



## Oliver Twist (Norton Critical Editions)

By Charles Dickens

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**Oliver Twist (Norton Critical Editions) By Charles Dickens**

**This Norton Critical Edition of a Dickens favorite reprints the 1846 text, the last edition of the novel substantially revised by Dickens and the one that most clearly reflects his authorial intentions.**

The editor has corrected printers' errors and annotated unfamiliar terms and allusions.

Three illustrations by George Cruikshank and a map of Oliver's London accompany the text.

"Backgrounds and Sources" focuses on The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, central both to Dickens and to the characters in *Oliver Twist*. The act's far-reaching implications are considered in source materials that include parliamentary debates on The Poor Laws, a harrowing account of an 1835 Bedfordshire riot, and "An Appeal to Fallen Women," Dickens' 1847 open letter to London's prostitutes urging them to turn their backs on "debauchery and neglect."

Ten letters on *Oliver Twist*, written between 1837 and 1864, are reprinted, including those to the novel's publisher, the novel's illustrator, and John Forster, Dickens' close friend and future biographer.

In addition, readers can trace the evolution of the novel by examining Dickens' installment and chapter-division plans and enjoy "Sikes and Nancy," the text of a public reading Dickens composed and performed often to large audiences.

"Early Reviews" provides eight witty, insightful, and at times impassioned responses to the novel and to Oliver's plight by William Makepeace Thackeray and John Forster (anonymously), among others.

"Criticism" includes twenty of the most significant interpretations of *Oliver Twist* published in this century. Included are essays by Henry James, George Gissing, Graham Greene, J. Hillis Miller, Harry Stone, Philip Collins, John Bayley, Keith Hollingsworth, Steven Marcus, Monroe Engel, James R. Kincaid, Michael Slater, Dennis Walder, Burton M. Wheeler, Janet Larson, Fred Kaplan, Robert Tracy,

David Miller, John O. Jordan, and Gary Wills.

A Chronology and Selected Bibliography are also included.

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is one of the most acclaimed and popular writers of all time. His many works include the classics *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *A Christmas Carol*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations*, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, *Our Mutual Friend*, *The Pickwick Papers* and many more.

Fred Kaplan is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English at Queens College and The Graduate Center, City University of New York. A biographer and literary scholar, he is the author of *John Quincy Adams: American Visionary*, *The Singular Mark Twain: A Biography*, *Lincoln: The Biography of a Writer*, *Henry James: The Imagination of Genius: A Biography*, and *Dickens: A Biography*, among others. His *Thomas Carlyle: A Biography* was nominated for the National Book Critics' Circle Award and for the Pulitzer Prize. His *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Fiction*, *Dickens and Mesmerism: The Hidden Springs of Fiction*, and *Miracles of Rare Device: The Poet's Sense of Self in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* are important contributions to the study of Romantic and Victorian British literature and culture. He is currently at work on a study of Lincoln, John Quincy Adams, and slavery and a biography of Thomas Jefferson.

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