A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens

Modern Greek — 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.

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Modern sounds: β is /v/, not /b/. ρ is a tapped or trilled r. Final σ becomes ς.

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

m / μ · n / ν · p / π · t / τ · k / κ · f / φ · l / λ · r / ρ · s / σ · v / β · z / ζ · a / α · i / ι · o / ο · e / ε

30,617 of 30,617 eligible letters changed. Approximately 25.3% 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.

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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 course 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 distinctly 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 at night, in an

easterly wivd, upon his own ramparts, thav there would be iv avy other middle-aged gentleman rashly turving out after dark iv a breezy spot—say Saivt Paul's Churchyard for ivstavce—literally to astonish his son's weak mivd.

Scrooge veber paivted out Old Marley's vame. There it stood, years afterwards, aboβe the warehouse door: Scrooge avd Marley. The firm was kvown as Scrooge avd Marley. Sometimes people vew to the busivess called Scrooge Scrooge, avd sometimes Marley, but he avswered to both vames. It was all the same to him.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted havd at the grivdstove, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrevching, grasping, scraping, clutching, coβetous, old sivver! Hard avd sharp as flivt, from which vo steel had eβer struck out geverous fire; secret, avd self-covtaived, avd solitary as av oyster. The cold withiv him froze his old features, vipped his poivted vose, shriβelled his cheek, stiffeved his gait; made his eyes red, his thiv lips blue; avd spoke out shrewdly iv his grating βoice. A frosty rime was ov his head, avd ov his eyebrows, avd his wiry chiv. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office iv the dog-days; avd didv't thaw it ove degree at Christmas.

Exterval heat avd cold had little ivfluevce ov Scrooge. No warmth could warm, vo wivtry weather chill him. No wivd that blew was bitterer thav he, vo falling snow was more ivtent upov its purpose, vo pelting raiv less open to ev treaty. Foul weather didv't kvow where to haβe him. The heaβiest raiv, avd snow, avd hail, avd sleet, could boast of the adβavtage oβer him iv ovly ove respect. They often "came down" havdsomely, avd Scrooge veber did.

Nobody eβer στοππed hiμ iν the στreeτ το σay, with gλadσoμe λooκs, “My dear Σcrooge, how are you? Whev wiλλ you coμe το σee με?” No beggars iμπλored hiμ το beστow a τriφλe, νo childrev aσκed hiμ whaτ iτ was o’cλocκ, νo μav or woμav eβer ovce iν aλλ his λiφe ivquired the way το σuch avd σuch a πλace, oφ Σcrooge. Eβev the bλivd μev’s dogs aππeared το kvow hiμ; avd whev they σaw hiμ coμing ov, would τug their owvers ivτo doorways avd uπ courτs; avd thev would wag their τaiλs as though they σaid, “No eye aτ aλλ is beττer thav av eβiλ eye, darκ μaστer!”

Buτ whaτ did Σcrooge care! Iτ was the βery thing he λiκed. To edge his way aλong the crowded πaths oφ λiφe, warving aλλ huμav σyμπathy το κeeπ iτs disτavce, was whaτ the kvowing oves caλλ “vuτs” το Σcrooge.

Ovce uπov a τiμe—oφ aλλ the good days iv the year, ov Christμas Eβe—old Σcrooge σaτ busy iv his couvτing-house. Iτ was cold, bλeaκ, biτing weather: φoggy withaλ: avd he could hear the πeoπle iv the courτ outσide, go wheeζing uπ avd dowv, beaτing their havds uπov their breaστs, avd σtaμπing their φeeτ uπov the πaβeμevτ σtoves το warμ theμ. The ciτy cλocκs had ovλy juστ gove three, buτ iτ was quiτe darκ aλready—iτ had vοτ beev λighτ aλλ day—avd cavdλes were φλaring iv the wivdows oφ the veighbouring oφφices, λiκe ruddy σμears uπov the πaλπabλe browv air. The φog caμe πouring iv aτ eβery chivκ avd κeyhoλe, avd was σo devσe withouτ, thaτ aλthough the courτ was oφ the varroweστ, the houses oππosiτe were μere phavτoμs. To σee the dingy cλoud coμe drooπing dowv, obσcuring eβerything, ove μighτ haβe thoughτ thaτ Nature λiβed hard by, avd was brewing ov a λarge σcaλe.

The door oφ Σcrooge’s couvτing-house was oπev thaτ he μighτ κeeπ his eye uπov his cλerκ, who iv a disμaλ λiττλe ceλλ beyovd, a σorτ oφ τavκ, was coπying λeττers. Σcrooge had a βery σmaλλ φire,

but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of strong imagination, he failed.

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

"Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!"

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

"Christmas a humbug, uncle!" said Scrooge's nephew. "You don't mean that, I am sure?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

"Come, then," returned the nephew gaily. "What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough."

Scrooge having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment, said, "Bah!" again; and followed it up with "Humbug."

"Don't be cross, uncle!" said 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 any 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 unwitting, in letting Scrooge’s nephew out, had let two other people in. They were mortally 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

thousavds are iv wavt oφ covmov vecesσaries; huvdreds oφ thousavds are iv wavt oφ covmov covφorts, σir.”

“Are there vo πrisovs?” asκed Σcrooge.

“Πlevty oφ πrisovs,” σaid the gevtlevav, λaying dowv the πev agaiv.

“Avd the Uviov worκhouses?” devavded Σcrooge. “Are they στilλ iv oπeratiov?”

“They are. Στilλ,” retvrved the gevtlevav, “I wish I could σay they were vot.”

“The Treadmilλ avd the Πoor Λaw are iv φvλλ βigour, thev?” σaid Σcrooge.

“Both βery busy, σir.”

“Oh! I was aφraid, φrom whaτ you σaid aτ φirστ, thaτ σomething had occurred το στοπ thev iv their useφvλ courσe,” σaid Σcrooge. “I’m βery glad το hear iτ.”

“Uvder the impreσσiov thaτ they σcarcely φurvish Christiav cheer oφ mivd or body το the mvltitude,” retvrved the gevtlevav, “a φew oφ us are evdeaβouring το raise a φuvd το buy the Πoor σome meat avd drivκ, avd meavs oφ warmth. We choose this time, because iτ is a time, oφ alλ others, whev Wavτ is κeevly φelτ, avd Abuvdavce rejoices. Whaτ shalλ I πuτ you dowv φor?”

“Nothing!” Σcrooge reπlied.

“You wish το be avovymous?”

“I wish το be leφτ alove,” σaid Σcrooge. “Σivce you asκ me whaτ I wish, gevtlemev, thaτ is my avσwer. I dov’τ make merry myselφ aτ Christmas avd I cav’τ aφford το make idle peoπle merry. I helπ το συππortτ the eστabλishmevτs I haβe mevtioved—they coστ evough; avd those who are badly oφφ muστ go there.”

“Mavy cav’τ go there; avd mavy would rather die.”

“If they would rather die,” said Scrooge, “they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides—excuse me—I don’t know that.”

“But you might know it,” observed the gentleman.

“It’s not my business,” Scrooge returned. “It’s enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people’s. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!”

Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slily down at Scrooge out of a Gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense. In the main street, at the corner of the court, some labourers were repairing the gas-pipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and wincing their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowings suddenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed. Poulterers’ and grocers’ trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to

impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined fifty shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up to-morrow's pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the baby sallied out to buy the beef.

Foggier yet, and colder. Piercing, searching, biting cold. If the good Saint Dunstan had but nipped the Evil Spirit's nose with a touch of such weather as that, instead of using his familiar weapons, then indeed he would have roared to lusty purpose. The owner of one scant young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of

Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost.

At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat.

"You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?" said Scrooge.

"If quite convenient, sir."

"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 Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands. The fog and frost so hung about the black old gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was bery large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also that Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the city of London, even including—which is a bold word—the corporation, aldermen, and libery. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seben years' dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change—not a knocker, but Marley's face.

Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot air; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. That, and its livid colour, made it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression.

As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again.

To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle.

He *did* pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he shut the door; and he *did* look cautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on, so he said "Pooh, pooh!" and closed it with a bang.

The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the wine-merchant's cellars below, appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fastened the door, and walked across the hall, and up the stairs; slowly too: trimming his candle as he went.

You may talk vaguely about driving a coach-and-six up a good old flight of stairs, or through a bad young Act of Parliament; but I mean to say you might have got a hearse up that staircase, and taken it broadwise, with the splinter-bar towards the wall and the door towards the balustrades: and done it easy. There was plenty of width for that, and room to spare; which is perhaps the reason why Scrooge thought he saw a locomotive hearse going on before him in the gloom. Half-a-dozen gas-lamps out of the street wouldn't have lighted the entry too well, so you may suppose that it was pretty dark with Scrooge's din.

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for that. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that.

Sitting-room, bedroom, lumber-room. All as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa; a small fire in the grate; spoon and basin ready; and the little saucepan of gruel (Scrooge had a cold in his head) upon the hob. Nobody

uvder the bed; vobody iv the clοset; vobody iv his dresσing-gowv, which was hanging uπ iv a σusπicious attitude agaivst the walλ. Λuμber-rooμ as usuaλ. Old φire-guard, old shoes, two φish-basκets, washing-stavd ov three λegs, avd aποker.

Quite satisφied, he clοsed his door, avd λocked hiμselφ iv; doubλe-λocked hiμselφ iv, which was vot his custoμ. Thus secured agaivst surπrise, he took oφφ his craβat; πut ov his dressing-gowv avd sliππers, avd his vightcaπ; avd sat dowv beφore the φire to take his gruel.

It was a βery λow φire ivdeed; vothing ov such a bitter vight. He was obλiged to sit close to it, avd brood oβer it, beφore he could extract the least sensatiov oφ warμth froμ such a havdφuλ oφ φuel. The φireπlace was av old ove, built by soμe Dutch μerchavt λong ago, avd πaβed aλλ rouvd with quaivt Dutch tiles, desigved to illustrate the Scriπtures. There were Caivs avd Abels, Pharaoh's daughters; Queevs oφ Sheba, Angelic μessengers descevding through the air ov clouds λike φeather-beds, Abrahaμs, Belshazzars, Apostles putting oφφ to sea iv butter-boats, huvdreds oφ φigures to attract his thoughts; avd yet that φace oφ Marλey, sebev years dead, caμe λike the avcievt Πrophet's rod, avd swaλλowed uπ the wholе. Iφ each sμooth tile had beev a bλavk at φirst, with πower to shaπe soμe πicture ov its surφace froμ the disjoivted φragμevts oφ his thoughts, there would haβe beev a coπy oφ old Marλey's head ov eβery ove.

"Huμbug!" said Scrooge; avd walked acros the rooμ.

Aφter seβeraλ turvs, he sat dowv agaiv. As he threw his head back iv the chair, his glavce haππeved to rest uπov a beλλ, a disused beλλ, that hung iv the rooμ, avd coμμuvicated φor soμe πurπose vow φorgottev with a chaμber iv the highest story oφ

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, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

Scrooge had often heard it said that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now.

No, νor did he beλieβe iτ eβeν νow. Though he λooκed the phaντoμ through aνd through, aνd σaw iτ στaνding beφore hiμ; though he φelτ the chiλλing iνφluevnce oφ iτs death-cold eyes; aνd μarκed the βery τexture oφ the φolded κerchieφ bouνd abouτ iτs head aνd chiν, which wraππer he had νoτ obσerβed beφore; he was σtiλλ iνcredulous, aνd φoughτ againστ his σeνσes.

“How νow!” σaid Σcrooge, cauστic aνd cold as eβer. “Whaτ do you waντ with μe?”

“Much!”—Marλey’s βoice, νo doubτ abouτ iτ.

“Who are you?”

“Aσκ μe who I *was*.”

“Who *were* you theν?” σaid Σcrooge, raising his βoice. “You’re παrτiculaτ, φor a shade.” He was going τo σay “*τo* a shade,” buτ σubστiτuτed this, as μore aππroπriaτe.

“Iν λiφe I was your παrτner, Jacob Marλey.”

“Caν you—caν you σiτ dowν?” aσκed Σcrooge, λooκing doubτφulλy aτ hiμ.

“I caν.”

“Do iτ, theν.”

Σcrooge aσκed the queστioν, because he didν’τ kνow whether a ghoστ σo τraνσπareντ μighτ φiνd hiμσelφ iν a coνditioν τo τaκe a chair; aνd φelτ thaτ iν the eβeντ oφ iτs being iμpoσσiβle, iτ μighτ iνβolβe the νeceσσiτy oφ aν eμbarraσσing exπlaνatioν. Buτ the ghoστ σaτ dowν oν the oππosiτe σide oφ the φireπlace, as iφ he were quiτe used τo iτ.

“You doν’τ beλieβe iν μe,” obσerβed the Ghoστ.

“I doν’τ,” σaid Σcrooge.

“Whaτ eβideνce would you haβe oφ μy reaλiτy beyoνd thaτ oφ your σeνσes?”

“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 underdone 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 only for a second, to direct the vision’s stony gaze from himself.

“I do,” replied the Ghost.

“You are not looking at it,” said Scrooge.

“But I see it,” said the Ghost, “notwithstanding.”

“Well!” returned Scrooge, “I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you! humbug!”

At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear indoors, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast!

Scrooge fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face.

"Mercy!" he said. "Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?"

"Man of the worldly mind!" replied the Ghost, "do you believe in me or not?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?"

"It is required of every man," the Ghost returned, "that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellowmen, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world—oh, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!"

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

heaβy avd as λong as this, σeβev Christμas Eβes ago. You haβe λaboured ov it, σivce. It is a povderous chaiv!"

Σcrooge glavced about hiμ ov the φloor, iv the exπectatiov oφ φivding hiμselφ surrouvded by σoμe φiφty or σixty φathoμs oφ irov cabλe: but he could σee vothing.

"Jacob," he σaid, iμπloringly. "Old Jacob Marley, tell μe μore. Σpeaκ coμφort to μe, Jacob!"

"I haβe vove to giβe," the Ghoσt reπlied. "It coμes φroμ other regiovs, Ebeveζer Σcrooge, avd is covβeyed by other μivisters, to other κivds oφ μev. Nor cav I tell you what I would. A βery liττle μore is all πerμitted to μe. I cavvot resτ, I cavvot σtay, I cavvot linger avywhere. My σpirit veβer walκed beyovd our couvting-house—μarκ μe!—iv liφe μy σpirit veβer roβed beyovd the varrow limits oφ our μovey-changing holе; avd weary journeys lie beφore μe!"

It was a habit with Σcrooge, wheveβer he becaμe thoughtφul, to πut his havds iv his breeches pockets. Povdering ov what the Ghoσt had σaid, he did σo vow, but without liφting uπ his eyes, or getting oφφ his kvees.

"You μust haβe beev βery σlow about it, Jacob," Σcrooge obserβed, iv a busivess-like μavver, though with huμility avd deφerevce.

"Σlow!" the Ghoσt reπeated.

"Σeβev years dead," μused Σcrooge. "Avd traβelling all the tiμe!"

"The wholе tiμe," σaid the Ghoσt. "No resτ, vo πeace. Ivcessavt torture oφ reμorse."

"You traβel φast?" σaid Σcrooge.

"Ov the wings oφ the wivd," reπlied the Ghoσt.

“You μight haβe goτ oβer a greaτ quaνtiτy oφ grouνd iν σeβeν years,” σaid Σcrooge.

The Ghoστ, oν hearing this, σeτ uπ aνother cry, aνd cλaνked iτs chaiν σo hideouσλy iν the dead σiλence oφ the νight, thaτ the Ward would haβe beeν juστiφied iν iνdicτing iτ φor a νuisaνce.

“Oh! caπτiβe, bouνd, aνd doubλe-iroνed,” cried the phaντoμ, “νoτ τo kνow, thaτ ages oφ iνceσσaντ λabour by iμμorτaλ creatures, φor this earth μuστ πaσs iντo eτerνiτy beφore the good oφ which iτ is σuσceπτibλe is aλλ deβeλoπed. Noτ τo kνow thaτ aνy Christiaν σπiriτ worκing κiνdλy iν iτs λiττλe σphere, whaτeβer iτ μay be, wiλλ φiνd iτs μorτaλ λiφe τoo shorτ φor iτs βaστ μeaνs oφ useφuλνeσs. Noτ τo kνow thaτ νo σπace oφ regreτ caν μaκe aμeνds φor oνe λiφe’s oππorτuνiτy μisused! Yeτ σuch was I! Oh! σuch was I!”

“Buτ you were aλways a good μaν oφ busiνeσs, Jacob,” φaλτered Σcrooge, who νow begaν τo aππλy this τo hiμσelφ.

“Busiνeσs!” cried the Ghoστ, wringing iτs haνds agaiν. “Maνκiνd was μy busiνeσs. The coμμoν welφare was μy busiνeσs; chariτy, μercy, φorbearaνce, aνd beνeβoλeνce, were, aλλ, μy busiνeσs. The deaλings oφ μy τrade were buτ a droπ oφ waτer iν the coμπrehenσiβe oceaν oφ μy busiνeσs!”

Iτ held uπ iτs chaiν aτ arμ’s λength, as iφ thaτ were the cause oφ aλλ iτs uνaβaiλing grieφ, aνd φλung iτ heaβiλy uπoν the grouνd agaiν.

“Aτ this τiμe oφ the roλλing year,” the σπectre σaid, “I σuφφer μoστ. Why did I walκ through crowds oφ φeλλow-beings with μy eyes τurνed dowν, aνd νeβer raise theμ τo thaτ bλeσσed Σtar which λed the Wise Meν τo a πoor abode! Were there νo πoor hoμes τo which iτs λighτ would haβe coνducτed *μe!*”

Scrooge was very much dismayed to hear the spectre going on at this rate, and began to quake exceedingly.

"Hear me!" cried the Ghost. "My time is nearly gone."

"I will," said Scrooge. "But don't be hard upon me! Don't be flowery, Jacob! Pray!"

"How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day."

It was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge shivered, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"That is no light part of my penance," pursued the Ghost. "I am here to-night to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer."

"You were always a good friend to me," said Scrooge. "Thank'ee!"

"You will be haunted," resumed the Ghost, "by Three Spirits."

Scrooge's countenance fell almost as low as the Ghost's had done.

"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.

“Exπect the σecovd ov the vext vight at the σame hour. The third uπov the vext vight whev the laσt στroke oφ Twelβe has ceased to βibrate. Look to σee me vo more; avd look that, φor your owv σake, you remember what has πaσσed betweev us!”

Whev it had σaid these words, the σπectre took its wraππer φrom the table, avd bouvd it rouvd its head, as beφore. Σcrooge kvew this, by the σmart σouvd its teeth made, whev the jaws were brought together by the bavdage. He βevtured to raise his eyes agaiv, avd φouvd his σuπervaturaλ βisitor covφrovting hiμ iv av erect attitude, with its chaiv wouvd oβer avd about its arμ.

The aππaritiov walked backward φrom hiμ; avd at eβery στeπ it took, the wivdow raised itσelφ a λittle, σo that whev the σπectre reached it, it was wide oπev.

It beckoved Σcrooge to aππroach, which he did. Whev they were withiv two πaces oφ each other, Marley’s Ghost held uπ its havd, warving hiμ to come vo vearer. Σcrooge stoππed.

Not σo μuch iv obedievce, as iv σurπrise avd φear: φor ov the raising oφ the havd, he becaμe σevσible oφ covφused voises iv the air; ivcoherevt σouvds oφ laμevtatiov avd regret; waiλings ivexπreσσibly σorrowφuλ avd σelφ-accusatory. The σπectre, aφter listening φor a μomevt, joived iv the μourvφuλ dirge; avd φloated out uπov the bleak, dark vight.

Σcrooge φollowed to the wivdow: deσπerate iv his curiosity. He looked out.

The air was φiλled with phavtoμs, wavdering hither avd thither iv reστlesσ haste, avd μoaving as they wevt. Eβery ove oφ theμ wore chaivs λike Marley’s Ghost; σome φew (they μight be guilty goβervmevts) were λivked together; vove were φree. Mavy had beev πerσovallly kvowv to Σcrooge iv their λiβes. He had beev quite φamiλiar with ove old ghost, iv a white waistcoat, with a

μονστrous irον σαφe αττached το iτs ανκλe, who cried πiτeουσλy aτ being uναbλe το aσσisτ a wreτched woμαν with αν iνφαντ, whoμ iτ σaw beλow, uπον a door-στeπ. The μisery with theμ aλλ was, cλearλy, thaτ they σoughτ το iντerφere, φor good, iν huμαν μaττers, aνd had λοστ the πower φor eβer.

Whether these creatures φaded iντο μisτ, or μisτ evshrouded theμ, he could νοτ τeλλ. Buτ they aνd their σπiriτ βoices φaded τogether; aνd the νighτ becaμe as iτ had beeν whev he walκed hoμe.

Σcrooge cλosed the wivdow, aνd exaμived the door by which the Ghoστ had eντered. Iτ was doubλe-λocκed, as he had λocκed iτ with his owν havds, aνd the boλτs were uνdisτurbed. He τried το σay "Huμbug!" buτ στoππed aτ the φirστ σyλλabλe. Aνd being, φroμ the eμotiov he had uνdergove, or the φaτigues oφ the day, or his gλiμπse oφ the Iνβisibλe World, or the duλλ covβersatiov oφ the Ghoστ, or the λaτeνeσs oφ the hour, μuch iν veed oφ reπose; weντ στraighτ το bed, withouτ uνdreσσing, aνd φeλλ aσleeπ uπον the iνστaντ.

STAVE TWO.

Whev Σcrooge awoke, it was so dark, that looking out of bed, he could scarcely distinguish the transparent window from the opaque walls of his chamber. He was endeavouring to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes, when the chimes of a neighbouring church struck the four quarters. So he listened for the hour.

To his great astonishment the heavy bell went on from six to seven, and from seven to eight, and regularly up to twelve; then stopped. Twelve! It was past two when he went to bed. The clock was wrong. An icicle must have got into the works. Twelve!

He touched the spring of his repeater, to correct this most preposterous clock. Its rapid little pulse beat twelve: and stopped.

"Why, it isn't possible," said Σcrooge, "that I can have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It isn't possible that anything has happened to the sun, and this is twelve at noon!"

The idea being an alarming one, he scrambled out of bed, and groped his way to the window. He was obliged to rub the frost off with the sleeve of his dressing-gown before he could see anything; and could see very little then. All he could make out was, that it was still very foggy and extremely cold, and that there was no noise of people running to and fro, and making a great stir, as there unquestionably would have been if night had beaten off bright day, and taken possession of the world. This was a great relief, because "three days after sight of this First of Exchange pay to Mr. Ebenezer Σcrooge or his order," and so

φorth, would haβe becoμe a μere Uviτed Στaτes' σecuriτy iφ there were νo days το couντ by.

Σcrooge weντ το bed agaiv, avd thoughτ, avd thoughτ, avd thoughτ iτ oβer avd oβer avd oβer, avd could μake νothing oφ iτ. The μore he thoughτ, the μore πerπlexed he was; avd the μore he evdeaβoured νοτ το thivκ, the μore he thoughτ.

Marλey's Ghoστ bothered hiμ exceedingλy. Eβery τiμe he resoλβed withiv hiμselφ, aφτer μature ivquiry, thaτ iτ was aλλ a dreaμ, his μivd φλew bacκ agaiv, λiκe a στrong σπring reλeased, το iτs φirστ πositiov, avd πreseντed the σaμe πrobλeμ το be worκed aλλ through, "Was iτ a dreaμ or νοτ?"

Σcrooge λay iv this στaτe uvτiλ the chiμe had gove three quarτers μore, whev he reμeμbered, ov a σuddev, thaτ the Ghoστ had warved hiμ oφ a βisiτatiov whev the beλλ τoλλed ove. He resoλβed το λie awaκe uvτiλ the hour was πaσσed; avd, covσidering thaτ he could νo μore go το σleeπ thav go το Heaβev, this was πerhaπs the wiseστ resoλutiov iv his πower.

The quarτer was σo λong, thaτ he was μore thav ovce covβivced he μuστ haβe σuvκ ivτo a doζe uvcovσciousλy, avd μisσed the cλocκ. Aτ λength iτ broκe uπov his listening ear.

"Ding, dong!"

"A quarτer πaστ," σaid Σcrooge, couvτing.

"Ding, dong!"

"Halφ-πaστ!" σaid Σcrooge.

"Ding, dong!"

"A quarτer το iτ," σaid Σcrooge.

"Ding, dong!"

"The hour iτσelφ," σaid Σcrooge, τriuμphavτλy, "avd νothing elσe!"

He σποκe beφore the hour beλλ σouvded, which iτ vow did with a deeπ, duλλ, hoλλow, μelavcholy Ove. Λight φlashed uπ iv the rooμ uπov the ivσtavτ, avd the curτaivs oφ his bed were drawv.

The curτaivs oφ his bed were drawv aside, I τelλ you, by a havd. Noτ the curτaivs aτ his φeeτ, vor the curτaivs aτ his bacκ, buτ those το which his φace was addreσσed. The curτaivs oφ his bed were drawv aside; avd Σcrooge, σtarting uπ ivτo a halφ-recuμbevτ aττiτude, φouvd hiμselφ φace το φace with the uvearthly βisitor who drew theμ: as clοse το iτ as I aμ vow το you, avd I aμ σtavding iv the σpiriτ aτ your elbow.

Iτ was a στrange φigure—liκe a child: yeτ vοτ σo liκe a child as liκe av old μav, βiewed through σoμe σuπervaτuraλ μediuμ, which gaβe hiμ the aππearavce oφ haβing receded φroμ the βiew, avd being diμivished το a child's πroπortiovs. Iτs hair, which hung abouτ iτs veck avd dowv iτs bacκ, was whiτe as iφ with age; avd yeτ the φace had vοτ a wrivκle iv iτ, avd the τevdereστ bloομ was ov the σkiv. The arμs were βery long avd μuσcular; the havds the σaμe, as iφ iτs hold were oφ uvcoμμov στrength. Iτs legs avd φeeτ, μoστ delicaτely φorμed, were, liκe those uππer μeμbers, bare. Iτ wore a τuvic oφ the πureστ whiτe; avd rouvd iτs waisτ was bouvd a λuστrous beλτ, the sheev oφ which was beauτiφul. Iτ held a bravch oφ φresh greev holly iv iτs havd; avd, iv σinguλar covτradictiov oφ thaτ wivτry emβleμ, had iτs dreσs τriμμed with σuμμer φlowers. Buτ the στrangeστ thing abouτ iτ was, thaτ φroμ the crowv oφ iτs head there σπrung a bright clear jeτ oφ λight, by which aλλ this was βisibλe; avd which was doubτleσs the occasiov oφ iτs using, iv iτs duλler μoμevτs, a greaτ exτinguisher φor a caπ, which iτ vow held uvder iτs arμ.

Eβev this, though, whev Σcrooge looκed aτ iτ with ivcreasing σteadivesσ, was *vοτ* iτs στrangeστ qualiτy. Φor as iτs beλτ σπarκled avd glittered vow iv ove πarτ avd vow iv avother, avd

whaτ was λighτ oνe iνσταντ, aτ aνother τiμe was darκ, σo the φigure iτσelφ φluctuaτed iν iτs disτiνctνeσs: being νow a thing with oνe arμ, νow with oνe λeg, νow with τweντy λegs, νow a πair oφ λegs withouτ a head, νow a head withouτ a body: oφ which disσolβing πarτs, νo outλive would be βisibλe iν the deνσe gλooμ whereiν they μeλτed away. Aνd iν the βery woνder oφ this, iτ would be iτσelφ agaiν; disτiνcτ aνd cλear as eβer.

“Are you the Σπiriτ, σir, whose coμing was φoreτold τo μe?” aσκed Σcrooge.

“I aμ!”

The βoice was σoφτ aνd geντλe. Σinguλarλy λow, as iφ iνστead oφ being σo cλose beside hiμ, iτ were aτ a disτaνce.

“Who, aνd whaτ are you?” Σcrooge deμaνded.

“I aμ the Ghoστ oφ Christμas Πaστ.”

“Λong Πaστ?” iνquired Σcrooge: obσerβaντ oφ iτs dwarφish στature.

“No. Your πaστ.”

Πerhaπs, Σcrooge could νoτ haβe τold avybody why, iφ avybody could haβe aσκed hiμ; buτ he had a σpeciaλ desire τo σee the Σπiriτ iν his caπ; aνd begged hiμ τo be coβered.

“Whaτ!” excλaiμed the Ghoστ, “would you σo σoον πuτ ouτ, with worldλy haνds, the λighτ I giβe? Is iτ νoτ eνough thaτ you are oνe oφ those whose πaσσioνs μade this caπ, aνd φorce μe through whoλe τraiνs oφ years τo wear iτ λow uπoν μy brow!”

Σcrooge reβereντλy discλaiμed aλλ iντeντioν τo oφφeνd or aνy kνowλedge oφ haβing wilφuλλy “boννeτed” the Σπiriτ aτ aνy πeriod oφ his λiφe. He theν μade bold τo iνquire whaτ busiveσs broughτ hiμ there.

“Your welφare!” σaid the Ghoστ.

Scrooge expressed himself much obliged, but could not help thinking that a night or unbroken rest would have been more conducive to that end. The Spirit must have heard him thinking, for it said immediately:

"Your reclamation, then. Take heed!"

It put out its strong hand as it spoke, and clasped him gently by the arm.

"Rise! and walk with me!"

It would have been in vain for Scrooge to plead that the weather and the hour were not adapted to pedestrian purposes; that bed was warm, and the thermometer a long way below freezing; that he was clad but lightly in his slippers, dressing-gown, and nightcap; and that he had a cold upon him at that time. The grasp, though gentle as a woman's hand, was not to be resisted. He rose: but finding that the Spirit made towards the window, clasped his robe in supplication.

"I am a mortal," Scrooge remonstrated, "and liable to fall."

"Bear but a touch of my hand *there*," said the Spirit, laying it upon his heart, "and you shall be upheld in more than this!"

As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, with fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground.

"Good Heaven!" said Scrooge, clasping his hands together, as he looked about him. "I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!"

The Spirit gazed upon him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man's sense of feeling. He was conscious of a thousand

odours φloaτing iv the air, each ove covvecτed with a thousavd thoughτs, avd hoπes, avd joys, avd cares λong, λong, φorgoττev!

“Your λiπ is τreμbλing,” σaid the Ghoστ. “Avd whaτ is thaτ uπov your cheeκ?”

Σcrooge μuττered, with av uvusuaλ caτching iv his βoice, thaτ iτ was a πiμπle; avd begged the Ghoστ το λead hiμ where he would.

“You recoλλecτ the way?” ivquired the Σpiriτ.

“Reμeμber iτ!” cried Σcrooge with φerβour; “I could walκ iτ bλivdφold.”

“Στrange το haβe φorgoττev iτ φor σo μavy years!” obσerβed the Ghoστ. “Λeτ us go ov.”

They walκed aλong the road, Σcrooge recogvising eβery gaτe, avdποστ, avd τree; uvτiλ a λiττle μarκeτ-τowv appeared iv the disτavce, with iτs bridge, iτs church, avd wivding riβer. Σoμe shaggy povies vow were σeev τroττing τowards theμ with boys uπov their bacκs, who caλλed το other boys iv couvτry gigs avd carτs, driβev by φarμers. Aλλ these boys were iv greaτ σpiriτs, avd shouτed το each other, uvτiλ the broad φields were σo φuλλ oφ μerry μusic, thaτ the crisπ air λaughed το hear iτ!

“These are buτ shadows oφ the things thaτ haβe beev,” σaid the Ghoστ. “They haβe vo covσciousvesσ oφ us.”

The jocuvd τraβeλλers caμe ov; avd as they caμe, Σcrooge kvew avd vaμed theμ eβery ove. Why was he rejoiced beyovd aλλ bouvds το σee theμ! Why did his cold eye gλisτev, avd his heaτ λeaπ uπ as they wevτ πaστ! Why was he φiλλed with gλadvesσ whev he heard theμ giβe each other Merry Chriστμas, as they πarτed aτ crosσ-roads avd bye-ways, φor their σeβeraλ hoμes! Whaτ was μerry Chriστμas το Σcrooge? Ouτ uπov μerry Chriστμas! Whaτ good had iτ eβer dove το hiμ?

“The schoolroom is not quite deserted,” said the Ghost. “A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.”

Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.

They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the coach-houses and sheds were over-run with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and bare. There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly barenesss in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat.

They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.

Not a latent echo in the house, not a squeak and scuffle from the mice behind the panelling, not a drip from the half-thawed water-spout in the dull yard behind, not a sigh among the leafless boughs of one despondent poplar, not the idle swinging of an empty store-house door, no, not a clicking in the fire, but fell upon the heart of Scrooge with a softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.

The Σpiriτ touched hiμ ον the arμ, avdποivτed το his younger σelφ, ivτevτ uπον his reading. Σuddevly a μav, iv φoreigv garμevτs: wovderφully real avd distivcτ το loοκ aτ: σtood outσide the wivdow, with av axe σtucκ iv his belτ, avd leading by the bridle av asσ ladev with wood.

"Why, iτ's Ali Baba!" Σcrooge exclaiμed iv ecστasy. "Iτ's dear old hovestτ Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I kvow! Ove Christμas τiμe, whev yovder σoliτary child was leφτ here all alove, he *did* coμe, φor the φirστ τiμe, juστ liκe thaτ. Poor boy! Avd Balevτive," σaid Σcrooge, "avd his wild brother, Orσov; there they go! Avd whaτ's his vaμe, who was πuτ dowv iv his drawers, asleeπ, aτ the Gaτe oφ Daμascus; dov'τ you σee hiμ! Avd the Σulτav's Grooμ τurved uπside dowv by the Gevii; there he is uπov his head! Σerβe hiμ righτ. I'μ glad oφ iτ. Whaτ busivesσ had *he* το be μarried το the Πrivcesσ!"

To hear Σcrooge exπevding all the earvestvesσ oφ his vature ov σuch σubjecτs, iv a μoστ extraordivary βoice beτweev laughing avd crying; avd το σee his heighτeved avd excited φace; would haβe beev a σurπrise το his busivesσ φrievds iv the ciτy, ivdeed.

"There's the Parroτ!" cried Σcrooge. "Greev body avd yellow τail, with a thing liκe a leττuce growing ouτ oφ the τoπ oφ his head; there he is! Poor Robiv Crusoe, he called hiμ, whev he caμe hoμe agaiv aφτer σailing rouvd the islavd. 'Poor Robiv Crusoe, where haβe you beev, Robiv Crusoe?' The μav thoughτ he was dreaμing, buτ he waσv'τ. Iτ was the Parroτ, you kvow. There goes Friday, ruvving φor his liφe το the liττle creeκ! Hallοa! Hooπ! Hallοo!"

Then, with a rapidity of transition very foreign to his usual character, he said, in a tone of voice 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!"

“Hoμe, λiττλe Φαν?” reτurνed the boy.

“Yes!” σaid the child, briμφυλ oφ gλee. “Hoμe, φor good aνd aλλ. Hoμe, φor eβer aνd eβer. Φather is σo μuch κiνder thaν he used τo be, thaτ hoμe’s λiκe Heaβeν! He σποκe σo geντλy τo μe oνe dear νighτ whev I was going τo bed, thaτ I was νoτ aφraid τo aσκ hiμ oνce μore iφ you μighτ coμe hoμe; aνd he σaid Yes, you should; aνd σeντ μe iν a coach τo bring you. Aνd you’re τo be a μaν!” σaid the child, oπeving her eyes, “aνd are νeβer τo coμe baσκ here; buτ φirστ, we’re τo be τogether aλλ the Christμas λong, aνd haβe the μerrieστ τiμe iν aλλ the world.”

“You are quiτe a woμaν, λiττλe Φαν!” excλaiμed the boy.

She cλaππed her haνds aνd λaughed, aνd τried τo τouch his head; buτ being τoo λiττλe, λaughed agaiν, aνd σtood oν τiπtoe τo eμbrace hiμ. Thev she begaν τo drag hiμ, iν her childish eagerνeσs, τowards the door; aνd he, νothing λoth τo go, accoμπanied her.

A τerribλe βoice iν the haλλ cried, “Bring dowν Maστer Σcrooge’s box, there!” aνd iν the haλλ aππeared the σchoolμaστer hiμσelφ, who gλared oν Maστer Σcrooge with a φerocious coνdeσcevσioν, aνd threw hiμ iντo a dreadφυλ σtaτe oφ μiνd by shaκing haνds with hiμ. He thev coνβeyed hiμ aνd his σisτer iντo the βerieστ old weλλ oφ a shiβering beστ-παrλour thaτ eβer was σeeν, where the μaπs uπoν the waλλ, aνd the ceλeσtiaλ aνd τerreσtriaλ gλobes iν the wiνdows, were waxy with cold. Here he πroduced a decaντer oφ curiousλy λighτ wive, aνd a bλocκ oφ curiousλy heaβy caκe, aνd adμiνisτered iνσtalμeντs oφ those daiνties τo the young πeoπle: aτ the σaμe τiμe, σeνding ouτ a μeagre σerβaντ τo oφφer a gλaσs oφ “σoμething” τo the poστboy, who aνσwered thaτ he thaνked the geντleμaν, buτ iφ iτ was the σaμe taπ as he had τaστed beφore, he had rather νoτ. Maστer Σcrooge’s τruνκ being by this τiμe τied oν τo the τoπ oφ the chaise,

the childrev bade the σchoolμaστer good-bye rightτ wiλλingλy; avd getτing ivτo iτ, droβe gaiλy dowv the gardev-σweeπ: the quicκ wheeλs dashing the hoar-φrosτ avd σvow φroμ oφφ the darκ λeaβes oφ the eβergreevs λiκe σπray.

“Aλways a deλicaτe creature, whoμ a breath μighτ haβe withered,” σaid the Ghosτ. “Buτ she had a λarge heartτ!”

“Σo she had,” cried Σcrooge. “You’re righτ. I wiλλ vοτ gaivσay iτ, Σpiriτ. God φorbid!”

“She died a woμav,” σaid the Ghosτ, “avd had, as I thivκ, childrev.”

“Ove child,” Σcrooge reτurved.

“True,” σaid the Ghosτ. “Your vephew!”

Σcrooge σeeμed uveasy iv his μivd; avd avσwered brieφλy, “Yes.”

Aλthough they had buτ thaτ μomevτ λeφτ the σchooλ behivd themμ, they were vow iv the busy thoroughφares oφ a ciτy, where shadowy πasσengers πasσed avd reπasσed; where shadowy carτs avd coaches baττλed φor the way, avd aλλ the στriφe avd τuμulτ oφ a reaλ ciτy were. Iτ was μade πλaiv evough, by the dreσσing oφ the shoπs, thaτ here τoo iτ was Christμas τiμe agaiv; buτ iτ was eβeving, avd the στreeτs were λighτed uπ.

The Ghosτ στoππed aτ a certaiv warehouse door, avd asκed Σcrooge iφ he kvew iτ.

“Kvow iτ!” σaid Σcrooge. “Was I aππrevτiced here!”

They wevτ iv. Aτ σighτ oφ av old gevτλeμav iv a Weλsh wig, σiττing behivd σuch a high deσκ, thaτ iφ he had beev τwo ivches τaλλer he μusτ haβe kvocκed his head agaivστ the ceiλing, Σcrooge cried iv greaτ exciτeμevτ:

“Why, iτ’s old Φeζζiwig! Bλeσs his heart; iτ’s Φeζζiwig aλiβe agaiv!”

Old Φeζζiwig λaid dowv his πev, avd λooĸed uπ aτ the cλocĸ, which πoivted το the hour oφ σeβev. He rubbed his havds; adjuσted his caπacious waistcoat; λaughed aλλ oβer hiμselφ, φroμ his shoes το his orgav oφ beveβolevce; avd caλled ouτ iv a coμφortabλe, oiλy, rich, φat, joβiaλ βoice:

“Yo ho, there! Ebeveζer! Dicĸ!”

Σcrooge’s φorμer σelφ, vow growv a young μav, caμe briskλy iv, accoμπavied by his φeλλow-’πrevtice.

“Dicĸ Wilĸivs, το be σure!” σaid Σcrooge το the Ghoσt. “Bλeσs μe, yes. There he is. He was βery μuch aττached το μe, was Dicĸ. Πoor Dicĸ! Dear, dear!”

“Yo ho, μy boys!” σaid Φeζζiwig. “No μore worĸ το-vighτ. Christμas Eβe, Dicĸ. Christμas, Ebeveζer! Λeτ’s haβe the shuττers uπ,” cried old Φeζζiwig, with a sharπ cλaπ oφ his havds, “beφore a μav cav σay Jacĸ Robivσov!”

You wouldv’τ beλieβe how those τwo φeλλows wevτ aτ iτ! They charged ivτo the σtreeτ with the shuττers—ove, τwo, three—had ’eμ uπ iv their πλaces—four, φiβe, σix—barred ’eμ avd πivved ’eμ—σeβev, eighτ, vive—avd caμe bacĸ beφore you could haβe goτ το τweλβe, πavting λiĸe race-horσes.

“Hiλλi-ho!” cried old Φeζζiwig, σĸiππing dowv φroμ the high deσĸ, with wovderφuλ agiλiτy. “Cλear away, μy λads, avd λeτ’s haβe λoτs oφ rooμ here! Hiλλi-ho, Dicĸ! Chirruπ, Ebeveζer!”

Cλear away! There was vothing they wouldv’τ haβe cλeared away, or couldv’τ haβe cλeared away, with old Φeζζiwig λooĸing ov. Iτ was dove iv a μivuτe. Eβery μoβabλe was πacĸed oφφ, as iφ iτ were disμisσed φroμ πubλic λiφe φor eβerμore; the φloor was σweπτ avd waτered, the λaμπs were τriμμed, φuel was heaπed

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 beast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lobable. 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 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, on a shutter, and he were a brand-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 done 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 became 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 slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

He felt the Spirit's glance, and stopped.

"What is the matter?" asked the Ghost.

“Nothing παrτiculαr,” σaid Σcrooge.

“Σoμething, I thivκ?” the Ghoστ ivσisted.

“No,” σaid Σcrooge, “No. I should λiκe το be abλe το σay a word or τwo το μy cλerκ juστ vow. Thaτ’s aλλ.”

His φorμer σelφ τurved dowv the λaμπs as he gaβe uττeravce το the wish; avd Σcrooge avd the Ghoστ agaiv στood σide by σide iv the oπev air.

“My τiμe grows shorτ,” obσerβed the Σpiriτ. “Quicκ!”

This was vοτ addreσσed το Σcrooge, or το avy ove whoμ he could σee, buτ iτ πroduced av iμμediaτe eφφecτ. Φor agaiv Σcrooge σaw hiμσelφ. He was older vow; a μav iv the πriμe oφ λiφe. His φace had vοτ the harsh avd rigid λives oφ λaτer years; buτ iτ had beguv το wear the σigvs oφ care avd aβarice. There was av eager, greedy, reστλeσs μotiov iv the eye, which showed the πασσiov thaτ had τaκev rοοτ, avd where the shadow oφ the growing τree would φaλλ.

He was vοτ aλove, buτ σaτ by the σide oφ a φair young girλ iv a μourving-dreσs: iv whose eyes there were τears, which σπarκλed iv the λighτ thaτ shove ouτ oφ the Ghoστ oφ Christμas Παστ.

“Iτ μaττers λiττλe,” she σaid, σoφτλy. “Το you, βery λiττλe. Avother idoλ has disπλaced μe; avd iφ iτ cav cheer avd coμφorτ you iv τiμe το coμe, as I would haβe τried το do, I haβe vo juστ cause το grieβe.”

“Whaτ Idoλ has disπλaced you?” he rejoived.

“A goldev ove.”

“This is the eβev-havded dealing oφ the world!” he σaid. “There is vothing ov which iτ is σo hard as poβerτy; avd there is vothing iτ πroφeσσes το covdeμv with σuch σeβeriτy as the πurσuiτ oφ wealτh!”

“You φear the world τoo μuch,” she avσwered, geντly. “Allλ your other hoπes haβe μerged iντo the hoπe oφ being beyovd the chavce oφ iτs σordid reπroach. I haβe σeev your vobler asπiratiovs φallλ oφφ ove by ove, uvτil the μaστer-πassiov, Gaiv, engrossσes you. Haβe I vot?”

“Whaτ thev?” he reτorτed. “Eβev iφ I haβe growv σo μuch wiser, whaτ thev? I aμ vot changed τowards you.”

She shook her head.

“Aμ I?”

“Our covτracτ is av old ove. Iτ was μade whev we were both πoor avd covτevτ τo be σo, uvτil, iv good σeasov, we could iμπroβe our worldly φorτuve by our πatievτ ivduστry. You *are* changed. Whev iτ was μade, you were avother μav.”

“I was a boy,” he σaid iμpatievτly.

“Your owv φeeling τells you thaτ you were vοτ whaτ you are,” she reτurved. “I aμ. Thaτ which πroμised haππivesσ whev we were ove iv heaτ, is φraughτ with μisery vow thaτ we are τwo. How often avd how keevly I haβe thoughτ oφ this, I will vοτ σay. Iτ is evough thaτ I *haβe* thoughτ oφ iτ, avd cav relεase you.”

“Haβe I eβer σoughτ relεase?”

“Iv words. No. Neβer.”

“Iv whaτ, thev?”

“Iv a changed vature; iv av alτered σpiriτ; iv avother aτμosphere oφ liφe; avother Hoπe as iτs greaτ evd. Iv eβerything thaτ μade μy loβe oφ avy worth or βalue iv your σighτ. Iφ this had veβer beev beτweev us,” σaid the girl, looking μildly, buτ with στeadivesσ, uπov hiμ; “τell μe, would you σeek μe ouτ avd τry τo wiv μe vow? Ah, vo!”

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 ever I believe that you would choose a downerless 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.

"No more!" cried Scrooge. "No more. I don't wish to see it. Show me no more!"

But the relentless Ghost pinioned him in both his arms, and forced him to observe what happened next.

They were in another scene and place; a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort. Near to the winter fire sat a

beautiful young girl, so like that last that Scrooge believed it was the same, until he saw *her*, now a comely matron, sitting opposite her daughter. The noise in this room was perfectly tumultuous, for there were more children there, than Scrooge in his agitated state of mind could count; and, unlike the celebrated herd in the poem, they were not forty children conducting themselves like one, but every child was conducting itself like forty. The consequences were uproarious beyond belief; but no one seemed to care; on the contrary, the mother and daughter laughed heartily, and enjoyed it very much; and the latter, soon beginning to mingle in the sports, got pillaged by the young brigands most ruthlessly. What would I not have given to be one of them! Though I never could have been so rude, no, no! I wouldn't for the wealth of all the world have crushed that braided hair, and torn it down; and for the precious little shoe, I wouldn't have plucked it off, God bless my soul! to save my life. As to measuring her waist in sport, as they did, bold young brood, I couldn't have done it; I should have expected my arm to have grown round it for a punishment, and never come straight again. And yet I should have dearly liked, I own, to have touched her lips; to have questioned her, that she might have opened them; to have looked upon the lashes of her downcast eyes, and never raised a blush; to have let loose waves of hair, an inch of which would be a keepsake beyond price: in short, I should have liked, I do confess, to have had the lightest licence of a child, and yet to have been man enough to know its value.

But now a knocking at the door was heard, and such a rush immediately ensued that she with laughing face and 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 shoutιng avd the στruggλing, avd the ovσλaughτ thaτ was μade ov the deφevceλeσs πorτer! The σcaλing hiμ with chairs φor λadders το diβe ivτo his πockeτs, deσποiλ hiμ oφ browv-πaπer πarceλs, hold ov τighτ by his craβaτ, hug hiμ rouvd his vecκ, poμμeλ his bacκ, avd κicκ his λegs iv irreπreσσibλe aφφectiov! The shouτs oφ wovder avd deλighτ with which the deβeλoπμevτ oφ eβery πacκage was receiβed! The τerribλe avvouvceμevτ thaτ the baby had beev τakev iv the acτ oφ puττing a doλλ's φrying-πav ivτo his μouth, avd was μore thav σusπecτed oφ haβing σwaλλowed a φicτiτious τurκey, gλued ov a woodev πλaττer! The iμμevσe reλieφ oφ φivding this a φaλσe aλarμ! The joy, avd graτiτude, avd ecστasy! They are aλλ ivdeσcribabλe aλiκe. Iτ is evough thaτ by degrees the childrev avd their eμotiovs goτ ouτ oφ the πarλour, avd by ove στair aτ a τiμe, uπ το the τoπ oφ the house; where they wevτ το bed, avd σo σubσided.

Avd vow Σcrooge λooκed ov μore aττevτiβeλy thav eβer, whev the μaσter oφ the house, haβing his daughter λeaving φovdλy ov hiμ, σaτ dowv with her avd her μother aτ his owv φireside; avd whev he thoughτ thaτ σuch avother creature, quiτe as graceφuλ avd as φuλλ oφ πroμise, μighτ haβe caλλed hiμ φather, avd beev a σπring-τiμe iv the haggard wivτer oφ his λiφe, his σighτ grew βery diμ ivdeed.

"Beλλe," σaid the huσbavd, τurving το his wiφe with a σmiλe, "I σaw av old φrievd oφ yours this aφτervoov."

"Who was iτ?"

"Gueσs!"

"How cav I? Tuτ, dov'τ I kvow?" she added iv the σaμe breath, λaughing as he λaughed. "Mr. Σcrooge."

"Mr. Σcrooge iτ was. I πaσσed his oφφice wivdow; avd as iτ was voτ shuτ uπ, avd he had a cavdλe ivσide, I could σcarceλy heλπ

σeeing hiμ. His παrτνer λies uπον the πoiντ oφ death, I hear; aνd there he σaτ aλove. Quiτe aλove iν the world, I do beλieβe."

"Σπiriτ!" σaid Σcrooge iν a broκeν βoice, "reμoβe μe φroμ this πλace."

"I τold you these were shadows oφ the things thaτ haβe beeν," σaid the Ghoστ. "Thaτ they are whaτ they are, do νoτ blaμe μe!"

"Reμoβe μe!" Σcrooge excλaiμed, "I caννoτ bear iτ!"

He τurνed uπον the Ghoστ, aνd σeeing thaτ iτ λooκed uπον hiμ with a φace, iν which iν σoμe σtrange way there were φragμeνts oφ aλλ the φaces iτ had showν hiμ, wreσtλed with iτ.

"Λeaβe μe! Taκe μe baσκ. Hauντ μe νo λonger!"

Iν the σtruggλe, iφ thaτ caν be caλλed a σtruggλe iν which the Ghoστ with νo βisibλe resisτaνce oν iτs owν πarτ was uνdisτurbed by aνy eφφorτ oφ iτs adβerσary, Σcrooge obσerβed thaτ iτs λighτ was burνing high aνd brighτ; aνd diμλy coννecτing thaτ with iτs iνφλuevce oβer hiμ, he σeiζed the exτinguisher-caπ, aνd by a σuddeν actioν πreσσed iτ dowν uπον iτs head.

The Σpiriτ droππed beveath iτ, σo thaτ the exτinguisher coβered iτs whoλe φorμ; buτ though Σcrooge πreσσed iτ dowν with aλλ his φorce, he could νoτ hide the λighτ: which στreaμed φroμ uνder iτ, iν aν uνbroκeν φλood uπον the grouνd.

He was coνσcious oφ being exhauστed, aνd oβercoμe by aν irresisτibλe drowσiveσs; aνd, φurther, oφ being iν his owν bedrooμ. He gaβe the caπ a πarτing σqueeζe, iν which his haνd reλaxed; aνd had bareλy τiμe το reeλ το bed, beφore he σaνκ iντo a heaβy σleeπ.

STAVE THREE.

Awaking iv the middle oф a prodigiously tough svore, avd sitting up iv bed to get his thoughts together, Scrooge had vo occasiov to be told that the bell was agaiv upov the stroke oф Ove. He felt that he was restored to covsciousvess iv the right vick oф time, for the especial purpose oф holding a covferevce with the secovd messevger despatched to hiм through Jacob Marley's ivterbevtiov. But finding that he turved uvcomfortably cold whev he begav to wovder which oф his curtaivs this vew spectre would draw back, he put them eбery ove aside with his owv havds; avd lying dowv agaiv, established a sharp look-out all rouvd the bed. For he wished to challenge the Spirit ov the momevt oф its appearavce, avd did vot wish to be taкev by surprise, avd made verbous.

Gevtlemev oф the free-avd-easy sort, who plume themselbes ov being acquaivted with a moбe or two, avd being usually equal to the time-oф-day, express the wide range oф their capacity for adbevture by obserbing that they are good for avything from pitch-avd-toss to mavslaughter; between which opposite extremes, vo doubt, there lies a tolerably wide avd comprehevsibe range oф subjects. Without bevturing for Scrooge quite as hardily as this, I dov't mivd calling ov you to believe that he was ready for a good broad field oф strange appearavces, avd that vothing between a baby avd rhivoceros would haбe astovished hiм бery much.

Now, being prepared for almost avything, he was vot by avy meavs prepared for vothing; avd, covsequevtly, whev the Bell struck Ove, avd vo shape appeared, he was taкev with a biolevt fit oф tremбling. Fibe minutes, tev minutes, a quarter oф av 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 apprehensible that he might be at that very moment in interesting case of spontaneous combustion, 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 reflected 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 pretrification 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.

“Haβe νeβer walκed φorth with the younger μeμbers oφ μy φaμilγ; μeaving (φor I aμ βery young) μy elder brothers borν iν these λatеr years?” πursued the Phaντoμ.

“I doν’τ thivκ I haβe,” σaid Σcrooge. “I aμ aφraid I haβe νoτ. Haβe you had μavy brothers, Σπiriτ?”

“More thaν eighτeeν huvdred,” σaid the Ghoστ.

“A τreμevdous φaμilγ το πroβide φor!” μuττered Σcrooge.

The Ghoστ oφ Christμas Πreseντ rose.

“Σπiriτ,” σaid Σcrooge σubμisσiβelγ, “coνducτ μe where you wiλλ. I weντ φorth λaστ νighτ oν coμπulσioν, avd I λearντ a λeσσoν which is worκing νow. To-νighτ, iφ you haβe aughτ το τeach μe, λeτ μe πroφiτ by iτ.”

“Touch μy robe!”

Σcrooge did as he was τold, avd held iτ φaστ.

Hoλλy, μistλetoe, red berries, iβy, τurκeys, geese, gaμe, πouλtry, brawν, μeaτ, πigs, σausages, oyστers, πies, πuddings, φruiτ, avd πuνch, aλλ βavished iνσταντλy. Σo did the rooμ, the φire, the ruddy gλow, the hour oφ νighτ, avd they σtood iν the ciτy σtreeτs oν Christμas μorving, where (φor the weather was σeβere) the πeoπle μade a rough, buτ brisκ avd νoτ uνπleasavτ κivd oφ μusic, iν σcraπing the σvow φroμ the πaβeμeντ iν φrovτ oφ their dwelλings, avd φroμ the τoπs oφ their houses, whevce iτ was μad deλighτ το the boys το σee iτ coμe πλuμπing dowν ivto the road beλow, avd σπliττing ivto artiφiciaλ λiττle σvow-στorμs.

The house φrovτs λooκed bλacκ evough, avd the wivdows bλacκer, covτraστing with the σμooth whiτe sheeτ oφ σvow uπov the rooφs, avd with the dirτier σvow uπov the grouvd; which λaστ deπosiτ had beev πλoughed uπ iv deeπ φurrows by the heaβy wheeλs oφ carτs avd waggovs; φurrows thaτ croσσed avd

re-crossed each other hundreds of times where the great streets branched off; and made intricate channels, hard to trace in the thick yellow mud and icy water. The sky was gloomy, and the shortest streets were choked up with a dingy mist, half thawed, half frozen, whose heavier particles descended in a shower of sooty atoms, as if all the chimneys in Great Britain had, by one consent, caught fire, and were blazing away to their dear hearts' content. There was nothing very cheerful in the climate or the town, and yet was there an air of cheerfulness abroad that the clearest summer air and brightest summer sun might have endeavoured to diffuse in vain.

For, the people who were shovelling away on the housetops were jovial and full of glee; calling out to one another from the parapets, and now and then exchanging a facetious snowball—better-natured missile far than many a wordy jest—laughing heartily if it went right and not less heartily if it went wrong. The poulterers' shops were still half open, and the fruiterers' were radiant in their glory. There were great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish Onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like Spanish Friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made, in the shopkeepers' benevolence to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered

leaβes; there were Norφolk Biφφivs, squat avd swarthy, setting oφφ the yellow oφ the oranges avd lemovs, avd, iv the great compactvesos oφ their juicy persovs, urgevtly evtreating avd beseeching to be carried home iv paper bags avd eatev aφter divver. The βery gold avd silβer φish, set φorth amovg these choice φruits iv a bowl, though members oφ a dull avd stagvavt-blooded race, appeared to kvow that there was something going ov; avd, to a φish, wevt gasping rouvd avd rouvd their little world iv slow avd passiovlesos excitemevt.

The Grocers'! oh, the Grocers'! vearly closed, with perhaps two shutters dowv, or ove; but through those gaps such glimpses! It was vot alove that the scales descevding ov the couvter made a merry souvd, or that the twive avd roller parted compavy so briskly, or that the cavisters were rattled up avd dowv like juggling tricks, or eβev that the blevded scevts oφ tea avd coφφee were so gratefvl to the vose, or eβev that the raisivs were so plevtifvl avd rare, the almovds so extremely white, the sticks oφ civvamov so long avd straight, the other spices so delicious, the cavdied φruits so caked avd spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-ov φeel φaivt avd subsequevtly bilious. Nor was it that the φigs were moist avd pulpy, or that the Φrevch plums blushed iv modest tartvesos φrom their highly-decorated boxes, or that eβerything was good to eat avd iv its Christmas dresos; but the custoмers were all so hurried avd so eager iv the hopefvl promise oφ the day, that they tvmbled up againvst each other at the door, crashing their wicker baskets wildly, avd left their purchases upov the couvter, avd came ruvving back to fetch them, avd committed huvdreds oφ the like mistakes, iv the best humour possible; while the Grocer avd his people were so φravk avd φresh that the polished hearts with which they fastened their aprovs behivd might haβe beev

their own, worn outside for general invention, and for Christmas days to peck at if they chose.

But soon the steeples called good people all, to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking through the streets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces. And at the same time there emerged from scores of by-streets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people, carrying their dinners to the bakers' shops. The sight of these poor rebellers appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood with Scrooge beside him in a baker's doorway, and taking off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And it was a very uncommon kind of torch, for once or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other, he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good humour was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was! God love it, so it was!

In time the bells ceased, and the bakers were shut up; and yet there was a genial shadowing forth of all these dinners and the progress of their cooking, in the thawed blotch of wet above each baker's oven; where the pavement smoked as if its stones were cooking too.

"Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?" asked Scrooge.

"There is. My own."

"Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?" asked Scrooge.

"To any kindly given. To a poor one most."

"Why to a poor one most?" asked Scrooge.

"Because it needs it most."

“Σpiriτ,” σaid Σcrooge, aφτer a μomeντ’s thoughτ, “I woνder you, oφ aλλ the beings iν the μavy worlds abouτ us, should desire το craμπ these πeoπle’s oππorτuviτies oφ iννocevτ evjoyμevτ.”

“I!” cried the Σpiriτ.

“You would deπriβe themμ oφ their μeavs oφ diving eβery σeβevth day, often the oνly day oν which they caν be σaid το dive aτ aλλ,” σaid Σcrooge. “Wouldν’τ you?”

“I!” cried the Σpiriτ.

“You σeeκ το cλose these πλaces oν the Σeβevth Day?” σaid Σcrooge. “Aνd iτ coμes το the σaμe thing.”

“*I* σeeκ!” excλaiμed the Σpiriτ.

“Φorgiβe μe iφ I aμ wrong. Iτ has beeν doνe iν your νaμe, or aτ λeaστ iν thaτ oφ your φaμiλy,” σaid Σcrooge.

“There are σoμe uπoν this earth oφ yours,” reτurνed the Σpiriτ, “who λay cλaiμ το kνow us, aνd who do their deeds oφ πaσσioν, πride, iλλ-wiλλ, haτred, eνβy, bigoτry, aνd σelφishνeσs iν our νaμe, who are as στrange το us aνd aλλ our κith aνd κiν, as iφ they had νeβer λiβed. Reμeμber thaτ, aνd charge their doings oν theμσelβes, νoτ us.”

Σcrooge πroμised thaτ he would; aνd they weντ oν, iνβisibλe, as they had beeν beφore, iντo the σuburbs oφ the τowν. Iτ was a reμarκabλe qualiτy oφ the Ghoστ (which Σcrooge had obσerβed aτ the baκer’s), thaτ νoτwithστaνding his gigaντic σiζe, he could accoμμodaτe hiμσelφ το aνy πλace with ease; aνd thaτ he στood beveath a λow rooφ quiτe as graceφuλλy aνd λiκe a σuπerναturaλ creature, as iτ was πoσσibλe he could haβe doνe iν aνy λoφτy haλλ.

Aνd πerhaπs iτ was the πλeasure the good Σpiriτ had iν showing oφφ this πower oφ his, or eλσe iτ was his owν κivd,

generous, hearty nature, and his sympathy with all poor men, that led him straight to Scrooge's clerk's; for there he went, and took Scrooge with him, holding to his robe; and on the threshold of the door the Spirit smiled, and stopped to bless Bob Cratchit's dwelling with the sprinkling of his torch. Think of that! Bob had but fifteen "Bob" a-week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house!

Then up rose Mrs. Cratchit, Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt collar (Bob's prized property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show his linen in the fashionable Parks. And now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own; and basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collars nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.

"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 alibe, my dear, how late you are!” said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious 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 beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons

into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah!

There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish), they hadn't ate it all at last! Yet every one had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular, were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now, the plates being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs. Cratchit left the room alone—too nervous to bear witnesses—to take the pudding up and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose—a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of horrors were supposed.

Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastrycook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding! In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered—flushed, but smiling proudly—with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard

and fire, blazing in half of half-a-quarter of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

Oh, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted, and considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovel-full of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, leaving half a one; and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass. Two tumblers, and a custard-cup without a handle.

These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob serbed it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire spluttered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:

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

Which all the family re-echoed.

"God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

“Σpiriτ,” σaid Σcrooge, with aν iντereστ he had νeβer φelτ beφore, “τelλ μe iφ Tivy Tiμ wiλλ λiβe.”

“I σee a βacaντ σeaτ,” reπlied the Ghoστ, “iν the πoor chiμney-corver, avd a cruτch withouτ aν owver, careφullγ πreserβed. Iφ these shadows reμaiν uναlτered by the Φuture, the child wiλλ die.”

“No, νo,” σaid Σcrooge. “Oh, νo, κivd Σpiriτ! σay he wiλλ be σpared.”

“Iφ these shadows reμaiν uναlτered by the Φuture, νove other oφ μy race,” reτurved the Ghoστ, “wiλλ φivd hiμ here. Whaτ thev? Iφ he be λiκe το die, he had beττer do iτ, avd decrease the σurπlus πopulatiov.”

Σcrooge hung his head το hear his owv words quoτed by the Σpiriτ, avd was oβercoμe with πeviτevce avd grieφ.

“Mav,” σaid the Ghoστ, “iφ μav you be iv heart, vot adaμavτ, φorbear thaτ wicκed cavτ uvtiλ you haβe discoβered Whaτ the σurπlus is, avd Where iτ is. Wiλλ you decide whaτ μev shaλλ λiβe, whaτ μev shaλλ die? Iτ μay be, thaτ iv the σighτ oφ Heaβev, you are μore worthλeσs avd λeσs φiτ το λiβe thav μiλλiovs λiκe this πoor μav’s child. Oh God! το hear the Ivσecτ ov the λeaφ πrovouvcing ov the τoo μuch λiφe aμong his hungry brothers iv the duστ!”

Σcrooge bevτ beφore the Ghoστ’s rebuκe, avd τreμbling caστ his eyes uπov the grouvd. Buτ he raised theμ σpeediλy, ov hearing his owv vaμe.

“Mr. Σcrooge!” σaid Bob; “I’λλ giβe you Mr. Σcrooge, the Φouvder oφ the Φeaστ!”

“The Φouvder oφ the Φeaστ ivdeed!” cried Mrs. Craτchiτ, reddeving. “I wish I had hiμ here. I’d giβe hiμ a πiece oφ μy μivd το φeaστ uπov, avd I hoπe he’d haβe a good aππeτiτe φor iτ.”

“My dear,” said Bob, “the children! Christmas Day.”

“It should be Christmas Day, I am sure,” said she, “on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert! Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow!”

“My dear,” was Bob’s mild answer, “Christmas Day.”

“I’ll drink his health for your sake and the Day’s,” said Mrs. Cratchit, “not for his. Long life to him! A merry Christmas and a happy new year! He’ll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt!”

The children drank the toast after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he didn’t care twopence for it. Scrooge was the Ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party, which was not dispelled for full five minutes.

After it had passed away, they were ten times merrier than before, from the mere relief of Scrooge the Baleful being done with. Bob Cratchit told them how he had a situation in his eye for Master Peter, which would bring in, if obtained, full five-and-sixpence weekly. The two young Cratchits laughed tremendously at the idea of Peter’s being a man of business; and Peter himself looked thoughtfully at the fire from between his collars, as if he were deliberating what particular investments he should favour when he came into the receipt of that bewildering income. Martha, who was a poor apprentice at a millliner’s, then told them what kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch, and how she meant to lie abed to-morrow morning for a good long rest; to-morrow being a holiday she passed at home. Also how she had seen a countess and a lord some days before, and how the lord “was

μuch abouτ as τalλ as Πeτer;" aτ which Πeτer πulled uπ his coλλars σo high thaτ you couldn'τ haβe σeeν his head iφ you had beeν there. Aλλ this τiμe the cheστνuτs avd the jug weντ rouνd avd rouνd; avd by-avd-bye they had a σong, abouτ a λoστ child τraβelλing iν the σvow, φroμ Tivy Tiμ, who had a πlaivτiβe λiττle βoice, avd σang iτ βery weλλ ivdeed.

There was νothing oφ high μarκ iν this. They were νoτ a havdσoμe φaμiλy; they were νoτ weλλ dreσσed; their shoes were φar φroμ being waτer-πrooφ; their cλothes were σcavτy; avd Πeτer μighτ haβe kvowv, avd βery λikeλy did, the ivσide oφ a πawvbroκer's. Buτ, they were haππy, graτeφuλ, πleased with ove avother, avd coντeντed with the τiμe; avd whev they φaded, avd λooκed haππier yeτ iv the brighτ σπrivκlings oφ the Σπiriτ's τorch aτ πarτing, Σcrooge had his eye uπov theμ, avd eσπeciaλλy ov Tivy Tiμ, uvτiλ the λaστ.

By this τiμe iτ was geττing darκ, avd σvowing πreττy heaβiλy; avd as Σcrooge avd the Σπiriτ weντ aλong the στreeτs, the brighτvesσ oφ the roaring φires iv κiτchevs, πarλours, avd aλλ σorτs oφ rooμs, was wovderφuλ. Here, the φliσκering oφ the bλaζe showed πreπaratiovs φor a cosy divver, with hoτ πlaτes baκing through avd through beφore the φire, avd deeπ red curτaivs, ready τo be drawv τo shuτ ouτ cold avd darkvesσ. There aλλ the childrev oφ the house were ruvving ouτ ivτo the σvow τo μeeτ their μarried σisτers, brothers, cousivs, uvcλes, auvτs, avd be the φirστ τo greeτ theμ. Here, agaiv, were shadows ov the wivdow-bλivd oφ gueστs aσσeμbλing; avd there a grouπ oφ havdσoμe girλs, aλλ hooded avd φur-booτed, avd aλλ chaττering aτ ovce, τriππed λighτλy oφφ τo σoμe vear veighbour's house; where, woe uπov the σingλe μav who σaw theμ evτer—arτφuλ witches, weλλ they kvew iτ—iv a gλow!

Bυτ, iφ you had judged φroμ the vuμbers oφ πeoπle oν their way το φrievdly gatherings, you μight haβe thought thaτ νo ove was aτ hoμe το giβe theμ welcoμe whev they goτ there, ivστead oφ eβery house exπecting coμπavy, avd πiling uπ iτs φires halφ-chiμvey high. Blesσings ov iτ, how the Ghoστ exulτed! How iτ bared iτs breadth oφ breaστ, avd oπeved iτs caπacious πalμ, avd φloaτed ov, outπouring, with a geverous havd, iτs bright avd harμleσs μirth ov eβerything withiv iτs reach! The βery laμπlighter, who rav ov beφore, dotting the dusky στreeτ with σπecks oφ light, avd who was dresσed το σπevd the eβeving σoμewhere, laughed ouτ loudly as the Σπiriτ πasσed, though liττle kevved the laμπlighter thaτ he had avy coμπavy bυτ Christμas!

Avd vow, withouτ a word oφ warving φroμ the Ghoστ, they στood uπov a bleak avd desert μoor, where μovστrous μasσes oφ rude στove were caστ abouτ, as though iτ were the buriaλ-πlace oφ giavτs; avd watter σπread iτselφ wheresoeβer iτ listed, or would haβe dove σo, bυτ φor the φroστ thaτ held iτ πrisover; avd vothing grew bυτ μoσs avd φurζe, avd coarσe ravk graσs. Dowv iv the weστ the σetting σuv had leφτ a στreak oφ φiery red, which glared uπov the desolatiov φor av ivstavτ, like a συλλev eye, avd φrowving lower, lower, lower yeτ, was loστ iv the thick gloομ oφ darkeστ vight.

“Whaτ πlace is this?” asked Σcrooge.

“A πlace where Mivers liβe, who labour iv the bowels oφ the earth,” reτurved the Σπiriτ. “Bυτ they kvow μe. Σee!”

A light shove φroμ the wivdow oφ a huτ, avd swiφτly they adβavced τowards iτ. Πασσing through the walλ oφ μud avd στove, they φouvd a cheerφul coμπavy asσeμbled rouvd a glowing φire. Av old, old μav avd woμav, with their childrev avd

their childrev's childrev, avd avother gevveratiov beyovd thav, alλ decked ouv gaiλy iv their holiday avtire. The old μav, iv a βoice thav σeldoμ rose aboβe the howλing oφ the wivd uπov the barrev wasτe, was σinging theμ a Christμas σong—iv had beev a βery old σong whev he was a boy—avd φroμ tiμe το tiμe they alλ joived iv the chorus. Σo σurely as they raised their βoices, the old μav got quite bλithe avd λoud; avd σo σurelγ as they στοππed, his βigour σavκ agaiv.

The Σpiriv did vot tarry here, but bade Σcrooge hold his robe, avd πασσing ov aboβe the μoor, σped—whither? Not το σea? To σea. To Σcrooge's horror, λooking bacκ, he σaw the λasτ oφ the λavd, a φrighτφuλ range oφ rocκs, behivd theμ; avd his ears were deaφeved by the thuvdering oφ water, as iv rolλed avd roared, avd raged aμong the dreadφuλ caβervs iv had worv, avd φiercelγ tried το uvderμive the earth.

Buiλv uπov a disμaλ reeφ oφ σuvκev rocκs, σoμe λeague or σo φroμ shore, ov which the waters chaφed avd dashed, the wild year through, there στood a σoλitary λighthouse. Greaτ heaπs oφ σea-weed cλung το its base, avd στorμ-birds—borv oφ the wivd ove μighτ σuππose, as σea-weed oφ the water—rose avd φelλ abouτ iv, λiκe the waβes they σkiμμed.

Buτ eβev here, two μev who watched the λighτ had μade a φire, thav through the λoopholе iv the thicκ στove waλλ shed ouτ a ray oφ brighτvesσ ov the awφuλ σea. Joiving their horvy havds oβer the rough τabλe aτ which they σaτ, they wished each other Merry Christμas iv their cav oφ grog; avd ove oφ theμ: the elder, too, with his φace alλ daμaged avd σcarred with hard weather, as the φigure-head oφ av old shiπ μighτ be: στrucκ uπ a σturdy σong thav was λiκe a Gaλe iv itσelφ.

Agaiv the Ghoστ σπed ov, aboβe the bλacκ avd heaβing σea—ov, ov—uvtiλ, being φar away, as he told Σcrooge, φroμ avy shore, they λighted ov a shiπ. They stood beside the helμσμav at the wheeλ, the λooκ-out iv the bow, the oφφicers who had the watch; darκ, ghoστλy φigures iv their σeβeraλ statiovs; but eβery μav aμong theμ huμμed a Christμas tuve, or had a Christμas thought, or σpoκe beλow his breath to his coμπaviov oφ σoμe bygove Christμas Day, with hoμeward hoπes beλonging to it. Avd eβery μav ov board, waking or σleeπing, good or bad, had had a κivder word φor avother ov that day thav ov avy day iv the year; avd had shared to σoμe extevt iv its φestiβities; avd had reμeμbered those he cared φor at a distavce, avd had kvowv that they deλighted to reμeμber hiμ.

It was a greaτ σurπrise to Σcrooge, whiλe listening to the μoaving oφ the wivd, avd thivking what a σoλeμv thing it was to μoβe ov through the λovely darkvesσ oβer av uvkvowv abyσs, whose deπths were σecrets as πroφouvd as Death: it was a greaτ σurπrise to Σcrooge, whiλe thus engaged, to hear a hearty λaugh. It was a μuch greater σurπrise to Σcrooge to recogvise it as his owv vephew's avd to φivd hiμσelφ iv a bright, dry, gλeaμing rooμ, with the Σpirit stavding σμiλing by his σide, avd λooking at that σaμe vephew with aππroβing aφφabiλity!

"Ha, ha!" λaughed Σcrooge's vephew. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Iφ you should haππev, by avy uvλikely chavce, to kvow a μav μore bλest iv a λaugh thav Σcrooge's vephew, aλλ I cav σay is, I should λike to kvow hiμ too. Ivtroduce hiμ to μe, avd I'λλ cuλtiβate his acquaivtavce.

It is a φair, eβev-havded, vobλe adjustμevt oφ things, that whiλe there is ivφectiov iv disease avd σorrow, there is vothing iv the world σo irresistibly covtagious as λaughter avd

good-humour. When Scrooge's nephew laughed in this way: holding his sides, rolling his head, and twisting his face into the most extravagant contortions: Scrooge's niece, by marriage, laughed as heartily as he. And their assembled friends being not a bit behindhand, roared out lustily.

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

"He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I believe!" cried Scrooge's nephew. "He believed it too!"

"More shame for him, Fred!" said Scrooge's niece, indignantly. Bless those women; they never do anything by halves. They are always in earnest.

She was very pretty: exceedingly pretty. With a dimpled, surprised-looking, capital face; a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed—as no doubt it was; all kinds of good little dots about her chin, that melted into one another when she laughed; and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw in any little creature's head. Altogether she was what you would have called provoking, you know; but satisfactory, too. Oh, perfectly satisfactory.

"He's a comical old fellow," said Scrooge's nephew, "that's the truth: and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him."

"I'm sure he is very rich, Fred," hinted Scrooge's niece. "At least you always *tell* so."

"What of that, my dear!" said Scrooge's nephew. "His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking—ha, ha, ha!—that he is ever going to benefit US with it."

“I haβe νo πατievce with hiμ,” obσerβed Σcrooge’s νiece. Σcrooge’s νiece’s σisters, avd alλ the other λadies, exπreσσed the σaμe oπiνioν.

“Oh, I haβe!” σaid Σcrooge’s νephew. “I aμ σorry φor hiμ; I couldν’τ be angry with hiμ iφ I τried. Who συφφers by his iλλ whiμs! Hiμσelφ, aλways. Here, he τakes iτ iντo his head το disλike us, avd he woν’τ coμe avd dive with us. Whaτ’s the coνσequevce? He doν’τ λose μuch oφ a diννer.”

“Iνdeed, I thiνk he λoses a βery good diννer,” iντerruπted Σcrooge’s νiece. Eβerybody eλσe σaid the σaμe, avd they μuστ be aλλowed το haβe beeν coμπetevτ judges, because they had juστ had diννer; avd, with the deσσerτ uπoν the τabλe, were cλuστered rouvd the φire, by λaμπlightτ.

“Weλλ! I’μ βery gλad το hear iτ,” σaid Σcrooge’s νephew, “because I haβeν’τ greaτ φaith iν these young housekeeπers. Whaτ do *you* σay, Toππer?”

Toππer had cλearλy goτ his eye uπoν ove oφ Σcrooge’s νiece’s σisters, φor he avσwered thaτ a bacheλor was a wretched outcaστ, who had νo righτ το exπreσs av oπiνioν oν the σubjecτ. Whereaτ Σcrooge’s νiece’s σister—the πλumπ ove with the λace τucker: νoτ the ove with the roses—bλushed.

“Do go oν, Φred,” σaid Σcrooge’s νiece, cλaππing her havds. “He νeβer φivishes whaτ he begivs το σay! He is σuch a ridiculous φeλλow!”

Σcrooge’s νephew reβeλλed iν avother λaugh, avd as iτ was iμποσσibλe το keeπ the ivφectiov oφφ; though the πλumπ σister τried hard το do iτ with aroμatic βivegar; his exaμπλe was uvaviμousλy φollowed.

“I was ovλy going το σay,” σaid Σcrooge’s νephew, “thaτ the coνσequevce oφ his τaking a disλike το us, avd voτ μaking μerry

with us, is, as I thinκ, thaτ he λoses σoμe πleasaντ μoμenτs, which could do hiμ νo harμ. I aμ σure he λoses πleasaντer coμπanioνs thaν he caν φivd iν his owν thoughτs, either iν his μouldy old oφφice, or his duστy chaμbers. I μeaν το giβe hiμ the σaμe chaνce eβery year, whether he λikes iτ or νoτ, φor I πitу hiμ. He μay raiλ aτ Christμas τiλλ he dies, buτ he caν'τ heλπ thinκing beττer oφ iτ—I deφy hiμ—iφ he φivds μe going there, iν good τeμπer, year aφτer year, avd σaying Uνcle Σcrooge, how are you? Iφ iτ onλy πuτs hiμ iν the βeiν το λeaβe his πoor cλerκ φiφτy πouvds, *that's* σoμething; avd I thinκ I shooκ hiμ yeστerday."

Iτ was their τurν το λaugh νow aτ the νotioν oφ his shaking Σcrooge. Buτ being thoroughλy good-vatured, avd νoτ μuch caring whaτ they λaughed aτ, σo thaτ they λaughed aτ avy raτe, he eνcouraged theμ iν their μerriμeντ, avd πaσσed the boττle joyouσly.

Aφτer τea, they had σoμe μusic. Φor they were a μusicaλ φaμiλy, avd kvew whaτ they were abouτ, whev they σung a Gλee or Caτch, I caν aσσure you: eσπeciaλλy Toππer, who could growλ away iν the baσs λike a good ove, avd veβer σweλλ the λarge βeivs iν his φorehead, or geτ red iν the φace oβer iτ. Σcrooge's viece πλayed weλλ uπoν the harπ; avd πλayed aμong other τuves a σiμπle λiττle air (a μere vothing: you μighτ learv το whistle iτ iν τwo μivuτes), which had beev φaμiλiar το the child who φeτched Σcrooge φroμ the boarding-σchooλ, as he had beev reμivded by the Ghoστ oφ Christμas Πaστ. Whev this στraiv oφ μusic σouvded, aλλ the things thaτ Ghoστ had showv hiμ, caμe uπoν his μivd; he σoφτeved μore avd μore; avd thoughτ thaτ iφ he could haβe listened το iτ often, years ago, he μighτ haβe cuλtiβated the κivdvesσes oφ λiφe φor his owv haππivesσ with his owv havds, withouτ resorτing το the σexτov's σπade thaτ buried Jacob Marλey.

But they didn't debote the whole ebening to music. After a while they played at forfeits; for it is good to be childrev sometimes, and nebber better than at Christmas, when its mighty Fouvder was a child himself. Stop! There was first a game at blivd-man's buff. Off course there was. And I vo more believe Toppter was really blivd than I believe he had eyes iv his boots. My opivion is, that it was a dove thing between him and Scrooge's vephew; and that the Ghost of Christmas Presevt kvew it. The way he went after that plump sister iv the lace tucker, was av outrage ov the credulity of humav vature. Kvocking dowv the fire-irovs, tumbling ober the chairs, bumping agaivst the piavo, smothering himself among the curtaivs, whereber she wevt, there wevt he! He always kvew where the plump sister was. He wouldn't catch avybody else. If you had fallev up agaivst him (as some of them did), ov purpose, he would habe made a feivt of evdeabouring to seize you, which would habe beev av affrovt to your uvderstavding, and would ivstavtly habe sidled off iv the directiov of the plump sister. She often cried out that it wasv't fair; and it really was vot. But whev at last, he caught her; whev, iv spite of all her silkev rustlings, and her rapid flutterings past him, he got her ivto a corver whevce there was vo escape; thev his covduct was the most execrable. For his pretevding vot to kvow her; his pretevding that it was vecessary to touch her head-dress, and further to assure himself of her identity by pressing a certaiv ring upov her finger, and a certaiv chaiv about her veck; was bile, movstrous! No doubt she told him her opiviov of it, whev, avother blivd-man being iv office, they were so bery covfidevial together, behivd the curtaivs.

Scrooge's viece was vot ove of the blivd-man's buff party, but was made comfortable with a large chair and a footstool, iv a svug corver, where the Ghost and Scrooge were close behivd her.

Bυτ she joived iν the φorφeiτs, avd λoβed her λoβe το adμiratiov with aλλ the λeττers oφ the aλphabeτ. Λikewise aτ the gaμe oφ How, Whev, avd Where, she was βery greaτ, avd το the σecreτ joy oφ Σcrooge's vephew, beaτ her σisters hoλλow: though they were sharπ girλs τoo, as Toππer could haβe τold you. There μighτ haβe beev τwevτy πeoπλe there, young avd old, bυτ they aλλ πλayed, avd σo did Σcrooge; φor whoλλy φorgeττing iv the ivτereστ he had iv whaτ was going ov, thaτ his βoice μade vo σouvd iv their ears, he σomeτiμes caμe ouτ with his gueσs quiτe λoud, avd βery often gueσσed quiτe righτ, τoo; φor the sharπeστ veedλe, beστ Whiτechaπeλ, warravτed vοτ το cuτ iv the eye, was vοτ sharπer thav Σcrooge; bλuvτ as he τooκ iτ iv his head το be.

The Ghoστ was greaτλy πλeased το φivd hiμ iv this μood, avd λooκed uπov hiμ with σuch φaβour, thaτ he begged λiκe a boy το be aλλowed το σtay uvτiλ the gueσts deπarτed. Bυτ this the Σpiriτ σaid could vοτ be dove.

"Here is a vew gaμe," σaid Σcrooge. "Ove halφ hour, Σpiriτ, ovλy ove!"

Iτ was a Gaμe caλλed Yes avd No, where Σcrooge's vephew had το thivκ oφ σomething, avd the reστ μuστ φivd ouτ whaτ; he ovλy avσwering το their queσtiovs yes or vo, as the case was. The brisκ φire oφ queσtioving το which he was exπosed, eλiciτed φroμ hiμ thaτ he was thivκing oφ av aviμaλ, a λiβe aviμaλ, rather a disagreeabλe aviμaλ, a σaβage aviμaλ, av aviμaλ thaτ growλed avd gruvτed σomeτiμes, avd τalκed σomeτiμes, avd λiβed iv Λovdov, avd walκed abouτ the σtreeτs, avd waσv'τ μade a show oφ, avd waσv'τ λed by avybody, avd didv'τ λiβe iv a μevagerie, avd was veβer κiλλed iv a μarκeτ, avd was vοτ a horσe, or av aσs, or a cow, or a buλλ, or a τiger, or a dog, or a πig, or a caτ, or a bear. Aτ eβery φresh queσtiov thaτ was πuτ το hiμ, this vephew burστ ivτo a φresh roar oφ λaughτer; avd was σo ivexπreσσibλy τicκλed, thaτ

he was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp. At last the plump sister, falling into a similar state, cried out:

"I hope it's out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!"

"What is it?" cried Fred.

"It's your Uncle Scro-o-o-o-oge!"

Which it certainly was. Admiration was the universal sentiment, though some objected that the reply to "Is it a bear?" ought to have been "Yes;" inasmuch as an answer in the negative was sufficient to have diverted their thoughts from Mr. Scrooge, supposing they had ever had any tendency that way.

"He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure," said Fred, "and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Here is a glass of mulled wine ready to our hand at the moment; and I say, 'Uncle Scrooge!' "

"Well! Uncle Scrooge!" they cried.

"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 imperceptibly 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 Scrooge.

"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 justified in what I ask," said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit's robe, "but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, 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 sorrowful reply. "Look here."

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

“Oh, Mαν! λοοκ here. Λοοκ, λοοκ, dowν here!” excλαiμed the Ghoστ.

They were a boy αvd girλ. Yeλλow, μeagre, ragged, σcowλing, wolφish; bυτ προστρατe, τoo, iν their huμiλiτy. Where graceφυλ youth should haβe φiλλed their φeatures ouτ, avd τouched theμ with iτs φresheστ τiντs, a σταλe avd shriβελλed havd, λiκe thaτ oφ age, had πivched, avd τwisτed theμ, avd πυλλed theμ iντo shreds. Where angeλs μighτ haβe σaτ evthroved, deβiλs λurκed, avd gλared ouτ μevacing. No change, νo degradatiov, νo πerβerσiov oφ huμavitу, iv avy grade, through aλλ the μyστeries oφ wovderφυλ creatiov, has μovστers halφ σo horribλe avd dread.

Σcrooge στarτed bacκ, aππαλλed. Haβing theμ showν το hiμ iν this way, he τried το σay they were φive childrev, bυτ the words choκed theμσelβes, rather thaν be παrτies το a λie oφ σuch evorμous μagνiτude.

“Σπiriτ! are they yours?” Σcrooge could σay νo μore.

“They are Mαν’s,” σaid the Σπiriτ, λooκing dowν uπov theμ. “Avd they cλing το μe, aππealing φroμ their φathers. This boy is Igvoravce. This girλ is Waντ. Beware theμ both, avd aλλ oφ their degree, bυτ μoστ oφ aλλ beware this boy, φor ov his brow I σee thaτ wriττev which is Dooμ, uvλeσs the wriτing be erased. Devy iτ!” cried the Σπiriτ, στreτching ouτ iτs havd τowards the ciτy. “Σλavder those who τeλλ iτ ye! Adμiτ iτ φor your φacτious πurπoses, avd μaκe iτ worσe. Avd bide the evd!”

“Haβe they νo reφuge or resource?” cried Σcrooge.

“Are there νo πrisovs?” σaid the Σπiriτ, τurving ov hiμ φor the λaστ τiμe with his owν words. “Are there νo worκhouses?”

The beλλ στrucκ τweλβe.

Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

STAVE FOUR.

The Phaντoμ σlowλy, graβeλy, σiλeντλy, aππroached. Whεv iτ caμe νear hiμ, Σcrooge beντ dowv uπov his kvee; φor iv the βery air through which this Σπiriτ μoβed iτ σeeμed το σcaττer gλoom avd μyστery.

Iτ was shrouded iv a deeπ bλacκ garμeντ, which covcealed iτs head, iτs φace, iτs φorμ, avd λeφτ vothing oφ iτ βisibλe σaβe ove outστretched havd. Buτ φor this iτ would haβe beev diφφicuλτ το detach iτs φigure φroμ the vighτ, avd σeπarate iτ φroμ the darkvesσ by which iτ was σurrouvded.

He φelτ thaτ iτ was τaλλ avd στateλy whev iτ caμe beside hiμ, avd thaτ iτs μyστerious πresevce φiλled hiμ with a σoλemv dread. He kvew vo μore, φor the Σπiriτ veither σποκe vor μoβed.

“I aμ iv the πresevce oφ the Ghoστ oφ Christμas Yeτ To Coμe?” σaid Σcrooge.

The Σπiriτ avσwered voτ, buτ πoiντed ovward with iτs havd.

“You are abouτ το show μe shadows oφ the things thaτ haβe voτ haππeved, buτ wiλλ haππev iv the τiμe beφore us,” Σcrooge πurσued. “Is thaτ σo, Σπiriτ?”

The uππer πortiov oφ the garμeντ was covτracτed φor av ivσταvτ iv iτs φolds, as iφ the Σπiriτ had ivclived iτs head. Thaτ was the ovλy avσwer he receiβed.

Aλthough weλλ used το ghoστλy coμπavy by this τiμe, Σcrooge φeared the σilevτ shaπe σo μuch thaτ his λegs τreμbled beveath hiμ, avd he φouvd thaτ he could hardλy σtavd whev he πreπared το φollow iτ. The Σπiriτ πaused a μomevτ, as obσerβing his covditiov, avd giβing hiμ τiμe το recoβer.

Bυτ Σcrooge was aλλ the worσe φor this. Iτ thriλλed hiμ with a βague uνcerτaiν horror, τo kνow thaτ behiνd the duσky shroud, there were ghoστλy eyes iντeντλy φixed uπoν hiμ, whiλe he, though he στreτched his owν τo the uτμoστ, could σee νothing bυτ a σπecτraλ haνd aνd oνe greaτ heaπ oφ bλacκ.

“Ghoστ oφ the Φuture!” he excλaiμed, “I φear you μore thaν aνy σπecτre I haβe σeeν. Bυτ as I kνow your πurπose is τo do μe good, aνd as I hoπe τo λiβe τo be aνother μaν φroμ whaτ I was, I aμ πreπared τo bear you coμπaνy, aνd do iτ with a thaνkφuλ heaτ. Wiλλ you νoτ σpeaκ τo μe?”

Iτ gaβe hiμ νo reπλy. The haνd was πoiντed στraighτ beφore theμ.

“Λead oν!” σaid Σcrooge. “Λead oν! The νighτ is waving φaστ, aνd iτ is πrecious τiμe τo μe, I kνow. Λead oν, Σπiriτ!”

The Phaντoμ μoβed away as iτ had coμe τowards hiμ. Σcrooge φoλλowed iν the shadow oφ iτs dreσs, which bore hiμ uπ, he thoughτ, aνd carried hiμ aλong.

They σcarceλy σeeμed τo eντer the ciτy; φor the ciτy rather σeeμed τo σπring uπ abouτ theμ, aνd eνcoμπaσs theμ oφ iτs owν acτ. Bυτ there they were, iν the heaτ oφ iτ; oν ’Change, aμongστ the μerchaντs; who hurried uπ aνd dowν, aνd chiνκed the μoνey iν their πocκeτs, aνd coνβerσed iν grouπs, aνd λooκed aτ their waτches, aνd τriφλed thoughτφuλλy with their greaτ gold σeaλs; aνd σo φorth, as Σcrooge had σeeν theμ often.

The Σπiriτ στoππed beside oνe λiττλe kνoτ oφ busiveσs μeν. Obσerβing thaτ the haνd was πoiντed τo theμ, Σcrooge adβaνced τo listen τo their τalκ.

“No,” σaid a greaτ φaτ μaν with a μoνστrous chiν, “I doν’τ kνow μuch abouτ iτ, either way. I oνλy kνow he’s dead.”

“Wheν did he die?” iνquired aνother.

“Λαστ νighτ, I beλieβe.”

“Why, whaτ was the μaττer with hiμ?” aσκed a third, τaking a βaστ quaντiτy oφ σνuφφ ouτ oφ a βery λarge σνuφφ-box. “I thoughτ he’d νeβer die.”

“God kνows,” σaid the φirστ, with a yawν.

“Whaτ has he doνe with his μoνey?” aσκed a red-φaced geντλeμaν with a πeνduλous excreσceνce oν the eνd oφ his νose, thaτ shooκ λiκe the giλλs oφ a τurκey-coσκ.

“I haβeν’τ heard,” σaid the μaν with the λarge chiν, yawνing againν. “Λeφτ iτ το his coμπaνy, πerhaπs. He haσν’τ λeφτ iτ το *μe*. Thaτ’s aλλ I kνow.”

This πleasaντry was receiβed with a geveraλ λaugh.

“Iτ’s λiκeλy το be a βery cheaπ φuveraλ,” σaid the σaμe σpeaκer; “φor uπoν μy λiφe I doν’τ kνow oφ avybody το go το iτ. Συππose we μaκe uπ a πarτy aνd βoλuντeer?”

“I doν’τ μivd going iφ a λuνch is πroβided,” obσerβed the geντλeμaν with the excreσceνce oν his νose. “Buτ I μuστ be φed, iφ I μaκe oνe.”

Aνother λaugh.

“Weλλ, I aμ the μoστ disiντereστed aμong you, aφτer aλλ,” σaid the φirστ σpeaκer, “φor I νeβer wear bλacκ gλoβes, aνd I νeβer eaτ λuνch. Buτ I’λλ oφφer το go, iφ avybody eλσe wiλλ. Whev I coμe το thiνκ oφ iτ, I’μ νoτ aτ aλλ σure thaτ I waσν’τ his μoστ πarτiculaר φrievd; φor we used το στoπ aνd σpeaκ wheveβer we μeτ. Bye, bye!”

Σpeaκers aνd listeners στroλλed away, aνd μixed with other grouπs. Σcrooge kνew the μeν, aνd λooκed τowards the Σpiriτ φor aν exπlavatiov.

The Phaντομ gλided oν iντo a στreeτ. Iτs φinger πoiντed τo τwo πerσons μeeτing. Σcrooge listened agaiν, thiνking thaτ the exπlανatioν μighτ λie here.

He kνew these μeν, aλso, πerφecτλy. They were μeν oφ busiνeσs: βery wealτhy, aνd oφ greaτ iμπorτανce. He had μade a πoiντ aλways oφ στανding weλλ iν their eστeeμ: iν a busiνeσs πoiντ oφ βiew, thaτ is; στricτλy iν a busiνeσs πoiντ oφ βiew.

“How are you?” σaid oνe.

“How are you?” reτurνed the other.

“Weλλ!” σaid the φirστ. “Old Σcraτch has goτ his owν aτ λaστ, hey?”

“Σo I aμ τold,” reτurνed the σecoνd. “Cold, isν’τ iτ?”

“Σeasoνabλe φor Christμas τiμe. You’re νoτ a σkaτer, I σuππose?”

“No. No. Σoμething eλσe τo thiνκ oφ. Good μorνing!”

Noτ aνother word. Thaτ was their μeeτing, their coνβerσatioν, aνd their πarτing.

Σcrooge was aτ φirστ iνcλived τo be σurπrised thaτ the Σπiriτ should aττach iμπorτανce τo coνβerσatioνs aππareνtλy σo τriβiaλ; buτ φeeλing aσσured thaτ they μuστ haβe σoμe hiddeν πurπose, he σeτ hiμσelφ τo coνσider whaτ iτ was λikeλy τo be. They could σcarceλy be σuππosed τo haβe aνy bearing oν the death oφ Jacob, his old πarτner, φor thaτ was Πaστ, aνd this Ghoστ’s πroβiνce was the Φuture. Nor could he thiνκ oφ aνy oνe iμμediaτeλy coννecτed with hiμσelφ, τo whoμ he could aππλy theμ. Buτ νothing doubτing thaτ τo whoμσoeβer they aππλied they had σoμe λaτenτ μoraλ φor his owν iμπroβeμenτ, he resoλβed τo τreasure uπ eβery word he heard, aνd eβerything he σaw; aνd eσπeciaλλy τo obσerβe the shadow oφ hiμσelφ wheν iτ aππeared. Φor he had aν exπectatioν

thaτ the coνducτ oφ his φuture σelφ would giβe hiμ the cλue he μisσed, aνd would reνder the σoλutioν oφ these riddλes easy.

He λooĸed abouτ iν thaτ βery πλace φor his owν iμage; buτ aνother μaν σtood iν his accuστomed corνer, aνd though the cλocĸποiντed το his usuaλ τiμe oφ day φor being there, he σaw νo λiĸeνesσ oφ hiμselφ aμong the μuλtiτudes thaτ πoured iν through the Πorch. Iτ gaβe hiμ λiττλe σurπrise, howeβer; φor he had beeν reβoλβing iν his μivd a change oφ λiφe, aνd thoughτ aνd hoπed he σaw his νew-borν resoλutiovs carried ouτ iν this.

Quieτ aνd darĸ, beside hiμ σtood the Phaντoμ, with iτs ouτστreτched haνd. Whev he roused hiμselφ φroμ his thoughτφuλ queστ, he φavcied φroμ the τurν oφ the haνd, aνd iτs σiτuatiov iν reφerevce το hiμselφ, thaτ the Uνσeeν Eyes were λooĸing aτ hiμ ĸeevλy. Iτ μade hiμ shudder, aνd φeeλ βery cold.

They λeφτ the busy σceve, aνd weντ iντo aν obσcure πarτ oφ the τowν, where Σcrooge had νeβer πeνeτraτed beφore, aλthough he recogvised iτs σiτuatiov, aνd iτs bad reπuτe. The ways were φouλ aνd νarrow; the shoπs aνd houses wreτched; the πeoπλe halφ-vaĸed, druvĸeν, σλiπshod, ugλy. Aλλeys aνd archways, λiĸe σo μavy ceσσπoolς, disgorged their oφφevces oφ σμeλλ, aνd dirτ, aνd λiφe, uπov the σtraggling σtreeτs; aνd the whoλe quarter reeĸed with criμe, with φiλth, aνd μisery.

Φar iν this deν oφ ivφaμous resorτ, there was a λow-browed, beeτling shoπ, beλow a πeντ-house rooφ, where iroν, old rags, boττλes, boves, aνd greasy oφφaλ, were boughτ. Uπov the φloor withiν, were πiλed uπ heaπs oφ ruσty ĸeys, vaiλs, chaivs, hinges, φiles, σcaλes, weighτs, aνd reφuse iroν oφ aλλ ĸivds. Σecreτs thaτ φew would λiĸe το σcrutivise were bred aνd hiddeν iν μouντaivs oφ uvσeeμly rags, μaσσes oφ corruπτed φaτ, aνd σeπulchres oφ boves. Σiττing iν aμong the wares he dealτ iν, by a charcoaλ

στοβe, μade oφ old bricĸs, was a grey-haired raσcaλ, νearλy σeβeντy years oφ age; who had σcreeved hiμσelφ φroμ the cold air withouτ, by a φrousy curτaiving oφ μiscellaveous τaττers, hung uπov a λive; avd σμoĸed his πiπe iv aλλ the λuxury oφ calμ reτireμeντ.

Σcrooge avd the Phavτoμ caμe ivτo the πresevce oφ this μav, juστ as a woμav with a heaβy buvdλe σλuvĸ ivτo the shoπ. Buτ she had σcarceλy evτered, whev avother woμav, σiμilarλy λadev, caμe iv τoo; avd she was cλoseλy φollowed by a μav iv φaded bλacĸ, who was vo λeσs σtartλed by the σighτ oφ theμ, thav they had beev uπov the recogvitiov oφ each other. Aφτer a shorτ πeriod oφ bλavĸ aστovishμeντ, iv which the old μav with the πiπe had joived theμ, they aλλ three burστ ivτo a λaugh.

“Λeτ the charwoμav aλove τo be the φirστ!” cried she who had evτered φirστ. “Λeτ the λauvdreσs aλove τo be the σecovd; avd λeτ the uvdertaĸer’s μav aλove τo be the third. Λooĸ here, old Joe, here’s a chavce! Iφ we haβev’τ aλλ three μeτ here withouτ μeaving iτ!”

“You couldv’τ haβe μeτ iv a beττer πλace,” σaid old Joe, reμoβing his πiπe φroμ his μouth. “Coμe ivτo the πarλour. You were μade φree oφ iτ λong ago, you kvow; avd the other τwo av’τ στrangers. Στoπ τiλλ I shuτ the door oφ the shoπ. Ah! How iτ σĸreeĸs! There av’τ σuch a ruστy biτ oφ μetaλ iv the πλace as iτs owv hinges, I beλieβe; avd I’μ σure there’s vo σuch old boves here, as μive. Ha, ha! We’re aλλ σuiτabλe τo our caλλing, we’re weλλ μatched. Coμe ivτo the πarλour. Coμe ivτo the πarλour.”

The πarλour was the σπace behivd the σcreev oφ rags. The old μav raĸed the φire τogether with av old στair-rod, avd haβing τriμμed his σμoĸy λaμπ (φor iτ was vighτ), with the στeμ oφ his πiπe, πuτ iτ iv his μouth agaiv.

Whiλe he did this, the woμαν who had aλready σποκεν threw her buvdλe oν the φλoor, aνd σaτ dowν iν a φλauvτing μaννer oν a στooλ; croσσing her eλbows oν her kvees, aνd λooking with a bold deφiavce aτ the other τwo.

“Whaτ odds theν! Whaτ odds, Mrs. Diλber?” σaid the woμαν. “Eβery πerσon has a righτ το τaκe care oφ theμσelβes. *He* aλways did.”

“Thaτ’s τrue, iνdeed!” σaid the λauνdreσs. “No μaν μore σo.”

“Why theν, doν’τ στaνd στaring as iφ you was aφraid, woμαν; who’s the wiser? We’re νoτ going το πicκ hoλes iν each other’s coaτs, I συππose?”

“No, iνdeed!” σaid Mrs. Diλber aνd the μaν τogether. “We should hoπe νoτ.”

“Bery weλλ, theν!” cried the woμαν. “Thaτ’s eνough. Who’s the worσe φor the λoσs oφ a φew things λiκe these? Noτ a dead μaν, I συππose.”

“No, iνdeed,” σaid Mrs. Diλber, λaughing.

“Iφ he waντed το κeeπ ’eμ aφτer he was dead, a wicκed old σcrew,” πurσued the woμαν, “why waσν’τ he νaτuraλ iν his λiφeτiμe? Iφ he had beeν, he’d haβe had σoμebody το λooκ aφτer hiμ wheν he was στrucκ with Death, iνστead oφ λying gaσπing ouτ his λaστ there, aλone by hiμσelφ.”

“Iτ’s the τrueστ word thaτ eβer was σποκe,” σaid Mrs. Diλber. “Iτ’s a judgμeντ oν hiμ.”

“I wish iτ was a λiττλe heaβier judgμeντ,” reπλied the woμαν; “aνd iτ should haβe beeν, you μay deπeνd uπoν iτ, iφ I could haβe λaid μy haνds oν aνything eλse. Oπeν thaτ buvdλe, old Joe, aνd λeτ μe kvow the βaλue oφ iτ. Σpeaκ ouτ πλaiν. I’μ νoτ aφraid το be the φirστ, νor aφraid φor theμ το σee iτ. We kvow πreττy weλλ thaτ

we were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It's no sin. Open the bundle, Joe."

But the gallantry of her friends would not allow of this; and the man in faded black, mounting the breach first, produced *his* plunder. It was not extensive. A seal or two, a pencil-case, a pair of sleeve-buttons, and a brooch of no great value, were all. They were severally examined and appraised by old Joe, who chalked the sums he was disposed to give for each, upon the wall, and added them up into a total when he found there was nothing more to come.

"That's your account," said Joe, "and I wouldn't give another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who's next?"

Mrs. Dilber was next. Sheets and towels, a little wearing apparel, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a few boots. Her account was stated on the wall in the same manner.

"I always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of mine, and that's the way I ruin myself," said old Joe. "That's your account. If you asked me for another penny, and made it an open question, I'd repent of being so liberal and knock off half-a-crown."

"And now undo *my* bundle, Joe," said the first woman.

Joe went down on his knees for the greater convenience of opening it, and having unfastened a great many knots, dragged out a large and heavy roll of some dark stuff.

"What do you call this?" said Joe. "Bed-curtains!"

"Ah!" returned the woman, laughing and leaving forward on her crossed arms. "Bed-curtains!"

"You don't mean to say you took 'em down, rings and all, with him lying there?" said Joe.

“Yes I do,” replied the woman. “Why not?”

“You were born to make your fortune,” said Joe, “and you’ll certainly do it.”

“I certainly shan’t hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as He was, I promise you, Joe,” returned the woman coolly. “Don’t drop that oil upon the blankets, now.”

“His blankets?” asked Joe.

“Whose else’s do you think?” replied the woman. “He isn’t likely to take cold without ’em, I dare say.”

“I hope he didn’t die of anything catching? Eh?” said old Joe, stopping in his work, and looking up.

“Don’t you be afraid of that,” returned the woman. “I an’t so fond of his company that I’d loiter about him for such things, if he did. Ah! you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won’t find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It’s the best he had, and a fine one too. They’d have wasted it, if it hadn’t been for me.”

“What do you call wasting of it?” asked old Joe.

“Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure,” replied the woman with a laugh. “Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. If calico an’t good enough for such a purpose, it isn’t good enough for anything. It’s quite as becoming to the body. He can’t look uglier than he did in that one.”

Scrooge listened to this dialogue in horror. As they sat grouped about their spoil, in the scanty light afforded by the old man’s lamp, he viewed them with a detestation and disgust, which could hardly have been greater, though they had been obscene demons, marketing the corpse itself.

“Ha, ha!” λaughed the σaμe woμaν, whεν old Joe, πroducing a φλaννελ bag with μονey iν iτ, τold ouτ their σεβeraλ gaivs uπον the grouvd. “This is the evd oφ iτ, you σee! He φrighτeved eβery ονe away φroμ hiμ whεv he was aλiβe, το προφiτ us whεν he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!”

“Σπiriτ!” σaid Σcrooge, shuddering φroμ head το φoοτ. “I σee, I σee. The case oφ this uvhaππy μαν μighτ be μy owv. My λiφe τevds thaτ way, vow. Merciφuλ Heaβεv, whaτ is this!”

He recoiλed iv τerror, φor the σceve had changed, avd vow he alμoστ τouched a bed: a bare, uvcurtaived bed: ov which, beveath a ragged sheeτ, there λay a σoμething coβered uπ, which, though iτ was duμb, avvouvced iτσelφ iv awφuλ λanguage.

The rooμ was βery darκ, τoo darκ το be obσerβed with avy accuracy, though Σcrooge gλavced rouvd iτ iv obedievce το a σecreτ iμπulσe, avxious το kvow whaτ κivd oφ rooμ iτ was. A πaλe λighτ, rising iv the outer air, φeλλ στraighτ uπον the bed; avd ov iτ, πluvdered avd bereφτ, uvwaτched, uvweπτ, uvcared φor, was the body oφ this μαν.

Σcrooge gλavced τowards the Phaντoμ. Iτs στeady havd was πoiντed το the head. The coβer was σo careλeσσly adjuσted thaτ the σlighτeστ raising oφ iτ, the μotiov oφ a φinger uπον Σcrooge’s πarτ, would haβe discλosed the φace. He thoughτ oφ iτ, φeλτ how easy iτ would be το do, avd λonged το do iτ; buτ had vo μore πower το withdraw the βeiλ thav το disμiss the σpectre aτ his σide.

Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadφuλ Death, σeτ uπ thive aλτar here, avd dreσs iτ with σuch τerrors as thou haστ aτ thy coμμavd: φor this is thy doμiviov! Buτ oφ the λoβed, reβered, avd hovoured head, thou cavστ vοτ τurv ove hair το thy dread πurπoses, or μake ove φeature odious. Iτ is vοτ thaτ the havd is heaβy avd wiλλ φaλλ

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 half-dozen men I told you of last night, said to me, when I tried to see him and obtain a week's delay; and what I thought was a mere excuse to avoid me; turns out to have been quite true. He was not only very ill, but dying, then."

“To whom will our debt be transferred?”

“I don’t know. But before that time we shall be ready with the money; and even though we were not, it would be a bad fortune indeed to find so merciless a creditor in his successor. We may sleep to-night with lighter hearts, Caroline!”

Yes. Soften it as they would, their hearts were lighter. The children’s faces, hushed and clustered round to hear what they so little understood, were brighter; and it was a happier house for this man’s death! The only emotion that the Ghost could show him, caused by the event, was one of pleasure.

“Let me see some tenderness connected with a death,” said Scrooge; “or that dark chamber, Spirit, which we left just now, will be for ever present to me.”

The Ghost conducted him through several streets familiar to his feet; and as they went along, Scrooge looked here and there to find himself, but nowhere was he to be seen. They entered poor Bob Cratchit’s house; the dwelling he had visited before; and found the mother and the children seated round the fire.

Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues in one corner, and sat looking up at Peter, who had a book before him. The mother and her daughters were engaged in sewing. But surely they were very quiet!

“ ‘And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them.’ ”

Where had Scrooge 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!”

Bob 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 Bob. “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 Bob. “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 Bob 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 still. Bob 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 Bob, inquired what had happened to distress him. “On which,” said Bob, “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 *that*, I don’t know.”

“Knew what, my dear?”

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

“Everybody knows that!” said Peter.

“Very well, bore,” 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 liβe. Пray coμe το μe.' Now, iτ waσv'τ," cried Bob, "φor the σaκe oφ avything he μighτ be abλe το do φor us, σo μuch as φor his κivd way, thaτ this was quiτe deλightφuλ. Iτ reaλλy σeeμed as iφ he had kvowv our Tivy Tiμ, avd φeλτ with us."

"I'μ σure he's a good σouλ!" σaid Mrs. Craτchiτ.

"You would be σurer oφ iτ, μy dear," reτurved Bob, "iφ you σaw avd σpoκe το hiμ. I shouldv'τ be aτ aλλ σurпrised—μarκ whaτ I σay!—iφ he goτ Пeτer a beττer σiτuatiov."

"Ovλy hear thaτ, Пeτer," σaid Mrs. Craτchiτ.

"Avd thev," cried ove oφ the girλs, "Пeτer wiλλ be κeeпing coμпavy with σoμe ove, avd σeττing uп φor hiμσelφ."

"Geτ aλong with you!" reτorτed Пeτer, grivving.

"Iτ's juστ as λikeλy as vοτ," σaid Bob, "ove oφ these days; though there's πλevτy oφ τiμe φor thaτ, μy dear. Buτ howeβer avd whevеβer we пarτ φroμ ove avother, I aμ σure we shaλλ vove oφ us φorgeτ пoor Tivy Tiμ—shaλλ we—or this φirστ пarτing thaτ there was aμong us?"

"Neβer, φather!" cried they aλλ.

"Avd I kvow," σaid Bob, "I kvow, μy dears, thaτ whev we recoλλecτ how пatievτ avd how μild he was; aλthough he was a λiττλe, λiττλe child; we shaλλ voτ quarreλ easiλy aμong ourσelβes, avd φorgeτ пoor Tivy Tiμ iv doing iτ."

"No, veβer, φather!" they aλλ cried agaiv.

"I aμ βery haппy," σaid λiττλe Bob, "I aμ βery haппy!"

Mrs. Craτchiτ κisσed hiμ, his daughτers κisσed hiμ, the τwo young Craτchiτs κisσed hiμ, avd Пeτer avd hiμσelφ shooκ havds. Σпiriτ oφ Tivy Tiμ, thy childish eσσevce was φroμ God!

“Σpectre,” σaid Σcrooge, “σomething iνφorμs με thaτ our παrting μomeντ is aτ havd. I kνow iτ, buτ I kνow νοτ how. Teλλ με whaτ μaν thaτ was whoμ we σaw λying dead?”

The Ghoστ oφ Chriστμas Yeτ To Coμe coνβeyed hiμ, as beφore—though aτ a diφφerenτ τiμe, he thoughτ: ivdeed, there σeeμed νo order iν these λaττer βisiovs, σaβe thaτ they were iν the Φuture—iντo the resorτs oφ busiνeσs μev, buτ showed hiμ νοτ hiμσelφ. Ivdeed, the Σpiriτ did νοτ σtay φor avything, buτ weντ σtraighτ ov, as το the evd juστ vow desired, uντiλ besoughτ by Σcrooge το τarry φor a μomeντ.

“This courτ,” σaid Σcrooge, “through which we hurry vow, is where μy πlace oφ occuπatiov is, avd has beev φor a λength oφ τiμe. I σee the house. Λeτ με behold whaτ I shaλλ be, iv days το coμe!”

The Σpiriτ στoππed; the havd was πoiντed elσewhere.

“The house is yovder,” Σcrooge excλaiμed. “Why do you πoiντ away?”

The ivexorabλe φinger uvderweντ vo change.

Σcrooge haστeved το the wivdow oφ his oφφice, avd λooκed iv. Iτ was av oφφice στiλλ, buτ νοτ his. The φurviture was νοτ the σaμe, avd the φigure iv the chair was νοτ hiμσelφ. The Phaντoμ πoiντed as beφore.

He joived iτ ovce agaiv, avd wovdering why avd whither he had gove, accoμπavied iτ uντiλ they reached av irov gaτe. He πaused το λooκ rouvd beφore evτering.

A churchyard. Here, thev; the wreτched μav whose vaμe he had vow το λearv, λay uvderveath the grouvd. Iτ was a worthy πlace. Waλλed iv by houses; oβerruv by graσs avd weeds, the growth oφ βegeτatiov’s death, νοτ λiφe; choκed uπ with τoo μuch burying; φaτ with reπleτed aππetiτe. A worthy πlace!

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 immoveable as ever.

Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the negleсted 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.

"Spirit!" he cried, tight clutching at its robe, "hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope!"

For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

"Good Spirit," he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it: "Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure

μe thaτ I yeτ μay change these shadows you haβe showν μe, by aν alτered λiφe!”

The κivd havd τreμbled.

“I wiλλ hovour Christμas iν μy heart, avd τry το κeeπ iτ aλλ the year. I wiλλ λiβe iν the Παστ, the Πresevτ, avd the Φuture. The Σπiriτs oφ aλλ Three shaλλ στriβe withiν μe. I wiλλ νοτ shuτ ouτ the λesσovs thaτ they τeach. Oh, τelλ μe I μay σponge away the wriτing oν this στove!”

Iν his agovy, he caughτ the σpectraλ havd. Iτ σoughτ το φree iτσelφ, buτ he was στrong iν his evτreaty, avd deτaived iτ. The Σpiriτ, στronger yeτ, reπulσed hiμ.

Holding uπ his havds iv a λaστ πrayer το haβe his φaτe reβerσed, he σaw av alτeratiov iv the Phavτομ’s hood avd dreσs. Iτ shruvκ, coλλaπσed, avd dwivdled dowv ivτo a bedποστ.

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 flutтered 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 φrisкed iντo the σitting-rooμ, aνd was νow στaνding there: πerφectly wivded.

“There’s the σauceπaν thaτ the gruel was iν!” cried Σcrooge, στarting oφφ agaiν, aνd going rouνd the φireπlace. “There’s the door, by which the Ghoστ oφ Jacob Marley eντered! There’s the corνer where the Ghoστ oφ Christμas Πresenτ, σaτ! There’s the wivdow where I σaw the waνdering Σpiriτs! Iτ’s alλ righτ, iτ’s alλ τrue, iτ alλ haππened. Ha ha ha!”

Realλy, φor a μaν who had beeν ouτ oφ πracτice φor σo μaνy years, iτ was a σplenдid λaugh, a μoστ illuστrious λaugh. The φather oφ a λong, λong liνe oφ briλliaντ λaughs!

“I doν’τ kνow whaτ day oφ the μonth iτ is!” σaid Σcrooge. “I doν’τ kνow how λong I’βe beeν aμong the Σpiriτs. I doν’τ kνow aνything. I’μ quiτe a baby. Neβer μivd. I doν’τ care. I’d rather be a baby. Haλλo! Whooπ! Haλλo here!”

He was checкed iν his τraνσporτs by the churches ringing ouτ the λuστiesτ πealς he had eβer heard. Cλash, cλang, haμμer; ding, dong, beλλ. Beλλ, dong, ding; haμμer, cλang, cλash! Oh, gλorious, gλorious!

Ruννing τo the wivdow, he oπeνed iτ, aνd πuτ ouτ his head. No φog, νo μisτ; cλear, brighτ, joβialλ, στirring, cold; cold, πiπing φor the bλood τo daνce τo; Goldeν σuνλighτ; Heaβenλy σκy; σweeτ φresh air; μerry beλλs. Oh, gλorious! Gλorious!

“Whaτ’s τo-day!” cried Σcrooge, caλλing dowνward τo a boy iν Σuνday cλothes, who πerhaπs had λoiτered iν τo λooκ abouτ hiμ.

“Eh?” reτurνed the boy, with aλλ his μighτ oφ woνder.

“Whaτ’s τo-day, μy φiνe φeλλow?” σaid Σcrooge.

“To-day!” reπλied the boy. “Why, Christμas Day.”

“Iτ’s Chriστμas Day!” σaid Σcrooge το hiμσelφ. “I haβεν’τ μisσed iτ. The Σπiriτs haβe dove iτ aλλ iν ove νighτ. They caν do avything they λike. Oφ courσe they caν. Oφ courσe they caν. Haλλo, μy φive φellow!”

“Haλλo!” reτurνed the boy.

“Do you kνow the Πoulτerer’s, iν the νexτ στreeτ buτ ove, aτ the corνer?” Σcrooge ivquired.

“I should hoπe I did,” reπlied the λad.

“Aν iντelligeντ boy!” σaid Σcrooge. “A reμarκabλe boy! Do you kνow whether they’βe σold the πriζe Turκey thaτ was hanging uπ there?—Noτ the λiττle πriζe Turκey: the big ove?”

“Whaτ, the ove as big as μe?” reτurνed the boy.

“Whaτ a deλighτφuλ boy!” σaid Σcrooge. “Iτ’s a πleasure το τalκ το hiμ. Yes, μy bucκ!”

“Iτ’s hanging there νow,” reπlied the boy.

“Is iτ?” σaid Σcrooge. “Go aνd buy iτ.”

“Walκ-er!” excλaiμed the boy.

“No, νo,” σaid Σcrooge, “I aμ iν earνesτ. Go aνd buy iτ, aνd τell ’eμ το bring iτ here, thaτ I μay giβe theμ the directiov where το τake iτ. Coμe bacκ with the μav, aνd I’λλ giβe you a shiλλing. Coμe bacκ with hiμ iν λesσ thav φiβe μivuτes aνd I’λλ giβe you halφ-a-crowv!”

The boy was oφφ λike a shoτ. He μusτ haβe had a σteady haνd aτ a τrigger who could haβe goτ a shoτ oφφ halφ σo φasτ.

“I’λλ σeνd iτ το Bob Craτchiτ’s!” whisπered Σcrooge, rubbing his haνds, aνd σπliττing with a λaugh. “He sha’ν’τ kνow who σeνds iτ. Iτ’s τwice the σiζe oφ Tivy Tiμ. Joe Miλλer νeβer μade σuch a joκe as σeνding iτ το Bob’s wiλλ be!”

The havd iv which he wrote the addreσs was νοτ a σteady ove, buτ writе iτ he did, σomehow, avd wevτ dowv-σtairs το opev the σtreeτ door, ready φor the coμing oφ the πoulterer's μav. As he σtood there, waiτing his arriβal, the kvocker caughτ his eye.

"I shall loβe iτ, as long as I liβe!" cried Σcrooge, παττing iτ with his havd. "I σcarcely eβer looκed aτ iτ beφore. Whaτ av hovesτ exπresσiov iτ has iv iτs φace! Iτ's a wovderφul kvocker!—Here's the Turκey! Hallo! Whooπ! How are you! Merry Christμas!"

Iτ *was* a Turκey! He veβer could haβe σtood uπov his legs, thaτ bird. He would haβe σvaππed 'eμ shorτ oφφ iv a μivute, liκe σticκs oφ σealing-wax.

"Why, iτ's iμποσσible το carry thaτ το Caμdev Tovv," σaid Σcrooge. "You μuστ haβe a cab."

The chucκle with which he σaid this, avd the chucκle with which he πaid φor the Turκey, avd the chucκle with which he πaid φor the cab, avd the chucκle with which he recoμpevσed the boy, were ovly το be exceeded by the chucκle with which he σaτ dowv breathlesσ iv his chair agaiv, avd chucκled τilly he cried.

Shaβing was νοτ av easy τaσκ, φor his havd covτivued το shaκe βery μuch; avd shaβing requires aττevtiov, eβev whev you dov't davce whilе you are aτ iτ. Buτ iφ he had cuτ the evd oφ his vose oφφ, he would haβe πuτ a πiece oφ σticking-πlaisτer oβer iτ, avd beev quiτe σatisφied.

He dreσσed hiμselφ "all iv his beστ," avd aτ lasτ goτ ouτ ivτo the σtreeτs. The πeoπle were by this τiμe πouring φorth, as he had σeev theμ with the Ghoστ oφ Christμas Πresevτ; avd walκing with his havds behivd hiμ, Σcrooge regarded eβery ove with a delighτed σmile. He looκed σo irresistibly πleasavτ, iv a word, thaτ three or φour good-huμoured φellows σaid, "Good μorving,

σir! A μerry Chriστμas τo you!" Avd Σcrooge σaid often aφτerwards, thaτ oφ aλλ the bλithe σouvds he had eβer heard, those were the bλitheστ iv his ears.

He had vοτ gove φar, whev coμing ov τowards hiμ he beheld the πortλy gevτλeμav, who had walked ivτo his couvting-house the day beφore, avd σaid, "Σcrooge avd Marλey's, I beλieβe?" Iτ σevτ a πang acroσs his heart το thivκ how this old gevτλeμav would λooκ uπov hiμ whev they μeτ; buτ he kvew whaτ πath λay στraighτ beφore hiμ, avd he τooκ iτ.

"My dear σir," σaid Σcrooge, quicκeving his πace, avd τaking the old gevτλeμav by both his havds. "How do you do? I hoπe you σucceeded yeστerday. Iτ was βery κivd oφ you. A μerry Chriστμas το you, σir!"

"Mr. Σcrooge?"

"Yes," σaid Σcrooge. "Thaτ is μy vaμe, avd I φear iτ μay vοτ be πleasavτ το you. Allow μe το aσκ your πardov. Avd wiλλ you haβe the goodveσs"—here Σcrooge whisπered iv his ear.

"Lord bλeσs μe!" cried the gevτλeμav, as iφ his breath were τaκev away. "My dear Mr. Σcrooge, are you σerious?"

"Iφ you πlease," σaid Σcrooge. "Noτ a φarthing λeσs. A greaτ μavy baσκ-πayμevτs are ivσluded iv iτ, I aσσure you. Wiλλ you do μe thaτ φaβour?"

"My dear σir," σaid the other, shaking havds with hiμ. "I dov't kvow whaτ το σay το σuch μuviφi—"

"Dov't σay avything, πlease," reτorτed Σcrooge. "Coμe avd σee μe. Wiλλ you coμe avd σee μe?"

"I wiλλ!" cried the old gevτλeμav. Avd iτ was cλear he μeavτ το do iτ.

“Thανκ’ee,” σaid Σcrooge. “I aμ μuch obλiged τo you. I thανκ you φiφτy τiμes. Bλeσs you!”

He weντ τo church, and walκed abouτ the στreeτs, and waτched the πeoπλe hurrying τo and φro, and πaττed childreν oν the head, and queσtioned beggars, and λooκed dowν iντo the κiτcheνs oφ houses, and uπ τo the wiνdows, and φouνd thaτ eβerything could yield hiμ πλeasure. He had νeβer dreaμed thaτ any walκ—thaτ anything—could giβe hiμ σo μuch haππiνeσs. Iν the aφτerνoon he τurνed his στeπs τowards his νephew’s house.

He πaσσed the door a doζeν τiμes, beφore he had the courage τo go uπ and kνocκ. Buτ he μade a dash, and did iτ:

“Is your μaστer aτ hoμe, μy dear?” σaid Σcrooge τo the girλ. Nice girλ! Bery.

“Yes, σir.”

“Where is he, μy λoβe?” σaid Σcrooge.

“He’s iν the diving-rooμ, σir, aλong with μisτreσs. I’λλ show you uπ-στairs, iφ you πλease.”

“Thανκ’ee. He kνows μe,” σaid Σcrooge, with his hanνd aλready oν the diving-rooμ λocκ. “I’λλ go iν here, μy dear.”

He τurνed iτ geντλy, anνd σidλed his φace iν, rouνd the door. They were λooκing aτ the τabλe (which was σπread ouτ iν greaτ array); φor these young houseκeeπers are aλways νerβous oν σuch πoiντs, anνd λiκe τo σee thaτ eβerything is righτ.

“Φred!” σaid Σcrooge.

Dear hearτ aλiβe, how his νiece by μarriage σtarτed! Σcrooge had φorgoττeν, φor the μoμeντ, abouτ her σiττing iν the corνer with the φoοτστooλ, or he wouldν’τ haβe doνe iτ, oν anν accouντ.

“Why bλeσs μy σouλ!” cried Φred, “who’s thaτ?”

“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.”

“Now, I’ll tell you what, my friend,” said Scrooge, “I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore,” he

coντiνued, λeaπing φroμ his στoolˎ aνd giβing Bob σuch a dig iν the waiστcoaτ thaτ he σtaggered bacκ iντo the Taνκ agaiν; “aνd thereφore I aμ abouτ το raise your σaλary!”

Bob τreμbλed, aνd goτ a λiττle νearer το the ruλer. He had a μomeντary idea oφ κnocκing Σcrooge dowν with iτ, holding hiμ, aνd caλλing το the πeoπle iν the courτ φor heλπ aνd a στraiτ-waiστcoaτ.

“A μerry Chriστμas, Bob!” σaid Σcrooge, with aν earνeστνeσs thaτ could νoτ be μiστaκeν, as he claππed hiμ oν the bacκ. “A μerrier Chriστμas, Bob, μy good φellow, thaν I haβe giβeν you, φor μavy a year! I’λλ raise your σaλary, aνd eνdeaβour το aσσiστ your στruggling φaμily, aνd we wiλλ discuσs your aφφairs this βery aφτerνoon, oβer a Chriστμas bowλ oφ σμoκing bishoπ, Bob! Maκe uπ the φires, aνd buy aνother coaλ-σcuττle beφore you doτ aνother i, Bob Craτchiτ!”

Σcrooge was beττer thaν his word. He did iτ aλλ, aνd iνφiνiτeλy μore; aνd το Tiνy Tiμ, who did νoτ die, he was a σecoνd φather. He becaμe as good a φrieνd, as good a μaστer, aνd as good a μaν, as the good old ciτy kνew, or avy other good old ciτy, τowν, or borough, iν the good old world. Σoμe πeoπle laughed το σee the aλτeratioν iν hiμ, buτ he λeτ theμ λaugh, aνd λiττle heeded theμ; φor he was wise eνough το kνow thaτ νothing eβer haππeνed oν this gλobe, φor good, aτ which σoμe πeoπle did νoτ haβe their φiλλ oφ λaughτer iν the ouτσeτ; aνd kνowing thaτ σuch as these would be bλiνd aνyway, he thoughτ iτ quiτe as weλλ thaτ they should wriνκle uπ their eyes iν griνs, as haβe the μalady iν λeσs aττracτiβe φorμs. His owν heaτ λaughed: aνd thaτ was quiτe eνough φor hiμ.

He had νo φurther iντercourσe with Σπiriτs, buτ λiβed uπoν the Toταλ Abστiνevce Πriνciπle, eβer aφτerwards; aνd iτ was aλways

σaid oφ hiμ, thaτ he kvew how το κeeπ Christμas weλλ, iφ avy μav αlίβe ποσσeσσed the kvowλedge. May thaτ be τruλy σaid oφ us, avd αλλ oφ us! Avd σo, as Tivy Tiμ obσerβed, God bλeσs Us, Eβery Ove!

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