

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-70)

Main works:

- **Sketches by Boz** (1836), journalistic sketches containing episodes of everyday London life.

- **The Pickwick Papers** (1836-37), a series of adventures of a club of amateur sportsmen.

Published serially, it was Dicken's first real success, thanks to the vitality and humour the author was able to infuse into it.

- **Oliver Twist** (1837-38), in which, through the story of an orphan boy, Dickens attacks the workhouse system and denounces the hideousness of slum life and the degradation of poverty.

It was published in instalments in a magazine. This novel is about a boy: Oliver Twist. He is born orphan. He leads a miserable existence in a workhouse and then with an undertaker.

He escapes and travels to London where he gets involved in a gang of young criminals. After numerous adventures, he will find security and happiness.

In the novel, Dickens deals with important issues of the time, such as the exploitation of children and poverty.

- **Nicholas Nickleby** (1838-39), an attack on the mismanagement of private schools.

- **The Old Curiosity Shop** (1840-1841), a pathetic story about the ill-treatment of children in the industrial age.

- **A Christmas Carol** (1843), a ghost story with a moral, set in the atmosphere of Christmas.

- **David Copperfield** (1849-50), his best-known work, full of autobiographical experiences.

- **Hard Times** (1854), denouncing the wrongs of society and the terrible conditions of industrial workers.

- **Great Expectations** (1860-61), by many considered his masterpiece, about the dramatic experiences of a young boy as he gradually and painfully grows up.