



Charles John Huffman Dickens
English Novelist

Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812. He was the second born, the eldest son in a family of eight children. When Charles was 12, he was forced to leave school when his father was put in debtors' prison for three months. Charles was forced to work under terrible conditions in a factory. After three months, when his father was released, he was able to return to school, but he never forgot this awful experience. He was a good student who demonstrated to his teachers his willingness to learn.

At age 15, he got a job as an office boy and then became a clerk at a lawyers' office. He hated mistreatments he saw in the legal system. At age 21, he became a journalist and reported on politicians. He grew to dislike politics. He began writing stories and they were well-liked by the general public. As his popularity began to grow, he could afford to get married. He married Kate Hogarth. They had ten children. The marriage was not successful and they eventually separated.

Dickens was full of energy. He wrote and traveled profusely. He began giving readings of his work which became popular and he went on an extensive tour. He traveled and toured factories, mines and schools to get information for his writings. He wrote to stir up the conscience of the people. He wrote in an entertaining way so that people would want to read his work. It worked! People read his works, and reforms were made. But, like all reforms, they were slow in coming. Perhaps part of the reason changes came slowly is because (Continued on page 52 in your book)