here seen at its best, with little or nothing of that melodrama which makes the alloy of "Nicholas Nickleby" and "Oliver Twist" —to speak only of the early books.

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