

B A N T A M C L A S S I C

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

CHARLES DICKENS



A  
Christmas Carol

---

CHARLES DICKENS



---

B A N T A M   C L A S S I C

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

A Bantam Book

PUBLISHING HISTORY

*A Christmas Carol* was first published in 1843

Bantam Classic edition December 1986

Bantam reissue December 1992

Bantam reissue December 2002

All rights reserved.

"Charles Dickens: A Biographical Sketch"

© 1965, 1986 by Bantam Books

Cover art : Saul, Isabel Florrie (b. 1895) / The Bridgeman Art Library.

Painting title: *A Merry Christmas to us all . . .*

(pen, ink and w/c).

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

For information address: Bantam Books.

If you purchased this book without a cover you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as "unsold and destroyed" to the publisher and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this "stripped book."

ISBN 0-553-21244-3

*Published simultaneously in the United States and Canada*

---

Bantam Books are published by Bantam Books, a division of Random House, Inc. Its trademark, consisting of the words "Bantam Books" and the portrayal of a rooster, is Registered in U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. Marca Registrada. Random House, New York, New York.

---

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OPM 33 32 31

## Marley's Ghost . . .

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

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

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

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

"I am here tonight to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate."

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

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

"Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?" Scrooge demanded, in a faltering voice.

"It is."

"I—I think I'd rather not," said Scrooge.

"Without their visits," said the Ghost, "you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls one."

"Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?" hinted Scrooge.

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

A CHRISTMAS CAROL  
BY CHARLES DICKENS

## PREFACE

**I** have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to rise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their house pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.

Their faithful Friend and Servant,  
C.D.

*December 1843*

## **ASK YOUR BOOKSELLER FOR THESE BANTAM CLASSICS**

**BEOWULF AND OTHER ENGLISH POEMS, 0-553-21347-4**

**THE BHAGAVAD-GITA: KRISHNA'S COUNSEL IN TIME OF WAR,  
0-553-21365-2**

**THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE and**

**THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, 0-553-21482-9**  
**THE FEDERALIST PAPERS, 0-553-21340-7**

**GREEK DRAMA, 0-553-21221-4**

**JO'S BOYS, Louisa May Alcott, 0-553-21449-7**

**LITTLE WOMEN, Louisa May Alcott, 0-553-21275-3**

**WINESBURG, OHIO, Sherwood Anderson, 0-553-21439-X**

**THE COMPLETE PLAYS, Aristophanes, 0-553-21343-1**

**EMMA, Jane Austen, 0-553-21273-7**

**MANSFIELD PARK, Jane Austen, 0-553-21276-1**

**NORTHANGER ABBEY, Jane Austen, 0-553-21197-8**

**PERSUASION, Jane Austen, 0-553-21137-4**

**PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, Jane Austen, 0-553-21310-5**

**SENSE AND SENSIBILITY, Jane Austen, 0-553-21334-2**

**PETER PAN, J.M. Barrie, 0-553-21178-1**

**BRADBURY CLASSIC STORIES, Ray Bradbury, 0-553-28637-4**

**THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES, Ray Bradbury, 0-553-27822-3**

**JANE EYRE, Charlotte Brontë, 0-553-21140-4**

**VILLETTE, Charlotte Brontë, 0-553-21243-5**

**WUTHERING HEIGHTS, Emily Brontë, 0-553-21258-3**

**THE SECRET GARDEN, Frances Hodgson Burnett, 0-553-21201-X**

**ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND &**

**THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS, Lewis Carroll, 0-553-21345-8**

**MY ANTONIA, Willa Cather, 0-553-21418-7**

**O PIONEERS!, Willa Cather, 0-553-21358-X**

**THE CANTERBURY TALES, Geoffrey Chaucer, 0-553-21082-3**

**STORIES, Anton Chekhov, 0-553-38100-8**

**THE AWAKENING and selected short stories, Kate Chopin,  
0-553-21330-X**

**THE WOMAN IN WHITE, Wilkie Collins, 0-553-21263-X**

**HEART OF DARKNESS and THE SECRET SHARER, Joseph Conrad,  
0-553-21214-1**

**LORD JIM, Joseph Conrad, 0-553-21361-X**

**THE DEERSLAYER, James Fenimore Cooper, 0-553-21085-8**

**THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS, James Fenimore Cooper, 0-553-21329-6**

MAGGIE: A GIRL OF THE STREETS AND OTHER SHORT FICTION,

**Stephen Crane, 0-553-21355-5**

THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE, **Stephen Crane, 0-553-21011-4**

THE INFERNO, **Dante, 0-553-21339-3**

PARADISO, **Dante, 0-553-21204-4**

PURGATORIO, **Dante, 0-553-21344-X**

THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES, **Charles Darwin, 0-553-21463-2**

MOLL FLANDERS, **Daniel Defoe, 0-553-21328-8**

ROBINSON CRUSOE, **Daniel Defoe, 0-553-21373-3**

BLEAK HOUSE, **Charles Dickens, 0-553-21223-0**

A CHRISTMAS CAROL, **Charles Dickens, 0-553-21244-3**

DAVID COPPERFIELD, **Charles Dickens, 0-553-21189-7**

GREAT EXPECTATIONS, **Charles Dickens, 0-553-21342-3**

HARD TIMES, **Charles Dickens, 0-553-21016-5**

OLIVER TWIST, **Charles Dickens, 0-553-21102-1**

THE PICKWICK PAPERS, **Charles Dickens, 0-553-21123-4**

A TALE OF TWO CITIES, **Charles Dickens, 0-553-21176-5**

THREE SOLDIERS, **John Dos Passos, 0-553-21456-X**

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV, **Fyodor Dostoevsky, 0-553-21216-8**

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, **Fyodor Dostoevsky, 0-553-21175-7**

THE ETERNAL HUSBAND AND OTHER STORIES, **Fyodor Dostoevsky,**

**0-553-21444-6**

THE IDIOT, **Fyodor Dostoevsky, 0-553-21352-0**

NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND, **Fyodor Dostoevsky, 0-553-21144-7**

SHERLOCK HOLMES VOL I, **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 0-553-21241-9**

SHERLOCK HOLMES VOL II, **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 0-553-21242-7**

SISTER CARRIE, **Theodore Dreiser, 0-553-21374-1**

THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK, **W. E. B. Du Bois, 0-553-21336-9**

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO, **Alexandre Dumas, 0-553-21350-4**

THE THREE MUSKETEERS, **Alexandre Dumas, 0-553-21337-7**

MIDDLEMARCH, **George Eliot, 0-553-21180-3**

SILAS MARNER, **George Eliot, 0-553-21229-X**

SELECTED ESSAYS, LECTURES, AND POEMS, **Ralph Waldo Emerson,**

**0-553-21388-1**

TEN PLAYS BY EURIPIDES, **Euripides, 0-553-21363-6**

APRIL MORNING, **Howard Fast, 0-553-27322-1**

MADAME BOVARY, **Gustave Flaubert, 0-553-21341-5**

HOWARDS END, **E.M. Forster, 0-553-21208-7**

A ROOM WITH A VIEW, **E.M. Forster, 0-553-21323-7**

THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL, **Anne Frank, 0-553-57712-3**

ANNE FRANK'S TALES FROM THE SECRET ANNEX, **Anne Frank,**

**0-553-58638-6**

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND OTHER WRITINGS, Benjamin Franklin,  
0-553-21075-0

THE YELLOW WALLPAPER AND OTHER WRITINGS, Charlotte Perkins  
Gilman, 0-553-21375-X

FAUST: FIRST PART, Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, 0-553-21348-2

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS, Kenneth Grahame, 0-553-21368-7

THE COMPLETE FAIRY TALES OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM, The Brothers  
Grimm, 0-553-38216-0

ROOTS, Alex Haley, 0-440-17464-3

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD, Thomas Hardy, 0-553-21331-8

JUDE THE OBSCURE, Thomas Hardy, 0-553-21191-9

THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE, Thomas Hardy, 0-553-21024-6

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE, Thomas Hardy, 0-553-21269-9

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES, Thomas Hardy, 0-553-21168-4

THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES, Nathaniel Hawthorne, 0-553-21270-2

THE SCARLET LETTER, Nathaniel Hawthorne, 0-553-21009-2

THE FAIRY TALES OF HERMANN HESSE, Hermann Hesse, 0-553-37776-0  
SIDDHARTHA, Hermann Hesse, 0-553-20884-5

THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER, Homer, 0-553-21399-7

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, Victor Hugo, 0-553-21370-9

FOUR GREAT PLAYS, Henrik Ibsen, 0-553-21280-X

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY, Henry James, 0-553-21127-7

THE TURN OF THE SCREW AND OTHER SHORT FICTION, Henry James,  
0-553-21059-9

A COUNTRY DOCTOR, Sarah Orne Jewett, 0-553-21498-5

DUBLINERS, James Joyce, 0-553-21380-6

A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN, James Joyce,  
0-553-21404-7

THE METAMORPHOSIS, Franz Kafka, 0-553-21369-5

THE STORY OF MY LIFE, Helen Keller, 0-553-21387-3

CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS, Rudyard Kipling, 0-553-21190-0

THE JUNGLE BOOKS, Rudyard Kipling, 0-553-21199-4

KIM, Rudyard Kipling, 0-553-21332-6

A SEPARATE PEACE, John Knowles, 0-553-28041-4

LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER, D.H. Lawrence, 0-553-21262-1

SONS AND LOVERS, D.H. Lawrence, 0-553-21192-7

WOMEN IN LOVE, D.H. Lawrence, 0-553-21454-3

INHERIT THE WIND, Jerome Lawrence, 0-553-26915-1

THE NIGHT THOREAU SPENT IN JAIL, Jerome Lawrence, 0-553-27838-X

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, Gaston Leroux, 0-553-21376-8

BABBITT, Sinclair Lewis, 0-553-21486-1

MAIN STREET, Sinclair Lewis, 0-553-21451-9



THE CALL OF THE WILD AND WHITE FANG, Jack London, 0-553-21233-8  
 THE SEA WOLF, Jack London, 0-553-21225-7  
 TO BUILD A FIRE AND OTHER STORIES, Jack London, 0-553-21335-0  
 THE PRINCE, Niccolo Machiavelli, 0-553-21278-8  
 DEATH IN VENICE AND OTHER STORIES, Thomas Mann, 0-553-21333-4  
 THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels,  
 0-553-21406-3  
 OF HUMAN BONDAGE, W. Somerset Maugham, 0-553-21392-X  
 THE BALLAD OF THE SAD CAFE AND OTHER STORIES, Carson  
 McCullers, 0-553-27254-3  
 THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER, Carson McCullers, 0-553-26963-1  
 THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING, Carson McCullers, 0-553-25051-5  
 BILLY BUDD, SAILOR AND OTHER STORIES, Herman Melville,  
 0-553-21274-5  
 MOBY-DICK, Herman Melville, 0-553-21311-3  
 ON LIBERTY AND UTILITARIANISM, John Stuart Mill, 0-553-21414-4  
 THE ANNOTATED MILTON, John Milton, 0-553-58110-4  
 THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL, Baroness Emmuska Orczy, 0-553-21402-0  
 THE DIALOGUES OF PLATO, Plato, 0-553-21371-7  
 THE TELL-TALE HEART AND OTHER WRITINGS, Edgar Allan Poe,  
 0-553-21228-1  
 CYRANO DE BERGERAC, Edmond Rostand, 0-553-21360-1  
 IVANHOE, Sir Walter Scott, 0-553-21326-1  
 THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE (25 vols.), William Shakespeare  
 PYGMALION and MAJOR BARBARA, George Bernard Shaw,  
 0-553-21408-X  
 FRANKENSTEIN, Mary Shelley, 0-553-21247-8  
 THE JUNGLE, Upton Sinclair, 0-553-21245-1  
 ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH, Alexander Solzhenitsyn,  
 0-553-24777-8  
 THE COMPLETE PLAYS OF SOPHOCLES, Sophocles, 0-553-21354-7  
 DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, Robert Louis Stevenson, 0-553-21277-X  
 KIDNAPPED, Robert Louis Stevenson, 0-553-21260-5  
 TREASURE ISLAND, Robert Louis Stevenson, 0-553-21249-4  
 DRACULA, Bram Stoker, 0-553-21271-0  
 UNCLE TOM'S CABIN, Harriet Beecher Stowe, 0-553-21218-4  
 GULLIVER'S TRAVELS AND OTHER WRITINGS, Jonathan Swift,  
 0-553-21232-X  
 VANITY FAIR, William Makepeace Thackeray, 0-553-21462-4  
 WALDEN AND OTHER WRITINGS, Henry David Thoreau, 0-553-21246-X  
 DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA, Alexis de Tocqueville, 0-553-21464-0  
 ANNA KARENINA, Leo Tolstoy, 0-553-21346-6  
 THE DEATH OF IVAN ILYICH, Leo Tolstoy, 0-553-21035-1

THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN, Mark Twain, 0-553-21079-3

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER, Mark Twain, 0-553-21128-5

THE COMPLETE SHORT STORIES OF MARK TWAIN, Mark Twain,

0-553-21195-1

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT, Mark Twain,

0-553-21143-9

LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI, Mark Twain, 0-553-21349-0

THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER, Mark Twain, 0-553-21256-7

PUDD'NHEAD WILSON, Mark Twain, 0-553-21158-7

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, Jules Verne, 0-553-21252-4

AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS, Jules Verne, 0-553-21356-3

FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON, Jules Verne, 0-553-21420-9

THE AENEID OF VIRGIL, Virgil, 0-553-21041-6

CANDIDE, Voltaire, 0-553-21166-8

THE INVISIBLE MAN, H.G. Wells, 0-553-21353-9

THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU, H.G. Wells, 0-553-21432-2

THE TIME MACHINE, H.G. Wells, 0-553-21351-2

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS, H.G. Wells, 0-553-21338-5

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE, Edith Wharton, 0-553-21450-0

THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY, Edith Wharton, 0-553-21393-8

ETHAN FROME AND OTHER SHORT FICTION, Edith Wharton, 0-553-21255-9

THE HOUSE OF MIRTH, Edith Wharton, 0-553-21320-2

SUMMER, Edith Wharton, 0-553-21422-5

LEAVES OF GRASS, Walt Whitman, 0-553-21116-1

THE ACCIDENT, Elie Wiesel, 0-553-58170-8

DAWN, Elie Wiesel, 0-553-22536-7

NIGHT, Elie Wiesel, 0-553-27253-5

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY AND OTHER WRITINGS, Oscar Wilde,

0-553-21254-0

THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON, Johann David Wyss, 0-553-21403-9

EARLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN CLASSICS, 0-553-21379-2

FIFTY GREAT SHORT STORIES, 0-553-27745-6

FIFTY GREAT AMERICAN SHORT STORIES, 0-553-27294-2

SHORT SHORTS, 0-553-27440-6

GREAT AMERICAN SHORT STORIES, 0-440-33060-2

SHORT STORY MASTERPIECES, 0-440-37864-8

THE VOICE THAT IS GREAT WITHIN US, 0-553-26263-7

THE BLACK POETS, 0-553-27563-1

THREE CENTURIES OF AMERICAN POETRY, (Trade) 0-553-37518-0,

(Hardcover) 0-553-10250-8

## CONTENTS

<i>A Christmas Carol</i> .....	1
Dickens Reads His <i>Carol</i> —The Reception .....	87
Charles Dickens: A Biographical Sketch .....	97

## STAVE ONE

### MARLEY'S GHOST

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

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

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

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

began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind, upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middle-aged gentleman rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot—say Saint Paul's Churchyard for instance—literally to astonish his son's weak mind.

Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names: it was all the same to him.

Oh! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, nor wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with glad-looking looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? when will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and

such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blindmen's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "no eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!"

But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance; was what the knowing ones call "nuts" to Scrooge.

Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement-stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already: it had not been light all day: and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came

upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

"Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!"

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

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

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

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

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

"Don't be cross, uncle," said the nephew.

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

"Uncle!" pleaded the nephew.

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

"Keep it!" repeated Scrooge's nephew. "But you don't keep it."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Why did you get married?" said Scrooge.

"Because I fell in love."

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

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

"Good afternoon," said Scrooge.

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



"Good afternoon," said Scrooge.

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

"Good afternoon!" said Scrooge.

"And A Happy New Year!"

"Good afternoon!" said Scrooge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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