A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN PROSE BEING A Ghost Story of Christmas b nd and Servant, C. D. December, 1843. STAVE I: MARLEY'S GHOST MAR s as dead as a door-nail. Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own k u will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as	y Charles Dickens PREFACE I HAVE endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, wh LEY was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by nowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a a door-nail. Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he	ich shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the si were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his	e was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose t o put his hand to. Old Marley wa
en Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an e he story I am going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Fat tance literally to astonish his son's weak mind. Scrooge never painted out Old Ma	xcellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnised it with an undoubted bargain. her died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, rley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The	The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that Marley in an easterly wind, upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middle-aged gentleman firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge S	was dead. This must be distinctly underst ood, or nothing wonderful can come of a rashly turning out after dark in a breez y spotsay Saint Paul's Churchyard for ins
e to him. Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind-stone, Scrooge! a squeezing his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrew ce on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew w	, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from w dly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. as bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less op	hich no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oys He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; a en to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and h	and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas. External heat and cold had little influentiall, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often
n "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did. Nobody ever stopped him in the stre ace, of Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him d paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones c	et to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to s coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag t all "nuts" to Scrooge. Once upon a timeof all the good days in the year, on Christm	ee me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock heir tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!" But what as Eveold Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: fogg	did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowde
wn, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones t at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrow at he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copyin	o warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark alread est, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come dro g letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much s	y it had not been light all dayand candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring oping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and maller 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 maste
r predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter that this was the first intimation he had of his approach. "Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!" He had so he nephew. "You don't mean that, I am sure?" "I do," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! What right have you t	, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of ated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew o be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're p	a strong imagination, he failed. "A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a che of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes spoor e nough." "Come, then," returned the nephew gaily. "What right have you to be dismal."	earkled, an d his breath smoked again. "Christmas a humbug, uncle!" said Scrooge's reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough." Scrooge having no be
tter answer ready on the spur of the moment, said, "Bah!" again; and followed it up with "Humbug." "Don't without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your bool be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!" "Uncle!" plea	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! O cound do zen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said Scrooge the uncle sternly, "keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine." "Keep it!	Dut u pon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills in dignantly, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should "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 whart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from thatank of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatuer Tank involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and ext	as a go od time; a kind, forgiv in	by which I have not profited, I dare say," returned the nephew. "Christmas among the re g, charitable , pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, w herefore, uncl e, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I beli	st. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come roundar hen men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to thi eve that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!" The clerk in th
don't go into Parliament." "Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow." Scrooge said that he woul ou fell in love!" growled Scrooge, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry	d see him yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression of the ex	sound from yo u," said Scrooge, "and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your sit ssi on, and said that he would see him in that extremity first. "But why?" cried Scrooge's e m e before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?" "Good after	uation! You're quite a powerful speaker, sir," he added, turning to his nephew. "I wonder you nephew. "Why?" "Why did you get married?" said Scrooge. "Because I fell in love." "Because y noon," 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 oge. His nephew left the room without an angry word, notwithstanding. He stopped at the outer door to besto out a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam." This lunatic, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, had let two other p	ow the greetin gs of the season on the clerk, who, cold as he was, was war beople in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and now s too	mag e to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A Merry Christ mer t han Scrooge; for he returned them cordially. "There's another fellow," muttere d, wi th their hats off, in Scrooge's office. They had books and papers in their ha	mas, uncle!" "Good afternoon!" said Scrooge. "And A Happy New Year!" "Good afternoon!" said Scro d Scrooge; who overheard him: "my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking ab nds, 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 word "liberality," Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the credentials back. "At this festive sea housands are in want of common necessaries; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.'	ason of the year, Mr. Scrooge," said the gentleman, taking up a pen , "it " "Are there no p risons," sai d the	no d oubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner," said the is mo re than usually desirable that gentle man, laying down the pen	gentleman, presenting his credentials. It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many tagain, "And the Union workhouses?" demanded Scrooge. "Are they still in operation?" "They are. Still," returned
he gentleman, "I wish I could say they were not." "The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?" s rcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude," returned the gentleman, "a few of us are ende Scrooge replied. "You wish to be anonymous?" "I wish to be left alone," said Scrooge. "Since you ask me wh	eavouring to raise a f und to buy the Poor some meat and drink, an d mea nat I wish, gentleme n, th at is my answer. I don't make merry myself a t Chri	ns of w armth. We choose this time, because i stmas a nd I can't afford to make idle people merry. I h	red to stop them in their useful course," said Scrooge. "I'm very glad to hear it." "Under the impression that they sca t is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?" "Nothing!" elp to support the establishments I have mentionedthey cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there." "Man
y can't go there; and many would rather die." "If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, her people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!" Seeing clearly that it would be usel nks, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient to	ess to pursue their p oint, th e gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his lab ower of a church, who se gr uff old bell was always peeping slily down at Scrooge out of	ours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a mor e facet a Gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and s	not my business," Scrooge returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with ot tious temper than was usual with him. Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring li e 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 repairi turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp l onghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord	d Mayor's household s hould; an d eve n the little t ailor, whom he had fined five shillings on th	s became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was	king their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowings sullenly congealed, and next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the str ts, stirred up to-morrow's pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the baby sallied out to buy the beef. Foggier yet, a
nd colder. Piercing, searching, biting cold. If the good Saint Dunstan had but nipped the Evil Spirit's nose wit him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of "God bless you, merry gentleman! May nothing you disr he fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat. "You'll wa	may!" Scrooge seized the ruler with such en ergy of action, that the singer fled in terror, leaving the int all day to-morrow, I suppose?" said Scroo ge. "If quite convenient, sir." "It's not convenient," said Scr	ooge, "and it's not fair. If I was to stop ha If-a -crown for it, you'd thi	se, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regal hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted t ink yourself ill-used, I'll be bound?" The clerk smiled faintly, "And yet," said Scrooge, "you don't think me ill-used, when
pay a day's wages for no work." The clerk observed that it was only once a year. "A poor excuse for picking nd the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coa wspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, went home to bed. He lived in chambe	t), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the en d of a la ne of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christma ers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of	s Ève, and then ran home to Camd en Tówn as hard as he could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt, to be usiness to be, that one could pelt to be usiness to be, that one could pelt to be usiness to be, that one could pelt to be usiness to be, that one could pelt to be usiness to be usiness to be, that one could pelt to be usiness to be used to	norning." The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was closed in a twinkling, a to play at blindman's-buff. Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the not 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 Scroog Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very crooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven years' dead partner that	ge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every ston y large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also t afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of t	that Scrooge had as little of wh at is called fanc y ab out him as any man in the city of the door, saw in the knocker, without its under going an y intermediate process of change	ck old gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold. of London, even includingwhich is a bold wordthe corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also be borne in mind that senot a knocker, but Marley's face. Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were
ther than a part of its own expression. As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again the door; and he did look cautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Mar	t Scrooge as mariey used to look: with ghostly speciacies turned up on its ghostly forenead. The hair was curiously stirre in. To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had relevely spigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and the total the door of the screws and the start of the screw and the start of the screw and the start of the screw and the screw are screw as the screw and the screw as the screw a		inequished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle. He did pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he shu d resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the wine-merchant's cellars below, ap
peared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fi th the splinter-bar towards the wall and the door towards the balustrades: and done it easy. There was plent utton for that. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through	y of width for that, and room to spare; which is perhaps the reason why Scrooge thought he saw a locomoti in his rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that. Sitting-r	ve hearse going on before him in the gloom. Half-a-dozen gas oom, bedroom, lumber-room. All as they shou look before him in the gloom. Half-a-dozen gas oom, bedroom, lumber-room. All as they shou look before him in the gloom. In the street wouldn't have learn the sold as the street wouldn't have learn the sold as the sold as the street wouldn't have learn the street	light young Act of Panlament; but I mean to say you might have got a hearse up that staircase, and taken it broadwise, w lighted the entry too well, so you may suppose that it was pretty dark with Scrooge's dip. Up Scrooge went, not caring a line of the grate; spoon and basin ready; and the little saucepan of gruel (Scrooge had a cold in his head) upon the hold because the property of the property of the property of the grates of the property
s. Pharaoh's daughters: Queens of Sheba. Angelic messengers descending through the air on clouds like fea	othing on such a bitter night. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it, before he could extract the lather-beds, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles putting off to sea in butter-boats, hundreds of figures to attract the lather-beds, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles putting off to sea in butter-boats, hundreds of figures to attract "said Scrooge; and walked across the room. After several turns, he sat down again. As he threw his head b	east sensation of warmth from such a handful of fuel. The fireplace was an old one, built by some Dutch mercha this thoughts; and yet that face of Marley, seven a half a dead, caned like the ancient Prophet's rod, and swallowed	int long ago, and paved all round with quaint Dutch tiles, designed to illustrate the Scriptures. There were Cains and Abel up the whole. If each smooth tile had been a blank at first, with power to shape some picture on its surface from the displayed to the whole of the payer
d with a strange, inexplicable dread, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. It swung so softly in t casks in the wine-merchant's cellar. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses	the outset that it scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house. This were described as dragging chains. The cellar-door flew open with a booming sound, and then he liame leaped up, as though it cried, "I know him; Marley's Ghost!" and fell again. The same face: the very sa	might have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells ceased as they had begun, togethe e heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight tow	to rollie purpose flow forgotten with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and er. They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the vards his door. "It's humbug still!" said Scrooge. "I won't believe it." His colour changed though, when, without a pause, tail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wo
und about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, le the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its	edgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing his death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which we." He was going to say "to a shade." but substituted this, as more appropriate. "In life I was your partner.	m, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind. Scrooge had often heard it said	d that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now. No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked crooge, caustic and cold as ever. "What do you want with me?" "Much!"Marley's voice, no doubt about it. "Who lore you asked the guestion because he didn't know whather a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to
the action and felt that in the event of its being impossible, it might involve the necessity of an embarrassing oge, "a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undiges a attention, and keeping down his terror; for the spectre's voice disturbed the very marrow in his hopes. To see	gexplanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it. Sted bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of the sted bit of beef, a fixed glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play. Scroone felt, the very deuce with	"You don't believe in me," observed the Ghost. "I don't," said Scrooge. "What evidence would you have of my real gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!" Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did	lity beyond that of your senses?" "I don't know," said Scrooge. "Why do you doubt your senses?" "Because," said Scrooge. "Why do you doubt your senses?" "Because," said Scrooge. That he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his 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?" by this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my creation. Humbug, I't lower law dropped down upon its breast! Scrooge fell upon his knees, and classed his bands before his face.	said Scrooge, returning quickly to the charge, for the reason just assigned; and wishing, though it were onlell you! humbug!" At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling nearly "Man of the worldly mind!" replied the Ghos	oise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much gr	reater was his horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear indoors, its of why do they come to me?" "It is required of every man." the Ghost returned. "that the spirit within him should walk ab
bad among his fellowmen, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to c 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, a ge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fath	do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the worldoh, woe is me!and witness what it cannot share, ind of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?" Scrooge trembled more and more. "Or would yo homs of iron cable; but he could see nothing "Jacob," he said, imploringly, "Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. S	t might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!" Again the spectre raised a cry, and shoo now," pursued the Ghost, "the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full	bk its chain and wrung its shadowy hands. "You are fettered," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell me why?" "I wear the chain as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!" Scrooge enezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little m
ore is all permitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyon is eyes, or getting off his knees. "You must have been very slow about it, Jacob," Scrooge observed, in a bus	nd our counting-housemark me!in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing his siness-like manner, though with humility and deference. "Slow!" the Ghost repeated. "Seven years dead," muse d S	ole: and weary journeys lie before me!" It was a habit with Scrooge, whenever he became thoughtful	l, to put his hands in his breeches pockets. Pondering on what the Ghost had said, he did so now, but without lifting up h It torture of remorse." "You travel fast?" said Scrooge. "On the wings of the wind." replied the Ghost. "You might have go
s susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatev ried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business "the spectre said. "I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down.	ver it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regrest case; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of w	n make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!" "But yo	ou were always a good man of business, Jacob," faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself. "Business!" of that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again. "At this time of the rolling year aved to hear the spectre going on at this rate, and began to guake exceedingly, "Hear me!" cried the Ghost, "My time is n
early gone." "I will," said Scrooge. "But don't be hard upon me! Don't be flowery, Jacob! Pray!" "How it is tha you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer." "You ver not." said Scrooge, "Without their visits." said the Ghost, "you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expe	at I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you were always a good friend to me," said Scrooge. "Thank'ee!" "You will be haunted," resumed the ct the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls One." "Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over. Ja co	many and many a day." It was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge shivered, and wiped the po Ghost, "by Three Spirits." Scrooge's countenance fell almost as low as the Ghost's had b?" hinted Scrooge, "Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third	erspiration from his brow. "That is no light part of my penance," pursued the Ghost. "I am here to-night to warn you, that d done. "Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?" he demanded, in a faltering voice. "It is." "II think I'd rath upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more: and look that, for you
r own sake, you remember what has passed between us!" When it had said these words, the spectre took its pparition walked backward from him; and at every step it took, the window raised itself a little, so that when to of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowfo	wrapper from the table, and bound it round its head, as before. Scrooge knew this, by the smart so und its teeth made, we the spectre reached it, it was wide open. It beckoned Scrooge to approach, which he did. When they were within two ull and self-accusatory. The spectre, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon t	when t he jaws were brought together by the bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, a paces of each other, Marley's Ghost held up its hand, warning him to come no neare he bleak, dark night. Scrooge followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity. He	and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in an erect attitude, with its chain wound over and about its arm. The a er. Scrooge stopped. Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear: for on the raising of the hand, he became sensibe tooked out. The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went.
Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had los as he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say "Humbug!" but stop	t the power for ever. Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist enshrouded them, he could no it tell. But they an	h one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its and the night became as it had been when he was the lowest of the Ghost, or the lateness of the house the conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the house the conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the house the conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the house the conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the house the conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the house the conversation of the Ghost.	kle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a door-ster walked home. Scrooge closed the window, and examined the door by which the Ghost had entered. It was double-locked our, much in need of repose; went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant. STAVE II: THE FI
RST OF THE THREE SPIRITS WHEN Scrooge awoke, it was so dark, that looking out of bed, he could scarcel ven to eight, and regularly up to twelve; then stopped. Twelve! It was past two when he went to bed. The cloo nything 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 hais dressing-gown	ess with his ferret eyes, when the chimes of a neighbouring church struck the fo ost preposterous clock. Its rapid little pulse beat twelve: and stopped. "Why, it i before he could see anything; and could see very little then. All he could make	our quarters. So he listened for the hour. To his great astonishment the heavy bell went on from six to seven, and from se isn't possible," said Scrooge, "that I can have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It isn't possible that a e out was, that it was still very foggy and extremely cold, and that there was no noise of people running to and fro, and m
aking a great stir, as there unquestionably would have been if night had beaten off bright day, and taken pos- over and over, and could make nothing of it. The more he thought, the more perplexed he was; and the more am or not?" Scrooge lay in this state until the chime had gone three quarters more, when he remembered, or	he endeavoured not to think, the more he thought. Marley's Ghost bothered him exceedingly. Every time he resolved win a sudden, that the Ghost had warned him of a visitation when the bell tolled one. He resolved to lie a wake until the hou	er Scrooge or his order," and so forth, would have become a mere United States' s thin himself, after mature inquiry, that it was all a dream, his mind flew back again, li r was passed; and, considering that he could no more go to sleep than go to Heaven, t	security if there were no days to count by. Scrooge went to bed again, and thought, and thought, and thought it over and ike a strong spring released, to its first position, and presented the same problem to be worked all through, "Was it a dre this was perhaps the wisest resolution in his power. The quarter was so long, that he was more than once convinced he
must have sunk into a doze unconsciously, and missed the clock. At length it broke upon his listening ear. "I ashed up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of his bed were drawn. The curtains of his bed were u, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow. It was a strange figurelike a child: yet not so like a child as I	drawn aside, I tell you, by a hand. Not the curtains at his feet, nor the curtains at his back, but those to which his face w like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the	as addres sed. The curtains of his bed were drawn aside; and Scrooge, starting up into a half	nothing else!" He spoke before the hour bell sounded, which it now did with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy ONE. Light f-recumbent attitude, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them: as close to it as I am now to yo its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The a
st thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this v one instant, at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness; being now a thing wit	l feet, most delicately formed, were, like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white; and round its wai was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguis her for a cap, wh th one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of whi	ich it no w held under its arm. Even this, though, when Scrooge looked at it with increasing steadiness, w	s hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers. But the strange was not its strangest quality. For as its belt sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another, and what was light very wonder of this, it would be itself again; distinct and clear as ever. "Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretol
nd begged him to be covered. "What!" exclaimed the Ghost, "would you so soon put out, with worldly hands brought him there, "Your welfare!" said the Ghost, Scrooge expressed himself much obliged, but could not h	se beside him, it were at a distance. "Who, and what are you?" Scrooge demanded. "I am the Ghost of C hristmas Past." ' , the light I give? Is it not enough that you are one of those whose passions made this cap, and force me through whole nelp thinking that a night of unbroken rest would have been more conducive to that end. The Spirit must have heard him	trains o f years to we ar it low upon my brow!" Scrooge reverently disclaimed all intention to offend or any thinkin g, for it said im mediately: "Your reclamation, then, Take heed!" It put out its strong hand as it spoke, a	ld not have told anybody why, if anybody could have asked him; but he had a special desire to see the Spirit in his cap; a knowledge of having wilfully "bonneted" the Spirit at any period of his life. He then made bold to inquire what business and clasped him gently by the arm. "Rise! and walk with me!" It would have been in vain for Scrooge to plead that the we
e to fall." "Bear but a touch of my hand there," said the Spirit, laying it upon his heart, "and you shall be uphe sping his hands together, as he looked about him. "I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!" The Spirit gaz	g way below freezing; that he was clad but lightly in his slippers, dressing-gown, and nightcap; and that h e had a cold up eld in more than this!" As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, w ed upon him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man's s	ith fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and the mis	st had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground. "Good Heaven!" said Scrooge, claud the ground of the Ghost, "And what is that upon the ground is the Ghost, "And what is that upon the ground of the Ghost, "And what is that upon the ground of the Ghost, "And what is that upon the ground of the Ghost, "And what is that upon the ground of the Ghost, "And what is that upon the ground of the Ghost, "And what is that upon the ground of the Ghost, "And what is the ground of the Ghost, "And what is the ground of the ground of the Ghost, "And what is the ground of the ground of the Ghost, "And what is the ground of the ground of the Ghost, "And what is the ground of the groun
n your cheek?" Scrooge muttered, with an unusual catching in his voice, that it was a pimple; and begged the distance, with its bridge, its church, and winding river. Some shaggy ponies now were seen trotting toward us." The jocund travellers came on; and as they came, Scrooge knew and named them every one. Why was long the beauty of the policy of the standard of	e Ghost to lead him where he would. "You recollect the way?" inquired the Spirit. "Remember it!" cried Scrooge with fervist them with boys upon their backs, who called to other boys in country gigs and carts, driven by farmers. All these boys he rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them! Why did his cold eye glisten, and his heart leap up as they went past! Why was, is left there still." Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed. They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon	were in great spirits, and shouted to each other, until the broad fields were so full of merry music, that the crisp air last spirits were in great spirits, and shouted to each other, until the broad fields were so full of merry music, that the crisp air last she filled with gladness when he heard them give each other Merry Christmas, as they parted at cross-roads and by	They walked along the road, Scrooge recognising every gate, and post, and tree; until a little market-town appeared in transpendence of the state of
nd mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the	e 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 vast.	There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much get
hat's his name, who was put down in his drawers, asleep, at the Gate of Damascus; don't you see him! And t	t a sigh among the leafless boughs of one despondent poplar, not the idle swinging of an empty store-house door, no, not t, and leading by the bridle an ass laden with wood. "Why, it's Ali Baba!" Scrooge exclaimed in ecstasy. "It's dear old hone he Sultan's Groom turned upside down by the Genii; there he is upon his head! Serve him right. I'm glad of it. What busing y and yellow tail, with a thing like a lettuce growing out of the top of his head; there he is! Poor Robin Crusoe, he called hi	ess had he to be married to the Princess!" To hear Scrooge expending all the earnestness of his nature on such subj	iects, in a most extraordinary voice between laughing and crying; and to see his heightened and excited face; would hav
to the little creek! Halloa! Hoop! Halloo!" Then, with a rapidity of transition very foreign to his usual character	r, he said, in pity for his former self, "Poor boy!" and cried again. "I wish," Scrooge muttered, putting his hand in his pock	et, 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
her "Dear, dear brother." "I have come to bring you home, dear brother!" said the child, clapping her tiny han more more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. Are the companies to emphase him. Then she had not be not been also been to be not be not been as to be not been as to be not be not been as to be not be not been as to be not been as to be not been as to be not be not been as to be not be not been as to be not been as to be not been as to be not be not been as to be not been as to be not be not been as to be not be not been as to be not been as to be not be not been as to be not been as to be not be not been as to be not be not been as to be not been as to be not been as to be not been as to be not be not been as to be not be not been as to be not be not been as to be	I gone home for the jolly holidays. He was not reading now, but walking up and down despairingly. Scrooge looked at the ads, and bending down to laugh. "To bring you home, home, home!" "Home, little Fan?" returned the boy. "Yes!" said the nd you're to be a man!" said the child, opening her eyes, "and are never to come back here; but first, we're to be together a ling loth to go, accompanied her. A terrible voice in the hall cried, "Bring down Master Scrooge's box, there!" and in the hall cried, "Bring down Master Scrooge's box, there!"	child, brimful of glee. "Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world." "You are quite a woman, little Fan!" exclaimed the land the christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world." "You are quite a woman, little Fan!" exclaimed the christmas long, and the solution of the christmas long, and the christmas lo	, that home I like Boy, called a ting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as , that home I like Heaven He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask I e boy. She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on a little in the species of mind by shaking hands with him. He then conveyed him and his sister into the veriest old well.
of a abjusting boot parlour that aver was soon, where the mane upon the well, and the colonial and terrestric	Il globes in the windows, were waxy with cold. Here he produced a decanter of curiously light wine, and a block of curious to the top of the chaise, the children bade the schoolmaster good-bye right willingly; and getting into it, drove gaily down the Ghost, "and had, as I think, children." "One child," Scrooge returned. "True," said the Ghost. "Your nephew!" Scrooge se bugh, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were light	by beauty cake, and administered inetalments of those deintice to the young people; at the same time, conding out a r	maggre convent to affer a glace of "comothing" to the poethow, who appropried that he thanked the gentleman, but if it was
y carts and coaches battled for the way, and all the strife and tumult of a real city were. It was made plain end if the had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, Scrooge cried in great ex	Gnost, "and had, as I think, children." "One child," Scrooge returned. "True," said the Gnost. "Your hepnew!" Scrooge se bugh, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were light citement: "Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!" Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked u d by his fellow-'prentice. "Dick Wilkins, to be sure!" said Scrooge to the Ghost. "Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very m	thed up. The Ghost stopped at a certain warehouse door, and asked Scrooge if he knew it. "Know it!" said Scrooge. " p at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed a	"Was I apprenticed here!" They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Welsh wig, sitting behind such a high desk, that all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice: "ristmas Eye, Dick, Christmas, Ebenezari Let's have the shutters up " gried old Egypting with a charmales of his bands."
efore a man can say Jack Robinson!" You wouldn't believe how those two fellows went at it! They charged in	a by his fellow- prentice. Dick Wilkins, to be sure: Said Scrooge to the Ghost. Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very materials the street with the shuttersone, two, threehad 'em up in their placesfour, five, sixbarred 'em and pinned 'emseve t have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. Every movable was packed off, as if it were dis f it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches. In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwig	n, eight, nineand came back before you could have got to twelve, panting like race-horses. "Hilli-ho!" cried old Fezi	ziwig, skipping down from the high desk, with wonderful agility. "Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! H
particular friend, the milkman. In came the boy from over the way, who was suspected of not having board en ands half round and back again the other way; down the middle and up again; round and round in various sta	rit, and tuned like they stomach-aches. In came wis, rezziwig, one vast substantial simile, in came the three wiss rezziwig nough from his master; trying to hide himself behind the girl from next door but one, who was proved to have had her ges of affectionate grouping; old top couple always turning up in the wrong place; new top couple starting off again, as so in again, though there were no dancers vet, as if the other fiddler had been carried home, exhausted, on a shutter, and he	s pulled by her mistress. In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwa	ardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and everyhow. Away they all went, twenty couple at once; had been pushing his hands to stop the dance, cried out, "Well done!" and the fiddler plunged his hot face into a po
reat piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening c e who were not to be trifled with; people who would dance, and had no notion of walking. But if they had bee	ame after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler (an artful dog, mind! The sort of man who knew his business better than in twice as manyah, four timesold Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to her, string had gone all through the dance: advance and retire, both hands to your partner, how and currisey, corkscrew, thread	you or I could have told it him!) struck up "Sir Roger de Coverley." Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Find 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 post-	ezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; peoplessive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You couldn't hat same upon his feet again without a stagger. When the clock struck eleven, this domestic hall broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezzi
wig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as h In the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everythin	tiving had gone an through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and curisey, corkscrew, thread he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two 'prentices, they did he ng, and underwent the strangest agitation. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turn is 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 mo	same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a count led from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the ligh	ter 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 ht upon its head burnt very clear. "A small matter." said the Ghost. "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude." "Small!
	words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happi		