



# Curiosities of London Life

*Charles Manby Smith*

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**We are going to lift the curtain, and present to the gaze of the Public many a varied scene in the strange drama of London life and experience...**

In this collection of sketches, Charles Manby Smith gives us privileged and unique insight into the nineteenth-century metropolis and all its varied curiosities, allowing us peek behind the scenes at London's roguery.

Not unlike Charles Dickens' *Sketches by Boz*, Manby Smith's *Curiosities of London Life* presents us with detailed and lively illustrations of a vast cast of characters, from crossing-sweeps and organ grinders to dog-stealers and drink doctors, to specific individuals such as the Blind Fiddler and the Label-printer.

It is the sheer scope of these sketches of Victorian lives and societal issues that ensures Manby Smith's work the status of one of the most important contributions to our depiction of nineteenth-century life in the lower echelons of London's society, making it a must-read for lovers of Victorian Britain.

**Charles Manby Smith**, (1804-1884) born in Devon at the turn of the nineteenth-century, apprenticed and eventually worked as a printmaker, whilst anonymously publishing articles in regular periodicals that focused on the lives of the London poor. Before long, Manby Smith abandoned his trade to live solely by his pen. He published his unique observations of London and its oddities as successful collections, as well as an autobiographical work that focused on his struggles as a young and poor apprentice.

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