



The great English writer **Charles Dickens** (1812—1870) is an author who has evoked devotion and love in quite extraordinary measure. His books are read by millions of people everywhere. His energy, vividness, imaginative sweep, and tender concern have made his characters unforgettable. He is tragic, humorous, dramatic, funny, melodramatic, delicate by turns. He was able to raise a smile or a laugh and bring a tear to the eye. His characters cannot be forgotten. Such is the power of Dickens's imagination, which is seen in his style, in his striking originality and variety. His novels form a world which is seen sharply. He showed a great moving picture of everyday life and wrote about the common people with sympathy.

We must admire the noble feeling that filled Dickens in the writing of many of his novels—the desire to show up some wrong and put it right. He attacked poverty, greed, cruelty, terrible labour conditions, children's labour, the system of education, all the social conditions of his time. His most important novels are *David Copperfield*, *The Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, *Dombey and Son*, *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit*, *Great Expectations*, *Our Mutual Friend*, *Bleak House* and *Nicholas Nickleby*.

His novels and stories are adapted for the theatre, for radio, television, and film, for solo performance, and for both musicals and modern opera.

FRANK O'CONNOR

45 *Read the words and guess their meaning:*

colour — colourless;
 expression — expressionless;
 education — educational;
 mathematics — mathematical;
 paper — to paper;
 sound — to sound;
 step — to step.

44 *Read these word combinations and translate them:*

colourless eyes; expressionless face;
 to paper a wall; to sound disappointed;
 to step forward; mathematical figures;
 educational factory.

45 *Read the proper names:*

Charles [tʃɑ:lz] Dickens ['dɪkɪnz],
 Thomas [tɒməs] Gradgrind
 ['græd'graɪnd],
 Cecilia [sɪ'sɪljə] Yupe [ju:p],
 Mr. Choacumchild ['tʃoukəm'tʃaɪld].

46 *Read the story Only facts from Hard Times. Answer the question:*

- Which words made the visitors to the class angry?

ONLY FACTS

"I want Facts, Sir," said Mr. Thomas Gradgrind. "Teach these children nothing that cannot be proved. Only Facts will ever be any use to them. That is how I bring up my own children, and these children too. Stick to the Facts, Sir!"

The scene was a high, plain¹ schoolroom. Mr. Gradgrind was a square man with hard dark eyes and a wide, thin mouth. "In this life," he said firmly, "we want nothing but Facts, Sir; nothing but Facts."

The other men listened. In front of them sat forty children, all ready to have Facts poured into them until they were full. Mr. Gradgrind pointed to a girl. "Girl number twenty. Who are you?"

"Sissy Jupe, Sir," said the child, curtsying².

"Sissy is not a name. Say Cecilia."

"Father calls me Sissy, Sir," replied the girl shyly, curtsying again.

"Then he is wrong. Cecilia Jupe, what does your father do?"

"He works with horses, Sir."

"Very well. What is a horse?"

Cecilia Jupe said nothing. "There!" said Mr. Gradgrind. "Girl number twenty knows nothing about one of the commonest animals. Bitzer! What is a horse?"

A boy stood up. He looked at Mr. Gradgrind with colourless, expressionless eyes. "Four legs. Eats grass... thirty teeth..." He went on and on.

"Now, girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind. "You know what a horse is." She went red, curtsyed, and sat down again.

The third gentleman stepped forward: he was a government education officer. "Now, children," he said. "That is a horse. Would you have wallpaper with horses on it?"

"Yes, Sir!" said all the children except one.

"Why wouldn't you do that?" the officer asked this child.

"Please, Sir, I wouldn't paper a wall, I would paint it."

"You must use paper," said Mr. Gradgrind. "Now, children, I will explain why you would not paper a wall with pictures of horses. Do you ever see horses walking up and down your walls?"

"No, Sir." They sounded disappointed.

¹ plain [pleɪn] — простой

² to curtsy ['kɜ:tsɪ] — присесть, делать реверанс

"Of course not," said the officer. "You must stick to Facts."

Thomas Gradgrind looked pleased. "This is an important thing," the officer continued. "I will try again. Would you have a carpet with pictures of flowers on it?" The children knew what he expected now. Most said, "No," and only a few said, "Yes". Sissy Jupe was one.

"Girl number twenty!" Sissy stood up and curtsayed again. "So you'd have a carpet with flowers on it? Why?"

"Please, Sir, I like flowers."

"So you want to put tables and chairs on them, and let people walk on them?"

"Please, Sir, it wouldn't hurt them. They'd only be pictures; pictures of something very pretty and pleasant. And I'd imagine..."

"Imagine!" cried the gentleman. "You must not do that. You must stick to the Facts, Cecilia Jupe, and forget Imagination. You

don't walk on flowers in Fact; so you must not walk on them on carpets. You do not find fruit and birds on your cups and plates in real life, so you must not have pictures of them on your cups and plates. You must have, in simple colours, pictures of mathematical figures which can be proved. That is Fact. This is Taste."

The girl curtsayed again and sat down. She looked troubled.

"Now," said the education officer, "would Mr. Choacumchild give his first lesson ... ?"

Mr. Gradgrind looked pleased. "We are ready for you, Mr. Choacumchild." And the schoolmaster began. He was one of a hundred and forty schoolmasters. They had all been produced at the same educational factory, like a hundred and forty piano legs. They all knew all the Facts about everything. And now Mr. Choacumchild was ready to deliver¹ all these Facts to the children who sat before him.

47 *Answer the questions:*

- 1 Who was Mr. Thomas Grandgrind?
- 2 How did he address the schoolchildren when he wanted their response?
- 3 Whose answer did he appreciate? Why was he satisfied with it?
- 4 What were Mr. Gradgrind's main teaching principles?
- 5 Did the girl understand why the visitors were so much disappointed with her? How did she feel when they talked to her?

Discussing the Theme of the Story

- 48
- ◆ What impression did the school in the story make on you? What kind of teacher-pupil relationships existed in it?
 - ◆ In your opinion, did the children have an opportunity to develop their abilities, their imagination? What kind of education do you suppose they could get?
 - ◆ One of the boys with colourless, expressionless eyes answered the teacher. Was it surprising or was it quite a normal thing at that school? Express your opinion.
 - ◆ Why do you think the education officer looked so frightened when he heard Sissy's words, "I'd imagine...?"
 - ◆ Could you call this kind of school and teaching ugly? Give your reasons.
 - ◆ How can you explain the sentence, "They (the schoolmasters) had all been produced at the same educational factory, like a hundred and forty piano legs"?

49 *Read these quotations and say in what way they are true.*

*What is now proved was
once only imagin'd.*

William Blake

*Imagination is more important
than knowledge.*

Albert Einstein

¹ to deliver [di'livə] — зд. передавать