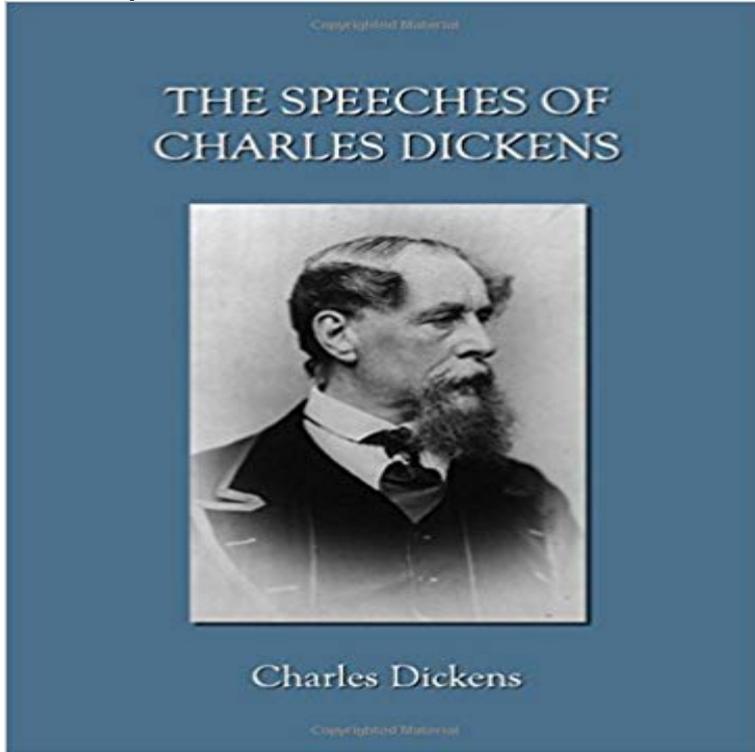


# The Speeches of Charles Dickens



Dickens was known as one of the best after-dinner speakers of his day. It was a period when elaborate formal dinners were the standard fundraising method for charities and other institutes, and the speeches at such occasions were printed by newspapers from shorthand reports on the occasion. Dickens himself did not use notes, but these eyewitness reports allow the reader to gain a very close idea of what he actually said on hundreds of public occasions throughout his career. The organisations he was involved with - here elaborated by extensive headnotes on his participation in each body - give key insights into his activities and thinking beyond literature which are much enriched by reading what he said about them to their members and supporters. As the editor states in his introduction, the speeches are in their own way as important an insight into Dickens as his letters. The late Prof. K. J. Fieldings edition of the Speeches is universally acknowledged as the academic standard version. Each speech was carefully collated from the original reports and any other available sources. Copious notes describe variations, suggested corrections, the context of each speech and further factual information where necessary to understand references made by Dickens. All of this has been preserved in this reprint, which makes the whole edition available for the first time since 1988. This edition is necessary reading for any serious scholar of Dickens or Victorian oratory, and will also be of great interest to anyone studying issues connected with Dickens such as nineteenth-century philanthropy, the dignity of literature debates, transatlantic relations of the period or the changing statuses of novels, drama and journalism.

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