

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.

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.

No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him.

# *Ebenezer Scrooge*

## *Stave 1*

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.

But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?"

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for that: darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it.

The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror; for the spectre's voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.



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

“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.”

# *Ebenezer Scrooge*

## *Stave 1*

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

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

The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.



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

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.”

“I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!”

“These are but shadows of the things that have been,” said the Ghost. “They have no consciousness of us.”

“A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.”

Why was he filled with gladness when he heard them give each other Merry Christmas, as they parted at cross-roads and bye-ways, for their several homes! What was merry Christmas to Scrooge? Out upon merry Christmas! What good had it ever done to him?

“Was it a dream or not?”

“Ding, dong!”

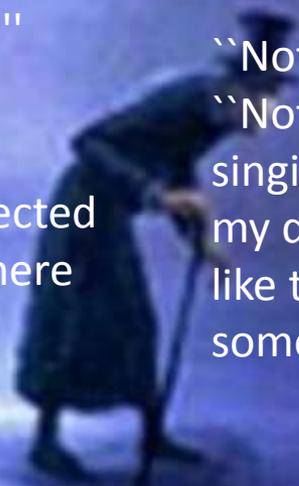
# *Ebenezer Scrooge*

## *Stave 2*

“Nothing,” said Scrooge.

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

Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.



His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on

“No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now! That's all.

## *Ebenezer Scrooge* *Stave 2*

During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self.

“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!

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

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.”



For he wished to challenge the Spirit on the moment of its appearance, and did not wish to be taken by surprise, and made nervous.

I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it."

"Spirit," said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, "tell me if Tiny Tim will live."

# *Ebenezer Scrooge*

## *Stave 3*

And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power of his, or else it was his own kind, generous, hearty nature, and his sympathy with all poor men, that led him straight to Scrooge's clerk's



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

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

Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.

There might have been twenty people there, young and old, but they all played, and so did Scrooge; for, wholly forgetting in the interest he had in what was going on, that his voice made no sound in their ears

The children drank the toast after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he didn't care twopence for it. Scrooge was the Ogre of the family.

## *Ebenezer Scrooge* *Stave 3*

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

“I was only going to say,” said Scrooge's nephew, “that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his dusty chambers.



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

I only know he's dead

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

Although well used to ghostly company by this time, Scrooge feared the silent shape so much that his legs trembled beneath him, and he found that he could hardly stand when he prepared to follow it.

# *Ebenezer Scrooge*

## *Stave 4*

"Ghost of the Future!" he exclaimed, "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's likely to be a very cheap funeral," said the same speaker; "for upon my life I don't know of anybody to go to it

"What has he done with his money?"

he resolved to treasure up every word he heard, and everything he saw

Every person has a right to take care of themselves. **He** always did

He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead!

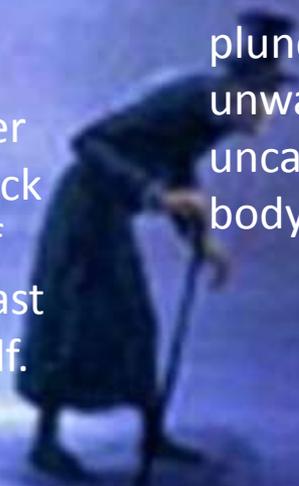
The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now.

he had been revolving in his mind a change of life

# *Ebenezer Scrooge*

## *Stave 4*

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.



plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man.

Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again.

there lay a something covered up, which, though it was dumb, announced itself in awful language.

if this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts? Avarice, hard-dealing, griping cares? They have brought him to a rich end, truly!

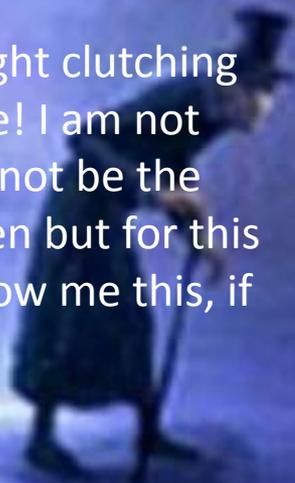
“Spirit!” he said, “this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go

Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?

## *Ebenezer Scrooge* *Stave 4*

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

“Am I that man who lay upon the bed?”



He had been sobbing violently in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with tears.

"I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!"

Come back with the man, and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes, and I'll give you half-a-crown!

Not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you.

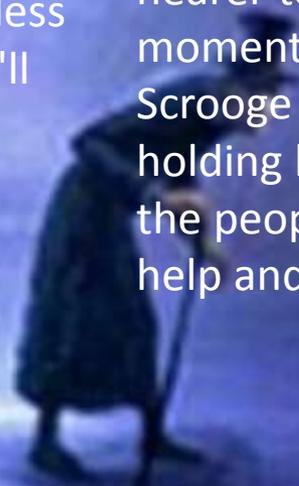
Bob trembled, and got a little nearer to the ruler. He had a momentary idea of knocking Scrooge down with it; holding him, and calling to the people in the court for help and a strait-waistcoat.

"I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a school-boy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to every-body! A happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!"

## *Ebenezer Scrooge*

### *Stave 5*

Scrooge regarded every one with a delighted smile. He looked so irresistibly pleasant, in a word, that three or four good-humoured fellows said, "Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!"



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

Wonderful party,  
wonderful games,  
wonderful unanimity,  
won-der-ful  
happiness!

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

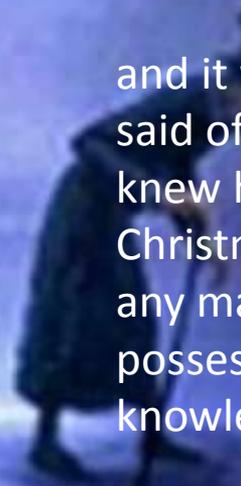
I am about to raise your salary!

## *Ebenezer Scrooge* *Stave 5*

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

and it was always  
said of him, that he  
knew how to keep  
Christmas well, if  
any man alive  
possessed the  
knowledge.

Scrooge was better than his  
word. He did it all, and infinitely  
more; and to Tiny Tim, who did  
not die, he was a second father.  
He became as good a friend, as  
good a master, and as good a  
man, as the good old city knew,  
or any other good old city, town,  
or borough, in the good old  
world



“Are there no prisons?”  
asked Scrooge.

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.”

“And the Union workhouses?” demanded Scrooge. “Are they still in operation?”

“If they would rather die,” said Scrooge, “they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population”

## *Ebenezer Scrooge*

### *On poverty*

“It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly.



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!"

"Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? what reason have you to be merry?"

The owner of one scant young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of God bless you, merry gentleman! May nothing you dismay! Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost.

## *Ebenezer Scrooge* *On Christmas*

"Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!"

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?



“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.”

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

## *Bob Cratchit the Clerk*

Bob, turning up his  
cuffs -- as if, poor  
fellow, they were  
capable of being  
made more shabby

“My little, little  
child!” cried Bob.  
“My little child!”

“Mr Scrooge!”  
said Bob; “I'll give  
you Mr Scrooge,  
the Founder of  
the Feast!”



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!"

"Ha, ha!"  
laughed  
Scrooge's  
nephew. "Ha,  
ha, ha!"

But being thoroughly good-natured, and not much caring what they laughed at, so that they laughed at any rate, he encouraged them in their merriment, and passed the bottle joyously.

## *Fred*

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

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice.

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

But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time... 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!"



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

Bob told them of the extraordinary kindness of Mr Scrooge's nephew, whom he had scarcely seen but once

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

## Fred

"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."



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."

Then up rose Mrs Cratchit, Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence

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

“The Founder of the Feast indeed!” cried Mrs Cratchit, reddening. “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.”

## *Mrs Cratchit*

“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.”



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

“No more work to-night.  
Christmas Eve, Dick.  
Christmas, Ebenezer!”

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

## *Old Fezziwig*

Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them

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

A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons.

Mr and Mrs Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas.



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

## *Tiny Tim*

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

he was very light to carry,” she resumed, intent upon her work, “and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble: no trouble

they had a song, about a lost child travelling in the snow, from Tiny Tim; who had a plaintive little voice, and sang it very well indeed

I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim -- shall we -- or this first parting that there was among us?



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

"She died a woman," said the Ghost, "and had, as I think, children."

"One child," Scrooge returned.

"True," said the Ghost. "Your nephew!" Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, "Yes."

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

## *Little Fan*

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



“It matters little,” she said, softly. “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.”

“What Idol has displaced you?” he rejoined.  
“A golden one.”

“Belle,” said the husband, turning to his wife with a smile, “I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon.”

“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?”

*Belle*

for the love of him you once were.”

“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.”

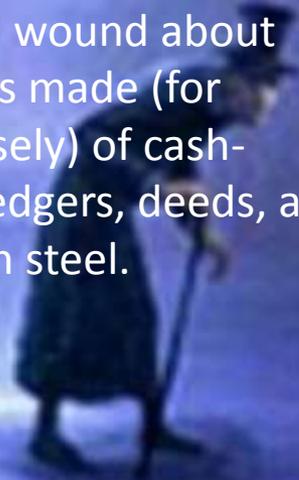


Marley was dead: to begin with.

Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change: not a knocker, but Marley's face.

“In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.”

The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel.



Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

## *Jacob Marley*

Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner.

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

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

“Old Jacob Marley, tell me more.  
Speak comfort to me, Jacob.”

Were there no poor  
homes to which its  
light would have  
conducted me!”

“It is required of every man,” the Ghost  
returned, “that the spirit within him should  
walk abroad among his fellow-men, 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!”

## *Jacob Marley*

“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!”

“No rest, no peace.  
Incessant torture of  
remorse.”

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

It was a strange figure -- like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man,

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

The grasp, though gentle as a woman's hand, was not to be resisted.

But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

## *Ghost of Christmas Past*

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



The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there

In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see: who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

## *Ghost of Christmas Present*

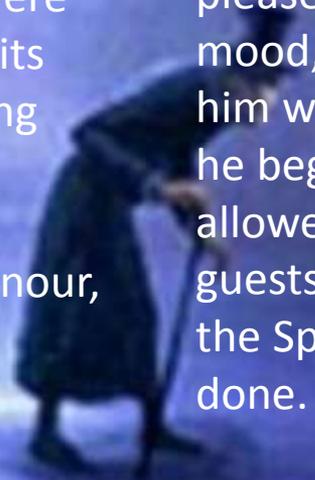
“Come in!” exclaimed the Ghost. “Come in. and know me better, man!”

### *Present*

Its dark brown curls were long and free: free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air.

The Ghost was greatly pleased to find him in this mood, and looked upon him with such favour, that he begged like a boy to be allowed to stay until the guests departed. But this the Spirit said could not be done.

“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?”



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

“Have they no refuge or resource?” cried Scrooge.

“Are there no prisons?” said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words.

“Are there no workhouses?”

This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want.

## *Want and Ignorance*

Is it a foot or a claw!

“It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it”



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

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

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

## *Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come*

the Spirit neither  
spoke nor moved

