

**THE ROSEMARY
LIBRARY: THE SPEECHES
OF CHARLES DICKENS**

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The Rosemary Library: The Speeches of Charles Dickens by Charles Dickens & R. H. Shepherd
& B. Darwin & Sir John Squire

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CHARLES DICKENS & R. H. SHEPHERD & B. DARWIN & SIR JOHN SQUIRE

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OF CHARLES DICKENS**

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CHARLES DICKENS



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The
ROSEMARY LIBRARY
Edited by Sir John Squire

The Speeches of
CHARLES DICKENS,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
BERNARD DARWIN,

Edited and Prefaced by
• *R. H. Shepherd*



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Introduction by
BERNARD DARWIN



DICKENS DIED SOME SIXTY-SIX YEARS AGO AND THERE ARE now but few people alive who heard him read from his own books. They tell us, as do the contemporary accounts and as indeed he suggested in his own letters, that the effect produced on his audience was extraordinary, that he made them laugh or cry at will and that during the scene of Nancy's murder women were carried out of the hall in rows, fainting and motionless. Only one dissentient voice has ever been raised, that of the American gentleman who declared that Dickens had no more notion of Sam Weller than a cow had of pleating shirts. With him some of us, who like to cherish undisturbed our own pictures of our favourites, may feel a secret sympathy; but we cannot deny that he was the exception to prove the rule of an universal and frantic admiration and delight. Therefore we entirely believe what we are told, but we cannot really understand. We have not sufficient imagination to conceive the flashing vitality of the reader himself, which carried all those thousands of listeners off their feet. We have to take it largely on trust.

The same remark must apply in some degree to Dickens's speeches which we know were rapturously received. Speeches are meant to be consumed hot-and-hot as David