

his genius undimmed, his intellectual force unabated, in the midst of his toils, loved and honoured as few masters of the pen have ever been, during their life-time. His mourning countrymen laid his remains in England's Pantheon—Westminster Abbey—amid her noblest dead. There he worthily sleeps in Poet's Corner among the mighty departed—"the great of old, the dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule our spirits from their urns":—

"But strew his ashes to the wind,
Whose sword or pen has served mankind,
And is he dead whose glorious mind lifts thine on high?
'To live in hearts we leave behind
Is not to die."

How are we to account for the wonderful hold obtained by Dickens over the hearts of his countrymen in particular and the world at large? That the son of a poor government clerk, who never passed through university or college, and commenced life as a newspaper reporter, should, by the sheer force of his genius, win his way to the front rank of literature, and take and keep a foremost place—that he should have for admiring readers royalty on the throne, nobles in their halls, bishops and clergy, all ranks and professions, the most learned and the most fastidious, down to the dust-begrimed artizan and the humblest toilers for the daily bread—that he should have held, for thirty years, such an audience as this enchanted by the potent spell of his genius, could only be accounted for by the possession of the rarest powers employed for beneficent and worthy ends. What was the great secret of his power over his generation? I answer, it lay far more in the heart than in the head—in his profound, all-comprehending sympathy with the joys and woes of the great brotherhood of man, rather than in his intellectual endowments, great though these were. No writer, excepting Shakspeare and Burns, has shown such a genial, healthy wide-ranging sympathy with all human feelings as Charles Dickens. Hence he is master of that "touch of nature that makes the whole world kin," and can unlock at will the fountain of our tears and laughter. Hence he looks at the world with the eye of love and the heart of charity—with gentle toleration for all foibles and frailties of character, if only accompanied with true goodness of heart, while denouncing unsparingly meanness, malignity, cant, selfishness, cruelty and hypocrisy. His beautiful creations have taught us to love our kind better, not only when adorned with all moral excellence, as in the case of the "Cheery-ble Brothers," but also when crusted over with ludicrous weaknesses, outward deformities and many frailties. How he delighted in bringing to light noble, generous, heroic qualities among the poorest and humblest, in the midst of squalid poverty, among the very outcasts of society and the most terrible or grotesque accompaniments! But he never proves untrue to his high calling, by varnishing over the evil and making it seem good—never awakens our sympathies for a vile character by superadding the tinsel of noble sentiments, as too many romancers have done. Never has Dickens written a line that may not be read aloud in the family circle, and that a parent would hesitate to