

A Christmas Carol

From the novel by
Charles Dickens

Adapted for the stage by
David Lawver

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Characters

Ebenezer Scrooge
Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's clerk (see the note on pronunciation)
Fred, Scrooge's nephew
First Philanthropist] (either men or women,
Second Philanthropist] and can be combined into one)
A boy caroler
Jacob Marley
Ghost of Christmas Past
Scrooge as a boy
Fan, Scrooge's younger sister
Fezziwig
Scrooge as a young man
Dick Wilkins
Mrs. Fezziwig
Nathaniel (the fiddler)
Emily, Fezziwig's housemaid
Barclay, Emily's cousin, a baker
Samantha, Fezziwig's cook
Alfred, a milkman
Ned, the boy from over the way from Fezziwig's
Monica, the girl from next door but one from Fezziwig's
Rose, Fezziwig's daughter
Fezziwig party servers
Belle
Ghost of Christmas Present
Mrs. Cratchit
Belinda Cratchit
Peter Cratchit
Young Cratchit boy
Young Cratchit girl
Martha Cratchit
Tiny Tim
Fred's wife
Fred's wife's sister
Topper] Fred's party guests
Grace]
Jenny]
Alice]
Simon]
Jeremiah]
Anthony]
Fred's maid
Ignorance
Want
Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come
First businessman
Second businessman

Third businessman (could be a woman, wife of the second)
Old Joe
Charwoman
Mrs. Dilber
Undertaker
Turkey Boy

Various Londoners, including carolers

Notes

Accents and pronunciation

At the discretion of the director, US actors may employ good General American speech (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_American) rather than a British accent for most of the characters. That's an acceptable choice, though it would be best to pronounce a few words in a special manner. By all means, “clerk” should be pronounced /klɑ:rk/, “either” should be /'aɪðə(r)/, and comfort should be /kʌmfɔ:rt/. The director and actors may identify other words.

For the low-life characters in Scene 12, some flavor of the Cockney dialect is preferable. Key changes would be silent h, /aɪ/ for /eɪ/, /ɔɪ/ for /aɪ/, and the glottal stop /ʔ/ for /t/ within words. Going further, one may substitute /ɑ:/ for /æ/ when the vowel precedes f, ft, nch, nce, nt, sk, sp, ss, st, voiced th, and unvoiced th not followed by a vowel.

Vocabulary

For the most part, research on the particular words and phrases used by Dickens has been left to the actors, director, and dramaturg. The material at: <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/xmas/pva116.html> may be initially useful, particularly regarding the Turkey Boy's “Walk-ER”.

Set

The original set kept Scrooge's bedroom on stage throughout, on an 8-inch platform. On the opposite side of the stage was another 8-inch platform which included a fireplace. This was used for Scrooge's office, the schoolroom, and parts of Fezziwig's warehouse, the Cratchit house, and Fred's house. The graveyard was set downstage of Scrooge's room, with Scrooges tomb against his bed to allow a smooth transition to his awakening. Directors and designers are challenged to create an evocative atmosphere that allows for a smooth, almost cinematic transition from scene to scene. Where shifts are necessary, they can take place while action goes on in other parts of the stage.

This adaption was first performed on December 9, 2011, by Barneveld School Drama in Barneveld, Wisconsin. The director, producer, scene, lighting, and sound designer was Duane Draper, the associate director, costume, properties, hair, and makeup designer was Heidi Bosch, and the technical director was Brian Walker. The choreographer was Sarah Karlen, and the hair designer was Sherry Whitish. Production stage managers were Mindy Kelly and Tory Schave.

CAST

Enzo Monroe.....	Ebenezer Scrooge
Austin Moyer.....	Bob Cratchit
Nik Dominguez.....	Fred/Alfred
Kaitlyn Walker.....	First Philanthropist/Emily/Martha Cratchit
Joey Frank.....	Boy Caroler/Ignorance
Hannah Coyne.....	Jacob Marley/Grace/Charwoman
Savannah Schaller.....	Ghost of Christmas Past/Fred's Maid
Tanner Sullivan.....	Young Scrooge/Peter Cratchit
Holly Moore.....	Mrs. Fezziwig/Mrs. Dilber
Joseph Ruhland.....	Nathaniel/Anthony/Second Businessman
Kaila Brunner.....	Belle/Jenny
Hailey Cannoy.....	Ghost of Christmas Present/Second Philanthropist
Kami Clerkin.....	Mrs. Cratchit/Rose
Emily Vandenberg.....	Belinda Cratchit/Fezziwig Server
Jessica Walker.....	Young Cratchit Girl
Micah Dominguez.....	Young Cratchit Boy
William Neuroth.....	Tiny Tim
Corissa Lease.....	Fred's Wife/Fan/Fezziwig Server
Dannielle Sickels.....	Fred's Wife's Sister/Samantha
Dan Flannery.....	Topper/Dick Wilkins/First Businessman
Zoe Schmitz.....	Want
Samuel Nechkash.....	Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come/Fezziwig/Simon
Alana Hendrickson.....	Second Businessman's Wife/Monica/Alice
Jacob Wright.....	Old Joe
Matthew Schaaf.....	Undertaker/Ned/Jeremiah
Colton Weinke-Owens.....	Turkey Boy/Boy Scrooge/Barclay

Scene 1

(The office of Scrooge's counting-house and the street outside. It is cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal. People in the street go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. A clock strikes three, but it is quite dark already. Candles are flaring in the office, where Scrooge keeps his eye upon his clerk, Bob Cratchit, who sits copying letters. A group of carolers gathers outside the office, and begins to sing.)

CAROLERS: God rest ye merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour...

(Scrooge seizes a ruler and charges out the door with such energy of action that the singers flee in terror. As he returns to his desk, his nephew, Fred, strolls down the street and quickly enters the office. He is all in a glow; his face ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkle, and his breath smokes in the cold.)

FRED: A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug!

FRED: Christmas a humbug, uncle! You don't mean that, I am sure?

SCROOGE: I do. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

FRED: Come, then. What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug.

FRED: Don't be cross, uncle!

SCROOGE: What else can I be 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, 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!

FRED: Uncle!

SCROOGE: Nephew! Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.

FRED: Keep it! But you don't keep it.

SCROOGE: Let me leave it alone, then. Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!

FRED: There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say, 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!

(Caught up in the spirit of Fred's speech, Cratchit applauds from his corner, but is stopped by a look from Scrooge.)

SCROOGE: Let me hear another sound from you and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! *(to Fred)* You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

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

SCROOGE: I'll see you, yes, indeed I will. But in hell first.

FRED: But why? Why?

SCROOGE: Why did you get married?

FRED: Because I fell in love.

SCROOGE: Because you fell in love! Good afternoon!

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

SCROOGE: Good afternoon.

FRED: 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!

SCROOGE: Good afternoon!

FRED: And A Happy New Year!

SCROOGE: Good afternoon!

(Fred leaves the room without an angry word, notwithstanding. He stops at the outer door to and speaks to clerk, softly, so as not to further anger Scrooge.)

FRED: A Merry Christmas to you, Bob, and to your family.

CRATCHIT: *(warmly and cordially, but likewise softly)* And to you as well.

SCROOGE: There's another fellow, my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam.

(In letting Scrooge's nephew out, Cratchit lets two other people in. They are portly individuals, pleasant to behold, and now stand in Scrooge's office. They have books and papers in their hands.)

FIRST PHILANTHROPIST: Scrooge and Marley's, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?

SCROOGE: Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago, this very night.

SECOND PHILANTHROPIST: *(presenting their credentials)* We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner.

(At the ominous word "liberality," Scrooge frowns, shakes his head, and hands the credentials back.)

FIRST PHILANTHROPIST: At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, 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 thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

SCROOGE: Are there no prisons?

SECOND PHILANTHROPIST: Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE: And the Union workhouses? Are they still in operation?

SECOND PHILANTHROPIST: They are. Still, I wish I could say they were not.

SCROOGE: The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?

SECOND PHILANTHROPIST: Both very busy, sir.

SCROOGE: Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course. I'm very glad to hear it.

FIRST PHILANTHROPIST: Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude, a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?

SCROOGE: Nothing!

SECOND PHILANTHROPIST: You wish to be anonymous?

SCROOGE: I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned—they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there.

FIRST PHILANTHROPIST: Many can't go there; and many would rather die.

SCROOGE: If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides—excuse me—I don't know that.

SECOND PHILANTHROPIST: But you might know it.

SCROOGE: It's not my business. 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!

(Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the pair withdraw. Scrooge resumes his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than is usual with him. A clock strikes four. With an ill-will Scrooge dismounts from his stool, and tacitly admits the fact that quitting time has arrived, to Bob, who instantly snuffs his candle out, and puts on his hat.)

SCROOGE: You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?

CRATCHIT: If quite convenient, sir.

SCROOGE: It's not convenient, 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? *(Cratchit smiles faintly.)* And yet you don't think me ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work.

CRATCHIT: Well, it is only once a year.

SCROOGE: *(buttoning his great-coat to the chin)* A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.

CRATCHIT: Oh, yes sir, I shall.

(Scrooge walks out with a growl. Cratchit closes the office in a twinkling, and, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist, joins a group of carolers in a merry song.)

CRATCHIT and CAROLERS: Deck the halls with boughs of holly, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

'Tis the season to be jolly, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

Don we now our gay apparel, Fa la la, la la la, la la la.

Troll the ancient Yuletide carol, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

CRATCHIT: *(Continuing briskly on his three-mile walk to Camden Town)*

See the blazing yule before us, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

Strike the harp and join the chorus, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

Follow me in merry measure, Fa la la, la la la, la la la.

While I tell of yuletide treasure, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

(And we find ourselves at Scrooge's front door.)

Scene 2

(Scrooge's home, including the front door, a short corridor, and his gloomy room. There is a very large knocker on the door. A boy stands by the door, singing.)

CAROLER: The holly and the ivy, when they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood, the holly bears the crown.
(Scrooge enters and scowls at encountering this disturbance.)
Oh, the rising of the sun and the running of the deer...

SCROOGE: You, young ruffian! What d'ye mean disturbing the neighborhood with your racket. Away, away with you!

(At first the boy is shocked and riveted to his spot, then runs in terror from this attack. Scrooge places his key in the lock, when he does so he sees in the knocker... Marley's face. It has a dismal light about it, and is not angry or ferocious, but looks at Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. As Scrooge looks fixedly at this phenomenon, it becomes a knocker again. Scrooge is startled, but puts his hand upon the key he had relinquished)

SCROOGE: Pooh, pooh!

(He turns the key sturdily, walks in, and lights his candle. He pauses, with a moment's irresolution, before he shuts the door; and looks 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, so he closes it with a bang. He fastens the door, and walks slowly along the hall, trimming his candle as he goes. He enters his room and looks about to see that all is right. Nobody under the table, nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet; nobody in his dressing-gown, which hangs in a suspicious attitude against the wall. Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locks himself in. Thus secured against surprise, he takes off his cravat; put on his dressing-gown and slippers, and his nightcap; and sits. As he throws his head back in the chair, his glance rests upon a bell that hangs in the room, installed with some purpose now forgotten. It is with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that as he looks, he sees this bell begin to swing. It swings so softly in the outset that it scarcely makes a sound; but soon it rings out loudly, then stops.)

SCROOGE: Humbug!

(Suddenly, every bell in the house begins to ring for what might last half a minute, or a minute, but seems an hour. The bells then cease as they had begun, together. They are succeeded by a clanking noise, as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar.)

SCROOGE: It's humbug still! I won't believe it.

(His door flies open with a booming sound, and the clanking becomes much louder as a figure appears in the corridor; then comes straight towards his room and enters. Upon its coming in, Scrooge's candle flame leaps up, as though to cry, "I know him; Marley's Ghost!" and falls again. For it is indeed 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 draws is clasped about his middle. It is long, and wound about him like a tail; and it is made of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. Scrooge looks the phantom through and through,

feeling the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; and marking the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin.)

SCROOGE: *(caustic and cold as ever)* How now! What do you want with me?

MARLEY: Much!

SCROOGE: Who are you?

MARLEY: Ask me who I was.

SCROOGE: Who were you then? You're particular, for a shade.

MARLEY: In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE: Can you—can you sit down?.

MARLEY: I can.

SCROOGE: Do it, then.

(The ghost sits, as if he were quite used to it.)

MARLEY: You don't believe in me.

SCROOGE: I don't.

MARLEY: What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?

SCROOGE: I don't know.

MARLEY: Why do you doubt your senses?

SCROOGE: Because 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! You see this toothpick?

MARLEY: I do.

SCROOGE: You are not looking at it.

MARLEY: But I see it notwithstanding.

SCROOGE: Well! 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 raises a frightful cry, and shakes its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge falls upon his knees, and clasps his hands before his face.)

SCROOGE: Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?

MARLEY: Man of the worldly mind! do you believe in me or not?

SCROOGE: I do, I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?

MARLEY: It is required of every man 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 raises a cry, and shakes its chain and wrings its shadowy hands.)

SCROOGE: You are fettered. Tell me why?

MARLEY: I wear the chain I forged in life. 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? Or would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!

SCROOGE: Jacob, Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!

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

SCROOGE: You must have been very slow about it, Jacob.

MARLEY: Slow!

SCROOGE: Seven years dead, and travelling all the time!

MARLEY: The whole time. No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.

SCROOGE: You travel fast?

MARLEY: On the wings of the wind.

SCROOGE: You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years.

(The Ghost, on hearing this, sets up another cry, and clanks its chain hideously in the dead silence of the night.)

MARLEY: Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed, not to know, that ages of incessant labour by immortal creatures, for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may

be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!

SCROOGE: But you were always a good man of business, Jacob.

MARLEY: Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business! At this time of the rolling year, I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me! Hear me! My time is nearly gone.

SCROOGE: I will. But don't be hard upon me! Don't be flowery, Jacob! Pray!

MARLEY: 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. That is no light part of my penance. 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.

SCROOGE: You were always a good friend to me. Thank'ee!

MARLEY: You will be haunted by Three Spirits.

SCROOGE: Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?

MARLEY: It is.

SCROOGE: I—I think I'd rather not.

MARLEY: Without their visits you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls One.

SCROOGE: Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?

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

(The spectre stands, and walks backward from Scrooge, through the door of the room, which slams loudly. It then turns and disappears down the corridor. Scrooge examines the door, which is still double-locked, with its bolts undisturbed. He tries to say "Humbug!" but stops at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he has undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or the dull conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose; goes straight to bed, without undressing, and falls asleep upon the instant.)

Scene 3

(In the darkness, the chimes of a neighbouring church strike a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy ONE. Light flashes up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of Scrooge's bed fly aside and he finds himself face to face a strange figure—like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, is white as if with age; and yet the face has not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom is on the skin. The arms are very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, are, like those upper members, bare. It wears a tunic of the purest white; and round its waist is bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which is beautiful. It holds a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, has its dress trimmed with summer flowers.)

SCROOGE: Are you the Spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

CHRISTMAS PAST: I am! *(The voice is soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close by, it were at a distance.)*

SCROOGE: Who, and what are you?

CHRISTMAS PAST: I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE: Long Past?

CHRISTMAS PAST: No. Your past.

SCROOGE: What business brings you here?

CHRISTMAS PAST: Your welfare!

SCROOGE: I am much obliged, but can't help thinking that a night of unbroken rest would be more conducive to that end.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Your reclamation, then. Take heed! *(Putting out its strong hand as it speaks, and clasping Scrooge gently by the arm)* Rise! and walk with me!

(Scrooge rises, and finding that the Spirit is maing towards the window, clasps his robe in supplication.)

SCROOGE: I am mortal, and liable to fall.

CHRISTMAS PAST: *(laying a hand upon Scrooge's heart)* Bear but a touch of my hand THERE and you shall be upheld in more than this!

(And as the words are spoken, the walls of the room disappear.)

Scene 4

(Scrooge and the Spirit stand upon an open country road. It is a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground.)

SCROOGE: Good Heaven! I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!

CHRISTMAS PAST: Your lip is trembling. And what is that upon your cheek?

SCROOGE: Nothing, nothing. I beg you, Spirit, lead me where you will.

CHRISTMAS PAST: You recollect the way?

SCROOGE: Remember it! I could walk it blindfold.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Strange to have forgotten it for so many years! Let us go on.

(They approach an empty schoolroom.)

SCROOGE: Ah! My school. Deserted for the Christmas holiday.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Not quite deserted. *(Scrooge as a boy enters, a book under his arm. He stirs a feeble fire burning in the stove.)* A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.

SCROOGE: *(With a sob)* I know, I know. *(The boy sits at a desk to read.)* Poor boy! *(Scrooge dries his eyes with his cuff)* I wish... but it's too late now.

CHRISTMAS PAST: What is the matter?

SCROOGE: Nothing, 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 smiles thoughtfully, touches Scrooge on the arm, and points to Fan as she comes darting in.)

FAN: *(putting her arms about Scrooge's neck)* Dear, dear brother.

BOY SCROOGE: Fan!

FAN: I have come to bring you home, dear brother! To bring you home, home, home!

BOY SCROOGE: Home, little Fan?

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

(The spirit and Scrooge start to move away from the schoolroom. The scene begins to shift to the Fezziwig warehouse)

CHRISTMAS PAST: Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered, but she had a large heart!

SCROOGE: So she had. You're right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!

CHRISTMAS PAST: She died a woman, and had, as I think, children.

SCROOGE: One child.

CHRISTMAS PAST: True. Your nephew!

SCROOGE: Yes.

Scene 5

(Scrooge and the ghost approach a warehouse, decorated for Christmas)

CHRISTMAS PAST: Do you know this place?

SCROOGE: Know it! Was I apprenticed here!

(They go in. An old gentleman in a Welsh wig, sits behind a high desk, writing in his account books, and two apprentices, Scrooge, now grown a young man, and Dick Wilkins busy themselves with the stock.)

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

(Fezziwig lays down his pen and looks up at the clock, which points to the hour of seven. He rubs his hands; adjusts his capacious waistcoat, and laughs all over himself, then calls out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:)

FEZZIWIG: Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick! No more work to-night. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer! Let's have the shutters up before a man can say Jack Robinson!

(Scrooge's former self, accompanied by his fellow-'prentice, moves briskly as they hurry to put the shutters up.)

SCROOGE: Dick Wilkins, to be sure! Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick! Dear, dear!

FEZZIWIG: Hilli-ho! Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer! *(Note: Accent on the first syllable of chirrip.)*

(Young Scrooge and Dick clear away every movable object, sweep the floor, light the lamps, and pile wood on the fire, until the warehouse is as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ball-room, as you would desire to see. As they do so, Mrs. Fezziwig enters, one vast substantial smile.)

FEZZIWIG: *(Rushing to his wife and kissing her soundly on the cheek)* Ah, my dear! A very very merry Christmas to you. I just have the boys tidying up a bit.

MRS. FEZZIWIG: Oh, boys. Thank you so much. A merry Christmas to you both!

(The young men barely pause in their work as they call out to her.)

YOUNG SCROOGE: Thank you Mrs. Fezziwig, and the same to you!

DICK: Merry Christmas to you Mrs. Fezziwig!

MRS. FEZZIWIG: But the fiddler has not arrived, and our guests will be here soon.

FEZZIWIG: *(rushing to the door and looking out)* Ah, just coming up the lane! Good evening, Nathaniel, and a merry Christmas to you!

(Nathaniel, the fiddler, enters carrying his instrument and a music book)

NATHANIEL: Thank you Mr. Fezziwig. Good evening Mrs. Fezziwig!

MRS. FEZZIWIG: Good evening, Nathaniel, and a merry Christmas!

NATHANIEL: Hilli-ho, Ebenezer!

DICK: Nathaniel! Hilli-ho!

NATHANIEL: Merry Christmas, Dick

YOUNG SCROOGE: Merry Christmas to you, Nathaniel!

(Nathaniel goes to Fezziwig's desk and begins to tune as the guests arrive amid warm greetings and Christmas wishes. In come all the young men and women employed in the business. In comes the housemaid, Emily, with her cousin Barclay, the baker.)

FEZZIWIG: Ah, Emily! Come in! Come in!

EMILY: Good evening, Mr. Fezziwig. Merry Christmas. You know my cousin, Barclay, who own the bake-shop?

FEZZIWIG. Indeed, indeed. Welcome, Barclay. Merry Christmas!

BARCLAY: And the same to you, Mr. Fezziwig, Mrs. Fezziwig.

(In comes the cook, Samantha, with her brother's particular friend, Alfred, the milkman.)

FEZZIWIG: Samantha! The ruler of my kitchen. All the food looks marvelous.

SAMANTHA: Thank you, Mr. Fezziwig. We all worked hard to prepare it.

FEZZIWIG: Alfred, delighted to see you. Merry Christmas!

ALFRED: And to you, sir. Thank you so much for having us!

(In comes Ned, the boy from over the way, trying to hide himself behind Monica, the girl from next door but one. In they all come, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and anyhow.)

FEZZIWIG: Monica, Ned. Welcome. The dancing will begin shortly. *(Monica and Ned cross to Emily and Barclay as the Fezziwigs' daughter, Rose, enters.)*

MRS. FEZZIWIG: Rose, my dear. Merry Christmas!

ROSE: Merry Christmas, mother. Hello, father.

FEZZIWIG: Merry Christmas, my dear!

EMILY: Merry Christmas, Monica!

MONICA: Merry Christmas to you, too.

EMILY: Have you met my cousin, Barclay, who owns the bake shop?

MONICA: No. Merry Christmas, Barclay.

BARCLAY: And to you as well.

(At last one particular young lady arrives.)

FEZZIWIG: Ah, Ebenezer. Belle has arrived!

YOUNG SCROOGE: Good evening, Belle. Merry Christmas!

BELLE: Merry Christmas, Ebenezer.

YOUNG SCROOGE: May I take your wrap? The dancing is about to begin.

BELLE: Yes, thank you.

FEZZIWIG: We're ready, we're ready! Nathaniel, let's have Sir Roger de Coverley!

(And away they all go, 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! The dance ends and the dancers applaud the fiddler.)

FEZZIWIG: Well done, everyone! Well done, Nathaniel. My dear, a pot of porter for his efforts.

MRS. FEZZIWIG: *(Bringing the drink)* Here you are, my lad. Plunge your hot face into this.

NATHANIEL: Thank you, Mrs. Fezziwig. It's welcome after such a lively tune.

MRS. FEZZIWIG: I must confess, though, that these old bones would fare better with something less taxing.

NATHANIEL: I think I have the ideal selection.

(As he plays the beginning of Purcell's Hornpipe from Abdelazer, Fezziwig takes his wife's hand.)

FEZZIWIG: May I have the honor, my love?

MRS. FEZZIWIG: Why sir, I thought you would never ask.

(The Fezziwigs lead off, followed by Young Scrooge and Belle. As the dance progresses, we see that the young couple are truly and deeply in love. The dance ends in a tableau, and the Spirit speaks.)

CHRISTMAS PAST: A small matter to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.

SCROOGE: Small!

CHRISTMAS PAST: Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps.

(The party guests exit as the shift to the next scene begins.)

SCROOGE: It isn't that, 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 is stopped by a glance from the Spirit.)*

CHRISTMAS PAST: What is the matter?

SCROOGE: Nothing particular.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Something, I think?

SCROOGE: No, no. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That's all.

CHRISTMAS PAST: My time grows short. Quick!

Scene 6

(And now we see Young Scrooge and Belle again, seated on a park bench. He is older now; a man in the prime of life. His face has not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it has begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There is an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which shows the passion that has taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree will fall. He sits by Belle's side, and tears sparkle in her eyes.)

BELLE: It matters little, to you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.

YOUNG SCROOGE: What Idol has displaced you?

BELLE: A golden one.

YOUNG SCROOGE: This is the even-handed dealing of the world! There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!

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

YOUNG SCROOGE: What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you. *(She shakes her head.)* Am I?

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

YOUNG SCROOGE: I was a boy.

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

YOUNG SCROOGE: Have I ever sought release?

BELLE: In words. No. Never.

YOUNG SCROOGE: In what, then?

BELLE: In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. Tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!

YOUNG SCROOGE: You think not.

BELLE: I would gladly think otherwise if I could. But if you were free today, tomorrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl—you who 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. *(She presses a ring into his hand.)* With a full heart, for the love of him you once were. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!

SCROOGE: Spirit, show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?

(Scrooge and the Spirit move toward his bedroom.)

CHRISTMAS PAST: I told you these were shadows of the things that have been. That they are what they are, do not blame me!

SCROOGE: Remove me! I cannot bear it! Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!

(Scrooge reels to his bed and sinks into a heavy sleep as the Spirit disappears.)

Scene 7

(In the darkness the church bell again tolls One, waking Scrooge. For a time nothing happens, then moonlight through the window reveals Scrooge, who is suddenly taken with a violent fit of trembling. Then, gradually, a blaze of ruddy light, reveals the figure of a jolly Giant, glorious to see; who bears a glowing torch. It is clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur, and decorated with crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, ivy, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, and luscious pears. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, are bare; and on its head it wears a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls are long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air.)

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Come here, Ebenezer Scrooge! Come here! and know me better, man! *(Scrooge crosses timidly, and hangs his head before this Spirit. He is not the dogged Scrooge he has been; and though the Spirit's eyes are clear and kind, he does not like to meet them.)* I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! *(Scrooge reverently does so.)* You have never seen the like of me before!

SCROOGE: Never. *(The Ghost rises.)* Spirit, conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. Tonight, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Touch my robe!

(Scrooge does, and holds it fast. Suddenly they stand in the city streets on Christmas morning, which are filled with people who are jovial and full of glee; calling out to one another, and now and then exchanging a facetious snowball, laughing heartily. Soon the steeples call good people all, to church and chapel, and away they come, flocking through the streets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces. Some carry their dinners, on the way to the bakers' shops. The sight of these poor revellers appears to interest the Spirit very much, for he takes off the covers as their bearers pass, and sprinkles incense on their dinners from his torch.)

SCROOGE: Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: There is. My own.

SCROOGE: Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: To any kindly given. To a poor one most.

SCROOGE: Why to a poor one most?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: *(as they continue on their way)* Because it needs it most.

Scene 8

(Scrooge and the Ghost find themselves at the threshold of a humble cottage in the suburbs of the town. where the Spirit smiles, and stops to bless the dwelling with the sprinkling of his torch.)

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: This is the home of your clerk, Bob Cratchit.

SCROOGE: Think of that! He has but fifteen "Bob" a week; he pockets on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet you bless his house!

(And we follow them inside. Mrs. Cratchit is dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons.)

MRS. CRATCHIT: Come, Belinda, and help me lay the cloth.

BELINDA: *(the second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons)* Yes mother. What lovely ribbons we have.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Well, they are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence. Peter, mind the potatoes, will you?

PETER: Yes, mother. *(He plunges a fork into the saucepan, and gets the corners of his monstrous shirt collar into his mouth as he mashes the potatoes with incredible vigour.)*

MRS. CRATCHIT: *(Laughing with Belinda)* Mind your collar! Your father gave it to you in honour of the day, and it must last you.

(Now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, come tearing in.)

GIRL: Mother, mother!

BOY: Belinda, we were outside the baker's.

GIRL: ...and we smelt the goose...

BOY: ...and knew it was ours!

GIRL: *(Dancing about the table)* There were lovely smells of sage...

BOY: ...and onion!

GIRL: Why Peter, how handsome you look!

BOY: Father's collar makes you look quite the man.

MRS. CRATCHIT: What has ever got your precious father then? And your brother, Tiny Tim! And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour?

MARTHA: *(Appearing as she speaks)* Here's Martha, mother!

GIRL: Here's Martha, mother!

BOY: Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha!

MRS. CRATCHIT: *(Kissing her eldest daughter and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal)* Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!

MARTHA: We'd a deal of work to finish up last night, and had to clear away this morning, mother!

MRS. CRATCHIT: Well! Never mind so long as you are come. Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!

CRATCHIT: *(From offstage, as he and Tiny Tim laugh)* So, Tim, your trusty steed has brought you home rampant!

BOY: No, no!

GIRL: There's father coming.

BOY: Hide, Martha, hide!

(Martha hides herself, and in comes Bob with at least three feet of comforter hanging down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. The boy carries a little crutch, and has his limbs supported by an iron frame. Peter and Belinda rush to help Tim dismount from his steed and seat him on his stool by the fireside.)

CRATCHIT: Why, where's our Martha?

MRS. CRATCHIT: Not coming.

CRATCHIT: Not coming! Not coming upon Christmas Day!

MARTHA: *(Emerging from her hiding place and running into her father's arms as the family laughs at the joke)* Here I am father!

CRATCHIT: Martha, merry Christmas!

MARTHA: I couldn't bear to see you disappointed, even in joke.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Peter, take Tim and the twins and fetch the goose from the baker's. *(Brothers and sisters assist Tim onto Peter's back, and they depart on their errand. Bob turns up his cuffs and begins to compound some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, stirring it round and round and putting it on the hob to simmer)* Belinda, will you sweeten the applesauce, please. Martha, dust the plates if you would. *(She starts to stir the gravy in a little saucepan)* And how did little Tim behave?

CRATCHIT: As good as gold, 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.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Oh, Robert!

CRATCHIT: *(His voice tremulous)* But I see him growing strong and hearty. I do. I see it every day.

(And now a bustle ensues as Peter and the others return with the goose. Cratchit lifts Tim from Peter's back.)

MRS. CRATCHIT: Thank you children. Put it on the table, please.

CRATCHIT: Look at that, Tim! Have you ever seen such a goose. I don't believe there ever was such a goose cooked.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Come then, everything is ready to eat.

(The two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, and bring Tim's stool to a corner at the table where Bob sets him down. The rest of the family hurries to set the dishes on, Peter taking the honor of bringing the jug from the hob and filling everyone's glass. When all are seated they take hands around the table.)

CRATCHIT: For what we are about to receive, and for all our gifts, may the Lord make us truly thankful.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Amen.

THE CHILDREN: Amen.

CRATCHIT: *(Standing and raising his glass)* Mr. Scrooge! I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!

MRS. CRATCHIT: The Founder of the Feast indeed! I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it.

CRATCHIT: My dear, the children! Christmas Day.

MRS. CRATCHIT: It should be Christmas Day, I am sure, 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!

CRATCHIT: My dear, Christmas Day.

MRS. CRATCHIT: I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's, 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! To Mr. Scrooge!

THE CHILDREN: *(Without any heartiness)* To Mr. Scrooge.

CRATCHIT: *(Seating himself, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepares to plunge it in the goose)* And now, a Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!

MRS. CRATCHIT, MARTHA, PETER, BELINDA, AND THE TWINS: God bless us!

TINY TIM: God bless us every one!

(The family freezes in a warm tableau.)

SCROOGE: Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: I see a vacant seat in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.

SCROOGE: No, no. Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, no other Christmas will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he "had better do it, and decrease the surplus population." *(Scrooge hangs his head to hear his own words quoted.)* Man, if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child.

(The Spirit blesses the family with a final bright sprinkling of its torch and leads Scrooge from the cottage.)

(An intermission at this point will allow ample opportunity for the hair and costume changes required for the Freds' Christmas party.)

Scene 9

(And now, without a word of warning from the Ghost, a hearty laugh carries us into a bright, dry, gleaming room, filled with guests in holiday finery.)

SCROOGE: What place is this?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: It is the home of your nephew, Fred, and your niece by marriage.

(Another laugh roars out lustily.)

FRED: He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live! He believed it too!

FRED'S WIFE: More shame for him, Fred!"

FRED: He's a comical old fellow, 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.

FRED'S WIFE: I'm sure he is very rich, Fred. At least you always tell me so.

FRED: What of that, my dear! 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.

FRED'S WIFE: I have no patience with him.

FRED: Oh, I have! I am sorry for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims! Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What's the consequence? He don't lose much of a dinner.

FRED'S WIFE: Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner.

FRED: Well! I'm very glad to hear it, because I haven't great faith in these young housekeepers. *(Fred's maid, who has been collecting glasses from the guests, takes offense at this.)* What do you say, Topper?

TOPPER: *(With an eye to Fred's wife's sister)* Since I am a bachelor, I am a wretched outcast, who has no right to express an opinion on the subject.

FRED'S WIFE: Do go on, Fred. He never finishes what he begins to say! He is such a ridiculous fellow!

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

(All the guests laugh now at the notion of his shaking Scrooge.)

FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Let us have a song!

FRED: How about the Twelve Days?

FRED'S WIFE: With forfeit's! You begin, Fred.

FRED: On the first day of Christmas my true love sent to me *(points to his wife)*

FRED'S WIFE: A partridge in a pear tree.

FRED AND HIS WIFE: On the second of Christmas my true love sent to me *(Fred's wife points to her sister.)*

FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Two turtle doves,

ALL THREE: And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the third day of Christmas my true love sent to me *(The sister points to Grace.)*

GRACE: Three French hens,

ALL FOUR: Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the fourth day of Christmas my true love sent to me *(Grace points to Jenny.)*

JENNY: Four colly birds,

ALL FIVE: Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the fifth day of Christmas my true love sent to me *(Fred spreads his arms to the company.)*

ALL: *(In harmony)* Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

FRED'S WIFE: *(Taking the lead)* On the sixth day of Christmas my true love sent to me *(Points to Fred)*

FRED: Six... *(All laugh at his hesitation.)*

FRED'S WIFE: *(Clapping her hands)* Forfeit! Forfeit! What shall it be?

(The guests all offer suggestions: a back flip, a cartwheel, do a jig, tell a joke, solve a riddle, etc. Scrooge, wholly forgetting that his voice made no sound in their ears, joins in quite loud.)

TOPPER: A somersault! (*All agree, and Fred executes one smartly.*)

FRED'S WIFE AND HER SISTER: Six geese a-laying,

ALL: Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

FRED: (*Who, having paid his forfeit, is leader once more*) On the seventh day of Christmas my true love sent to me (*Points to his wife*)

FRED'S WIFE: Seven swans a-swimming,

FRED AND HIS WIFE: Six geese a-laying,

ALL: Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

FRED AND HIS WIFE: On the eighth day of Christmas my true love sent to me (*Together they point to Simon*)

SIMON: Eight maids a-milking,

ALL THREE: Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,

ALL: Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

FRED, HIS WIFE, AND SIMON On the ninth day of Christmas my true love sent to me (*Simon points to Fred's wife's sister.*)

FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Nine drummers drumming,

ALL FOUR: Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,

ALL: Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,

Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: On the tenth day of Christmas my true love sent to me *(Points to Topper)*

TOPPER: Ten pipers piping,

(At a sign from Fred's wife all yield to Topper and the sister.)

TOPPER AND FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Nine drummers drumming,
Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,

ALL: *(With Scrooge and the Spirit joyfully joining in)* Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

TOPPER: On the eleventh day of Christmas my true love sent to me *(Points to Fred's wife's sister)*

FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Eleven ladies dancing,

TOPPER AND FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Ten pipers piping,
Nine drummers drumming,
Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,

ALL: Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love sent to me *(Points to Topper)*

TOPPER: Twelve lords a-...

(And he is stuck. Again there is much laughter, cries of "Forfeit! Forfeit!" and a flood of suggestions.)

FRED'S WIFE: I have it, I have it. You must kiss the one you love the most!!

(Amid laughter and blushes, Topper shyly crosses to Fred's wife's sister, takes her hand, and kisses her on the cheek.)

FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Twelve lords a-leaping,

TOPPER AND FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Eleven ladies dancing,

FRED'S WIFE, TOPPER, AND FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Ten pipers piping,

FRED, FRED'S WIFE, TOPPER, AND FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Nine drummers drumming,

ALL: Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: We must soon be going.

SCROOGE: Oh, no, Spirit, no. Please let's stay!

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: That may not be.

FRED'S WIFE: How about a game of Yes and No?

SCROOGE: Here is a new game. One half hour, Spirit, only one!

(Smiling, the Ghost nods assent.)

FRED'S WIFE: Fred, you have to think of something, and the rest of us must find out what; but you must only answer yes or no to our questions.

TOPPER: Is it a place?

FRED: No.

FRED'S WIFE: Is it an animal?

FRED: Yes!

ALICE: A live animal?

FRED: Yes!

FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: Is it a pleasant animal?

FRED: No.

TOPPER: Savage, then?

FRED: Yes.

JEREMIAH: Does it live in London?

FRED: Yes.

FRED'S WIFE: In a menagerie?

FRED: No.

JENNY: Does it walk the streets?

FRED: Yes!

TOPPER: Is it killed in a market?

FRED: No.

ANDREW: Is it a horse?

FRED: No.

(A brisk fire of questioning from all sides establishes that it is not a horse, or an ass, or a cow, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. Scrooge joyfully joins in the guessing. At every fresh question that is put to him, Fred bursts into a fresh roar of laughter. At last Fred's wife's sister, joining in his mirth, cries out)

FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!

FRED: What is it?

FRED'S WIFE'S SISTER: It's your Uncle Scro-o-o-o-oge!

FRED: It is indeed. *(There is laughter on all sides as the maid serves the guests.)* He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure, 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!"

ALL: To Uncle Scrooge!

FRED: A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is! He wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!

(As the guests drink, Scrooge moves to thank them, but in the breath of the last word spoken by his nephew the party disappears.)

Scene 10

(Scrooge and the Spirit now stood together in an open place. The Ghost has grown older, clearly older.)

SCROOGE: Spirit, your hair has turned quite gray. Are spirits' lives so short?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: My life upon this globe, is very brief. It ends tonight.

SCROOGE: Tonight!

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Tonight at midnight. The time is drawing near.

SCROOGE: *(Looking intently at the Spirit's robe, as an emciated hand begins to protrude.)* Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask, but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it. Look here. *(From the foldings of its robe, it brings two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They kneel down at its feet, and cling upon the outside of its garment.)* Oh, Man! look here. Look, look, down here!

(They are a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Scrooge starts back, appalled.)

SCROOGE: Spirit! are they yours?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: They are Man's. And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it! Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And bide the end! *(The Spirit starts to go, with the children still clinging to his robe.)*

SCROOGE: Have they no refuge or resource?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: *(Turning on him)* Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

(As a bell strikes twelve they disappear.)

Scene 11

(Scrooge looks about him for the Ghost, and sees it not. As the bell's last stroke ceases to vibrate, he lifts up his eyes, beholds a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him, and slowly, gravely, silently, approaches. When it comes near him, Scrooge bends down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moves it seems to scatter gloom and mystery. It is shrouded in a deep black garment, which conceals its head, its face, its form, and leaves nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand.)

SCROOGE: I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come? *(The Spirit answers not, but points onward with its hand.)* You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us. Is that so, Spirit? *(The upper portion of the garment contracts for an instant in its folds, as if the Spirit has inclined its head.)* Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me? *(It gives him no reply. The hand is pointed straight before them.)* Lead on! Lead on! The night is waning fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Lead on, Spirit!

(They approach a little knot of businessmen. Observing that the hand is pointed to them, Scrooge advances to listen to their talk.)

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: No, I don't know much about it, either way. I only know he's dead.

THIRD BUSINESSMAN: When did he die?

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: Last night, I believe.

SECOND BUSINESSMAN: Why, what was the matter with him? I thought he'd never die.

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: God knows.

THIRD BUSINESSMAN: What has he done with his money?

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: I haven't heard. Left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know. *(They laugh.)* It's likely to be a very cheap funeral, for upon my life I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?

SECOND BUSINESSMAN: I don't mind going if a lunch is provided. But I must be fed, if I make one.

(Another laugh, and they head on their way as we begin to move to the next scene.)

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: Well, I am the most disinterested among you, after all, for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Bye, bye!

Scene 12

(The Phantom glides onward, leading Scrooge to a foul miserable shop, and points to a grey-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; just as a woman with a heavy bundle slinks into the shop. She has scarcely entered, when another woman, similarly laden, came in too; and she is closely followed by a man in faded black.)

CHARWOMAN: Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If we haven't all three met here without meaning it!

OLD JOE: You couldn't have met in a better place. We're all suitable to our calling, we're well matched.

CHARWOMAN: *(Throwing her bundle on the floor; and sitting)* What odds then! What odds, Mrs. Dilber? Every person has a right to take care of themselves. He always did.

MRS. DILBER: That's true, indeed! No man more so.

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

UNDERTAKER: No, indeed!

MRS. DILBER: We should hope not.

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

MRS. DILBER: *(Laughing)* No, indeed.

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

MRS. DILBER: It's the truest word that ever was spoke. It's a judgment on him.

CHARWOMAN: I wish it was a little heavier judgment, and it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else.

UNDERTAKER: Here Joe. What will you pay for these?

OLD JOE: Let's see now. *(He examines the plunder, which is not extensive. A seal or two, a pencil-case, a pair of sleeve-buttons, and a brooch. As he does so, he chalks the sums he is disposed to give for each, upon the wall. Mm-hmm. Ah! Yes, I see. Oh-ho. (He adds them up.)* That's your account, and I wouldn't give another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who's next?

MRS. DILBER: Here you are, Joe. *(She hands him sheets and towels, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a few boots. Joe mumbles as he states her account in the same manner.)*

OLD JOE: I always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of mine, and that's the way I ruin myself.

CHARWOMAN: And now undo my bundle.

OLD JOE: (*Dragging out a large and heavy roll of some dark stuff*) What do you call this? Bed-curtains!

CHARWOMAN: Ah! Bed-curtains!

OLD JOE: You don't mean to say you took 'em down, rings and all, with him lying there?

CHARWOMAN: Yes I do. Why not?

OLD JOE: You were born to make your fortune, and you'll certainly do it.

CHARWOMAN: 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. Don't drop that oil upon the blankets, now.

OLD JOE: His blankets?

CHARWOMAN: Whose else's do you think? He isn't likely to take cold without 'em, I dare say.

OLD JOE: I hope he didn't die of anything catching? Eh?

CHARWOMAN: Don't you be afraid of that. 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.

OLD JOE: What do you call wasting of it?

CHARWOMAN: Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure. 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.

OLD JOE: (*Producing a flannel bag with money in it and laying out their several gains upon the ground*) There's your accounts. 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.

CHARWOMAN: (*Laughing with the others as they pick up their shares*) This is the end of it, you see! He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! (*They depart, still laughing.*)

SCROOGE: (*As the Phantom leads him away*) Spirit! I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now. (*He stops.*) Let me see some tenderness connected with a death, or that dark scene which we left just now will be for ever present to me.

Scene 13

(The Phantom leads Scrooge into poor Bob Cratchit's house; the dwelling he had visited before; The mother and the children are seated round the fire. It is quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits are as still as statues in one corner, and sit looking up at Peter, who has a book before him. The mother and her daughters are engaged in sewing a shroud. But surely they are very quiet!)

PETER: And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them.

MRS. CRATCHIT: *(Laying her work upon the table, and putting her hand up to her face)* .The colour hurts my eyes. *(Belinda and Martha reach out to comfort her.)* They're better now again. 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.

PETER: *(Shutting up his book)* Past it rather. But I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother.

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

PETER: And so have I, often.

MARTHA: *(Nodding with the others)* And so have we all.

MRS. CRATCHIT: But he was very light to carry, and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble: no trouble. And there is your father at the door!

(They hurry to meet him. Belinda brings his tea from the hob as he greets each of his family with a warm embrace, Martha taking his comforter. Then the two young Cratchits get upon his knees and each lay a little cheek, against his face.)

CRATCHIT: *(Looking at the work on the table)* Why, how industrious you have been and how quickly you have progressed. You'll be done long before Sunday.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?

CRATCHIT: Yes, my dear. 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! *(Breaking down all at once)* My little child! *(They family comforts him as he recovers his composure.)* I met Mr. Scrooge's nephew on the street today, and he showed me the most extraordinary kindness. I had scarcely seen him but once, but seeing that I looked—just a little down you know, asked what had happened to distress me. On which, 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.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Knew what, my dear?

CRATCHIT: Why, that you were a good wife.

PETER: Everybody knows that!

CRATCHIT: Very well observed, my boy! I hope they do. "If I can be of service to you in any way," he said, giving me his card, "that's where I live. Pray come to me." Now, it wasn't for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us.

MRS. CRATCHIT: I'm sure he's a good soul!

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

MRS. CRATCHIT: Only hear that, Peter.

BELINDA: And then Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself.

PETER: (*Grinning*) Get along with you!

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

MARTHA: Never, father!

PETER: No, never!

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

CRATCHIT GIRL: No, never, father!

CRATCHIT BOY: Never!

CRATCHIT: (*Embracing and kissing as many as he can*) I am very happy, I am very happy!

SCROOGE: Spectre, something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how.

Scene 14

(The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come conveys Scrooge to a churchyard.)

SCROOGE: Here, then; lies the wretched man whose name I have now to learn.

(The Spirit stands among the graves, and points down to One. Scrooge advances towards it trembling.)

SCROOGE: Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point, 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 points downward to the grave by which it stood.)

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

(As the Spirit remains immovable as ever, Scrooge creeps towards it, trembling as he goes; and following the finger, is able to read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE. The finger points from the grave to him, and back again.)

SCROOGE: No, Spirit! Oh no, no! *(The finger still is there. Scrooge clutches at his robe.)* Spirit! hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been. Why show me this, if I am past all hope!

(For the first time the hand appeared to shake.)

SCROOGE: Good Spirit, your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life!

(The kind hand trembles.)

SCROOGE: I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!

(In his agony, he catches the spectral hand. It seeks to free itself, but he is strong in his entreaty, and detains it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulses him. As they struggle, there is an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress. It shrinks, collapses, and dwindles down into a bedpost.)

Scene 15

(And the bedpost is his own. The bed is his own, the room is his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him is his own, to make amends in!)

SCROOGE: I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future! The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. *(Kneeling)* Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob; on my knees! *(Standing again and folding his bed-curtains in his arms)* Oho! They are not torn down, 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! *(Dancing around the room)* I don't know what to do! 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. *(He runs to the window and opens it.)* A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world. *(Turning back into the room)* I don't know what day of the month it is! I don't know how long I've been among the Spirits. I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. Never mind. I don't care. I'd rather be a baby.

(He is checked in his transports by the churches ringing out the lustiest peals he had ever heard. Clash, clang, hammer; ding, dong, bell. Bell, dong, ding; hammer, clang, clash! He returns to the window and calls out to a boy dressed in Sunday clothes, who perhaps has loitered in to look about him.)

SCROOGE: Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here! What's today?

TURKEY BOY: Eh?

SCROOGE: What's today, my fine fellow?

TURKEY BOY: To-day! Why, CHRISTMAS DAY.

SCROOGE: *(To himself)* It's Christmas Day! I haven't missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. *(To the boy)* Hallo, my fine fellow!

TURKEY BOY: Hallo!

SCROOGE: Do you know the Poulterer's, in the next street but one, at the corner?

TURKEY BOY: I should hope I did.

SCROOGE: An intelligent boy! A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they've sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there?—Not the little prize Turkey: the big one?

TURKEY BOY: What, the one as big as me?

SCROOGE: What a delightful boy! It's a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck!

TURKEY BOY: It's hanging there now.

SCROOGE: Is it? Go and buy it.

TURKEY BOY: Walk-ER!

SCROOGE: No, no, I am in earnest. Go and buy it, and take it to an address in Camden Town. A moment, please. (*He runs to his desk and writes quickly.*) I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's! He sha'n't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller never made such a joke as sending it to Bob's will be! (*Returning to the window*) Here you are, my lad. But wait. That turkey is enormous. It's impossible to carry that to Camden Town. You must have a cab.

TURKEY BOY: A cab!

SCROOGE: Here's money for the turkey, and for the cab, and for you, my fine fellow, half-a-crown!

TURKEY BOY: Half-a-crown! Yes, sir! Thank you, sir! A merry Christmas to you, sir!

SCROOGE: Merry Christmas! Merry, merry Christmas!

Scene 16

(People pour forth, in the same manner as Scrooge saw them with the Ghost of Christmas Present. They greet each other happily, and carolers raise their voices.)

CAROLERS: God rest ye merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas-day,
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray:
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our Heav'nly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:

(They are joined by everyone in the street.)

ALL: O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All other doth deface:
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

(Scrooge enters dressed "all in his best" and walks with his hands behind him, regarding every one with a delighted smile. He looks so irresistibly pleasant that several good-humoured folk are move to greet him.)

FIRST PASSER-BY: Good morning, sir!

SCROOGE: And to you as well!

SECOND PASSER-BY: A merry Christmas to you!

SCROOGE: May you have the merriest of Christmases!

(He has not gone far; when coming on towards him he beholds the philanthropists who had visited his counting-house the day before. He quickens his pace and takes one by both his hands.)

SCROOGE: My dear friends. How do you do? I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. *(Taking the hand of the other)* A merry Christmas to you as well!

FIRST PHILANTHROPIST: Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE: Yes, That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness— *(Scrooge whispers in the first philanthropist's ear.)*

FIRST PHILANTHROPIST: Lord bless me! *(Whispers in the second philanthropist's ear)*

SECOND PHILANTHROPIST: My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?

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

SECOND PHILANTHROPIST: My dear sir, I don't know what to say to such munifi—

SCROOGE: Don't say anything, please. Come and see me. Will you come and see me?

FIRST PHILANTHROPIST: We will!

SCROOGE: Thank'ee, I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!

(Fred and his wife have come down the street and become witnesses to this surprising exchange.)

FRED: Uncle Scrooge?

SCROOGE: My nephew! Fred!

FRED'S WIFE: Why bless my soul!

SCROOGE: A merry Christmas, Fred.

FRED: *(Hesitantly)* Merry Christmas, Uncle.

SCROOGE: And this charming lady?

FRED: I have the honor to present my wife.

FRED'S WIFE: So lovely to meet you at last, sir.

SCROOGE: Merry Christmas, my dear!

FRED'S WIFE: Merry Christmas, Uncle Scrooge!

SCROOGE: Fred, you were gracious enough to invite me to dine with you today, and I answered in anger. *(Fred and his wife look at each other.)* Would you accept a sincere apology and allow me to accept?

FRED: *(Shaking Scrooge's hand so heartily that it is mercy he didn't shake his arm off)* Of course. Of course!

FRED'S WIFE: We've just come from church. Will you walk along with us?

SCROOGE: Delighted, my dear!

(With Fred on one of her arms and Scrooge on the other, they head down the street, singing a snatch of tidings of comfort and joy.)

Scene 17

(We are back at Scrooge's counting house and the street outside. People pass on their post-holiday business. As a clock strikes nine, Scrooge hurries in and tries the door, finding it still locked.)

SCROOGE: I've done it, yes, I have. I've gotten here first, and Bob Cratchit is late! Oh, how jolly! How wonderful!

(He unlocks the door and goes in, as more Londoners pass by. He greets a few.)

SCROOGE: Good morning, good morning! I trust you had a very Merry Christmas!

PASSERBY: Why, yes sir. I did, sir. Thank'ee for inquiring.

(Suddenly the entire Cratchit family appears, hurrying down the street, Tiny Tim on Peter's shoulders and the two young Cratchits scurrying about in wonder at the sights of the city.)

CRATCHIT: Oh dear me. I am so very late, and I promised to come in early!

MRS. CRATCHIT: But Robert, the children so wanted to walk along with you this morning, Tim especially. Your Mr. Scrooge will simply have to accept it!

(Scrooge, giggling, has observed this exchange through the window, but quickly returns to his desk as Cratchit rushes in, tossing away his hat and comforter. He is on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.)

SCROOGE: *(feigning his accustomed voice)* Hallo! What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?

CRATCHIT: I am very sorry, sir. I am behind my time.

SCROOGE: You are? Yes. I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please.

CRATCHIT: It's only once a year, sir. It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir.

(Scrooge escorts Cratchit to the still-open door, through which the family is able to observe this scene. Cratchit trembles as he anticipates the shove that will carry him back into the arms of his wife.)

SCROOGE: Now, I'll tell you what, my friend. I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore, and therefore I am about to raise your salary!

(The collective jaws of the Cratchits drop in unison, none further than the father's.)

CRATCHIT: Sir?

SCROOGE: A merry Christmas, Bob! A merrier Christmas, my good fellow, than I have given you, for many a year! I'll raise your salary, *(escorting the clerk to the arms of his wife)* and endeavour to assist your family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob! Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit!

MRS. CRATCHIT: Why, Mr. Scrooge!

SCROOGE: And that's not all. I assure you that if it is within my power, Tiny Tim will live and grow well, and if you will let me, I wish to become as good a friend, as good a master, and with your help as good a man, as this good old city knows. People may laugh to see the alteration in me, but I shall let them laugh, and little heed them; for I have learned that nothing ever happens on this globe, for good, at which some people do not have their fill of laughter. And so I say, God bless us!

MRS. CRATCHIT: *(after a pause, remembering her anger of the previous day)* God bless us...

CRATCHIT: God bless us!

CRATCHIT CHILDREN: God bless us!

TIM: God bless Us, Every One!

Sir Roger de Coverley

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Sir Roger de Coverley". The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 9/8 time. It consists of nine staves of music, each beginning with a measure number (3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 31) and ending with a double bar line. The melody is characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing triplets. The final staff concludes with a double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.

Hornpipe

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Hornpipe". The score is written in treble clef, 3/4 time, and the key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The music is organized into four staves, each beginning with a measure number: 1, 5, 9, and 13. The first staff (measures 1-4) features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a trill (tr) on the final note. The second staff (measures 5-8) continues the pattern, also ending with a trill. The third staff (measures 9-12) includes a key signature change to one flat (B-flat) in measure 10 and ends with a trill. The fourth staff (measures 13-16) returns to the original key signature and concludes with a trill. Each staff ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.