

Charles Dickens Museum

Audio Transcript: Dickens's dreams of Mary Hogarth

My Dear Mrs. Hogarth,

I was dressing to go to church yesterday morning - thinking, very sadly, of that time six years - when your kind note and its accompanying packet were brought to me. The best portrait that was ever painted would be of little value to you and me, in comparison with that unfading picture we have within us; and of the worst (which ----'s really is) I can only say, that it has no interest in my eyes, beyond being something which she sat near in its progress, full of life and beauty. In that light, I set some store by the copy you have sent me; and as a mark of your affection, I need not say I value it very much. As a record of that dear face, it is utterly worthless.

I trace in many respects a strong resemblance between her mental features and Georgina's - so strange a one, at times, that when she and Kate and I

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are sitting together, I seem to think that what has happened is a melancholy dream from which I am just awakening. The perfect like of what she was, will never be again, but so much of her spirit shines out in this sister, that the old time comes back again at some seasons, and I can hardly separate it from the present.

After she died, I dreamed of her every night for many months - I think for the better part of a year - sometimes as a spirit, sometimes as a living creature, never with any of the bitterness of my real sorrow, but always with a kind of quiet happiness, which became so pleasant to me that I never lay down at night without a hope of the vision coming back in one shape or other. And so it did. I went down into Yorkshire, and finding it still present to me, in a strange scene and a strange bed, I could not help mentioning the circumstance in a note I wrote home to Kate. From that moment I have never dreamed of her once, though she is so much in my thoughts at all times (especially when I am successful, and have prospered in anything) that the recollection of her is an essential part of my being,

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and is as inseparable from my existence as the beating of my heart is.

Always affectionately

Charles Dickens