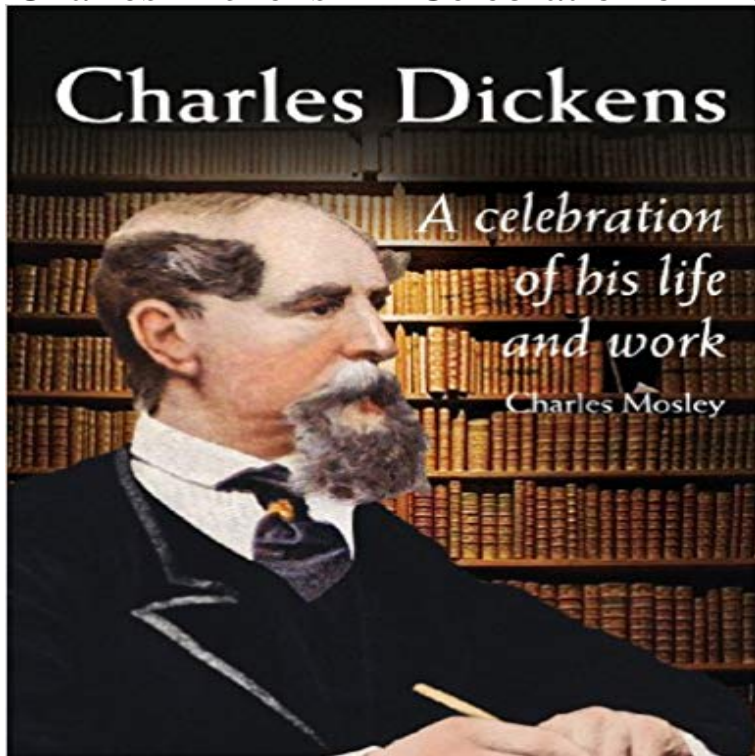


## Charles Dickens - A Celebration of His Life & Work



The world of Charles Dickens was the world of nineteenth century England, full of extraordinary and shocking contrasts. Boys with bare feet swept the snow away for ladies who thought it immodest to show an ankle. Men were hardworking, women pure, and children innocent, but these were the values of the middle class, not of the filthy slums, where children stole, girls turned to prostitution from hunger and desperation, and the only refuge of the sick and the unemployed was the inhuman and degrading workhouse. Yet England as a whole was extremely wealthy. Dickens own life reflected these contrasts: it was a fascinating mixture of the respectable and the shady. He became successful and prosperous, but as a boy he had slunk through the gates of a debtors prison to visit his father, lodged alone in the mean back streets of Camden Town, and worked in a factory. Though his novels emphasised the sanctity of the home, in middle-age he deserted his wife, the mother of his nine children, and took up with a young actress. With enormous energy Charles Dickens managed to hold all these elements together and weld them into the fabric of his writing. In this celebratory volume Charles Mosley, a specialist in the history of the period, traces the course of Dickens life and the development of his writing, from the cheery fun of Pickwick Papers and A Christmas Carol, through the social indignation of Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby, to deeper novels like Great Expectations and Little Dorrit.

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