

**CHARLES DICKENS:
A CRITICAL STUDY.
[NEW YORK]**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649425563

Charles Dickens: A Critical Study. [New York] by G. K. Chesterton

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G. K. CHESTERTON

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A CRITICAL STUDY

BY

G. K. CHESTERTON

Author of Varied Types, Heretica, Etc.

NEW YORK
DODD MEAD & COMPANY

1907

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First Edition Published in September, 1906

To

RHODA BASTABLE

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CHAPTER I

THE DICKENS PERIOD

MUCH of our modern difficulty, in religion and other things, arises merely from this, that we confuse the word "indefinable" with the word "vague." If some one speaks of a spiritual fact as "indefinable" we promptly picture something misty, a cloud with indeterminate edges. But this is an error even in common-place logic. The thing that cannot be defined is the first thing; the primary fact. It is our arms and legs, our pots and pans, that are indefinable. The indefinable is the indisputable. The man next door is indefinable, because he is too actual to be defined. And there are some to whom spiritual things have the same fierce and practical proximity; some to whom God is too actual to be defined.

But there is a third class of primary terms. There are popular expressions which every one uses and no one can explain; which the wise man will accept and reverence, as he reverences desire or darkness or any elemental thing. The prigs of the debating club will demand that he should