

# Our Monthly Letter

*We Are Fun, Friendship and Learning!*

Charles Dickens in His Third Century



**Mr. Squeers and Mrs. Sliderskew Unconscious of Visitors:** Etching by *Phiz* (Hablot K. Browne) for Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*, September, 1839. Source: J.A. Hammerton, *The Dickens Picture Book*, p. 168, Image scan and text by Philip V. Allingham, Courtesy of *The Victorian Web*.

## Our Monthly Quote

Ninth in a Series of Ten on  
Outstanding American Writers

### *Kate Chopin*

née Katherine O'Flaherty

February 8, 1850 - August 22, 1904  
American Novelist and Short Story  
Writer



"The artist must possess the  
courageous soul that dares and  
defies"

*The Awakening* (1899)

## OUR MAY MEETING

### **Date and Time:**

Saturday, May 2, 2015, 1:00pm-4:00pm

**Location:** NYPL Kips Bay Branch

446 Third Avenue at E. 31 Street, New York, NY 10016

**Program:** *Nicholas Nickleby*

Chapters fifty-five to fifty-eight

**Moderator:** Bob Havlena

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**The Friends of Dickens** who attended our April 18 meeting at the NYPL Epiphany Branch were: **James Armstrong, Stephen Blank** and **Marianne Roncoli, Danielle Cammarota, Jerry** and **Loretta Frohnhoefer, Gela Kline, Mike** and **Ruthy Rosen, Kevin Quinn, Mike** and **Su Quinn, Dorothy Smith, Ellen Spears, Ken Wachtell** and **Warren Wyss.**

We received regrets from **Leona Adams, Marilyn Baranoski, Irma Marie Cerne, Jeannette Rosen** and **Bernice Stein** who could not join us.

**Moderator Marianne Roncoli** skillfully guided our reading and discussion of chapters fifty-two through fifty-four of *Nickleby*, highlighting, in particular, the roles of Newman Noggs, Ralph Nickleby and Arthur Gride, the Kenwigs family and Mr. Lillyvick. Questions arose! Does Mrs. Kenwigs remind us of another Dickens female character? If so, who? Some thought she is similar to the overwhelmed Mrs. Micawber. The subject of the consumption of malt liquors by a woman breast feeding her infant, as Mrs. Kenwigs does, also came up for discussion. Would the ingestion of malt liquors by a breast feeding mother in our own day be considered healthy? Marianne, who is a highly trained nurse

and medical professional, thought not.

We are finally nearing the end of *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*. Please join us at the Kips Bay library on May 2 when **Bob Havlena** will guide us through chapters fifty-five to fifty-eight. Our last meeting of the season will be June 6, also at Kips Bay, when **Warren Wyss** will lead us through the final chapters.

#### **Our Next Novel Will Be?**

Two great Dickens novels have been recommended as our project for 2015-2016:

*Our Mutual Friend* (1864-1865) is the last completed Dickens novel and one of his most sophisticated. The river Thames, holds mysteries and symbolizes life, death, regeneration and cleansing.

*Great Expectations* (1860-1861) is Dickens's penultimate novel, a great coming of age story about the orphan boy Pip's dream of becoming *a gentleman* and his struggle to become *a human being*.

At the May 2 meeting we will discuss and decide which of these great stories will next occupy us. Please join us in *Fun, Friendship and Learning*.

Have a heart that never hardens, and a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts

Charles Dickens

#### **The Friends Bulletin Board Our May Birthdays**

**There are** no May birthday celebrants on this month's birthday list but we do wish **Lynn Manuell a very happy belated birthday.** Her natal day was April 17 and we regret the omission of her name in last month's Monthly Letter.

#### **Barnaby Rudge**

**Eileen Norris**, a member of the Portsmouth Birthplace branch in the UK, is seeking assistance in bringing the story of **BARNABY RUDGE** to a wider audience through the media of film or television. If you know someone who can help please contact Eileen at eileennorris27@gmail.com

#### **The Dickens Circle Chauncy Hare Townshend**

April 10, 1798-February 25, 1868

**Townshend**, was from a wealthy Norfolk family. He attended Eton and earned B.A and M.A degrees at Cambridge where he won the Chancellor's Gold Medal in 1817 for his poem *Jerusalem*. He was a



clergyman, poet, cricket player, collector and mesmerist—best remembered today for his large bequests to the Victoria and Albert Museum. In 1840 he published *Facts in Mesmerism: With Reasons for a Dispassionate Inquiry Into It*. That same year he met Dickens and their shared interest in mesmerism led to a life long friendship. CD dedicated *Great Expectations* to him and Townshend appointed Dickens his literary executor. On 12 March, 1868, less than a year after Townshend's death, Dickens wrote to Georgina Hogarth, saying of his departed friend: 'It is not a light thing, to lose such a friend, and I truly loved him.'