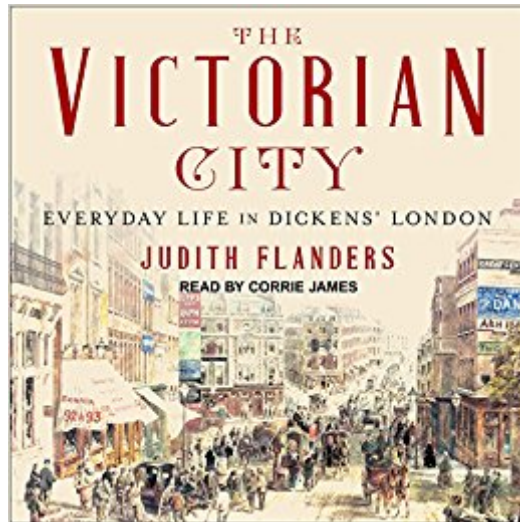




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The Victorian City: Everyday Life In Dickens' London



Synopsis

The nineteenth century was a time of unprecedented change, and nowhere was this more apparent than London. In only a few decades, the capital grew from a compact Regency town into a sprawling metropolis of 6.5 million inhabitants, the largest city the world had ever seen.

Technology-railways, street-lighting, and sewers-transformed both the city and the experience of city-living, as London expanded in every direction. Now Judith Flanders, one of Britain's foremost social historians, explores the world portrayed so vividly in Dickens' novels, showing life on the streets of London in colorful, fascinating detail. From the moment Charles Dickens, the century's best-loved English novelist and London's greatest observer, arrived in the city in 1822, he obsessively walked its streets, recording its pleasures, curiosities, and cruelties. Now, with him, Flanders leads us through the markets, transport systems, sewers, rivers, slums, alleys, cemeteries, gin palaces, chop-houses, and entertainment emporia of Dickens' London, to reveal the Victorian capital in all its variety, vibrancy, and squalor.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review By the end of the nineteenth century, London was the most populous city in world history and the center of an immense political and commercial empire that enveloped all populated continents. In his novels and essays, Charles Dickens vividly conveyed the color, dynamism, and squalor of the metropolis. Of course, Dickens had an ax to grind, so his efforts at social criticism led to some distortions. Also, he died in 1870, missing three decades of critical growth and reforms at the end of the Victorian era. Flanders, a Londoner, is a contributor to various British journals. She

takes a broader and less judgmental approach than Dickens. Still, her imagery is often intense and striking even without editorial comment. Here is a putrid, disease-ridden water system filled with human and animal waste, characteristic of some of today's Third World urban centers. At Covent Garden, home to a huge food market and theaters, and also a center for vice, rich and poor mingled on a daily basis. The streets of London were a constant assault on the senses with their noise and smell. This is a superb portrait of an exciting, thriving, and dangerous city. --Jay Freeman

--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"A superb portrait of an exciting, thriving, and dangerous city." ---Booklist Starred Review

This is a book best read by people who know London intimately. I only know the city from Victorian literature, and so I was lost and/or bored by many sections of the book where the author went into great detail about neighborhoods that mean nothing to me. I imagine if you have lived in London or have an extensive familiarity with it, these chapters would be fascinating. Even so, the writing is clear, the research appears to be sound, and there were some interesting revelations about city life in the day of Dickens that were new to me, and on that basis, I would recommend the book for anyone interested in the history of that time.

A masterpiece of research, and the perfect resource for any writer attempting to portray Victorian London.

Only if you are interested in the history and especially the history of London. The information the author has put in here is impressive and sometimes a bit daunting. It gives you a very good idea of life the streets of London in the Victorian City.

So interesting. Loved the descriptions of Victorian London and the tie-ins with Charles Dickens. Some interesting parallels with our current times.

The book feels like a Dicken's companionship to London. Illustrating how the city impacted his work. It could act as a walking guide following in his footsteps.

Excellent picture of Victorian London, keyed extensively, perhaps too extensively, to the novels of Charles Dickens. Relies rather heavily on long lists of names, places, etc., which may not be

meaningful to non-specialized readers.

Looking forward to completing read ... it reminds me of the book "Rambles through Glasgow" and gives me a better understanding of the life and times during which my ancestors lived and worked ... Good reference source ...

This book takes you back to the London Dickens knew and loved - and despaired of, often as not. Life in the poor back streets of Victorian London is a terrifying place, more like the slums of Mumbai than the jolly England of 'Pickwick Papers' or 'A Christmas Carol'. I must say I loved every gruesome detail in what is not only a scholarly, meticulously researched but hugely readable book.

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