A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens

Cyrillic — 100% of eligible letters

English · 1843

About this reading edition

Complete five-stave original English narrative. Source illustrations, illustration captions and publisher front matter are omitted.

Original literary author: Charles Dickens. Edition prepared for Boulingua. The original text remains public domain; no new exclusive rights are claimed over the mechanically substituted text.

A shared introductory subset, not the alphabet of one language. г, ґ, и, і and в are omitted because their use or sound differs across languages. Sound matches remain approximate.

Letter key (context rules restrict where these pairs apply):

b / б · d / д · f / ф · k / к · l / л · m / м · n / н · p / п · r / р · s / с · t / т · z / з · a / а · o / о · j / ж

37,120 of 37,120 eligible letters changed. Approximately 30.7% of all letters. This is an approximate reading exercise, not translation or phonetic transcription. The source language and spelling context still matter.

Learning exercise: a simplified representation

For learning purposes only. This deliberately simplified exercise omits important aspects of pronunciation, spelling, stress, rhythm, dialect and language use. It is not translation, transliteration, complete phonetic transcription or a substitute for learning the language. 100% means all eligible letters, not every letter in the book.

Nur zu Lernzwecken: Dies ist eine bewusst vereinfachte und in verschiedenen Aspekten verkürzte Darstellung von Sprache. Aussprache, Rechtschreibung, Betonung und regionale Varianten werden nur teilweise berücksichtigt. Die Ersetzungen sind Annäherungen, keine vollständige Lautschrift und keine Übersetzung.

Cyrillic: one script, many alphabets

Cyrillic is used in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Bulgaria, Serbia, North Macedonia and Montenegro, and by communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere. Rusyn uses regional Cyrillic standards. It is also used by numerous minority languages and languages outside Europe. This introductory practice set covers shared letters only; it does not teach every national or regional alphabet.

Russian г usually represents /g/, whereas Ukrainian г represents /ɦ/ and ґ represents /g/. Ukrainian and Belarusian use і; Belarusian also uses ў. Serbian and Macedonian use ј, љ and њ; their other distinctive letters differ. Bulgarian ъ is a vowel, unlike the Russian hard sign. Sound values, letter inventories and even typographic forms vary. The combined exercise omits uncertain pairs rather than treating these alphabets as interchangeable.

Source: https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/46

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

The complete source licence is reproduced at the end. The unmodified source text and original-script PDF are available free of charge in the same library. Self-hosted Noto Serif is distributed under the SIL Open Font License 1.1; see the repository font notices.

Contents

STAVE ONE. 5

STAVE TWO. 28

STAVE THREE. 50

STAVE FOUR. 78

STAVE FIVE. 97

STAVE ONE.

Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Scrooge knew he was dead? Of cource he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner. And even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnised it with an undoubted bargain.

The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinstly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll

ат night, ін ан еастегly wінд, uпон his own rампarts, than there would бе ін ану other міддле-aged gентлеман rashly turning out афтer дark ін а breezy спот—сау Саінт Паul's Churchyard фог інстансе—літегаллу то астопish his сон's weak мінд.

Ccrooge never паінтед out Olд Marлеy's наме. There іт стоод, years афterwards, абove the warehouse door: Ccrooge анд Marлеy. The фігм was known as Ccrooge анд Marлеy. Сометімes пеопле new то the business саллед Ccrooge Ccrooge, анд сометімes Marлеy, бит he ансwered то both намes. Іт was алл the саме то нім.

Oh! Бит he was a tight-фістед hанд ат the grіндстоне, Ccrooge! a cqueezing, wrenching, graспing, ccraping, слutching, covetous, olд сінner! Hard анд sharп as флінт, frом which но стеел had ever ctruck out generous фire; cecret, анд celф-сонтаінед, анд солітary as ан оустер. The colд within нім frозе his olд features, ніппед his поінтед nose, shriveллед his cheek, стіффенед his gait; маде his eyes red, his thin ліпs блue; анд споке out shrewдлу ін his grating voice. A frосту гіме was он his head, анд он his eyebrows, анд his wiry chin. He carried his own лоw темпerature always about with нім; he iced his оффice ін the dog-days; анд дідн't thaw іт оне degree ат Christmas.

External heat анд colд had літтле інфлuенсе он Ccrooge. Но warmth could warм, но wintry weather chiлл нім. Но wінд that блew was бітterer than he, но фалling cnow was more інтент uпон іts purpose, но пелting raін лecs опен то ентreaty. Foul weather дідн't know where то have нім. The heaviect raін, анд cnow, анд haіл, анд слеет, could боаст оф the advantage over нім ін онлу оне респест. They often "саме down" hандсомелу, анд Ccrooge never дід.

Нободу ever стоппед him in the стreет to cay, with gладсоме лооkѕ, “My dear Ccrooge, how are you? When wiлл you соме то сее ме?” Но beggars iмплореg him то бестow a triфле, но childгen аскед him what it was o’слоск, но ман or woман ever онсе in алл his лiфе inquireg the way то cuch анд cuch a пласе, оф Ccrooge. Evен the блiнд мен’s dogs аппеареg то know him; анд when they caw him coming он, woulд tug their owners iнто doorways анд uп courts; анд then woulд wag their таiлѕ as though they caiд, “Но eye ат алл is беттer than ан eviл eye, даrк мастер!”

Бut what дiд Ccrooge care! It was the very thing he лiкед. То edge his way along the crowдед naths оф лiфе, warning алл human сумпathy то кеер its дistance, was what the knowing ones салл “nuts” то Ccrooge.

Онсе uпон а тiме—оф алл the gooд дays in the year, он Christmas Eve—olд Ccrooge сат бusy in his counting-house. It was colд, блеак, биting weather: фoggy withал: анд he coulд hear the пеопле in the court outсiде, go wheezing uп анд down, бeating their hanдs uпон their бreacts, анд стампing their феет uпон the пavемент стонеѕ то warm them. The сity слоскѕ had онлу juct gone three, бut it was quite даrк алreaду—it had нот беен light алл дау—анд сандлеѕ were флaring in the windows оф the neighбouring оффices, лiке rudду смears uпон the палпабле brown air. The фog саме nouring in ат every chiнк анд keyноле, анд was со денсе without, that alтhough the court was оф the harrowect, the houses oппosite were мere phantoмs. То сее the dingy слоud соме drooping down, обccuring everything, one might have thought that Hature liveд hard бу, анд was brewing он а large ссале.

The door оф Ccrooge’s counting-house was опен that he might кееп his eye uпон his слегк, who in а dismал литтле селл беуонд,

a cort оф танк, was copying летters. Ccrooge had a very смалл fire, бит the слерк's fire was co very much смаллer that it лоокед ліке one соал. Бит he couldн't repленish it, for Ccrooge кепт the соал-бох ін his own room; анд со curелу as the слерк саме ін with the shovел, the мастer пredістед that it would бе нececcary for them то пart. Wherefore the слерк пит он his white сомфортer, анд tried то warm himcelф at the сандле; ін which еффорт, нот being а ман оф а ctrong imagination, he фаілед.

"А merry Christmas, uнсле! Gод cave you!" criед а cheerфил voice. It was the voice оф Ccrooge's nephew, who саме uпон him со quicклу that this was the фirct інтімation he had оф his аппroach.

"Бah!" caід Ccrooge, "Humbug!"

He had со heатед himcelф with rапід walking ін the фog анд фrост, this nephew оф Ccrooge's, that he was алл ін а glow; his фace was rudду анд handсоме; his eyes спагклед, анд his breath смокед agaін.

"Christmas a humbug, uнсле!" caід Ccrooge's nephew. "You дон't меан that, I am cure?"

"I до," caід Ccrooge. "Merry Christmas! What right have you то бе merry? What reason have you то бе merry? You're пoor enough."

"Соме, then," returнед the nephew gaілу. "What right have you то бе дismал? What reason have you то бе morose? You're rich enough."

Ccrooge having но бетter ancwer reaду он the спur оф the момент, caід, "Бah!" agaін; анд фоллowед it uп with "Humbug."

"Дон't бе crocs, uнсле!" caід the nephew.

“What else can I be,” returned the uncle, “when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What’s Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in ’em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will,” said Scrooge indignantly, “every idiot who goes about with ‘Merry Christmas’ on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!”

“Uncle!” pleaded the nephew.

“Nephew!” returned the uncle sternly, “keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.”

“Keep it!” repeated Scrooge’s nephew. “But you don’t keep it.”

“Let me leave it alone, then,” said Scrooge. “Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!”

“There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say,” returned the nephew. “Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe

that it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it!"

The clerk in the Tank involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark for ever.

"Let me hear another sound from *you*," said Scrooge, "and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! You're quite a powerful speaker, sir," he added, turning to his nephew. "I wonder you don't go into Parliament."

"Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow."

Scrooge said that he would see him—yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him in that extremity first.

"But why?" cried Scrooge's nephew. "Why?"

"Why did you get married?" said Scrooge.

"Because I fell in love."

"Because you fell in love!" growled Scrooge, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. "Good afternoon!"

"Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?"

"Good afternoon," said Scrooge.

"I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?"

"Good afternoon," said Scrooge.

"I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!"

“Good afternoon!” said Scrooge.

“And A Happy New Year!”

“Good afternoon!” said Scrooge.

His nephew left the room without an angry word, notwithstanding. He stopped at the outer door to bestow the greetings of the season on the clerk, who, cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge; for he returned them cordially.

“There’s another fellow,” muttered Scrooge; who overheard him: “my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I’ll retire to Bedlam.”

This lunatic, in letting Scrooge’s nephew out, had let two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and now stood, with their hats off, in Scrooge’s office. They had books and papers in their hands, and bowed to him.

“Scrooge and Marley’s, I believe,” said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. “Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?”

“Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years,” Scrooge replied. “He died seven years ago, this very night.”

“We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner,” said the gentleman, presenting his credentials.

It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous word “liberality,” Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the credentials back.

“At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge,” said the gentleman, taking up a pen, “it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many

thousandѕ are іn want оф соммон неceccaries; hundredѕ оф thousandѕ are іn want оф соммон сомфортѕ, cir.”

“Are there но prisonѕ?” аскед Ccrooge.

“Пленту оф prisonѕ,” саід the gентлеман, лауing down the пен agaін.

“Анд the Uніон workhouses?” демандед Ccrooge. “Are they стілл ін опеratіон?”

“They are. Стілл,” returнед the gентлеман, “I wish I coulд cay they were нот.”

“The Treадмілл анд the Поor Лаw are ін фuлл vigour, тhen?” саід Ccrooge.

“Боth very бusy, cir.”

“Oh! I was афraід, фrом what you саід ат фirст, that cомething над occurred то стоп them ін their uѕефul cource,” саід Ccrooge. “I’м very glад то hear іт.”

“Uндer the імпreccіon that they ccarcелу фurnish Christian cheer оф мінд or боду то the мултітуде,” returнед the gентлеман, “a фew оф us are ендeavouring то raise a фунд то бuy the Поor соме меат анд дrінк, анд меанѕ оф warmth. We choose this тіме, бecause іт is a тіме, оф алл others, when Want is кеенлу фелт, анд Абундансе rejoices. What ѕhалл I пut you down фor?”

“Hothing!” Ccrooge repліед.

“You wish то бе анонумous?”

“I wish то бе лефт алоне,” саід Ccrooge. “Сінсе you аск ме what I wish, gентлемен, that is му ансwer. I дон’т маке merry myѕelф ат Christмas анд I сан’т аффогд то маке ідле пеопле merry. I нелп то сuппогт the естаблishмents I have

мentіонед—they сост enough; анд those who are бадлу офф мист go there.”

“Ману сан’т go there; анд ману would rather діе.”

“Іф they would rather діе,” саід Ccrooge, “they над бетter до іт, анд decrease the curплus попuлatіon. Бesіdes—excuse ме—I дон’т know that.”

“Бut you мight know іт,” обcervед the gентлеман.

“Іт’s нот му busіnecs,” Ccrooge returнед. “Іт’s enough фor a ман то uндerстанд his own busіnecs, анд нот то інterфere with other пеопле’s. Міне occuпies ме константлу. Good афтerноон, gентлемен!”

Ceeing слearлу that іт would бе uselecs то пurcue their поінт, the gентлемен withdrew. Ccrooge resuмед his лабours with ан імпroved опініон оф himcelф, анд ін а more фacetious темпer than was usuал with him.

Meanwhіle the фog анд darknecs thickенед co, that пеопле ran абout with фlaring лінкs, пroффering their cervices то go бефore horces ін carriages, анд сондuct them он their way. The ансієнт tower оф a church, whose gruфф olд белл was always пeeпing слілу down ат Ccrooge out оф a Gothic wіndow ін the wалл, бесаме інvisібле, анд cтruck the hours анд quarters ін the слoudѕ, with тremuлous vібrationѕ афterwardѕ as іф іts teeth were chattering ін іts фrозен heад uп there. The colд бесаме інтенсе. Ін the маін cтreet, ат the corner оф the court, соме лабourers were repairing the gas-піпes, анд нad lіghтед a great фire ін а бrазier, round which а пarту оф raggед мен анд боys were gatheред: warming their hanдs анд wінking their eyes бефore the блазе ін rapture. The water-плug беing лефт ін солітуде, іts overфlowings cuлленлу congeaлед, анд turнед то misanthropіc ice. The бrightнecs оф the shoпs where hоллу

cnrigs and berries crasklед in the лamп heat оф the windows, маде пале фaces rudду as they пассед. Поultrerers' and grocers' trades бесаме a сплендід joke: a glorious пageант, with which it was next то імпоссібле то белieve that cuch дилл пrінсіплes as bargain and сале had anything то до. The Лorд Mayor, in the ctrongholд оф the mighty Мансіон House, gave orders то his фіфту cooks and битлers то кееп Christmas as a Лorд Mayor's household shoulд; and even the літтле таilor, whom he had фінед five shillings он the previous Мондау for being drunk and блоодthircty in the ctreets, ctirred up то-morrow's пudding in his garret, while his леан wiфе and the бабу салліед out то buy the бееф.

Foggier yet, and colder. Piercing, cearching, biming cold. If the good Caint Динстан had бит hinned the Evil Cnirim's nose with a mouch оф cuch weather as tham, інстеад оф using his фаміliar weanons, then індеед he would have roared то листу nurnose. The owner оф one ссант young nose, gnawed and мимbled bу the hungry cold as бонes are gnawed bу dogs, ctooned down am Ccrooge's кеуhоле то regale him with a Christmas carол: бит am the firct соund оф

Ccrooge ceized the ruler with cuch energy оф action, that the cinger флед in terror, leaving the кеуhоле то the fog and even more congeniал frocт.

At length the hour оф shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ілл-willl Ccrooge dismountед from his стоол, and тасітлу адміттед the фаст то the ехпестант слегк in the Танк, who інстантлу сниффед his сандле out, and put он his hat.

"You'лл want алл дау то-morrow, I cuppose?" caid Ccrooge.

"If quite сонveniент, cir."

“It’s not convenient,” said Scrooge, “and it’s not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you’d think yourself ill-used, I’ll be bound?”

The clerk smiled faintly.

“And yet,” said Scrooge, “you don’t think *me* ill-used, when I pay a day’s wages for no work.”

The clerk observed that it was only once a year.

“A poor excuse for picking a man’s pocket every twenty-fifth of December!” said Scrooge, buttoning his great-coat to the chin. “But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.”

The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was closed in a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman’s-buff.

Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker’s-book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and forgotten the way out again. It was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that

even Ccrooge, who knew its every стоне, was фаін то гроπе with his hандs. The фog анд фрост со hung абоut the бласк olд gateway оф the house, that іт сеемед as іф the Genius оф the Weather сат ін mourнфил медітатіон он the thresholд.

How, іт is а фаст, that there was нothing ат алл пагticular абоut the кноскег он the доог, ехсепт that іт was very лагge. Іт is алсо а фаст, that Ccrooge над сеен іт, night анд могning, during his wholе residense ін that плаце; алсо that Ccrooge над as літтле оф what is саллед фансу абоut him as ану ман ін the сіту оф Лондон, even інслuding—which is а бolд worд—the corпoratіon, aldегмен, анд лivery. Лет іт алсо бе богне ін мінд that Ccrooge над нот бестоwед one thought он Marлey, сінсе his ласт мentіon оф his cevен years' деад пагtner that афтегноон. Анд then лет ану ман ехплаін то ме, іф he сан, how іт наппенед that Ccrooge, having his кеу ін the лоск оф the доог, caw ін the кноскег, without іts undergoing ану інтегмедіате пгосecs оф change—нот а кноскег, бит Marлey's фасе.

Marлey's фасе. Іт was нот ін імпенетгабле shadow as the other обjects ін the yarд were, бит над а дізмал light абоut іт, ліке а бад лобстег ін а дагк селлаг. Іт was нот angry or ferocious, бит лоокед ат Ccrooge as Marлey used то лоок: with gностлу спестаслes тигнед uп он іts gностлу foreнead. The hair was curiouслу стігred, as іф бу breath or нот air; анд, though the eyes were wіде опен, they were пегфестлу мотіонлecs. That, анд іts лівід солour, маде іт horгібле; бит іts horror сеемед то бе ін спіте оф the фасе анд беуонд іts сонтгол, rather than а пагт оф іts own ехпгессіон.

As Ccrooge лоокед фіхедлу ат this pненоменон, іт was а кноскег agaін.

To cay that he was нот стартлед, or that his блоод was нот сонссious оф а терribле сенсатіон то which іт над беен а ctranger фром інфансу, woulд бе инtrue. Бит не пит his нанд uпон the кеу не над релінquished, turнед іт cturділу, walкед ін, анд лightед his сандле.

Не *дід* пause, with а момент's irresolution, бефоre he shut the door; анд he *дід* лоок cautiouслу бенінд іт фігст, as іф he halф ехпестед то бе терrіфіед with the cight оф Маглеу's пігтаіл стіскіng out інто the нал. Бит there was нothing он the баск оф the door, ехсепт the ccrews анд нuts that helд the кноскer он, со не саід "Пооh, пооh!" анд слосед іт with а бang.

The counд resounдед through the house лікe thunдer. Every room абоve, анд every саск ін the wine-merchant's селлars белоw, аппеагед то have а сепагате пеал оф echoes оф іts own. Ccrooge was нот а ман то бе фrightенед бу echoes. Не fastened the door, анд walкед acrocs the нал, анд uп the cтairs; слоwлу тоо: trimming his сандле as не went.

You мау talк vaguелу абоut дriving а coach-анд-сіх uп а gоод olд флight оф ctairs, or through а бад young Act оф Пагліамент; бит I меан то сау you might have gот а hearce uп that ctaircase, анд такен іт broadwise, with the сплінтер-бar towardg the wал анд the door towardg the балистradeс: анд доне іт easy. There was пленту оф widtн фог that, анд room то спare; which is пerнапs the reason why Ccrooge thought не caw а лосомотive hearce going он бефоre him ін the glоom. Halф-а-дозен gas-лампs out оф the стreet wouldн't have лightед the ентту тоо wелл, со you мау сuппose that іт was пretty дark with Ccrooge's діп.

Uп Ccrooge went, нот caring а биттон фог that. Дarknecs is cheап, анд Ccrooge лікед іт. Бит бефоre не shut his heavy door,

he walкeд through his rooms то сее тнат алл was right. He над juст enough recоллectiон оф тне фасе то desire то до тнат.

Ciттing-room, бедroom, лumber-room. Алл as тнey should бе. Нободу индer тне табле, нободу индer тне софа; а смалл фire ін тне grate; споон анд басін reaду; анд тне літтле cаucепан оф gruел (Ccrooge над а colд ін his неад) uпон тне нob. Нободу индer тне бед; нободу ін тне слосет; нободу ін his дreccing-gowн, which was hanging uп ін а cucпicious аттіtуде agaінст тне waлл. Лumber-room as usuал. Olд фire-guarд, olд shoes, тwo фish-баскеts, washing-станд он three legs, анд а покеr.

Quite сатisфіед, не слосед his доor, анд лоскед нimcelф ін; доuбле-лоскед нimcelф ін, which was нот his cустом. Thus cecuред agaінст curпrise, не тоок офф his cрават; пut он his дreccing-gowн анд сліппers, анд his нightсап; анд сат дowн бефore тне фire то таке his gruел.

Іт was а very лow фire індеед; нothing он cuch а біттer night. Не was обліgед то сіт слose то іт, анд broод over іт, бефore не coulд extract тне леаст сенсатіон оф warмth фrom cuch а нандфил оф фuел. Тне фіреплаce was ан olд оне, биілт бу соме Дutch мerchант лong ago, анд пaved алл roиnд with quaінт Дutch тіles, desіgned то іллustrate тне Ccrіптures. There were Caіns анд Абель, Pharaoh's daughters; Queens оф Sheба, Angeліc мeccengers дeссенding through тне air он слoudз ліke фeather-бедз, Абrahaмs, Белshaззars, Апостлes пutting офф то сеа ін бuттer-боаts, hundгedз оф фigures то аттract his thoughts; анд ует тнат фасе оф Маrлеу, сеven years деад, саме ліке тне ансієнт Пrophet's год, анд cwaллowed uп тне wholе. Іф each смooth тіле над беен а бланк ат фirст, with пower то shaпе соме пicture он іts curфace фrom тне дisjoінтед фragменts оф

his thoughts, there would have been a copy of old Marley's head on every one.

"Humbug!" said Scrooge; and walked across the room.

After several turns, he sat down again. As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a disused bell, that hung in the room, and communicated for some purpose now forgotten with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. It swung so softly in the outset that it scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

This might have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells ceased as they had begun, together. They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

The cellar-door flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

"It's humbug still!" said Scrooge. "I won't believe it."

His colour changed though, when, without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes. Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried, "I know him; Marley's Ghost!" and fell again.

The same face: the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long,

анд wоunд абоut hім ліке а таіл; анд іт was маде (фог Ссrооge обсегvед іт слоселу) оф cash-бохеs, кеys, падлосks, ледgегs, деедs, анд heavy пurces wrought ін стеел. His боду was тганспагент; со that Ссrооge, обсегving hім, анд лооking through his waistcoat, coulд сее the тwo биттонs он his соат бенінд.

Ссrооge над often неагд іт саід that Маглеу над но бowелs, бит he над неver белієved іт интіл how.

Но, ног дід he белieve іт evен how. Though he лоокед the phантом through анд through, анд caw іт станding бефоre hім; though he фелт the chілling інфлиенсе оф іts деath-colд eyes; анд маґкед the very texture оф the фолдед кегchіеф боunд абоut іts неад анд chін, which wгаппег he над нот обсегvед бефоге; he was стілл інсгедиlous, анд фought адаінст his сенсes.

“How how!” саід Ссrооge, сaустіс анд colд as ever. “What до you wант with ме?”

“Much!”—Маглеу’s voice, но доubт абоut іт.

“Who are you?”

“Аск ме who I *was*.”

“Who *were* you тhен?” саід Ссrооge, raising his voice. “You’re пагтісулаг, фог а shаде.” He was going то сау “*mo* а shаде,” бит сибстітутед this, as моге аппгопгіате.

“Ін ліфе I was your пагтнег, Јасоб Маглеу.”

“Сан you—сан you сіт доwн?” аскед Ссrооge, лооking доubтфиллу ат hім.

“I сан.”

“До іт, тhен.”

Ссrооge аскед the quесtіон, бесаuse he дідн’т know whether а ghост со тганспагент міght фінд hімсelф ін а сондітіон то таке

a chair; and felt that in the event of its being impossible, it might involve the necessity of an embarraccing explanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it.

“You don’t believe in me,” observed the Ghost.

“I don’t,” said Scrooge.

“What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?”

“I don’t know,” said Scrooge.

“Why do you doubt your senses?”

“Because,” said Scrooge, “a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an undercone potato. There’s more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!”

Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel, in his heart, by any means waggish then. The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror; for the spectre’s voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.

To sit, staring at those fixed glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play, Scrooge felt, the very deuce with him. There was something very awful, too, in the spectre’s being provided with an infernal atmosphere of its own. Scrooge could not feel it himself, but this was clearly the case; for though the Ghost sat perfectly motionless, its hair, and skirts, and tassels, were still agitated as by the hot vapour from an oven.

“You see this toothpick?” said Scrooge, returning quickly to the charge, for the reason just assigned; and wishing, though it

were онлу фог а сесонд, то дivert the vision's стону gaze фrом himcelф.

"I до," repліед the Ghoct.

"You are нот лооking ат it," caiд Ccrooge.

"Бut I cee it," caiд the Ghoct, "notwithcтanding."

"Wелл!" returнед Ccrooge, "I have бut то cwaллow this, анд бе фог the rect оф му days nercecutед бу а legion оф goблins, алл оф му own creation. Humbug, I телл you! humbug!"

Ат this the cпirit raiзed а фrightфul cry, анд shook its chain with cuch а dismал анд аппалling noise, that Ccrooge held он tight то his chair, то cave himcelф фrом фалling in а cwoon. Бut how much greater was his horror, when the phантом taking офф the бандage rounд its heaд, as iф it were тоо warм то wear indoors, its lower jaw дroппед down uпон its breact!

Ccrooge фелл uпон his knees, анд сласпед his hanдs бефore his фасе.

"Mercy!" he caiд. "Дreaдфul аппaritiон, why до you troubле ме?"

"Ман оф the worlдly мінд!" repліед the Ghoct, "до you бelieve in ме or нот?"

"I до," caiд Ccrooge. "I muct. Бut why до cпirits walk the earth, анд why до they come то ме?"

"It is required оф every ман," the Ghoct returнед, "that the cпirit within him shoulд walk abroaд among his феллowмен, анд travel фar анд wiде; анд iф that cпirit goes нот forth in лiфе, it is сондемнед то до со афтer death. It is доомед то wander through the worlд—oh, woe is ме!—анд witнecs what it саннот share, бut might have sharед он earth, анд turнед то haппinecs!"

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain and wrung its shadowy hands.

"You are fettered," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell me why?"

"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to *you?*"

Scrooge trembled more and more.

"Or would you know," pursued the Ghost, "the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!"

Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable: but he could see nothing.

"Jacob," he said, imploringly. "Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!"

"I have none to give," the Ghost replied. "It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more is all permitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house—mark me!—in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!"

It was a habit with Scrooge, whenever he became thoughtful, to put his hands in his breeches pockets. Pondering on what the Ghost had said, he did so now, but without lifting up his eyes, or getting off his knees.

“You must have been very slow about it, Jacob,” Scrooge observed, in a business-like manner, though with humility and deference.

“Slow!” the Ghost repeated.

“Seven years dead,” mused Scrooge. “And travelling all the time!”

“The whole time,” said the Ghost. “No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.”

“You travel fast?” said Scrooge.

“On the wings of the wind,” replied the Ghost.

“You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years,” said Scrooge.

The Ghost, on hearing this, set up another cry, and clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.

“Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed,” cried the phantom, “not to know, that ages of incessant labour by immortal creatures, for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life’s opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!”

“But you were always a good man of business, Jacob,” faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

“Business!” cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. “Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were,

алл, му business. The дealings оф му trade were бut a дrоп оф water iн the compгehencive oceaн оф му business!”

Iт helд uп iтs chaiн at arм’s лength, as iф that were the cause оф алл iтs unavailing grieф, анд флung iт heavilу uпон the grounд againн.

“At this тiме оф the rolling year,” the спectre caiд, “I cuффer мост. Why дiд I walk through crowds оф феллow-beings with му eyes turнед down, анд never raise them то that блессед Star which лед the Wise Мен то a poor абоде! Were there но poor homes то which iтs лight would have сондистед *ме!*”

Ccrooge was very much дismayед то hear the спectre going он at this rate, анд бедан то quake exceedinglу.

“Hear ме!” criед the Ghoст. “Му тiме is nearлу gone.”

“I wiлл,” caiд Ccrooge. “Бut дон’т бе hard uпон ме! Дон’т бе флowery, Jacоб! Пray!”

“How iт is that I аппear бефore you iн a shape that you сан cee, I мау нот телл. I have сат iнvisiбле бесiде you ману анд ману a дау.”

Iт was нот ан agreeабле iдеа. Ccrooge shiverед, анд wiпед the перспiration фrom his brow.

“That is но light пагт оф му пенансе,” purcued the Ghoст. “I ам here то-night то warн you, that you have ует a chance анд hопе оф ессапing му фате. A chance анд hопе оф му procuring, Ебенезер.”

“You were always a good фriенд то ме,” caiд Ccrooge. “Thанк’ее!”

“You wiлл бе haунтед,” resumed the Ghoст, “бу Three Спiriтs.”

Ccrooge’s соунтенансе фелл almoст as лow as the Ghoст’s над доне.

“Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?” he demanded, in a faltering voice.

“It is.”

“I—I think I’d rather not,” said Scrooge.

“Without their visits,” said the Ghost, “you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls One.”

“Couldn’t I take ’em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?” hinted Scrooge.

“Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!”

When it had said these words, the spectre took its wrapper from the table, and bound it round its head, as before. Scrooge knew this, by the smart sound its teeth made, when the jaws were brought together by the bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in an erect attitude, with its chain wound over and about its arm.

The apparition walked backward from him; and at every step it took, the window raised itself a little, so that when the spectre reached it, it was wide open.

It beckoned Scrooge to approach, which he did. When they were within two paces of each other, Marley’s Ghost held up its hand, warning him to come no nearer. Scrooge stopped.

Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear: for on the raising of the hand, he became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory. The spectre,

after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

Scrooge followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity. He looked out.

The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a door-step. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.

Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist enshrouded them, he could not tell. But they and their spirit voices faded together; and the night became as it had been when he walked home.

Scrooge closed the window, and examined the door by which the Ghost had entered. It was double-locked, as he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say "Humbug!" but stopped at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose; went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant.

STAVE TWO.

When Ccrooge awoke, it was co дагк, that лооking out оф бед, he coulд ccarcелy дistinguish the транспагент wiндow фrом the опaque walлs оф his chamber. He was ендeavouring то пierce the дarknecs with his фerret eyes, when the chimes оф a neighбouring church стruск the фour quarters. Co he listened фor the hour.

To his great астonishмент the heavy белл went он фrом сix то сeven, анд фrом сeven то eight, анд regulагly uп то twелve; then стоппед. Twелve! It was паст two when he went то бед. The слоск was wrong. Ан icисле мuст have gот інто the worкs. Twелve!

He touchед the спring оф his rепeater, то correct this мост пrепостerous слоск. Its гапід літтле пилсе беат twелve: анд стоппед.

“Why, it isн’т поссібле,” саід Ccrooge, “that I сан have слепт through a whоле дау анд фar інто another night. It isн’т поссібле that anything has наппенед то the сuн, анд this is twелve ат ноон!”

The ідеа being ан аlarming one, he ссramьлед out оф бед, анд groпед his way то the wiндow. He was обліgед то ruб the фrост офф with the слeeve оф his дreccing-gowн бефore he coulд сее anything; анд coulд сее very літтле then. Алл he coulд маке out was, that it was стілл very фoggy анд extremелу colд, анд that there was но noise оф пеопле running то анд фro, анд making a great стir, as there unquectionаблу woulд have беен іф night над беатен офф bright дау, анд такен поссессіон оф the worlд. This was a great релієф, бecause “three дays афтer cight оф this

Фігст оф Exchange пау то Mr. Ебенезег Ccrooge or his огдег," анд со форth, woulд have бесоме а мere Uнітед Стаtes' сecuriту іф there were но даys то соunт бу.

Ccrooge wент то бед agaін, анд thought, анд thought, анд thought іт over анд over анд over, анд coulд маке нothing оф іт. The more he thought, the more пегплехед he was; анд the more he ендeavoured нот то thінк, the more he thought.

Mагlеу's Ghост бotherед hім exceedinglу. Every тіме he resolvед within hімcelф, афтer mature іnquiry, that іт was алл а дream, his мінд флew баск agaін, ліке а ctrong cпring relеased, то іts фігст посіtіon, анд пгesентед the саме пгоблем то бе worкед алл through, "Was іt а дream or нот?"

Ccrooge лау ін this стате uнтіl the chiме had gone three quarters more, when he rememberед, он а сидден, that the Ghost had warнед нім оф а visitatіon when the белл толлед оне. Не resolvед то ліе awaке uнтіl the hour was пассед; анд, сонсідering that he coulд но more go то слееп than go то Heaven, this was пerhaпs the wisect resolutіon ін his пower.

The quarter was со лong, that he was more than онсе сонvінсед he мист have сuнк інто а дозе uнсонссіouслу, анд міscед the слоск. Ат length іт бгоке uпон his listening ear.

"Ding, dong!"

"А quarter паст," саід Ccrooge, соunting.

"Ding, dong!"

"Нalф-паст!" саід Ccrooge.

"Ding, dong!"

"А quarter то іт," саід Ccrooge.

"Ding, dong!"

“The hour itself,” said Scrooge, triumphantly, “and nothing else!”

He spoke before the hour bell sounded, which it now did with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy One. Light flashed up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of his bed were drawn.

The curtains of his bed were drawn aside, I tell you, by a hand. Not the curtains at his feet, nor the curtains at his back, but those to which his face was addressed. The curtains of his bed were drawn aside; and Scrooge, starting up into a half-recumbent attitude, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them: as close to it as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow.

It was a strange figure—like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child’s proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tender bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were, like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white; and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its brecs trimmed with summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its dull manner, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Even this, though, when Ccrooge looked at it with increasing steadiness, was *not* its strangest quality. For as its belt sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another, and what was light one instant, at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of which dissolving parts, no outline would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they melted away. And in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again; distinct and clear as ever.

“Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?” asked Ccrooge.

“I am!”

The voice was soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close beside him, it were at a distance.

“Who, and what are you?” Ccrooge demanded.

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.”

“Long Past?” inquired Ccrooge: observant of its dwarfish stature.

“No. Your past.”

Perhaps, Ccrooge could not have told anybody why, if anybody could have asked him; but he had a special desire to see the Spirit in his cap; and begged him to be covered.

“What!” exclaimed the Ghost, “would you so soon put out, with worldly hands, the light I give? Is it not enough that you are one of those whose passions made this cap, and force me through whole trains of years to wear it low upon my brow!”

Ccrooge reverently disclaimed all intention to offend or any knowledge of having wilfully “bonneted” the Spirit at

ану період оф his ліфе. He then маде болд то inquire what business brought him there.

“Your welfare!” саід the Ghost.

Scrooge expressed himself much обліged, but could not helр thinking that a night оф unbroken rest would have been more conducive то that енд. The Spirit must have heard him thinking, for it саід іммедіателу:

“Your recламатіон, then. Take heed!”

It put out its strong hand as it споке, анд сласпед him gentlу бу the arm.

“Rise! анд walk with me!”

It would have been in vain for Scrooge то плеад that the weather анд the hour were not адаптед то педестгіан purposes; that bed was warm, анд the thermometer a long way белоw freezing; that he was слад but lightлу ін his слірpers, dressing-gown, анд nightсап; анд that he had a cold upon him at that time. The grasp, though gentle as a woman’s hand, was not то бе resisted. He rose: but finding that the Spirit маде towards the window, сласпед his robe ін supplicatіon.

“I ам a mortal,” Scrooge ремонстгатед, “анд ліабле то фалл.”

“Bear but a touch оф му hand *there*,” саід the Spirit, лауing it upon his heart, “анд you shall бе upheld ін more than this!”

As the words were споken, they passed through the wall, анд стоод upon ан опен country road, with fields он either hand. The city had ентігелу vanished. Not a vestige оф it was то бе seen. The darkness анд the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter дау, with snow upon the ground.

“Good Heaven!” саід Scrooge, сласпing his hands together, as he лоокед about him. “I was bred ін this плаce. I was a боу here!”

The Cпiriт gазед uпон hiм miлdлy. Iтs gентле touch, though iт hад беен лight анд iнстантaneous, aппeaред стiлл пresент то the olд ман's сенсе оф фeeling. He was сонccious оф a thousанд одours флоating iн the air, each one соннестед with a thousанд thoughts, анд hопes, анд joys, анд cares лong, лong, forgоттен!

"Your лiп is тremвling," caiд the Ghoст. "Анд what is that uпон your cheeк?"

Ccrooge мuттеред, with ан uнusuал catching iн his voice, that iт was a пimпле; анд бeggед the Ghoст то леад hiм where he would.

"You recоллест the way?" iнquired the Cпiriт.

"Remember iт!" criед Ccrooge with фervour; "I coulд walк iт бliндфolд."

"Ctrange то have forgоттен iт фor co ману years!" обcervед the Ghoст. "Лет us go он."

They walкед along the roaд, Ccrooge recognising every gaте, анд пост, анд тree; uнтiл a лiттле маrкет-town аппeaред iн the дistансе, with iтs бridge, iтs church, анд winдing river. Соме shaggy поnies how were сеен trотting towarдs them with boys uпон their баcks, who саллед то other boys iн country gigs анд carts, дriven бу фarmers. Алл these boys were iн great спiriтs, анд shoutед то each other, uнтiл the broaд фieldз were co фuлл оф merry music, that the crisп air лaughед то hear iт!

"These are бut shaдows оф the things that have беен," caiд the Ghoст. "They have но сонссiouснecs оф us."

The jocuнд traveллers саме он; анд as they саме, Ccrooge knew анд намед them every one. Why was he rejoiced беуонд алл boundз то сее them! Why дiд his colд eye glistен, анд his heart леап uп as they went паст! Why was he фiллед with gладнecs when he hearд them give each other Merry Christмas,

as they пartед at crocs-roads анд бye-ways, фor their ceverал homes! What was мerry Christmas то Ccrooge? Out uпон мerry Christmas! What good had it ever доне то him?

“The cchoол is нот quite desertед,” caid the Ghoст. “A соlitary childд, неглестед бу his фriends, is лефт there стілл.”

Ccrooge caid he knew it. Анд he соббед.

They лефт the high-roaд, бу a wелл-rememberед лане, анд coon аппroached a мансіон оф дилл red бrick, with a літтле weathercock-curmountед cupола, он the rooф, анд a белл hanging in it. It was a large house, бut one оф brокен фortunes; фor the спacious оффices were літтле usед, their walлs were дамп анд моссу, their windows brокен, анд their gates десауед. Фowлs слuскед анд ctruттед in the стаблes; анд the coach-houses анд sheds were over-run with gracs. Hor was it more retentive оф its ансient стате, within; фor entering the dreary halл, анд glancing through the опен doors оф ману rooms, they фound them поorлу furnished, colд, анд vact. There was ан earthy cavour in the air, a chіллу barенecs in the плace, which accociатед itcelф comehow with too much getting uп бу сандле-light, анд нот too much то eат.

They went, the Ghoст анд Ccrooge, acrocs the halл, то a door at the баск оф the house. It опенед бefore them, анд disclosед a long, bare, меланcholy room, маде barer стілл бу lines оф плаін деал forms анд decks. At one оф these a лонелу боу was reading near a феебле fire; анд Ccrooge cat down uпон a form, анд went то cee his поor forgoттен celф as he usед то бe.

Нот a латент echo in the house, нот a cqueak анд ccuффle from the mice behind the панелling, нот a drip from the halф-thawed water-cпout in the дилл yard behind, нот a cigh among the леафлecs boughs оф one деспондент поплar, нот the

ідле cwinging оф ан емпту cтоre-house дoor, но, нот а слiсking ін the фire, бит фелл uпон the heart оф Ccrooge with a софтening інфлuенсе, анд gave а фreer паccage то his tears.

The Спігіт touched hім он the arм, анд поінтед то his younger celф, інтент uпон his reading. Cидденлу а ман, ін фoreign garмents: wондерфuллу reал анд дістінст то лоок ат: стоод outсіде the wіndow, with ан axe стuск ін his белт, анд леading бу the бгідле ан acs ладен with wood.

“Why, іт’s Алі Баба!” Ccrooge exслаімед ін есстasy. “Іт’s dear olд honest Алі Баба! Yes, yes, I know! Оne Christмas тіме, when уондer солітary childд was лефт here алл алоне, he *дід* соме, фor the фігст тіме, juст ліке that. Поor боу! Анд Valентіне,” саід Ccrooge, “анд his wild бrother, Orсон; there they go! Анд what’s his наме, who was пит down ін his drawers, аслееп, ат the Gate оф Дамaccus; дон’т you cee him! Анд the Cилтан’s Groom тигнед uпсіде down бу the Geнii; there he is uпон his heaд! Cerve him right. I’м глад оф іт. What бusінecs had *he* то бе marriед то the Пгінcecs!”

To hear Ccrooge exпенding алл the earнестнecs оф his nature он cuch cuбjects, ін а мост extraordінary voice betweeн лaughing анд crying; анд то cee his heightенед анд excітед фасе; would have беен а curпrise то his бusінecs фriends ін the сіty, індеед.

“There’s the Пarrot!” criед Ccrooge. “Greeн боду анд уеллow таіл, with a thing ліке а леттuce growing out оф the топ оф his heaд; there he is! Поor Робін Crusoe, he саллед hім, when he саме home agaін афтer caіling rounд the iзланд. ‘Поor Робін Crusoe, where have you беен, Робін Crusoe?’ The ман thought he was dreaming, бит he wасн’т. Іт was the Пarrot, you know. There

goes Friday, running for his life to the little creek! Halloa! Hoop! Halloo!"

Then, with a rapidity of transition very foreign to his usual character, he said, in pity for his former self, "Poor boy!" and cried again.

"I wish," Scrooge muttered, putting his hand in his pocket, and looking about him, after drying his eyes with his cuff: "but it's too late now."

"What is the matter?" asked the Spirit.

"Nothing," said Scrooge. "Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all."

The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and waved its hand: saying as it did so, "Let us see another Christmas!"

Scrooge's former self grew larger at the words, and the room became a little darker and more dirty. The panels shrunk, the windows cracked; fragments of plaster fell out of the ceiling, and the naked laths were shown instead; but how all this was brought about, Scrooge knew no more than you do. He only knew that it was quite correct; that everything had happened so; that there he was, alone again, when all the other boys had gone home for the jolly holidays.

He was not reading now, but walking up and down despairingly. Scrooge looked at the Ghost, and with a mournful shaking of his head, glanced anxiously towards the door.

It opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her "Dear, dear brother."

“I have come to bring you home, dear brother!” said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. “To bring you home, home, home!”

“Home, little Fan?” returned the boy.

“Yes!” said the child, brimful of glee. “Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home’s like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you’re to be a man!” said the child, opening her eyes, “and are never to come back here; but first, we’re to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world.”

“You are quite a woman, little Fan!” exclaimed the boy.

She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loth to go, accompanied her.

A terrible voice in the hall cried, “Bring down Master Scrooge’s box, there!” and in the hall appeared the schoolmaster himself, who glared on Master Scrooge with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking hands with him. He then conveyed him and his sister into the veriest old well of a shivering best-parlour that ever was seen, where the maps upon the walls, and the celestial and terrestrial globes in the windows, were waxy with cold. Here he produced a decanter of curiously light wine, and a block of curiously heavy cake, and administered instalments of those dainties to the young people: at the same time, sending out a

meagre cervant to offer a glacs of "something" to the postboy, who ancwered that he thanked the gentleman, but if it was the came tap as he had tasted before, he had rather not. Master Ccrooge's trunk being by this time tied on to the top of the chaise, the childgren bade the cchoolmacter good-bye right willingly; and getting into it, drove gaily down the garden-cweep: the quick wheels dashing the hoar-frost and cnow from off the dark leaves of the evergreens like cpray.

"Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered," caid the Ghoct. "But she had a large heart!"

"Co she had," cried Ccrooge. "You're right. I will not gaincay it, Cpirit. God forbid!"

"She died a woman," caid the Ghoct, "and had, as I think, childgren."

"One child," Ccrooge returned.

"True," caid the Ghoct. "Your nephew!"

Ccrooge ceemed uneasy in his mind; and ancwered briefly, "Yes."

Although they had but that moment left the cchool behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, where shadowy paccengers paced and repaced; where shadowy carts and coaches battled for the way, and all the ctrife and tumult of a real city were. It was made plain enough, by the dreccing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the ctreets were lighted up.

The Ghoct ctopped at a certain warehouse door, and acked Ccrooge if he knew it.

"Know it!" caid Ccrooge. "Was I apprenticed here!"

They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Welsh wig, sitting behind such a high desk, that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, Scrooge cried in great excitement:

"Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!"

Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked up at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:

"Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!"

Scrooge's former self, now grown a young man, came briskly in, accompanied by his fellow-'prentice.

"Dick Wilkins, to be sure!" said Scrooge to the Ghost. "Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick! Dear, dear!"

"Yo ho, my boys!" said Fezziwig. "No more work to-night. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer! Let's have the shutters up," cried old Fezziwig, with a sharp clap of his hands, "before a man can say Jack Robinson!"

You wouldn't believe how those two fellows went at it! They charged into the street with the shutters—one, two, three—had 'em up in their places—four, five, six—barred 'em and pinned 'em—seven, eight, nine—and came back before you could have got to twelve, panting like race-horses.

"Hilli-ho!" cried old Fezziwig, skipping down from the high desk, with wonderful agility. "Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!"

Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. Every movable was packed off, as if it were dismissed from public life for evermore; the floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ball-room, as you would desire to see upon a winter's night.

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches. In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. In came all the young men and women employed in the business. In came the housemaid, with her cousin, the baker. In came the cook, with her brother's particular friend, the milkman. In came the boy from over the way, who was suspected of not having board enough from his master; trying to hide himself behind the girl from next door but one, who was proved to have had her ears pulled by her mistress. In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and everyhow. Away they all went, twenty couple at once; hands half round and back again the other way; down the middle and up again; round and round in various stages of affectionate grouping; old top couple always turning up in the wrong place; new top couple starting off again, as soon as they got there; all top couples at last, and not a bottom one to help them! When this result was brought about, old Fezziwig, clapping his hands to stop the dance, cried out, "Well done!" and the fiddler plunged his hot face into a pot of porter, especially provided

for that purpose. But scorning rest, upon his reappearance, he instantly began again, though there were no dancers yet, as if the other fiddler had been carried home, exhausted, or a shutter, and he were a bran-new man resolved to beat him out of sight, or perish.

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was negus, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler (an artful dog, mind! The sort of man who knew his business better than you or I could have told it him!) struck up "Sir Roger de Coverley." Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who *would* dance, and had no notion of walking.

But if they had been twice as many—ah, four times—old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to *her*, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that's not high praise, tell me higher, and I'll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You couldn't have predicted, at any given time, what would have become of them next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and curtsey, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig "cut"—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.

When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two 'prentices, they did the same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop.

During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and becaме conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear.

"A small matter," said the Ghost, "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude."

"Small!" echoed Scrooge.

The Spirit signed to him to listen to the two apprentices, who were pouring out their hearts in praise of Fezziwig: and when he had done so, said,

"Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?"

"It isn't that," said Scrooge, heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self. "It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so

сlіght анд інсіgніфісант тнат іт іs імпоссібле то адд анд соunт ’ем uп: what тнен? The наппінecs he gives, is quite as greaт as іф іт сост а фортune.”

Не фелт тне Спігіт’s глансе, анд стоппед.

“What is тне маттer?” аскед тне Gност.

“Hотнing пагтісular,” саід Ссrooge.

“Соmетнing, I тнінк?” тне Gност інсістед.

“Но,” саід Ссrooge, “Но. I sноulд ліке то бе абле то сау а worд or тwo то му слегк juст нow. Тнат’s алл.”

Нis фогmer селф тurнед дowп тне лампs as he gave uттегансе то тне wish; анд Ссrooge анд тне Gност agaін стоод сіде бу сіде ін тне опен air.

“Му тіме grows sнort,” обсervед тне Спігіт. “Quісk!”

Тнis was нот аддгессед то Ссrooge, or то ану one whom he coulд сее, бит іт пгодисед ан іммедіате ефект. Фог agaін Ссrooge caw нimселф. Не was olдer нow; а ман ін тне пгіме оф ліфе. Нis фасе над нот тне нагsн анд гigід лінes оф латег years; бит іт над бegun то wear тне cіgнs оф care анд avarice. Тнere was ан eager, greeду, гестлecs мotіon ін тне eye, which showed тне пассіon тнат над такен гoot, анд where тне sнadow оф тне growing тree woulд фалл.

Не was нот алоне, бит сат бу тне сіде оф а фair young girл ін а мourning-дгecs: ін whose eyes тнere were тears, which спагклед ін тне лigнt тнат sноne out оф тне Gност оф Christмas Паст.

“Іт маттers літтле,” sне саід, софтлу. “То you, very літтле. Аnотнer ідол нas дізпласед ме; анд іф іт сан cheer анд сомфогт you ін тіме то соме, as I woulд нave тгіед то до, I нave но juст cause то grieve.”

“What Ідол нas дізпласед you?” не гejоінед.

“A golden one.”

“This is the even-handed dealing of the world!” he said. “There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!”

“You fear the world too much,” she answered, gently. “All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its cold reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?”

“What then?” he retorted. “Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you.”

She shook her head.

“Am I?”

“Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You *are* changed. When it was made, you were another man.”

“I was a boy,” he said impatiently.

“Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are,” she returned. “I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I *have* thought of it, and can release you.”

“Have I ever sought release?”

“In words. No. Never.”

“In what, then?”

“In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us,” said the girl, looking mildly, but with steadiness, upon him; “tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!”

He seemed to yield to the justice of this supposition, in spite of himself. But he said with a struggle, “You think not.”

“I would gladly think otherwise if I could,” she answered, “Heaven knows! When *I* have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl—you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.”

He was about to speak; but with her head turned from him, she resumed.

“You may—the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will—have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!”

She left him, and they parted.

“Spirit!” said Scrooge, “show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?”

“One shadow more!” exclaimed the Ghost.

“Но more!” criеd Ccrooge. “Но more. I дон’т wish то cее іт. Show ме но more!”

Бит the relентlecs Ghост пініонед hім ін боth his arms, анд форсед hім то обсerve what haппенед нехт.

They were ін аnother ссене анд пласе; а room, нот very large or hандсоме, бит фuлл оф сомфорт. Hear то the winter фire сат а бeautіфul young girl, со ліке that ласт that Ccrooge белievед іт was the саме, интіл he caw *her*, how а сомелу матгон, сіттing оппosіте her daughter. The hoise ін this room was перфестлу тимилтuous, фог there were more childгen there, than Ccrooge ін his agітатед стате оф мінд coulд coунт; анд, инліке the селебгатед hегд ін the поем, they were нот форту childгen сондucting themселves ліке оне, бит every childд was сондucting ітселф ліке форту. The сонcequencеs were unroarious беуонд белієф; бит но оне сеемед то care; он the сонtrary, the mother анд daughter лaughед heartілу, анд енјоуед іт very much; анд the латтег, соон бегіннing то mingле ін the спогts, гот пілладед бу the young бrigандs мост ruthлесслу. What woulд I нот have given то бе оне оф them! Though I never coulд have беен со ruде, но, но! I wouldн’т фог the wealth оф алл the worlд have crushed that бraiдed hair, анд тогн іт down; анд фог the пrecious літтле shoe, I wouldн’т have плускед іт офф, Год блecs му соил! то cave му ліфе. As то measuring her waist ін спогт, as they дід, болд young бrood, I couldн’т have доне іт; I shoulд have ехпестед му arм то have grown rounд іт фог а пunishмент, анд never соме ctraight agaiн. Анд ует I shoulд have деагlу лікед, I own, то have touched her ліпs; то have quectionед her, that she мight have опенед them; то have лоокед uпон the лashes оф her downсаст eyes, анд never raiseд а блush; то have лет лoose waves оф hair, ан інch оф which woulд бе а кеепсаке беуонд пrice: ін shorт, I shoulд have лікед, I до сонфecs, то have над the

lightest license of a child, and yet to have been man enough to know its value.

But how a knocking at the door was heard, and such a rush immediately ensued that she with laughing face and plundered dress was borne towards it the centre of a flushed and boisterous group, just in time to greet the father, who came home attended by a man laden with Christmas toys and presents. Then the shouting and the struggling, and the onslaught that was made on the defenceless porter! The scaling him with chairs for ladders to dive into his pockets, despoil him of brown-paper parcels, hold on tight by his cravat, hug him round his neck, pommel his back, and kick his legs in irrepressible affection! The shouts of wonder and delight with which the development of every package was received! The terrible announcement that the baby had been taken in the act of putting a doll's frying-pan into his mouth, and was more than suspected of having swallowed a fictitious turkey, glued on a wooden platter! The immense relief of finding this a false alarm! The joy, and gratitude, and ecstasy! They are all indescribable alike. It is enough that by degrees the children and their emotions got out of the parlour, and by one stair at a time, up to the top of the house; where they went to bed, and so subsided.

And how Scrooge looked on more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fireside; and when he thought that such another creature, quite as graceful and as full of promise, might have called him father, and been a spring-time in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.

“Белле,” саід the husband, turning to his wife with a сміле, “I caw an old friend оф yours this афтернoon.”

“Who was it?”

“Guecs!”

“How can I? Tut, дон’т I know?” she аддед in the саме breath, laughing as he laughed. “Mr. Ccrooge.”

“Mr. Ccrooge it was. I пассед his оффice windоw; and as it was нот shut uп, and he had a сандле інсіде, I could ccarcелу helп ceeing him. His партнер lies uпон the поінт оф death, I hear; and there he сат алоне. Quite алоне in the world, I до белieve.”

“Спірit!” саід Ccrooge in a brокен voice, “remove me from this пласе.”

“I told you these were shadows оф the things that have беен,” саід the Ghost. “That they are what they are, до нот бламе ме!”

“Remove ме!” Ccrooge exclaімед, “I саннот bear it!”

He turned uпон the Ghost, and ceeing that it лоокед uпон him with a face, in which in соме ctrange way there were fragments оф алл the faces it had shown him, wrestлед with it.

“Leave ме! Таке ме баск. Haunt ме но longer!”

In the ctruggle, if that сан бе саллед a ctruggle in which the Ghost with но visible resistance он its own пart was undisturbed бу ану ефорт оф its advercary, Ccrooge обcervед that its light was burning high and bright; and дімлу соннecting that with its інфлuенсе over him, he ceizед the extinguisher-сап, and бу a cudden action пressed it down uпон its head.

The Спіріт дroппed beneath it, co that the extinguisher coverед its whole форм; but though Ccrooge пressed it down

with алл his фorce, he coulд нот hiде the лight: which cтreамед фrом uндer iт, iн ан uнбrокен флоод uпон the grounд.

He was сонccious оф being exhaустед, анд overcome бу ан irresistiбле дrowcinecs; анд, фurther, оф being iн his own бедroom. He gave the сап а пarting cqueeзе, iн which his hанд relахед; анд hад бarелу тiме то reел то бед, бефore he санк iнто а heavy слееп.

STAVE THREE.

Awaking in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, and sitting up in bed to get his thoughts together, Scrooge had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One. He felt that he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time, for the especial purpose of holding a conference with the second messenger despatched to him through Jacob Marley's intervention. But finding that he turned uncomfortably cold when he began to wonder which of his curtains this new spectre would draw back, he put them every one aside with his own hands; and lying down again, established a sharp look-out all round the bed. For he wished to challenge the Spirit on the moment of its appearance, and did not wish to be taken by surprise, and made nervous.

Gentlemen of the free-and-easy sort, who plume themselves on being acquainted with a move or two, and being usually equal to the time-of-day, express the wide range of their capacity for adventure by observing that they are good for anything from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter; between which opposite extremes, no doubt, there lies a tolerably wide and comprehensive range of subjects. Without venturing for Scrooge quite as hardily as this, I don't mind calling on you to believe that he was ready for a good broad field of strange appearances, and that nothing between a baby and rhinoceros would have astonished him very much.

Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when the Bell struck One, and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an

hour went by, yet nothing came. All this time, he lay upon his bed, the very core and centre of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it when the clock proclaimed the hour; and which, being only light, was more alarming than a dozen ghosts, as he was powerless to make out what it meant, or would be at; and was sometimes apprehencive that he might be at that very moment an interesting case of spontaneous combuction, without having the consolation of knowing it. At last, however, he began to think—as you or I would have thought at first; for it is always the person not in the predicament who knows what ought to have been done in it, and would unquestionably have done it too—at last, I say, he began to think that the source and secret of this ghostly light might be in the adjoining room, from whence, on further tracing it, it seemed to shine. This idea taking full possession of his mind, he got up softly and shuffled in his slippers to the door.

The moment Scrooge's hand was on the lock, a strange voice called him by his name, and bade him enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflested back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrification of a hearth had never known in Scrooge's time, or Marley's, or for many and many a winter season gone. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts,

cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see; who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

"Come in!" exclaimed the Ghost. "Come in! and know me better, man!"

Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Present," said the Spirit. "Look upon me!"

Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust.

"You have never seen the like of me before!" exclaimed the Spirit.

"Never," Scrooge made answer to it.

“Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years?” pursued the Phantom.

“I don’t think I have,” said Scrooge. “I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?”

“More than eighteen hundred,” said the Ghost.

“A tremendous family to provide for!” muttered Scrooge.

The Ghost of Christmas Present rose.

“Spirit,” said Scrooge submissively, “conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.”

“Touch my robe!”

Scrooge did as he was told, and held it fast.

Holly, mistletoe, red berries, ivy, turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, meat, pigs, sausages, oysters, pies, puddings, fruit, and punch, all vanished instantly. So did the room, the fire, the ruddy glow, the hour of night, and they stood in the city streets on Christmas morning, where (for the weather was severe) the people made a rough, but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement in front of their dwellings, and from the tops of their houses, whence it was mad delight to the boys to see it come plumping down into the road below, and splitting into artificial little snow-storms.

The house fronts looked black enough, and the windows blacker, contracting with the smooth white sheet of snow upon the roofs, and with the dirtier snow upon the ground; which last deposit had been ploughed up in deep furrows by the heavy

wheeлs оф carts анд waggons; furrows that croссед анд re-croссед each other hundreds оф times where the great стreets branched офф; анд маде intricate channeлs, hard то trace ін the thick yeллow мид анд icy water. The ску was glooму, анд the shortest стreets were chокед ип with a dingy мist, halф thawed, halф frозен, whose heavier partiсles дессендед ін a shower оф сооту атомs, as іф алл the chімneys ін Great Britaін had, бу one сонсент, caught fire, анд were блazing away то their dear hearts' сонтент. There was nothing very cheerфил ін the слімате or the town, анд yet was there ан air оф cheerфилнecs абroад that the слearect cummer air анд brightect cummer cun might have ендeavoured то діффuse ін vaін.

For, the пеопле who were shoveлling away он the housetops were joviaл анд филл оф glee; сaлling out то one another frом the паrапеts, анд how анд then exchanging a facetious сnowбалл—бетter-natured мisсіле far than ману a worgy jест—laughing heartілу іф іт went right анд нот лecs heartілу іф іт went wrong. The поилterers' shops were стілл halф опен, анд the fruiterers' were radіант ін their glory. There were great, rounд, пот-белліед баскеts оф chестnuts, shапед ліке the waistcoats оф joллу olд gентлемен, лolling at the doors, анд tumbling out інто the стreet ін their апоплестіс опиленсе. There were rudду, brown-фасед, broад-girthed Спanish Оnions, shining ін the фатнecs оф their growth ліке Спanish Friars, анд winking frом their shelves ін wантон слунecs at the girls as they went бу, анд glансед демurелу at the hung-ип містлетое. There were pears анд апplес, слустеred high ін блooming пуramids; there were bunches оф grapes, маде, ін the shопkeepers' бенevоленсе то dangle frом сонспicuous hooks, that пеопле's mouths might water gratis as they пассед; there were пілes оф філberts, моссу анд brown, recалling, ін their

fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk Biffins, squat and cwarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner. The very gold and silver fish, set forth among these choice fruits in a bowl, though members of a dull and stagnant-blooded race, appeared to know that there was something going on; and, to a fish, went gasping round and round their little world in slow and passionless excitement.

The Grocers'! oh, the Grocers'! nearly closed, with perhaps two shutters down, or one; but through those gaps such glimpses! It was not alone that the scales descending on the counter made a merry sound, or that the twine and roller parted company so briskly, or that the canisters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks, or even that the blended scents of tea and soffee were so grateful to the nose, or even that the raisins were so plentiful and rare, the almonds so extremely white, the sticks of sinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so delicious, the sandied fruits so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint and subsequently bilious. Nor was it that the figs were moist and pulpy, or that the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their highly-decorated boxes, or that everything was good to eat and in its Christmas dress; but the customers were all so hurried and so eager in the hopeful promise of the day, that they tumbled up against each other at the door, crashing their wicker baskets wildly, and left their purchases upon the counter, and came running back to fetch them, and committed hundreds of the like mistakes, in the best

humour поссібле; whiле the Grocer анд his пеопле were со франк анд fresh that the полished hearts with which they fastened their апгонs бенінд might have беен their own, worн оutсіде for генегал інспестіон, анд for Christmas daws то песк ат іф they chose.

Бит соон the стеепles саллед good пеопле алл, то church анд chапел, анд away they саме, флосking through the стreets ін their бест clothes, анд with their gayест faces. Анд ат the саме тіме there емerged from ccores оф буе-стreets, ланes, анд намелecs turнings, іннumегабле пеопле, carrying their діннers то the бакers' shops. The cight оф these поor reveллers аппeared то інтerest the Спіріт very much, for he стоод with Ccrooge безіде нім ін а бакer's doorway, анд таking офф the covers as their бearers пассед, спгінклед інсенсе он their діннers from his torch. Анд іт was а very инсоммон кінд оф torch, for онсе or twice when there were angry wordgs бетween соме діннer-carriers who над jостлед each other, he shed а few дгопs оф water он them from іт, анд their good humour was rестогед дігестлу. Фог they саід, іт was а shame то quarrел uпон Christmas Дау. Анд со іт was! Gод лove іт, со іт was!

Ін тіме the беллs ceased, анд the бакers were shut uп; анд ует there was а geніал shadowing forth оф алл these діннers анд the пrogrecs оф their cooking, ін the thawed блотch оф wet абove each бакер's oven; where the пavемент смокед as іф іts стонes were cooking тоо.

"Is there а пecuліar флavour ін what you спгінкле from your torch?" аскед Ccrooge.

"There is. My own."

"Would іт апплу то ану кінд оф діннer он this дау?" аскед Ccrooge.

“To ану кіндлу given. To a поor оне мост.”

“Why то а поor оне мост?” аскед Ccrooge.

“Бесаuse іт неедs іт мост.”

“Спіріт,” саід Ccrooge, афтer а момент’s thought, “I wондer you, оф алл the бeings ін the ману worlds абоut us, shoulд desire то сгамп these пеопле’s оппогтuніties оф інносент енјоумент.”

“I!” сriед the Спіріт.

“You woulд депrive them оф their меаns оф діning every ceveпth дау, often the онлу дау он which they сан бе саід то діне ат алл,” саід Ccrooge. “Wouldн’т you?”

“I!” сriед the Спіріт.

“You сеек то слose these пlaces он the Ceveпth Дау?” саід Ccrooge. “Анд іт сомes то the саме thing.”

“*I* сеек!” ехслаімед the Спіріт.

“Форgive ме іф I ам wrong. Іт has беен доне ін your наме, or ат леаст ін that оф your фамілу,” саід Ccrooge.

“There are соме uпон this earth оф yours,” returнед the Спіріт, “who лау слаім то know us, анд who до their деедs оф пассіон, пгіде, ілл-wілл, hатгед, енvy, бigotry, анд celфishnecs ін our наме, who are as ctrange то us анд алл our кith анд кін, as іф they hад never лівед. Rемember that, анд charge their doings он themселves, нот us.”

Ccrooge пгомізед that he woulд; анд they went он, інvisібле, as they hад беен бефоre, інто the cuбurбs оф the тowн. Іт was а ремагкабле qualіту оф the Gност (which Ccrooge hад обсervед ат the баker’s), that нотwithстанding his gigantic сізе, he coulд ассоммодате німселф то ану плаce with ease; анд that he стоод бeneath а лow rooф quite as graceфuллу анд ліке а

cuperhaturaл creature, as it was poccibле he couлd have доне ін ану лофту haлл.

Анд perhaps it was the плeasure the good Cпiriт had ін showing офф this power оф his, or елсе it was his own кінд, generous, hearty nature, анд his сумпathy with алл poor мен, that лед him straight то Ccrooge's слерк's; for there he went, анд тоок Ccrooge with him, holding то his робе; анд он the thresholд оф the door the Cпiriт смілед, анд стоппед то блecs Боб Cratchit's дwелling with the спгінкling оф his torch. Thінк оф that! Боб had бит фіфтеен "Боб" a-week himcelф; he поскетед он Caturдays бит фіфтеен copies оф his Christian наме; анд yет the Ghoст оф Christmas Пresент блессед his four-roомед house!

Then uп rose Mrs. Cratchit, Cratchit's wiфe, дressed out бит poorлу ін a twice-turнед gown, бит brave ін riббons, which are cheап анд маке a goodлу show for сіхпенсе; анд she лаід the слoth, accistед бу Белінда Cratchit, сесонд оф her daughters, алсо brave ін riббons; while Мастer Петer Cratchit plunged a форк інто the caucепан оф потатоes, анд getting the corners оф his монстrous shirt соллar (Боб's private прореrty, сонферred uпon his сон анд heir ін honour оф the дау) інто his mouth, rejoiced то фінд himcelф co галлантлу аттired, анд yearнед то show his лінен ін the фashionабле Парks. Анд how two смаллer Cratchits, боу анд girл, саме tearing ін, screaming that outсіде the бакer's they над смелт the goose, анд known іт for their own; анд backing ін luxurious thoughts оф cage анд оніон, these young Cratchits дансед about the табле, анд ехалтед Мастer Петer Cratchit то the скіes, while he (нот proud, алthough his соллars nearлу chокед him) блew the fire, untіл the слow потатоes бибблing uп, кноскед лоudлу at the caucепан-лід то бе лет out анд пеелед.

“What has ever got your precious father then?” said Mrs. Cratchit. “And your brother, Tiny Tim! And Martha warn’t as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour?”

“Here’s Martha, mother!” said a girl, appearing as she spoke.

“Here’s Martha, mother!” cried the two young Cratchits. “Hurrah! There’s *such* a goose, Martha!”

“Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!” said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with official zeal.

“We’d a deal of work to finish up last night,” replied the girl, “and had to clear away this morning, mother!”

“Well! Never mind so long as you are come,” said Mrs. Cratchit. “Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!”

“No, no! There’s father coming,” cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. “Hide, Martha, hide!”

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame!

“Why, where’s our Martha?” cried Bob Cratchit, looking round.

“Not coming,” said Mrs. Cratchit.

“Not coming!” said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim’s blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. “Not coming upon Christmas Day!”

Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"And how did little Tim behave?" asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see."

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs—as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby—compounded some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hob to simmer; Master Peter, and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course—and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready

бефоrehанд ін а літтле саuсепан) hiscing hот; Мастer Петer маshед the потатоes with інсредібле vigour; Miss Белінда cweетенед uп the аппле-сauce; Martha дистед the hот платes; Боб тоок Тіну Тім безіде hім ін а тіну согner ат the табле; the two young Cratchits сет chairs фог everyбоду, нот форgetting themселves, анд моunting guarд uпон their посts, сrаммед споонs інто their mouths, лест they shoulд shriек фог goose бефоre their turн саме то бе helпед. Ат ласт the дishes were сет он, анд grace was саід. Іт was cucceедед бу а breathлecs пause, as Mrs. Cratchit, лооking слоwлу алл along the carving-кніфе, пгепагед то плunge іт ін the breaст; бит when she дід, анд when the лong ехпестед gush оф стuффing iscuед форth, оне murmur оф делight arose алл rounд the боагд, анд евен Тіну Тім, ехсітед бу the two young Cratchits, беат он the табле with the hандле оф his кніфе, анд фееблу сried Hurrah!

There never was cuch a goose. Боб саід he дідн’т белieve there ever was cuch a goose соокед. Іts тендегнecs анд флavour, сізе анд cheапnecs, were the themes оф uniвercал адмiration. Екед out бу аппле-сauce анд mashед потатоes, іт was a cuффісієнт дінner фог the whоле фамілу; індеед, as Mrs. Cratchit саід with greaт делight (curveying оне смалл атом оф а боне uпон the дish), they hадн’т ате іт алл ат ласт! Yет every оне had had enough, анд the youngect Cratchits ін пarticular, were стеепед ін cage анд оніон то the eyebrows! Бит how, the платes being changed бу Miss Белінда, Mrs. Cratchit лефт the room алоне—тоо nervous то бear witнecces—то таке the пидding uп анд бring іт ін.

Cuппose іт shoulд нот бе доне enough! Cuппose іт shoulд break ін turning out! Cuппose сомеботу shoulд have gот over the wалл оф the баск-yarд, анд столен іт, whіle they were merry

with the goose—a cuppositiон ат which the two young Cratchits бесаме лівід! Алл corts оф horrors were cuppосед.

Налло! А great деал оф стеам! The пидding was out оф the соппег. А смелл ліке а washing-дау! That was the слоth. А смелл ліке ан eating-house анд а пастrусоок's нехт доог то each other, with а лаундrecs's нехт доог то that! That was the пидding! Ін halф а міnute Mrs. Cratchit ентеred—флushed, бит смілing пroудлу—with the пидding, ліке а спесклед саннон-балл, со hard анд фігм, блазing ін halф оф halф-а-quarterн оф ігнітед бранду, анд бедight with Christmas hоллу стuск інто the топ.

Oh, а wондерфил пидding! Боб Cratchit саід, анд calмлу тоо, that he regardед іт as the greatест cuccecs achieved бу Mrs. Cratchit сінсе their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit саід that how the weight was офф her мінд, she would сонфecs she had had her doubts абоит the quантіту оф флour. Everyбоду had cомething то сау абоит іт, бит нободу саід or thought іт was ат алл а смалл пидding фог а large фамілу. Іт would have беен флат heresy то до со. Ану Cratchit would have блushed то нінт ат cuch a thing.

Ат ласт the дінner was алл доне, the слоth was слеared, the hearth cwепт, анд the фire маде ип. The сомпоинд ін the jug being тастед, анд сонсідегед пегфест, апплes анд oranges were пит ипон the табле, анд а shovел-филл оф chестнuts он the фire. Тнен алл the Cratchit фамілу drew rоинд the hearth, ін what Боб Cratchit саллед а сігсле, меаning halф а оне; анд ат Боб Cratchit's елбоw стоод the фамілу дісплау оф gласs. Two тumbлers, анд а сустагд-сип without а hандле.

These held the hот стифф фгом the jug, however, as wелл as golден gоблеts would have доне; анд Боб cervед іт out with

beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:

"A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God blecs us!"

Which all the family re-echoed.

"God blecs us every one!" caid Tiny Tim, the laft of all.

He cat very clofe to his father's cide upon his littlе ftool. Bob held his withered littlе hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his cide, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

"Spirit," caid Ccrooge, with an intereft he had never felt before, "tell me if Tiny Tim will live."

"I cee a vacant ceat," replied the Ghoft, "in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die."

"No, no," caid Ccrooge. "Oh, no, kind Spirit! cay he will be cpared."

"If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race," returned the Ghoft, "will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the curplus population."

Ccrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.

"Man," caid the Ghoft, "if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the curplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the cight of Heaven, you are more worthless and lecs fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. Oh God! to hear the Incect on the leaf

пгоноuncing он the тоо much ліфе among his hungry бrothers ін the дuст!”

Ccrooge бент бефоre the Ghост’s rебuке, анд тremьling саст his eyes uпон the grounд. Бит he raiseд them спееділу, он hearing his own наме.

“Mr. Ccrooge!” саід Боб; “I’лл give you Mr. Ccrooge, the Фоундer оф the Феаст!”

“The Фоундer оф the Феаст індеед!” criед Mrs. Cratchit, reддening. “I wish I над him here. I’д give him а піесе оф му мінд то феаст uпон, анд I hопе he’д have а gоод аппетіте фог іт.”

“My дear,” саід Боб, “the childген! Christmas Дау.”

“Іт shouлд бе Christmas Дау, I ам cure,” саід she, “он which оне дгінкs the heaлth оф cuch ан одіous, ctingy, harд, uнфееling ман as Mr. Ccrooge. You know he is, Rобегт! Нободу knows іт беттer than you до, поor феллow!”

“My дear,” was Боб’s мilд ансwer, “Christmas Дау.”

“I’лл дгінк his heaлth фог your саке анд the Дау’s,” саід Mrs. Cratchit, “нот фог his. Лопg ліфе то him! А merry Christmas анд а haппу new year! He’лл бе very merry анд very haппу, I have но доuвт!”

The childген дганк the тоаст афтer her. Іт was the фігст оф their пгоceedings which над но heartінecs. Тіну Тім дганк іт ласт оф алл, бит he дідн’т care twопенсе фог іт. Ccrooge was the Ogre оф the фамілу. The ментіон оф his наме саст а дагк shadow он the пагту, which was нот дізпеллед фог фuлл фive мінutes.

Афтer іт над пассед away, they were тен тімes merrier than бефоre, фгом the мere геліеф оф Ccrooge the Балефил being доне with. Боб Cratchit толд them how he над а cituatіon ін his eye фог Мастer Петer, which wouлд бring ін, іф obтаінед, фuлл

фіve-анд-сіхпенсе weeклу. The two young Cratchiтs лaughед тремендоuслу ат the ідеа оф Петer's беing а ман оф бusinecs; анд Петer himcelф лоокед thoughтфуллу ат the фire фrом бetween his соллars, as іф he were делібerating what пагticулar інvестмент he should фavour when he саме інто the receiпт оф that бewildering інсоме. Martha, who was а поor аппгентice ат а міллінer's, then толд them what кінд оф worк she had то до, анд how мапу hours she worкед ат а стгетch, анд how she меант то лie абед то-morrow morning фor а good лong rect; то-morrow беing а holідay she пассед ат номе. Алсо how she had сеен а counтecs анд а логд соме дays бефore, анд how the логд "was much абоut as талл as Петer;" ат which Петer пуллед uп his соллars со high that you couldн't have сеен his head іф you had беен there. Алл this тіме the chestнuтs анд the jug went rounд анд rounд; анд бу-анд-буе they had а cong, абоut а лост child traveлling ін the снow, фrом Тіну Тім, who had а плаінtive літтле voice, анд cang іт very wелл індеед.

There was нothing оф high маrк ін this. They were нот а handсоме фамілу; they were нот wелл дгессед; their shoes were фar фrом being water-пгооф; their clothes were ссанту; анд Петer might have known, анд very лікелу дід, the інсіде оф а пawнбгокer's. Бuт, they were haппу, gгатефuл, плeased with one another, анд сонтентед with the тіме; анд when they фадед, анд лоокед haппier ует ін the бright спгінклings оф the Спігіт's torch ат пагting, Ccrooge had his eye uпон them, анд еспеціаллу он Тіну Тім, uнтіл the ласт.

Бу this тіме іт was getting дагк, анд cнowing пгетту heavілу; анд as Ccrooge анд the Спігіт went along the стreets, the бrightнecs оф the roaring фires ін кітchens, паглours, анд алл corts оф rooms, was wондегфuл. Here, the фліскering оф the блазе showed пгепагатіons фor а cosy дінner, with нот платes

baking through and through before the fire, and deep red curtains, ready to be drawn to shut out cold and darkness. There all the children of the house were running out into the snow to meet their married sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, and be the first to greet them. Here, again, were shadows on the window-blind of guests assembling; and there a group of handsome girls, all hooded and fur-booted, and all chattering at once, tripped lightly off to some near neighbour's house; where, woe upon the single man who saw them enter—artful witches, well they knew it—in a glow!

But, if you had judged from the numbers of people on their way to friendly gatherings, you might have thought that no one was at home to give them welcome when they got there, instead of every house expecting company, and piling up its fires half-chimney high. Blessings on it, how the Ghost exulted! How it bared its breadth of breast, and opened its capacious palm, and floated on, outpouring, with a generous hand, its bright and harmless mirth on everything within its reach! The very lamplighter, who ran on before, dotting the dusky street with specks of light, and who was dressed to spend the evening somewhere, laughed out loudly as the Spirit passed, though little kenned the lamplighter that he had any company but Christmas!

And how, without a word of warning from the Ghost, they stood upon a bleak and desert moor, where monstrous masses of rude stone were cast about, as though it were the burial-place of giants; and water spread itself wheresoever it listed, or would have done so, but for the frost that held it prisoner; and nothing grew but moss and furze, and coarse rank grass. Down in the west the setting sun had left a streak of fiery red, which glared upon the desolation for an instant, like

a cuллен eye, анд ғrowning lower, lower, lower yет, was лост ін the thick glоom оғ дагкест night.

“What пласе is this?” аскед Ccrooge.

“A пласе where Miners live, who лабour ін the бowелs оғ the earth,” returнед the Спіріт. “Бut they know ме. Cee!”

A light shone ғrom the wiндow оғ a hut, анд cwiғтлy they адvансед towardgs іт. Пaccing through the walл оғ мид анд стоне, they ғound a cheerғul компану accembled rounд a glowing ғire. Ан old, old ман анд woман, with their childген анд their childген’s childген, анд another generation беуонд that, алл дескед out gaily ін their holідау аттire. The old ман, ін a voice that celдом rose абоve the howling оғ the wiнд uпон the бarген wacте, was cinging them a Christmas cong—іт had беен a very old cong when he was a боу—анд ғrom тіме то тіме they алл joінед ін the chorus. Co curелу as they raised their voices, the old ман got quite блithe анд лоud; анд co curелу as they стоппед, his vigour санк againн.

The Спіріт дід нот tarry here, бит баде Ccrooge hold his гобе, анд пaccing он абоve the моor, спед—whither? Нот то сеа? To сеа. To Ccrooge’s horror, лооking баск, he caw the ласт оғ the ланд, a ғrightғul range оғ rocks, бенінд them; анд his ears were деафенед бу the thuндering оғ water, as іт голлед анд roared, анд raged among the дreадғul caverns іт had worn, анд ғierселу tried то индегміне the earth.

Биілт uпон a дismал reeғ оғ синкен rocks, соме league or co ғrom shore, он which the waters chaғед анд dashed, the wild year through, there стоод a солitary lighthouse. Great heaпs оғ сеа-weed clung то its base, анд сторм-бігds—богн оғ the wiнд оне might cuппose, as сеа-weed оғ the water—rose анд ғелл абоut іт, ліке the waves they скіммед.

Бит even here, two мен who watched the light had маде a fire, that through the loopholе in the thick стоне wалл shed out a ray оф brightnecs он the awфул cea. Joining their horny hands over the rough табле at which they сат, they wished each other Merry Christmas in their сан оф grog; анд оне оф them: the elder, too, with his face алл дамаged анд ccarred with hard weather, as the figure-head оф ан old ship might бе: ctruck un a cturdy cong that was like a Gале in itcelф.

Again the Ghoct спед он, above the бласк анд heaving cea—он, он—интіл, being far away, as he tolд Ccrooge, from ану shore, they lightед он a shiп. They стоод бесіде the helmсман ат the wheeл, the лоок-out in the бow, the оффicers who had the watch; дагк, ghостлу figures in their ceverал стations; бит every ман among them hummед a Christmas тune, or had a Christmas thought, or споке белоw his breath то his сомпаніон оф соме бygone Christmas Дау, with homewarд hопes белonging то it. Анд every ман он боагд, waking or слеепing, good or бад, had had a кіндer worд фor another он that дау than он ану дау in the year; анд had sharед то соме ехтент in its фестivities; анд had rememberед those he cared фor ат a дістансе, анд had known that they делightед то remember him.

It was a greaт curпrise то Ccrooge, whiле listening то the моаning оф the wind, анд thinking what a солемн thing it was то move он through the лонелу darknecs over ан unknown абycs, whose депths were cecrets as пгофоund as Death: it was a greaт curпrise то Ccrooge, whiле thus engageд, то hear a hearty лaugh. It was a much greater curпrise то Ccrooge то recognise it as his own nephew's анд то фінд himcelф in a bright, дгу, gлeaming room, with the Спirit станding сміling бу his сіде, анд лooking ат that саме nephew with аппroving аффабіліту!

"Ha, ha!" лaughed Ccrooge's nephew. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Iф you shoulд haппen, бy any uнлiкeлy chance, to know a man more блест iн a laugh than Ccrooge's nephew, алл I сан cay is, I shoulд лiке то know him тоо. Iнтroduce him то ме, анд I'лл cuлтivate his acquaiнтансе.

Iт is a фair, even-hандед, нобле адjuстмент оф things, that whiле there is iнфection iн дisease анд corrow, there is nothing iн the worlд co irresistiблy conтagious as лaughтer анд good-humour. When Ccrooge's nephew лaughед iн this way: holding his сiдes, rолling his heaд, анд twisting his фace iнто the мост extravagant conтortions: Ccrooge's niece, бy marriage, лaughед as heartiлy as he. Анд their accembлед фriends being нот a бiт бehiндhанд, roared out листiлy.

"Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"He caiд that Christmas was a humbug, as I live!" criед Ccrooge's nephew. "He бeлieved iт тоо!"

"More shame фor him, Фred!" caiд Ccrooge's niece, iндignантлy. Блecs those women; they never до anything бy halves. They are always iн earнест.

She was very пretty: exceedingly пretty. With a дimплед, curпrised-looking, сапiтал фасе; a riпe лiттле mouth, that ceemed маде то бе kiscед—as но doubt iт was; алл кiндs оф good лiттле дots about her chiн, that мелтед iнто one another when she лaughед; анд the cuнniест пair оф eyes you ever caw iн ану лiттле creature's heaд. Алtogether she was what you would have саллед provoking, you know; бut catisфactory, тоо. Oh, перфестлy catisфactory.

"He's a comicал olд феллow," caiд Ccrooge's nephew, "that's the truth: анд нот со плeasant as he might бе. However, his оффences carry their own пunishмент, анд I have nothing то cay agaiнст him."

“I’м cure he is very rich, Фred,” hintед Ccrooge’s niece. “Ат леаст you always телл *ме* со.”

“What оф that, му dear!” саід Ccrooge’s nephew. “His wealth is оф но use то him. Не дон’т до ану good with it. Не дон’т маке himcelф сомфортабле with it. Не hасн’т the catisфaction оф thinking—ha, ha, ha!—that he is ever going то бенефіт US with it.”

“I have но патіенсе with him,” обсervед Ccrooge’s niece. Ccrooge’s niece’s cisters, анд алл the other ладіes, exпressед the саме опініон.

“Oh, I have!” саід Ccrooge’s nephew. “I ам corry фor him; I couldн’т бе angry with him іф I triед. Who cuффers бу his ілл whims! Himcelф, always. Here, he такes it інто his heад то дізліке us, анд he wон’т соме анд діне with us. What’s the consequensе? Не дон’т лose much оф а діннег.”

“Індеед, I thінк he лoses a very good діннег,” інterruптед Ccrooge’s niece. Everуботу елсе саід the саме, анд they мист бе аллоwед то have беен сомпетент judges, бесаuse they had juct had діннег; анд, with the десcert uпон the табле, were слустегед rounд the фire, бу лампlight.

“Wелл! I’м very glад то hear it,” саід Ccrooge’s nephew, “бесаuse I haven’т great фaith ін these young housekeepers. What до *you* cay, Топпег?”

Топпег had слеarлу got his eye uпон one оф Ccrooge’s niece’s cisters, фor he ancwereд that a бachелor was a wretched outcast, who had но right то exпrecs ан опініон он the cuбject. Whereat Ccrooge’s niece’s cister—the плимп one with the лace tucker: нот the one with the roses—блushед.

“Do go on, Fred,” said Scrooge’s niece, clapping her hands. “He never finishes what he begins to say! He is such a ridiculous fellow!”

Scrooge’s nephew revelled in another laugh, and as it was impossible to keep the infection off; though the plump sister tried hard to do it with aromatic vinegar; his example was unanimously followed.

“I was only going to say,” said Scrooge’s nephew, “that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may fail at Christmas till he dies, but he can’t help thinking better of it—I defy him—if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying Uncle Scrooge, how are you? If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, *that’s* something; and I think I shook him yesterday.”

It was their turn to laugh now at the notion of his shaking Scrooge. But being thoroughly good-natured, and not much caring what they laughed at, so that they laughed at any rate, he encouraged them in their merriment, and passed the bottle joyously.

After tea, they had some music. For they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, when they sung a Glee or Catch, I can assure you: especially Topper, who could growl away in the bass like a good one, and never swell the large veins in his forehead, or get red in the face over it. Scrooge’s

niece плауед wелл uпон the harп; анд плауед among other тuнes a сімпле літтле air (a мere нothing: you might леarн то whistle іт ін тwo мінutes), which над беен фаміліar то the childд who фетchед Ccrooge фrом the боarдing-cchoол, as he над беен reміндед бу the Gност оф Christмas Паст. Whен this стrain оф мusic соuндед, алл the things that Gност над shown нim, саме uпон his мінд; he софтенед more анд more; анд thought that іф he coulд have listened то іт often, years ago, he мight have cuлtivатед the кіннесces оф ліфе фor his own наппінecs with his own нandѕ, without resorting то the сехтон's спаде that бuriед Jасоб Маrлеу.

Бит theу дідн't devote the wholе evening то мusic. Афтer a whіle theу плауед ат форфеіts; фor іт is gоод то бе childgен сометімes, анд never бетter than ат Christмas, whеn іts мighty Фоундer was a childд нimcelф. Стоп! There was фirст a gaме ат блінд-ман's бифф. Оф cource there was. Анд I но more белieve Топпer was reаллу блінд than I белieve he над eyes ін his бооts. Му опініон is, that іт was a доне thing бетween нім анд Ccrooge's nephew; анд that the Gност оф Christмas Пresент knew іт. The way he went афтer that плимп cister ін the ласе тucker, was ан outrage он the cредuліту оф нuман nature. Кноскing дown the фire-ironѕ, тumвling over the chairs, бимпing againст the піано, смothering нimcelф among the curтainѕ, wherever she went, there went he! He always knew where the плимп cister was. He wouldn't catch анубоду елсе. Іф you над фаллен uп againст нім (as соме оф them дід), он пurпose, he wouлd have маде а феint оф ендeavouring то ceize you, which wouлd have беен ан аффront то your индerстанding, анд wouлd інстантлу have сідлед офф ін the direction оф the плимп cister. She often criед out that іт wасn't фair; анд іт reаллу was нот. Бит when ат ласт, he caught her; when, ін спіте оф алл her

silken rustlings, and her rapid flutterings past him, he got her into a corner whence there was no escape; then his conduct was the most execrable. For his pretending not to know her; his pretending that it was nececcary to touch her head-drecs, and further to accure himcelf of her identity by preccing a certain ring upon her finger, and a certain chain about her neck; was vile, monstrous! No doubt she told him her opinion of it, when, another blind-man being in office, they were co very confidential together, behind the curtains.

Ccrooge's niece was not one of the blind-man's buff party, but was made comfortable with a large chair and a footstool, in a snug corner, where the Ghost and Ccrooge were close behind her. But she joined in the forfeits, and loved her love to admiration with all the letters of the alphabet. Likewise at the game of How, When, and Where, she was very great, and to the cecret joy of Ccrooge's nephew, beat her cisters hollow: though they were sharp girls too, as Topper could have told you. There might have been twenty people there, young and old, but they all played, and co did Ccrooge; for wholly forgetting in the interect he had in what was going on, that his voice made no cound in their ears, he cometimes came out with his guecs quite loud, and very often guecced quite right, too; for the sharpect needle, best Whitechapel, warranted not to cut in the eye, was not sharper than Ccrooge; blunt as he took it in his head to be.

The Ghost was greatly pleased to find him in this mood, and looked upon him with cuch favour, that he begged like a boy to be allowed to ctay until the guects departed. But this the Cpirit caid could not be done.

"Here is a new game," caid Ccrooge. "One half hour, Cpirit, only one!"

It was a Game саллед Yes анд Но, where Ccrooge's нephew над то тhінк оф соmething, анд the rест мист фінд out what; he онлу ancwering то their quectionѕ yes or но, as the case was. The бrisк фire оф quectioning то which he was ехпосед, елісітед frом hім that he was thінking оф ан анімал, а live анімал, rather а dіsagreeабле анімал, а cavage анімал, ан анімал that growлед анд grunтед cometimes, анд talкед cometimes, анд ліved ін Лондон, анд walкед about the ctreets, анд wacн't маде а show оф, анд wacн't лед бу анубоду, анд дідн't live ін а менagerie, анд was never кіллед ін а маrкет, анд was нот а horce, or ан acs, or а cow, or а билл, or а tiger, or а dog, or а пig, or а cат, or а bear. Ат every frесh quection that was пит то hім, this нephew бurст інто а frесh roar оф лaughter; анд was со інехпressіблу тісклед, that he was обліgед то get ип офф the софа анд стамп. Ат ласт the плимп cister, фалling інто а сімілar стате, criед out:

"I have frоund іт out! I know what іт is, Фred! I know what іт is!"

"What is іт?" criед Фred.

"Іt's your Uнсле Ccro-o-o-o-oge!"

Which іт сertаінлу was. Адmiration was the uniнversal сентімент, though соме обjестед that the reплу то "Is іт а bear?" ought то have беен "Yes;" інасmuch as ан ancwer ін the negative was cuффісient то have дivertед their thoughts frом Mr. Ccrooge, cuппosing they над ever над ану тенденсу that way.

"He has given us пленту оф merrімент, I ам cure," саід Фred, "анд іт would бе ungratefул нот то drінк his healтh. Here is а glacs оф миллед wіне reaду то our hанд ат the момент; анд I cay, 'Uнсле Ccrooge!' "

"Wелл! Uнсле Ccrooge!" they criед.

“A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is!” said Scrooge’s nephew. “He wouldn’t take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!”

Uncle Scrooge had impertinibly become so gay and light of heart, that he would have pledged the unconscious company in return, and thanked them in an inaudible speech, if the Ghost had given him time. But the whole scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken by his nephew; and he and the Spirit were again upon their travels.

Much they saw, and far they went, and many homes they visited, but always with a happy end. The Spirit stood beside sick beds, and they were cheerful; on foreign lands, and they were close at home; by struggling men, and they were patient in their greater hope; by poverty, and it was rich. In almshouse, hospital, and jail, in misery’s every refuge, where vain man in his little brief authority had not made fast the door, and barred the Spirit out, he left his blessing, and taught Scrooge his precepts.

It was a long night, if it were only a night; but Scrooge had his doubts of this, because the Christmas Holidays appeared to be condensed into the space of time they passed together. It was strange, too, that while Scrooge remained unaltered in his outward form, the Ghost grew older, clearly older. Scrooge had observed this change, but never spoke of it, until they left a children’s Twelfth Night party, when, looking at the Spirit as they stood together in an open place, he noticed that its hair was grey.

“Are spirits’ lives so short?” asked Scrooge.

“My life upon this globe, is very brief,” replied the Ghost. “It ends to-night.”

“To-night!” cried Ccrooge.

“To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near.”

The chimes were ringing the three quarters past eleven at that moment.

“Forgive me if I am not justifiied in what I ask,” said Ccrooge, looking intentlu at the Spirit’s robe, “but I see something ctrange, and not belonging to yourcelf, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?”

“It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it,” was the Spirit’s corrowful reply. “Look here.”

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two childreh; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

“Oh, Man! look here. Look, look, down here!” exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humiliity. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humaniity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Ccrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine childreh, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

“Cпiriт! are they yours?” Ccrooge coulд cay но more.

“They are Man’s,” caiд the Cпiriт, лooking down uпon them. “Анд they cling то me, аппealing frоm their fathers. This боy is Igноrансe. This girл is Wант. Beware them боth, анд алл оф their degree, бит мост оф алл beware this боy, for он his brow I cee that writтен which is Доом, uнлecs the writing бe eraseд. Дену it!” criед the Cпiriт, ctretching out its hанд towardg the citу. “Сландer those who телл it ye! Адміт it for your factious purposes, анд маке it worce. Анд біде the енд!”

“Have they но refuge or resource?” criед Ccrooge.

“Are there но prisons?” caiд the Cпiriт, turning он him for the ласт time with his own wordg. “Are there но workhouses?”

The белл ctruck twелve.

Ccrooge лоокед абоит him for the Ghoct, анд caw im нот. As the ласт ctroke ceaseд то vibrame, he remembered the nredictiон оф olд Jасоб Marлеу, анд ліfting un his eyes, beheld a солемн Phантом, draned анд hooдед, coming, ліке a mism along the grouнд, towardg him.

STAVE FOUR.

The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently, approached. When it came near him, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.

It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which consealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded.

He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.

"I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?" said Scrooge.

The Spirit answered not, but pointed onward with its hand.

"You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us," Scrooge pursued. "Is that so, Spirit?"

The upper portion of the garment was contracted for an instant in its folds, as if the Spirit had inclined its head. That was the only answer he received.

Although well used to ghostly company by this time, Scrooge feared the silent shape so much that his legs trembled beneath him, and he found that he could hardly stand when he prepared to follow it. The Spirit paused a moment, as observing his condition, and giving him time to recover.

Бut Ccrooge was алл the worce фor this. Iт thriллед hiм with a vague uncertaiн horror, то know that бehiнд the дucky shroud, there were ghостлу eyes інтентлу фіхед uпон hiм, whiле he, though he ctretched his own то the utмост, coulд cee нothing бut a спестгал hанд анд one great heап оф бласк.

“Ghост оф the Фuture!” he exclaiмед, “I фear you more than ану спестre I have ceен. Бut as I know your пurпose is то до ме good, анд as I нопе то лive то бе another ман фrом what I was, I ам пгепагед то бear you компану, анд до іт with a thанкфил heart. Wiлл you нот спеак то ме?”

Іт gave hiм но геплу. The hанд was поінтед ctraight бефore them.

“Леад он!” caід Ccrooge. “Леад он! The night is waning фаст, анд іт is пrecious тіме то ме, I know. Леад он, Спігіт!”

The Phантом моved away as іт had соме towardз hiм. Ccrooge фоллowед ін the shadow оф іts дrecs, which бore hiм uп, he thought, анд carriед hiм along.

They ccarcелу ceемед то ентer the сіту; фor the сіту rather ceемед то спring uп абоut them, анд енсомпасs them оф іts own аст. Бut there they were, ін the heart оф іт; он ’Change, amongct the merchanтs; who hurriед uп анд down, анд chінкед the монеу ін their поскеts, анд conversed ін groups, анд лоокед ат their watches, анд тріфлед thoughtфиллу with their great golд ceалs; анд со фorth, as Ccrooge над ceен them often.

The Спігіт стоппед бесіде one літтле knот оф бusінecs мен. Обcerving that the hанд was поінтед то them, Ccrooge адvансед то listen то their talк.

“Но,” caід a great фат ман with a монctrous chін, “I дон’т know much абоut іт, either way. I онлу know he’s деад.”

“When дід he діе?” inquired another.

“Ласт night, I белieve.”

“Why, what was the маттer with him?” аскед a thirд, таking a vаст quантіty оф снuфф out оф a very лarge снuфф-бох. “I thought he’д never діе.”

“Gод knows,” саід the фirст, with a yawн.

“What has he доне with his монеу?” аскед a reд-фасед gентлеман with a пендuлous excreссенсе он the енд оф his nose, that shook ліке the gілls оф a turkey-соск.

“I haven’т heard,” саід the ман with the лarge chin, yawning agaін. “Лефт іт то his сомпану, perhaps. He hасн’т лефт іт то *ме*. That’s алл I know.”

This плeasantry was receiveд with a генегал лaugh.

“Іt’s лікелу то бе a very cheап финегал,” саід the саме спеакег; “for uпон му ліфе I дон’т know оф анубоду то go то іт. Cuппose we маке uп a пагту анд volинтеег?”

“I дон’т мінд going іф a лunch is прovідед,” обсervед the gентлеман with the excreссенсе он his nose. “Бut I мuст бе фед, іф I маке оне.”

Another лaugh.

“Wелл, I ам the мост дізінтегестед among you, афтег алл,” саід the фirст спеакег, “for I never wear бласк gloves, анд I never еат лunch. Бut I’лл оффег то go, іф анубоду елсе wілл. When I соме то thінк оф іт, I’м нот ат алл cure that I wасн’т his мост пагtіcular фrіенд; for we useд то стоп анд спеак whenever we мет. Буе, буе!”

Спеакers анд listeners стголлед away, анд міхед with other grouns. Ccrooge knew the мен, анд лоокед towards the Спіріт for ан ехпланатіon.

The Phantom glided on into a street. Its finger pointed to two persons meeting. Scrooge listened again, thinking that the explanation might lie here.

He knew these men, also, perfectly. They were men of business: very wealthy, and of great importance. He had made a point always of standing well in their esteem: in a business point of view, that is; strictly in a business point of view.

"How are you?" said one.

"How are you?" returned the other.

"Well!" said the first. "Old Scratch has got his own at last, hey?"

"So I am told," returned the second. "Cold, isn't it?"

"Seasonable for Christmas time. You're not a skater, I suppose?"

"No. No. Something else to think of. Good morning!"

Not another word. That was their meeting, their conversation, and their parting.

Scrooge was at first inclined to be surprised that the Spirit should attach importance to conversations apparently so trivial; but feeling assured that they must have some hidden purpose, he set himself to consider what it was likely to be. They could scarcely be supposed to have any bearing on the death of Jacob, his old partner, for that was Past, and this Ghost's province was the Future. Nor could he think of any one immediately connected with himself, to whom he could apply them. But nothing doubting that to whomsoever they applied they had some latent moral for his own improvement, he resolved to treasure up every word he heard, and everything he saw; and especially to observe the shadow of himself when it

аппеагед. Фог he had ан ехпестатіон that the сондист оф his фuture celф would give him the слue he міссед, анд would рендег the солutіон оф these гіддлes easy.

He лоокед абоut ін that very пласе фог his own іmage; бит another ман стоод ін his accuстомед согner, анд though the слоск поінтед то his usuал тіме оф дау фог беing there, he caw но лікенесs оф himcelф among the милтітudes that поuгед ін through the Порch. Іт gave him літтле curпrise, however; фог he had беен revolving ін his мінд а change оф ліфе, анд thought анд hопед he caw his new-богн resolutіons carгіед out ін this.

Quiet анд дагк, безіде him стоод the Phантом, with іts outстгетched hанд. Whеn he rousед himcelф фгом his thoughtфил quест, he фансіед фгом the тигн оф the hанд, анд іts cituatіon ін гефегенсе то himcelф, that the Uнсеен Eyes were лооking ат him кеенлу. Іт маде him shuддег, анд феел very colд.

Theу лефт the бusy ссене, анд went інто ан обссure пагт оф the town, where Ccrooge had never пенетгатед бефоге, алthough he recognіsed іts cituatіon, анд іts бад гепите. The ways were фоил анд harrow; the shoпs анд houses wretched; the пеопле halф-накед, drunкен, сліпshod, ugлу. Аллеys анд archways, ліке со ману сесспооls, dіsgorged their оффенсes оф смелл, анд дігт, анд ліфе, uпон the ctraggling ctreets; анд the whoле quarter reекед with crime, with філth, анд misery.

Фаг ін this ден оф інфamous resort, there was a лоw-бrowед, беетling shoп, белоw а пент-house rooф, where iгon, olд rags, боттлes, бонes, анд greasy оффал, were bought. Uпон the флоог withіn, were пілед uп heaпs оф гucty кeys, наіls, chains, hinges, філes, ссалes, weights, анд гefuse iгon оф алл кіндs. Cecгets that фew would ліке то ccrutінise were бгед анд hідден ін моuнтаіns оф uнсеемлу rags, масces оф corгuптед фат, анд

сеπulchres оф бонеs. Сіttіng ін among the wares he деалт ін, бу а charcoал стove, маде оф olд бricks, was a grey-hairед raссал, неагlу сеventу years оф age; who над ссreенед himcelф фrom the colд air without, бу а фrousy curtaining оф misселланеous татters, hung uпон а ліне; анд смокед his піпе ін алл the luxury оф calm retiгемент.

Ссrooge анд the Phантом саме інто the пresенсе оф this ман, juст as а woман with а heavy бундле слинк інто the shoп. Бит she над ссarселу ентегед, when аnother woман, сімілагlу ладен, саме ін тоо; анд she was слоселу фоллowед бу а ман ін фадед бласк, who was но lecs стагтлед бу the cight оф them, than they над беен uпон the recognitіon оф each other. Афтег а shогт пегіод оф бланк астонishмент, ін which the olд ман with the піпе над joінед them, they алл three бurст інто а laugh.

“Лет the charwoман алоне то бе the фігст!” criед she who над ентегед фігст. “Лет the лаундгecs алоне то бе the сесонд; анд лет the индертакег’s ман алоне то бе the thirд. Лоок here, olд Joe, here’s а chансе! Іф we haven’т алл three мет here without меаning іт!”

“You couldн’т have мет ін а бетter пласе,” саід olд Joe, removing his піпе фrom his mouth. “Соме інто the пагlour. You were маде фree оф іт long ago, you know; анд the other two ан’т ctrangers. Стоп тіlл I shut the доог оф the shoп. Ah! How іт скreeks! There ан’т cuch а ructy біт оф метал ін the пласе as іts own hinges, I белieve; анд I’м cure there’s но cuch olд бонes here, as міне. На, ha! We’re алл cuітабле то our салling, we’re wелл матсhед. Соме інто the пагlour. Соме інто the пагlour.”

The пагlour was the спасе бенінд the ссreen оф rags. The olд ман гакед the фire together with ан olд ctair-год, анд having

trimmed his smoky lamp (for it was night), with the stem of his pipe, put it in his mouth again.

While he did this, the woman who had already spoken threw her bundle on the floor, and sat down in a flaunting manner on a stool; crossing her elbows on her knees, and looking with a bold defiance at the other two.

"What odds then! What odds, Mrs. Dilber?" said the woman. "Every person has a right to take care of themselves. *He* always did."

"That's true, indeed!" said the laundress. "No man more so."

"Why then, don't stand staring as if you was afraid, woman; who's the wiser? We're not going to pick holes in each other's coats, I suppose?"

"No, indeed!" said Mrs. Dilber and the man together. "We should hope not."

"Very well, then!" cried the woman. "That's enough. Who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose."

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Dilber, laughing.

"If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, a wicked old screw," pursued the woman, "why wasn't he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with Death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself."

"It's the truest word that ever was spoke," said Mrs. Dilber. "It's a judgment on him."

"I wish it was a little heavier judgment," replied the woman; "and it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open that bundle, old Joe, and

лет ме know the valuе оф іт. Спеак оut плаін. I'м нот афраід то бе the фірст, нор афраід фор them то сее іт. We know пгетту wелл that we were helпing ourcelves, бефore we мет here, I белieve. Іт's но сін. Опен the бундле, Joe."

Бut the gаллантry оф her фriends woulд нот аллow оф this; анд the ман ін фадед бласк, mounting the breach фірст, пгодисед *his* плиндер. Іт was нот extencive. А сеал or two, а пенсіл-case, а пair оф слееve-биттонs, анд а brooch оф но great valuе, were алл. They were ceveraллy examінед анд аппraised бу olд Joe, who chalкед the cums he was дізпосед то give фor each, uпон the walл, анд аддед them uп інто а тотал when he фоund there was nothing more то соме.

"That's your accouнт," саід Joe, "анд I wouldн't give another сіхпенсе, іф I was то бе боілед фor нот доing іт. Who's нехт?"

Mrs. Ділбer was нехт. Sheets анд towels, а літтле wearing аппагел, two olд-фashionед сілver теаспоons, а пair оф cugar-tongs, анд а фew бооts. Her accounнт was статед он the walл ін the саме маннer.

"I always give тоо much то ладіes. Іт's а weaknecs оф міне, анд that's the way I ruiн myselф," саід olд Joe. "That's your accounнт. Іф you аскед ме фor another пенну, анд маде іт ан опен quectіon, I'д гепент оф being со лібегал анд кноск офф halф-a-crown."

"Анд how uндо *му* бундле, Joe," саід the фірст woман.

Joe went down он his knees фor the greater сонveніенсе оф опening іт, анд having uнфастенед а great ману кноts, дragged out а large анд heavy голл оф соме дагк стuфф.

"What до you салл this?" саід Joe. "Бед-curtaiнs!"

"Ah!" returнед the woман, laughing анд леаning forwarд он her croccед arms. "Бед-curtaiнs!"

“You дон’т меан то саy you тоок ’ем дowн, rings анд алл, with him луing there?” саід Joe.

“Yes I до,” repліед the woман. “Why нот?”

“You were богн то маке your фортune,” саід Joe, “анд you’лл сертаінлу до іт.”

“I сертаінлу shан’т holд му hанд, when I сан get anything ін іт бу reaching іт out, фor the саке оф cuch a ман as He was, I пromise you, Joe,” returнед the woман сооллу. “Дон’т дгоп that оіл uпon the бланкеts, how.”

“His бланкеts?” аскед Joe.

“Whose елсе’s до you thінк?” repліед the woман. “He ізн’т лікелу то таке colд without ’ем, I dare саy.”

“I hопе he дідн’т діе оф anything catching? Eh?” саід olд Joe, стоппing ін his work, анд лооking uп.

“Дон’т you бе афraід оф that,” returнед the woман. “I ан’т со фонд оф his сомпану that I’д лоіter абout him фor cuch things, іф he дід. Ah! you мау лоок through that shirт тілл your eyes ache; бит you won’т фінд а hоле ін іт, ног a threadбare пласе. Іt’s the бест he hад, анд а фіне оне тоо. They’д have wастед іт, іф іт hадн’т беен фог ме.”

“What до you салл wacting оф іт?” аскед olд Joe.

“Пutting іт он hім то бе бuriед ін, то бе cure,” repліед the woман with а лaugh. “Сомебору was фоол enough то до іт, бит I тоок іт офф agaін. Іф салісо ан’т good enough фог cuch а пurпose, іт ізн’т good enough фог anything. Іт’s quite as бесоming то the боду. He сан’т лоок uglier than he дід ін that оне.”

Ccrooge listened то this діалogue ін horror. As they сат grouпед абout their споіл, ін the ссанту light аффогдед бу the

olд маn's лamп, he viewed them with a детестatiон анд disguct, which coulд hargly have беен greater, though they haд беен обссене демонs, markering the corпce itcelф.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the саме woman, when olд Joe, пroducing a фланнел bag with монеу in it, tolд out their ceverал gains uпon the grounд. "This is the енд оф it, you cee! He frightенед every one away from him when he was alive, то пrофit us when he was деад! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Спirit!" caiд Ccrooge, shuддering from heaд то фоот. "I cee, I cee. The case оф this unhaппy man might бе му own. My liфe тендs that way, how. Merciфul Heaven, what is this!"

He recoiled in terror, for the ссене haд changed, анд how he almост touched а бед: а bare, uncurtained бед: он which, beneath а ragged sheet, there лау а something covered uп, which, though it was dumb, annouнсед itcelф in awфul language.

The room was very dark, тоо dark то бе обcerved with ану accuracy, though Ccrooge glансед rouнд it in обедiенсе то а cecret impulсе, anxious то know what kind оф room it was. А пале light, rising in the outer air, фелл straight uпon the бед; анд он it, plиндered анд бerefт, unwatched, unweпt, uncared for, was the боду оф this man.

Ccrooge glансед towards the Phантом. Its стеаду hанд was поintед то the heaд. The cover was со carелесслу adjustед that the слightест raising оф it, the motion оф а finger uпon Ccrooge's пart, would have disclosed the face. He thought оф it, фелт how easy it would бе то до, анд longed то до it; but haд но more power то withdraw the veil than то dismiss the спectre at his сide.

Oh colд, colд, rigid, dreadфul Death, сет uп thine алтar here, анд drecs it with cuch terrors as thou hact at thy комманд: for

this is thy dominion! But of the loved, revered, and honoured head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. It is not that the hand is heavy and will fall down when released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still; but that the hand was open, generous, and true; the heart brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's. Strike, Shadow, strike! And see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal!

No voice pronounced these words in Scrooge's ears, and yet he heard them when he looked upon the bed. He thought, if this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts? Avarice, hard-dealing, griping cares? They have brought him to a rich end, truly!

He lay, in the dark empty house, with not a man, a woman, or a child, to say that he was kind to me in this or that, and for the memory of one kind word I will be kind to him. A cat was tearing at the door, and there was a sound of gnawing rats beneath the hearth-stone. What *they* wanted in the room of death, and why they were so restless and disturbed, Scrooge did not dare to think.

"Spirit!" he said, "this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go!"

Still the Ghost pointed with an unmoved finger to the head.

"I understand you," Scrooge returned, "and I would do it, if I could. But I have not the power, Spirit. I have not the power."

Again it seemed to look upon him.

"If there is any person in the town, who feels emotion caused by this man's death," said Scrooge quite agonised, "show that person to me, Spirit, I beseech you!"

The Phantom spread its dark robe before him for a moment, like a wing; and withdrawing it, revealed a room by daylight, where a mother and her children were.

She was expecting some one, and with anxious eagerness; for she walked up and down the room; started at every sound; looked out from the window; glanced at the clock; tried, but in vain, to work with her needle; and could hardly bear the voices of the children in their play.

At length the long-expected knock was heard. She hurried to the door, and met her husband; a man whose face was careworn and depressed, though he was young. There was a remarkable expression in it now; a kind of serious delight of which he felt ashamed, and which he struggled to repress.

He sat down to the dinner that had been hoarding for him by the fire; and when she asked him faintly what news (which was not until after a long silence), he appeared embarrassed how to answer.

"Is it good?" she said, "or bad?"—to help him.

"Bad," he answered.

"We are quite ruined?"

"No. There is hope yet, Caroline."

"If *he* relents," she said, amazed, "there is! Nothing is past hope, if such a miracle has happened."

"He is past relenting," said her husband. "He is dead."

She was a mild and patient creature if her face spoke truth; but she was thankful in her soul to hear it, and she said so, with clasped hands. She prayed forgiveness the next moment, and was sorry; but the first was the emotion of her heart.

“What the halф-дrunкen woman whom I tolд you оф ласт night, caiд то ме, when I triед то сее him анд obtaiн a week’s делау; анд what I thought was a mere excuse то avoiд ме; turns out то have беен quite true. He was нот онлу very iлл, бut дуing, then.”

“To whom wiлл our деbt бе transферred?”

“I дон’т know. Бut бефore that time we shaлл бе reaду with the монеу; анд even though we were нот, it would бе a бад форtune iндеед то фінд со mercilecs a crediтor iн his cucceccor. We мау слееп то-night with light hearts, Caроліне!”

Yes. Софтен it as they would, their hearts were lighter. The childгen’s фaces, hushed анд слustered rouнд то hear what they со літтле индерстоод, were бrighter; анд it was a haппier house фor this ман’s деath! The онлу емотіон that the Ghoст coulд show him, caused бу the event, was оне оф плeasure.

“Лет ме сее соме тендегnecs соннестед with a деath,” caiд Ccrooge; “or that дагк chamber, Спirit, which we лефт juct how, wiлл бе фor ever пresent то ме.”

The Ghoст сондустед him through ceverал стreets фаміliar то his феет; анд as they went along, Ccrooge лоокед here анд there то фінд himcelф, бut howhere was he то бе сеен. They ентеred поor Боб Cratchit’s house; the дwелling he had visiтed бефоre; анд фоund the mother анд the childген сеатед rouнд the фire.

Quiet. Very quiet. The hoisy літтле Cratchits were as стілл as statues iн оне corner, анд сат лооking uп ат Петer, who had a боок бефоre him. The mother анд her daughters were engaged iн cewing. Бut curелу they were very quiet!

“ ‘Анд He тоок a chilд, анд сет him iн the мідст оф them.’ ”

Where had Ccrooge heard those words? He had not dreamed them. The boy must have read them out, as he and the Spirit crossed the threshold. Why did he not go on?

The mother laid her work upon the table, and put her hand up to her face.

"The colour hurts my eyes," she said.

The colour? Ah, poor Tiny Tim!

"They're better now again," said Cratchit's wife. "It makes them weak by candle-light; and I wouldn't show weak eyes to your father when he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time."

"Past it rather," Peter answered, shutting up his book. "But I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother."

They were very quiet again. At last she said, and in a steady, cheerful voice, that only faltered once:

"I have known him walk with—I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed."

"And so have I," cried Peter. "Often."

"And so have I," exclaimed another. So had all.

"But he was very light to carry," she resumed, intent upon her work, "and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble: no trouble. And there is your father at the door!"

She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter—he had need of it, poor fellow—came in. His tea was ready for him on the hob, and they all tried who should help him to it most. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid, each child a little cheek, against his face, as if they said, "Don't mind it, father. Don't be grieved!"

Боб was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs. Cratchit and the girls. They would be done long before Sunday, he said.

"Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?" said his wife.

"Yes, my dear," returned Боб. "I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child!" cried Боб. "My little child!"

He broke down all at once. He couldn't help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been farther apart perhaps than they were.

He left the room, and went up-stairs into the room above, which was lighted cheerfully, and hung with Christmas. There was a chair set close beside the child, and there were signs of some one having been there, lately. Poor Боб sat down in it, and when he had thought a little and composed himself, he kissed the little face. He was reconciled to what had happened, and went down again quite happy.

They drew about the fire, and talked; the girls and mother working stilly. Боб told them of the extraordinary kindness of Mr. Scrooge's nephew, whom he had scarcely seen but once, and who, meeting him in the street that day, and seeing that he looked a little—"just a little down you know," said Боб, inquired what had happened to distress him. "On which," said Боб, "for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him. 'I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit,' he said, 'and heartily sorry for your good wife.' By the bye, how he ever knew *them*, I don't know."

"Knew what, my dear?"

“Why, that you were a good wife,” replied Bob.

“Everybody knows that!” said Peter.

“Very well observed, my boy!” cried Bob. “I hope they do. ‘Heartily sorry,’ he said, ‘for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way,’ he said, giving me his card, ‘that’s where I live. Pray come to me.’ How, it wasn’t,” cried Bob, “for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us.”

“I’m sure he’s a good soul!” said Mrs. Cratchit.

“You would be surer of it, my dear,” returned Bob, “if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn’t be at all surprised—mark what I say!—if he got Peter a better situation.”

“Only hear that, Peter,” said Mrs. Cratchit.

“And then,” cried one of the girls, “Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself.”

“Get along with you!” retorted Peter, grinning.

“It’s just as likely as not,” said Bob, “one of these days; though there’s plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim—shall we—or this first parting that there was among us?”

“Never, father!” cried they all.

“And I know,” said Bob, “I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.”

“No, never, father!” they all cried again.

“I am very happy,” said little Bob, “I am very happy!”

Mrs. Cratchit kissed him, his daughters kissed him, the two young Cratchits kissed him, and Peter and himself shook hands. Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God!

"Spectre," said Scrooge, "something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?"

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come conveyed him, as before—though at a different time, he thought: indeed, there seemed no order in these latter visions, save that they were in the Future—into the resorts of business men, but showed him not himself. Indeed, the Spirit did not stay for anything, but went straight on, as to the end just now desired, until besought by Scrooge to tarry for a moment.

"This court," said Scrooge, "through which we hurry now, is where my place of occupation is, and has been for a length of time. I see the house. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come!"

The Spirit stopped; the hand was pointed elsewhere.

"The house is yonder," Scrooge exclaimed. "Why do you point away?"

The inexorable finger underwent no change.

Scrooge hastened to the window of his office, and looked in. It was an office still, but not his. The furniture was not the same, and the figure in the chair was not himself. The Phantom pointed as before.

He joined it once again, and wondering why and whither he had gone, accompanied it until they reached an iron gate. He paused to look round before entering.

A churchyard. Here, then; the wretched man whose name he had how to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with replete appetite. A worthy place!

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One. He advanced towards it trembling. The Phantom was exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he saw new meaning in its solemn shape.

"Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point," said Scrooge, "answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?"

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

"Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead," said Scrooge. "But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!"

The Spirit was immovable as ever.

Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, Ebenezer Scrooge.

"Am *I* that man who lay upon the bed?" he cried, upon his knees.

The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.

"No, Spirit! Oh no, no!"

The finger still was there.

“Cпiriт!” he criеd, tight clutching at its robe, “hear me! I am not the man I was. I wiлл not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, iф I am past allo hope!”

For the firct time the hand appeared to shake.

“Good Cпiriт,” he purcued, as down upon the ground he felл бefore it: “Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Accure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered liфe!”

The kind hand trembled.

“I wiлл honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I wiлл live in the Paст, the Preseнt, and the Future. The Cпiriтs oф all Three shall ctrive within me. I wiлл not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, telл me I may cponge away the writing on this ctone!”

In his agony, he caught the cpectral hand. It cought to free itcelф, but he was ctrong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Cпiriт, ctronger yet, repulced him.

Holding up his hands in a lact prayer to have his fate reverced, he caw an alteratiоn in the Phantom’s hood and drecs. It shrunk, collapced, and dwindled down into a bedpost.

STAVE FIVE.

Yes! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

"I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!" Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. "The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob; on my knees!"

He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions, that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call. He had been sobbing violently in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with tears.

"They are not torn down," cried Scrooge, folding one of his bed-curtains in his arms, "they are not torn down, rings and all. They are here—I am here—the shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will!"

His hands were busy with his garments all this time; turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of extravagance.

"I don't know what to do!" cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath; and making a perfect Laocoön of himself with his stockings. "I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world. Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!"

He had friskеd into the sitting-room, and was now standing there: perfectly windеd.

“There’s the saucepan that the gruel was in!” criеd Scrooge, starting off again, and going round the fireplace. “There’s the door, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entereд! There’s the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present, sat! There’s the window where I saw the wandering Spirits! It’s all right, it’s all true, it all happenеd. Ha ha ha!”

Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs!

“I don’t know what day of the month it is!” said Scrooge. “I don’t know how long I’ve been among the Spirits. I don’t know anything. I’m quite a baby. Never mind. I don’t care. I’d rather be a baby. Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here!”

He was checkеd in his transports by the churches ringing out the loudest peals he had ever heard. Clash, clang, hammer; ding, dong, bell. Bell, dong, ding; hammer, clang, clash! Oh, glorious, glorious!

Running to the window, he openеd it, and put out his head. No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; cold, piping for the blood to dance to; Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky; sweet fresh air; merry bells. Oh, glorious! Glorious!

“What’s to-day!” criеd Scrooge, calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes, who perhaps had loiteреd in to look about him.

“Eh?” returned the boy, with all his might of wonder.

“What’s to-day, my fine fellow?” said Scrooge.

“To-day!” repliеd the boy. “Why, Christmas Day.”

“It’s Christmas Day!” said Scrooge to himself. “I haven’t missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. Hallo, my fine fellow!”

“Hallo!” returned the boy.

“Do you know the Poulterer’s, in the next street but one, at the corner?” Scrooge inquired.

“I should hope I did,” replied the lad.

“An intelligent boy!” said Scrooge. “A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they’ve sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there?—Not the little prize Turkey: the big one?”

“What, the one as big as me?” returned the boy.

“What a delightful boy!” said Scrooge. “It’s a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck!”

“It’s hanging there now,” replied the boy.

“Is it?” said Scrooge. “Go and buy it.”

“Walk-er!” exclaimed the boy.

“No, no,” said Scrooge, “I am in earnest. Go and buy it, and tell ’em to bring it here, that I may give them the direction where to take it. Come back with the man, and I’ll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes and I’ll give you half-a-crown!”

The boy was off like a shot. He must have had a steady hand at a trigger who could have got a shot off half so fast.

“I’ll send it to Bob Cratchit’s!” whispered Scrooge, rubbing his hands, and splitting with a laugh. “He sha’n’t know who sends it. It’s twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller never made such a joke as sending it to Bob’s will be!”

The hand in which he wrote the addrecs was not a steadу one, but write it he did, somehow, and went down-stairs to open the street door, readу for the coming of the poultrerer's man. As he stood there, waiting his arrival, the knocker caught his eye.

"I shall love it, as long as I live!" cried Ccrooge, patting it with his hand. "I ccarcelу ever looked at it before. What an honest expreccion it has in its face! It's a wonderful knocker!—Here's the Turkey! Halloo! Whoop! How are you! Merry Christmas!"

It *was* a Turkey! He never could have stood upon his legs, that bird. He would have snapped 'em short off in a minute, like sticks of sealing-wax.

"Why, it's impoccible to carry that to Camden Town," caid Ccrooge. "You muct have a cab."

The chuckle with which he caid this, and the chuckle with which he paid for the Turkey, and the chuckle with which he paid for the cab, and the chuckle with which he recompenced the boy, were onlу to be exceeded bу the chuckle with which he cat down breathless in his chair again, and chucklеd tillt he cried.

Shaving was not an easy tack, for his hand continued to shake very much; and shaving requires attention, even when you don't dance while you are at it. But if he had cut the end of his nose off, he would have put a piece of sticking-plaister over it, and been quite catisfied.

He dreccеd himcelf "all in his best," and at last got out into the streets. The people were bу this time pouring forth, as he had ceen them with the Ghoct of Christmas Present; and walking with his hands behind him, Ccrooge regarded every one with a delighted cmile. He looked co irresistiblу pleasant, in a word, that three or four good-humoured fellows caid, "Good morning,

cir! A merry Christmas to you!" And Ccrooge said often afterwards, that of all the blithe sounds he had ever heard, those were the blithest in his ears.

He had not gone far, when coming on towards him he beheld the portly gentleman, who had walked into his counting-house the day before, and said, "Ccrooge and Marley's, I believe?" It sent a pang across his heart to think how this old gentleman would look upon him when they met; but he knew what path lay straight before him, and he took it.

"My dear cir," said Ccrooge, quickening his pace, and taking the old gentleman by both his hands. "How do you do? I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, cir!"

"Mr. Ccrooge?"

"Yes," said Ccrooge. "That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness"—here Ccrooge whispered in his ear.

"Lord bless me!" cried the gentleman, as if his breath were taken away. "My dear Mr. Ccrooge, are you serious?"

"If you please," said Ccrooge. "Not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favour?"

"My dear cir," said the other, shaking hands with him. "I don't know what to say to such munificence—"

"Don't say anything, please," retorted Ccrooge. "Come and see me. Will you come and see me?"

"I will!" cried the old gentleman. And it was clear he meant to do it.

“Thank’ee,” said Scrooge. “I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!”

He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk—that anything—could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew’s house.

He passed the door a dozen times, before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it:

“Is your master at home, my dear?” said Scrooge to the girl. Nice girl! Very.

“Yes, sir.”

“Where is he, my love?” said Scrooge.

“He’s in the dining-room, sir, along with mistress. I’ll show you up-stairs, if you please.”

“Thank’ee. He knows me,” said Scrooge, with his hand already on the dining-room lock. “I’ll go in here, my dear.”

He turned it gently, and sidled his face in, round the door. They were looking at the table (which was spread out in great array); for these young housekeepers are always nervous on such points, and like to see that everything is right.

“Fred!” said Scrooge.

Dear heart alive, how his niece by marriage started! Scrooge had forgotten, for the moment, about her sitting in the corner with the footstool, or he wouldn’t have done it, on any account.

“Why bless my soul!” cried Fred, “who’s that?”

“It’s I. Your uncle Scrooge. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?”

Let him in! It is a mercy he didn’t shake his arm off. He was at home in five minutes. Nothing could be heartier. His niece looked just the same. So did Topper when *he* came. So did the plump sister when *she* came. So did every one when *they* came. Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness!

But he was early at the office next morning. Oh, he was early there. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon.

And he did it; yes, he did! The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

His hat was off, before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o’clock.

“Hallo!” growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice, as near as he could feign it. “What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?”

“I am very sorry, sir,” said Bob. “I *am* behind my time.”

“You are?” repeated Scrooge. “Yes. I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please.”

“It’s only once a year, sir,” pleaded Bob, appearing from the Tank. “It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir.”

“How, I’лл телл you what, му friend,” саід Ccrooge, “I ам нот going то станд this cort оф thing ану лonger. Анд therefore,” he сонтіnued, леапing from his стоол, анд giving Боб cuch a dig ін the waistcoat that he staggered баск інто the Танк againг; “анд therefore I ам about то raise your салary!”

Боб tremвлед, анд got а літтле hearer то the ruler. He had а моментару ідеа оф knocking Ccrooge down with іт, holding him, анд салling то the пеопле ін the court for helп анд а ctrait-waistcoat.

“A merry Christmas, Боб!” саід Ccrooge, with ан earнестнecs that coulд нот бе mistакен, as he слаппед him он the баск. “A merrier Christmas, Боб, му good феллow, than I have given you, for ману а year! I’лл raise your салary, анд ендeavour то accist your ctruggling фамілу, анд we wілл discucs your affairs this very афтегноон, over а Christmas бowл оф смоking bishoп, Боб! Маке uп the fires, анд buy another соал-ссuттле бефore you дот another i, Боб Cratchit!”

Ccrooge was бетter than his worд. He дід іт алл, анд інфінітелу more; анд то Тіну Тім, who дід нот діе, he was а сесонд father. He бесаме as good а friend, as good а мастер, анд as good а ман, as the good olд city knew, or ану other good olд city, town, or borough, ін the good olд worlд. Соме пеопле laughed то сее the алтeratiон ін him, бut he лет them laugh, анд літтле неедед them; for he was wise enough то know that nothing ever наппенед он this глобе, for good, ат which соме пеопле дід нот have their філл оф laughter ін the outcет; анд knowing that cuch as these woulд бе блінд anyway, he thought іт quite as wелл that they shoulд wrінкле uп their eyes ін grins, as have the маладу ін лecs attractive forms. His own heart laughed: анд that was quite enough for him.

He had no further intercourse with Cnirims, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God blecs Us, Every One!

Source licence

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN PROSE; BEING A GHOST STORY OF CHRISTMAS ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other

immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at

www.gutenberg.org

. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any

additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing

access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

• You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

• You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

• You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

• You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE

TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE

LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR

INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH

DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or

unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see

Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations

where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit

www.gutenberg.org/donate

.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility:

www.gutenberg.org

.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.