



What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew: From Fox Hunting to Whist—the Facts of Daily Life in Nineteenth-Century England

By Daniel Pool

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A “delightful reader’s companion” (*The New York Times*) to the great nineteenth-century British novels of Austen, Dickens, Trollope, the Brontës, and more, this lively guide clarifies the sometimes bizarre maze of rules and customs that governed life in Victorian England.

For anyone who has ever wondered whether a duke outranked an earl, when to yell “Tally Ho!” at a fox hunt, or how one landed in “debtor’s prison,” this book serves as an indispensable historical and literary resource. Author Daniel Pool provides countless intriguing details (did you know that the “plums” in Christmas plum pudding were actually raisins?) on the Church of England, sex, Parliament, dinner parties, country house visiting, and a host of other aspects of nineteenth-century English life—both “upstairs” and “downstairs.

An illuminating glossary gives at a glance the meaning and significance of terms ranging from “ague” to “wainscoting,” the specifics of the currency system, and a lively host of other details and curiosities of the day.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This useful guide to Victorian life enlightens on such subjects as grave robbing, debtors' prison and putrid fever. Illustrations. BOMC, QPB and History Book Club alternates.

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From Library Journal

This guide to daily life in 19th-century England is a welcome companion for readers of Austin, the Brontes, Dickens, and Trollope. The first section is a collection of engrossing short chapters on various aspects of British life, including clothing, etiquette, marriage, money, occupations, society, and transportation. For example, customs now lost but very much practiced at the time were primogeniture, which ensured that the great family houses would not be split up, and the avoidance of eating cheese by the middle class, who considered it a food for the poor. The second part of the book is a glossary of commonly used words or phrases that may be unfamiliar to the modern reader; for instance, tar was a colloquial name for a sailor. Although there are many books on the social history of 19th-century Britain (including several companions to Victorian fiction), this volume is useful because of its concise chapters and lengthy glossary.

Recommended for general literature collections.

- *Caroline Mitchell, Washington, D.C.*

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From Kirkus Reviews

An eccentric collection of brief essays (plus a glossary) that explains not the facts but the fictions of English life, as they were represented by writers such as Hardy, Trollope, Dickens, and Jane Austen. To provide an understanding of the life portrayed in 19th-century English novels, Pool focuses primarily on economic and social issues; the era's money, calendar (holidays, terms, reigns), and measurements; and geography. The "public world" of the era, he explains, consisted of titles, forms of address, various ranks in status and the etiquette associated with them, dinner parties, card games, presentations at court, social "seasons," and balls--from whom to invite to what to wear, to why wax dripping from overhead chandeliers on to guests was perilous. Pool--often sounding like the annotator of a Jane Austen text--explains the country-house visit; the contemporary definition of wealth; ways to protect one's estate--or to lose it; Parliament; the Church; the navy; universities; law, lawyers, and criminals. A section on "transition" discusses the roles of horses, coaches, railroads, and the mail, and is followed by essays on country life (hunting, farms, fairs) and on domesticity (marriage, sex, divorce, furniture, lighting, bathing, food--including puddings, oysters, and gruel--and drink, fashion, and servants). Pool winds up with the "grim world" of orphans, work, poverty, disease, and death, while a glossary explains names such as Wellington and Westminster, and terms such as "wet nurse" and "whalebone." Not history per se but a period piece--a reproduction of the idealizations and stereotypes that appeared in fiction, many of which were well explained in context. Superficial but charming--in effect, a handbook on how to live as if one were a character in a 19th-century English novel. --

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Users Review

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Linda Spaulding:

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Eric Beasley:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray you actually, why because this What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew: From Fox Hunting to Whist-the Facts of Daily Life in Nineteenth-Century England guide written by well-known writer who really knows well how to make book which might be understand by anyone who also read the book. Written inside good manner for you, still dripping wet every ideas and publishing skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still hesitation What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew: From Fox Hunting to Whist-the Facts of Daily Life in Nineteenth-Century England as good book not simply by the cover but also from the content. This is one publication that can break don't judge book by its protect, so do you still needing one more sixth sense to pick this particular!? Oh come on your examining sixth sense already said so why you have to listening to another sixth sense.

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