



STAVE I.

SCENE: The counting house of SCROOGE and MARLEY. A dark, dreary office, indicated by brown curtains at sides, with entrances R. and L. and brown curtains at rear. Note: These rear curtains must be arranged to be parted, showing the tableau stage back of the real stage. The tableau stage is elevated a few feet above the real stage (this makes a better picture but is not absolutely necessary). High desk at R. facing the R. wall. Tall stool at this desk; ledger, quill pen, ink, candle on this desk. Small, old desk down L., facing audience. Desk chair back of this desk. Two common wooden chairs at R.C. and L.C. Ledger, quill pen, books, candle stuck in an old dark bottle, on desk down L.

Full description of costumes, etc., will be found at the end of the play.

Before the curtain rises WAITS are heard singing off L. Curtain rises disclosing BOB CRATCHIT seated on stool, bent over ledger at desk R., working by the light of the candle.

WAITS (outside, sing "Christmas Carol").

(CRATCHIT turns and listens.)

Enter SCROOGE from R. in a towering passion. Slams door R. CRATCHIT hurriedly returns to his work. SCROOGE crosses to door L. and flings it open angrily.

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

J.M. NEALE.  
THOMAS HELMORE.

1. Christ was born on Christ-mas day,  
Wreathe the hol-ly, twine the bay,  
Light and life and joy is He,  
The Babe, the Son, the Ho-ly One of Ma-ry.

2. He is born to set us free;  
He is born our Lord to be;  
Car-ol, Chris-tians, joy-ful-ly;  
The God, the Lord, by all a-dored for-ev-er.

3. Let the bright red ber-ries glow  
Ev-'ry-where in good-ly show,  
Light and life and joy is He,  
The Babe, the Son, the Ho-ly One of Ma-ry.

Christian men, re-joice and sing;  
'Tis the birth-day of our King.

Car-ol, Christians, joy-ful-ly;  
The God, the Lord,  
By all a-dored  
For-ev-er.

Night of sadness,  
Morn of glad-ness  
Ev-er-more:  
Ev-er, Ev-er,  
Aft-er man-y troub-les sore,  
Morn of glad-ness ev-er-more, and ev-er-more.

Mid-night scarce-ly passed and o-ver,  
Draw-ing to the ho-ly morn;  
Ver-y ear-ly, Ver-y ear-ly, Christ was born.  
Sing out with bliss,  
His name is this:  
Em-man-u-el!  
As 'twas fore-told,  
In days of old,  
By Ga-bri-el.]

SCROOGE (flinging open door L. at this point). Get away from my door. Begone, ye beggars! I've nothing for you.

FIRST WAIT (sticking his head in door at L.). Only a shillin', sir, for a merry Christmas, yer honor.

SCROOGE. Get away from there or I'll call the police.

FIRST WAIT. Only a shillin', sir.

SCROOGE. Not a penny. I have other places to put my money. Go on, now. You don't get a cent. Not a penny!

FIRST WAIT. All right, sir. Merry Christmas, just the same, sir.  
(Exits L.)

SCROOGE (comes down to his desk at L., muttering). Howling idiots! Give 'em a shilling, hey? I'd like to give 'em six months in the work'us, that I would. Paupers! I'd show 'em what a merry Christmas is. (CRATCHIT gets down from stool and starts to slink out L.) Hey!

CRATCHIT (pauses, turns to SCROOGE). Yes, sir.

SCROOGE. Where you goin'?

CRATCHIT. I was just goin' to get a few coals, sir. Just to warm us up a bit, sir.

SCROOGE. You let my coals alone. Get back to work. I'm not complaining about the cold, am I? And I'm an older man than you are. Back to work!

CRATCHIT (sighs, pauses, then says meekly). Yes, sir. (Resumes work.)

SCROOGE. You want to let my coals alone if you expect to keep your job. I'm not a millionaire. Understand? (Loudly.) Understand?

CRATCHIT. Yes, sir, I understand. (Shivers, wraps long white woolen muffler closer about throat and warms hands at candle.)

SCROOGE. Here it is three o'clock, the middle of the afternoon, and two candles burning. What more do you want? Want me to end up in the poorhouse?

FRED (heard outside at L.). Uncle! Uncle! Where are you? Merry Christmas, uncle.

FRED enters from L. He is happy and bright and has a cheerful, loud laugh. He enters laughing and comes down C.

SCROOGE (looking up from his work). Oh, it's you, is it?

FRED. Of course it is, uncle. Merry Christmas! God save you!

SCROOGE (with disgust). Merry Christmas! Bah! Humbug!

FRED. Christmas a humbug, uncle? You don't mean that, I'm sure.

SCROOGE. I don't, hey? Merry Christmas! What cause have you got to be merry? You're poor enough.

FRED (laughing good-naturedly). Come, then, what right have you got to be dismal? You're rich enough. So, merry Christmas, uncle.

SCROOGE. Out upon your merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer? You keep Christmas in your own way and let me keep it in mine.

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

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

FRED. Christmas is a good time, uncle; 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 in the social scale. 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, God bless Christmas!

CRATCHIT (who had been listening eagerly, claps his hands). Good!

SCROOGE. Let me hear another sound from you and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your job. Get to work!

CRATCHIT. Yes, sir. (Resumes his work on the ledger.)

SCROOGE (to FRED). You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

FRED. Don't be angry, uncle. Come, dine with us tomorrow.

SCROOGE. Dine with you? Me? I'll see you hanged first. Dine with you? I'll see you in--

CRATCHIT (sneezes violently).

SCROOGE. What's the matter with you? (Turns to FRED.) I'm a busy man. Good afternoon.

FRED. Come, uncle; say "Yes."

SCROOGE. No.

FRED. But why? Why?

SCROOGE (savagely). Why did you get married?

FRED. Because I fell in love.

SCROOGE. Bah! (Resumes his work.) Good afternoon.

FRED. I want nothing from you. I ask nothing from you. But why can't we be friends?

SCROOGE. Good afternoon.

FRED. Uncle I won't part in anger. My dear mother was your only sister--your only relation. For her sake let us be friends.

SCROOGE (savagely). Good afternoon.

FRED. I'll still keep the Christmas spirit, uncle. A merry Christmas to you.

SCROOGE (busy at ledger). Bah!

FRED. And a happy New Year.

SCROOGE. Good afternoon!

FRED (goes to CRATCHIT). And a merry Christmas to you, Bob Cratchit.

CRATCHIT (getting down from stool, shaking hands with FRED warmly). Merry Christmas, sir. God bless it!

FRED. Ay, God bless it! And a happy New Year.

CRATCHIT. And a happy New Year, too! God bless that, too!

FRED. Ay, Bob, God bless that, too. (Exit L.)

SCROOGE. Cratchit, get to work!

CRATCHIT. Yes, sir. (Resumes work.)

SCROOGE (looks at him). Humph! Fifteen shillings a week and a wife and six children, and he talks about a merry Christmas. Humph! (Works on ledger.)

Enter from L. TWO MISSION LASSIES. They come down C.

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

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

FIRST LASS. We have no doubt his liberality is represented by his surviving partner. (Shows subscription paper.)

SCROOGE. Liberality? Humph! (Returns paper to her.)

SECOND LASS. At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, we are trying to make some slight provision for the poor and destitute, who are suffering greatly. Hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

SCROOGE. Are there no prisons?

SECOND LASS (sighs). Plenty of prisons, sir.

SCROOGE. And the workhouses--are they still in operation?

FIRST LASS. They are, sir; but they scarcely furnish Christmas cheer for mind and body. We are trying to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink and means of warmth.

SECOND LASS. We chose this time because it is a time when want is keenly felt and abundance rejoices. What shall we put you down for?

SCROOGE. Nothing.

FIRST LASS. You wish to be anonymous?

SCROOGE. I wish to be left alone. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, I don't believe in it. And I can't afford to make idle people merry. They should go to the poorhouse.

SECOND LASS. Many of them would rather die, sir, than do that.

SCROOGE (savagely). If they would rather die, they'd better do it and decrease the population. And besides, I am a very busy man.

FIRST LASS. But, sir--

SCROOGE. Good afternoon.

FIRST LASS. I'm sorry, sir. Sorry--

SCROOGE. Sorry for them?

FIRST LASS. No, sir, I'm sorry for you, sir. Good afternoon. (Exits L. followed by SECOND LASS.)

SCROOGE. Sorry for me, hey? (Pause. He works. The clock strikes five.) Sorry for me!

CRATCHIT (closes his book, blows out candle). Is there anything

more, sir? (Comes to C.)

SCROOGE. You'll want all day off tomorrow, I suppose?

CRATCHIT. If it's quite convenient, sir.

SCROOGE. Well, it isn't--and it's not fair. If I'd dock you a half a crown for it you'd think I was ill using you, wouldn't you?

CRATCHIT (nervously). I don't know, sir.

SCROOGE. And yet you expect me to pay a full day's wages for no work.

CRATCHIT. It only comes once a year, sir. Only once a year.

SCROOGE. A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! But I suppose you've got to have the whole day. But you be here all the earlier next morning.

CRATCHIT. Oh, yes, indeed, sir. (Goes out R.)

SCROOGE. I'll stay here a bit and finish up the work.

Enter CRATCHIT from R. with hat. He turns up his coat collar, wraps the long white woolen muffler around chin and pulls hat down over his face.

CRATCHIT (crosses to door L.). I'm going, sir.

SCROOGE. All right.

CRATCHIT (shields face with arm as though he were afraid Scrooge might throw something at him). Merry Christmas, sir! (Runs out L.)

SCROOGE. Bah! Humbug! (He works at ledger. Finally drops his head on his arms and sleeps. The light of his candle goes out. Note: Scrooge might blow it out unseen by audience.)

The stage is now in darkness. A musical bell tolls off L. After a pause another bell tolls off R. The clinking of chains is heard. When the stage is completely darkened the GHOST OF MARLEY slips in and sits at R. He is entirely covered with black, face and all, as he slips in, so as to be quite invisible.

Mysterious music. Sudden clap of thunder heard. An auto light from the wings at R. is thrown on the GHOST'S face. This light should be green. The thunder dies away. Clanking of chains heard.

GHOST (groans).

SCROOGE (starts up, looks at Ghost, pauses). How now! What do you want with me?

GHOST. Much.

SCROOGE. Who are you?

GHOST. Ask me who I was.

SCROOGE. Well, who were you, then?

GHOST. In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley. It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death.

SCROOGE. You are fettered. Tell me why.

GHOST. I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, yard by yard, the heavy chain of avarice. Now I must make amends for the opportunities I neglected in life.

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

GHOST. Business? Mankind should have been my business. Kind actions, charity, mercy, benevolence, love--all should have been my business. I am here tonight to warn you, to warn you, Ebenezer Scrooge, that you have yet a chance of escaping my fate.

SCROOGE. You were always a good friend to me.

GHOST. You will be haunted by Three Spirits.

SCROOGE. If it's all the same to you, I think I'd rather not.

GHOST. Without their visits, you cannot hope to escape my fate. Expect the first when the bell tolls one.

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

GHOST. Remember my warning, heed the message and you may yet be saved. My time is over. (Chains rattle.) Farewell, farewell, farewell!  
(Loud crash of thunder. Light is quenched and GHOST exits unseen by audience.)

Pause. The bell tolls one. Enter SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST from R. She comes down R. Strong white light on her from R.

SCROOGE (trembling). Are you the Spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

FIRST SPIRIT. I am.

SCROOGE. Who and what are you?

FIRST SPIRIT. I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE. Long past?

FIRST SPIRIT. No, your past.

SCROOGE. Why have you come here to me?

FIRST SPIRIT. For your own welfare. I must teach you the first lesson



of consideration.

SCROOGE. But I am considerate.

FIRST SPIRIT. Are you a kind master to your clerk?

SCROOGE. Well, I'm not unkind.

FIRST SPIRIT. Do you remember your own first master? One Fezziwig by name?

SCROOGE. Indeed, I do. Bless his dear, old heart. He was the kindest master that ever lived.

FIRST SPIRIT. Then why haven't you followed his good example? Would any of your clerks say that you were the kindest master that ever lived?

SCROOGE. Well, times have changed, that's it--it's all the fault of the times.

FIRST SPIRIT. It's all the fault of a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel has ever struck out a generous fire. No wind that blows is more bitter than he, no falling snow is more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. And his name is Ebenezer Scrooge.

SCROOGE. All I ask is to edge my way along the crowded path of life. I want to be left alone. That's all--left alone.

FIRST SPIRIT. I have come to save you, Ebenezer Scrooge. I have come to kindle into life the stone that once was your heart. First I will show you the kind heart and generosity of your old time master. Behold the warehouse of Fezziwig and Company.

(Rear curtains are drawn apart, revealing a workshop, with desk down R. facing front. Barrel up L. Sign on rear wall reads, "Fezziwig and Company." Two young men, EBENEZER and DICK, discovered happily working at desk. Fezziwig stands up L. looking off L. WAITS are heard singing off L. at rear.)

WAITS (sing, music page 169).

Christ was born on Christmas Day,  
Wreath the holly, twine the bay,  
Light and Life and Joy is He,  
The Babe, the Son,  
The Holy One  
Of Mary.

FEZZIWIG (flinging them a handful of coins). That's right, my lads. Sing away. Merry Christmas to you.

WAITS (outside). Thank ye, sir. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Thank ye, sir. (They sing and the song dies away in the distance.)

SCROOGE (down R. with FIRST SPIRIT). Why, it's old Fezziwig. Bless his dear, old heart. It's Fezziwig alive again.

FEZZIWIG (comes merrily down C.). Yo ho, my boys! No more work for tonight. Christmas Eve, Dick! (Throws his arms over the shoulders of the two boys.) Christmas Eve, Ebenezer! God bless Christmas.

DICK. Ay, ay, sir.

EBENEZER. Ay, ay; God bless Christmas.

FIRST SPIRIT. Did you hear that, Scrooge? That is yourself--and you said God bless Christmas.

SCROOGE. That's true. That was thirty years ago.

FEZZIWIG (bustling about). The missis and the girls are down stairs, so let's clear away before you can say Jack Robinson. (They push desk back, and decorate rear stage with strings of Christmas greens, FEZZIWIG talking all the time.) Yo ho! That's right, Dick. String the Christmas greens. Here you are, Ebenezer. We're going to have the merriest time in all the kingdom. (Dancing a step or two.) I'll show ye how to enjoy life. That's it. Now we're all ready. (Sings.) "Wreathe the holly, twine the bay!" Let's have lots of room. Clear away, Dick. Here comes the fiddler now.

Enter OLD FIDDLER. He sits on barrel at rear and starts to "tune up."

OLD FIDDLER. Merry Christmas, sir.

FEZZIWIG. The same to you, granfer, and many of 'em.

Enter MRS. FEZZIWIG from L.

MRS. FEZZIWIG. Lawsy, lawsy, I thought we'd be late. (Goes to the two boys and puts her arms over their shoulders.) And how's my merry boys tonight?

DICK. Finer'n a fiddle.

EBENEZER. Merry Christmas, Mrs. Fezziwig.

MRS. FEZZIWIG. The same to you, dear lads.

FEZZIWIG. Where's the girls, mother?

MRS. FEZZIWIG. Here they come, Flora, Felicity and little Fanny May.

Enter the THREE FEZZIWIG girls with their escorts. Everybody bustles around shaking hands, wishing each other "Merry Christmas."

FEZZIWIG. And here's the housemaid and her cousin the baker. (They enter and are greeted by all.) The cook and the milkman, and the lonesome little boy from over the way! And Ebenezer's young lady, Miss Bella. (They enter and are merrily greeted.) And now, mother, what do you say to a rollicking game of Puss in the Corner.

(They play Puss in the Corner with much loud laughter, clapping hands, running about, etc. The FIDDLER plays.)

MRS. FEZZIWIG. Oh, I never was so happy in all my life. This is the real spirit of Christmas.

FEZZIWIG (hangs up a bit of mistletoe). And here's the mistletoe.

(They form a ring and play a ring game with much noise and confusion.)

EBENEZER (catching MRS. FEZZIWIG under the mistletoe). I've got ye! (Kisses her.)

MRS. FEZZIWIG. God bless the boy!

EBENEZER. And God bless the merry Christmas!

FEZZIWIG. And now a dance, my hearties. Yo ho! For the old time Christmas dance.

(They dance a few figures of Sir Roger de Coverly or the Virginia Reel. All are dancing wildly, swinging, etc., with plenty of loud laughter, clapping of hands, etc., as the rear curtains are drawn. Note: Use brilliant lights from R. and L. upon the rear stage.)

FIRST SPIRIT. What a small matter to make these silly folks so full of gratitude and happiness.

SCROOGE (astonished). Small? It was the happiest time in my life.

FIRST SPIRIT. And yet your master only spent a few pounds of your mortal money. Three or four, perhaps. And yet he kindled the true spirit of Christmas in all your hearts.

SCROOGE. He could have made us miserable, but he made every day we worked for him seem like Christmas.

FIRST SPIRIT (gazes steadily at Scrooge, who becomes uneasy under the look). What's the matter now?

SCROOGE (trying to appear unconcerned, but failing). Oh, nothing!

FIRST SPIRIT (gazing at him). Something, I think.

SCROOGE. No, nothing; only this, I wish I could say a word or two to my clerk just now. That's all. Poor fellow. I'm afraid I've been a little hard on him. Poor Bob Cratchit!

FIRST SPIRIT. My work is thriving, but my time grows short. Quick, I have another picture for you.

Soft music. The curtains part, showing the scene as before, but only EBENEZER and BELLA are discovered. Soft music plays all through this scene.

BELLA. It matters little to you, very little. Another idol has displaced me, that's all. If it can comfort you and cheer you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.

EBENEZER (irritated). What idol has displaced you in my heart?

BELLA. An idol of gold.

EBENEZER. Well, I must make money. You know that. Poverty is the hardest thing in the world.

BELLA. I have seen your nobler instincts fall off one by one. Now nothing remains in your heart but the love of gold. Therefore, I am releasing you from your engagement. (Offers ring.)

EBENEZER. Have I ever sought release?

BELLA. In words, no; but in everything else, yes. I am penniless. If you married me, you would probably regret it. So I release you with a heart full of love for the noble man you once were.

EBENEZER. But, Bella--

BELLA. You will soon forget me. Your time and your mind will be full of business, seeking after gold. The idol of gold has driven love from your heart, but may you be happy and contented in the life you have chosen. (Rear curtains are drawn.)

FIRST SPIRIT. And are you happy and content in the life you have chosen, Ebenezer Scrooge?

SCROOGE. No, a thousand times--no. I threw away her love, the one pure thing in my life, for gold. And now I'm alone, alone. (Sinks at desk and sobs.)

FIRST SPIRIT. I have shown shadows of times that are passed. Have you learned a lesson from the Spirit of Christmas Past?

SCROOGE. I have, I have; a bitter, bitter lesson.

FIRST SPIRIT. And will you see more?

SCROOGE. No, no. Show me no more. Torture me no longer.

FIRST SPIRIT. Remember the lesson you have learned. Remember the kindness of your old master. Remember the love of your old sweetheart. Your life is barren and bitter, but there is yet time for repentance. (Bell tolls twice.) The signal! My hour is past. On the stroke of six my brother, the Spirit of the Christmas Present, will visit you. Remember! Repent! Believe! Farewell, farewell, farewell!

FRONT CURTAIN SLOWLY FALLS.

STAVE II.

Same scene as Stave I. Lights half up, but candles are not burning.

Rear curtains closed. SCROOGE is discovered asleep at his desk. The SPIRIT of CHRISTMAS PRESENT sits at R., a red light shining on him. He carries a torch in which a red light burns. The bells toll six times. SCROOGE suddenly awakens and gazes at SECOND SPIRIT.

SECOND SPIRIT. Arise, arise, Ebenezer Scrooge, and learn to know me better.

SCROOGE (frightened). I don't believe I ever met you before.

SECOND SPIRIT. Probably not. I am the Spirit of Christmas. The Ghost of Christmas Present.

SCROOGE. The Ghost of Christmas Present?

SECOND SPIRIT. I am a brother of the little Spirit of Christmas Past who visited you before.

SCROOGE. And are you going to show me all my past misdeeds?

SECOND SPIRIT. Not me. I am going to show you your present misdeeds. It is my mission to show you the love and comradeship of Christmas of today. I travel among the common people. My torch is their benediction. If there is a slight quarrel or any misunderstandings on Christmas Day, I simply throw on them the light of my torch. And then they say it is a shame to quarrel on Christmas Day--the Day of Peace and Love. And so it is! God bless it! God bless Christmas Day!

SCROOGE. And what do you intend to show me?

SECOND SPIRIT. I intend to show you the House of Happiness.

SCROOGE. Is it a wonderful palace of gold?

SECOND SPIRIT. It is a humble little kitchen. In fact, the kitchen of your poor clerk, Bob Cratchit. Bob, with his fifteen shillings a week--with his wife and six children--with his shabby clothes and his humble, shabby manners--Bob, with his little four-roomed house, and his struggle to keep the wolf from the door. The Ghost of the Christmas Present blesses his abode. Behold!

Bright, cheerful music. SCROOGE and SECOND SPIRIT cross to R. The rear curtains open, showing the interior of the Cratchit kitchen. Everything neat, but showing extreme poverty. Fireplace C. rear. Kettle boiling on crane. Table down L.C. with red cloth and lighted lamp. Cupboard up R. Old chairs around stage. Several pots of bright flowers in evidence. A bird in a cage is singing over the mantel. PETER discovered watching the potatoes boiling in the kettle at the fireplace. Enter MRS. CRATCHIT and BELINDA from L.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Hurry, Belinda; we must set the table right away. How's the taters, Peter?

PETER (peeks in the kettle). Boiling, mammy, boiling.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Here, carry the lamp over there.

BELINDA. Yes, ma'am. (Puts lamp on cupboard.)

MRS. CRATCHIT. And now where's the white table cloth?

BELINDA (getting it from cupboard). Here it is, mammy. (They place  
castor, plates, knives, etc., on table during the following scene.)

MRS. CRATCHIT. Whatever has got your precious father, I wonder? He and  
Tiny Tim's been at the church these three hours.

Enter BOB and BETTY from R. They run down and kiss MRS.  
CRATCHIT.

BOB. Oh, mumsy, we saw the goose, we did. We peeked in through the  
bakery window and we saw the goose, we did.

BETTY. And we smelled him, too. And we went inside, we did. And the  
baker asked us what was wantin'. And Bob said he wanted to know which  
goose was the Cratchit goose.

BOB. And he pointed to the very biggest one, mumsy. Didn't he, Betty?

BETTY. And it was all nice and brownly on top. And he said it 'ud be  
ready in 'bout twenty minutes. Didn't he, Bob?

BOB. And it was the best looking goose I ever saw, it was. It just  
made me hungry to see him and to smell him baking.

BETTY. And it had sage and onion stuffing, mumsy, didn't it, Bob?

MRS. CRATCHIT. I'm sure there never was such a goose before, and I'm  
sure there never will be such a goose again. How's the 'taters, Peter?

PETER (looks in kettle). Boilin', mammy, boilin'.

BOB. Oh, Peter's got on pa's shirt collar, he has. Peter's got on pa's  
shirt collar.

PETER. If I didn't have to mind these 'taters, I'd show you!

MRS. CRATCHIT. I can't think what's keeping your father, and your  
brother Tiny Tim. And Martha wasn't as late last Christmas Day by half  
an hour.

Enter MARTHA from R.

MARTHA. Here's Martha, mumsy.

BOB (dragging her down to Mrs. Cratchit). Here's Martha, mumsy.

BETTY. Oh, Martha, there's such a goose! Isn't there, Bob?

MRS. CRATCHIT (hugging and kissing MARTHA). Why, bless your heart  
alive, my dear, how late you are! (Takes off her bonnet and shawl.)

MARTHA. We'd a deal of work to finish up last night. I was on my feet  
all day. Oh, why won't people learn to do their Christmas shopping

early. If they'd only stop to give a moment's thought to the poor clerks.

MRS. CRATCHIT. There, there, my dear, sit ye down. Here's the big chair, Martha. (BOB has been sitting in the big chair at R., but MRS. CRATCHIT simply turns it forward, letting BOB slip to the floor, and seats MARTHA therein.) Well, never mind, as long as you're home at last, Martha. Draw your chair up to the fire and have a warm. God bless you. How's the 'taters, Pete?

PETER (looking in kettle). Boilin', mammy, boilin'.

MARTHA (sitting in front of the fire). Oh, mumsy, ain't this Heavenly? Be it ever so humble there's no place like home.

BETTY (at door R.). Father's coming, father's coming.

BOB. Hide yourself, Martha. Here, here. (Pulls her to L.)

BETTY (helping her). Hurry up. Hide, hide! (Exit MARTHA at L.)

Bright music. Enter CRATCHIT carrying TINY TIM on his shoulder. TINY TIM carries a little crutch.

CRATCHIT (down C.). Why, where's our Martha?

MRS. CRATCHIT (down L.). Not coming.

CRATCHIT. Not coming? Not coming--on Christmas Day?

MARTHA (rushing in from L.). No, father, it's only a joke. Here I am, father, here I am. (Rushes into his arms.)

BETTY (taking Tiny Tim). Come on, Tiny Tim, out to the wash-house. We've got something to show you, we have. Ain't we, Bob?

BOB. You bet we have, Tiny Tim. Come and hear the Christmas pudding singing in the wash boiler. Come on! (Exit BOB, followed by BETTY and TINY TIM, at L.)

MRS. CRATCHIT (taking Cratchit's hat and muffler and hanging them up). And how did Tiny Tim behave in the church, father?

CRATCHIT. As good as gold and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. (Sits at L. surrounded by all.) 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 it was who made lame beggars walk and blind men see. (Trembling voice.) Little Tim is growing stronger and more hearty every day.

Enter TINY TIM from L.

TIM. I heard the pudding singing a song in the wash boiler, I did.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Everything is ready. Bob, you and Betty run across the street to the baker's and fetch the goose.

BOB. Come on, Betty. (Runs out R. with BETTY.)

MRS. CRATCHIT. I've got the gravy to heat, right away. Peter, mash the potatoes. Belinda, sweeten up the apple sauce! Martha, the hot plates! (All bustle around, setting table. CRATCHIT with TIM, on his knee, sit before the fire.)

BELINDA. We haven't got enough chairs, mumsy.

CRATCHIT. This young shaver can sit on my knee.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Peter, set up the chairs.

Enter BOB and BETTY from R. bearing a roast goose in a baking pan.

BOB. Here it is, mumsy.

BETTY. Here's the goose. (MRS. CRATCHIT puts it on plate on table.)

BELINDA. What a wonderful goose.

MARTHA. And how big it is! (All take seats.)

BOB. And don't it smell good!

BETTY. Hurray for the Christmas goose.

TIM. Hurray! (CRATCHIT makes signal, all bend heads for a silent grace.)

CRATCHIT (after pronounced pause). And God bless Christmas Day.

TIM. God bless us all, every one. (CRATCHIT and MRS. CRATCHIT serve the meal. All eat.)

CRATCHIT. I've got a situation in my eye for Master Peter.

PETER. A situation for me?

CRATCHIT. Yes, sir, for you. Full five-and-sixpence weekly.

ALL. Oh, Peter!

BOB. Peter will be a man of business, won't you, Peter?

PETER. What'll I do with all that money?

CRATCHIT. Invest it, invest it, my lad. It's a bewildering income.

MARTHA. Who do you think was in the shop yesterday? You'll never guess. A countess and a real lord.

ALL. Martha!

MARTHA. A real, live lord, as fine as silk and just about as tall as



Peter here.

PETER (pulls his collar up high and tosses his head). As big as me?  
(WAITS outside sing two verses of Christmas Carol, as before.)

CRATCHIT (goes to door). Here's a sixpence for you, and God bless you all.

WAITS (outside). Thankee, sir. Merry Christmas, sir.

BELINDA. And now the pudding.

BETTY. Oh, suppose it should break in turning it out.

MARTHA. Or suppose it isn't done enough.

BOB. Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the backyard and stolen it while we were in here eating the goose.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Nonsense. I'll get the Christmas pudding. (Exits.)

BOB (very much excited). Oh, I can smell it, I can. I smell the pudding.

Enter MRS. CRATCHIT bearing dish of pudding, decked with holly, and blazing.

CRATCHIT. Oh, it's a wonder, mother, it's a wonder.

BETTY. It looks like a little speckled cannon-ball.

BOB. But just wait till you taste it; that's all. (It is served.)

CRATCHIT (rises). I have a toast. Mr. Scrooge! I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the founder of the feast.

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

CRATCHIT (remonstrating gently). My dear, the children! Christmas Day.

MRS. CRATCHIT. He's an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man. You know he is, Robert. Nobody knows it better than you do.

CRATCHIT (mildly). My dear, Christmas Day!

MRS. CRATCHIT. Then I'll drink his health, for your sake and the Day's, not for his. Long life to him! A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! He'll be very merry and happy, I've no doubt.

CRATCHIT. And now a Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us.

ALL (rising). A very Merry Christmas.

TIM. And God bless us every one!

(The tableau curtains are slowly drawn.)

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

SECOND SPIRIT. I see a vacant seat in the poor chimney-corner, and a little crutch without an owner. If these shadows remained unaltered by the future, the child will die.

SCROOGE. No, no, kind Spirit! Say he will be spared.

SECOND SPIRIT. If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Your very words, Scrooge. Decrease the surplus population. (SCROOGE hangs his head in shame.) Man, if man you be in heart, forbear that wicked cant. Will you decide what men shall live, and what men shall die? It may be that in the sight of Heaven you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child.

SCROOGE. Forgive me, forgive me.

SECOND SPIRIT. You have seen the spirit of Christmas bless this poor dwelling. They were not a handsome family, they were not well dressed; their clothes were scanty and their shoes far from being water-proof--but they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the Christmas time. They are my children. Have you learned your lesson? (Chimes ring.) My hour is spent.

SCROOGE. I have learned the lesson, Spirit of Christmas. I have seen happiness, in spite of poverty. A happiness that all my gold cannot buy. I have seen the Christmas spirit. Forgive me that I ever dared to utter a word against Christmas. Forgive me! Forgive me! (The chimes continue ringing, the SPIRIT glides out. SCROOGE kneels in prayer, muttering, "Forgive me! Forgive me!")

CURTAIN.

STAVE III.

Same scene as before, the rear curtains drawn together. SCROOGE is discovered seated at his desk, his head buried in his hands. The THIRD SPIRIT stands at C. with green, ghastly light on him from R. This is the only light on the stage. The bells toll six.

SCROOGE (awakens). I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.

THIRD SPIRIT (inclines head).

SCROOGE. You are going to show me the shadows of things that are to happen in the future?

THIRD SPIRIT (inclines head).

SCROOGE. I fear you more than any I have yet seen. But I know you are working for my welfare, so I will see your visions with a thankful

heart. Will you not speak to me?

THIRD SPIRIT (points downward with R. hand).

SCROOGE. No word for me. Well, have you anything to show me?

THIRD SPIRIT (points to rear stage. The curtains part. Rear stage is draped in white sheets, with bare trees at R. and L. A grave with carved headstone is at C. Blue lights on this scene. Snow falls. Bells heard tolling in the distance.)

SCROOGE. A churchyard!

THIRD SPIRIT (goes to rear stage, points to tombstone.)

SCROOGE. Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point, answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they the shadows of things that May be, only?

THIRD SPIRIT (points to stone).

SCROOGE (creeps tremblingly toward it, moving very slowly, bends over, reads the name, screams). Ebenezer Scrooge! My tombstone, my grave! No, Spirit, no, no! (Rushes to desk, sinks in chair.) I am not the man I was. I am not past all hope. I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. Save me, save me!

(The rear curtains are slowly closed)

SCROOGE (rising). I will keep Christmas in the past, the present and the future. The spirits of all three shall strive within me. Heaven be praised for this Christmas warning. (Laughing.) I don't know what to do. I'm as light as a feather, I'm as happy as an angel, I'm as merry as a schoolboy. A Merry Christmas to everybody. A happy New Year to all the world. Hip, hurrah!

(Christmas chimes heard outside. Waits singing in the distance.)

WAITS (singing louder, music, page 169):

Christ was born on Christmas Day,  
Wreath the holly, twine the bay,  
Light and Life and Joy is He,  
    The Babe, the Son,  
    The Holy One  
    Of Mary.

SCROOGE (rushes to the door). Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas. God bless ye! (Flings them a handful of coins.)

FIRST WAIT. Thankee, sir.

SCROOGE (grabs him and brings him down C.). What day is this, my merry lad?

WAIT. Hey?

SCROOGE. What day is this my lad?

WAIT (loudly). Today! Why, Christmas Day!

SCROOGE. Do you know the grocer's in the next street?

WAIT. I should hope I did.

SCROOGE. Do you know whether they've sold the prize turkey that was hanging up there? Not the little prize turkey, the big prize turkey?

WAIT. What, the one as big as me?

SCROOGE. Yes, my buck.

WAIT. It's hanging there now.

SCROOGE. Is it? Go and buy it.

WAIT. Aw, go on!

SCROOGE. No, no; I'm in earnest. Go and buy it and tell 'em to bring it here, that I may tell 'em where to take it. 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.

WAIT. Watch me. (Rushes out.)

SCROOGE. What a fine little fellow. See him run. I'll send the turkey to Bob Cratchit's. He shan't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim. He should be here by now.

Enter CRATCHIT from R.

CRATCHIT. Morning, sir. (Takes off cap and muffler, goes to desk, starts to work.)

SCROOGE (at desk). What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?

CRATCHIT. I'm very sorry, sir. Very, very sorry.

SCROOGE. Sorry? (Sarcastically.) Yes, you are! Come here! Come here at once! Understand!

CRATCHIT (comes to Scrooge's desk). If you please, sir--

SCROOGE. I'm not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore (rises, dances toward CRATCHIT, digs him in ribs), and therefore I am about to raise your salary.

CRATCHIT. Heavens! The master has gone plumb crazy.

SCROOGE. I'm going to help you and your family. I'm going to be a Godfather to all of 'em. The two girls and Master Peter, Bob, Betty and to dear Tiny Tim. Home to your family, now. Home to them, Bob Cratchit--and merry Christmas to you and yours. God bless you.

Enter FRED from R.

FRED. Here I am again, uncle. Merry Christmas.

SCROOGE (rushes to him and shakes his hands heartily). And the same to you, my lad, and many of 'em. I'm going to eat Christmas dinner with you this day. I'm going to honor Christmas in my heart, and keep it every day in the year. I will live in the past, the present and the future. The spirits of all three shall strive within me. (Stands C., FRED on his R., CRATCHIT on his L. He takes their hands.) Merry Christmas, boys, and God bless us!

FRED and CRATCHIT. The same to you, sir. God bless us.

(Rear curtains are drawn back, showing the Cratchit family at the table. TINY TIM stands on table.)

TIM. God bless us everyone!

(All unite in singing Christmas Carol to--)

SLOW CURTAIN.

THE SCENERY.

TABLEAUX ON REAR STAGE.

No. 1. A room. Barrel up L. for fiddler. Desk at R. Sign on wall "Fezziwig and Company." Garlands of green.

No. 2. Ebenezer and Bella. Same scene as No. 1.

No. 3. Cratchit's kitchen. Table at C. and home-made fireplace at rear C. are the only essentials, with a few stools or chairs. Fireplace made of a few boards covered with red paper marked like bricks with white chalk or paint.

No. 4. White sheets hang at back and sides. Two small evergreen trees nailed in position, white cotton hanging from them. Grave at C. covered with snow. Wooden headstone painted white and small footstone. The headstone may be in the form of a cross or a slab.

COSTUMES.

SCROOGE--Should be played by a thin man of middle age, if possible. Gray hair. Shabby dark suit. Face lined. No jewelry or colors. If desired to costume the play in the middle Victorian period, Scrooge should wear very tight dark trousers, brown low cut vest, shabby black full-dress coat, soft white shirt, black stock tie, high collar made by taking an ordinary turn-over collar and turning it up.

BOB CRATCHIT--Very shabby dark suit. Long white woolen muffler. Old cap. Suit should be the same style as that worn by Scrooge, but much shabbier. Clothing neatly patched. He wears a sprig of mistletoe or

holly in Staves 1 and 2.

FRED--Bright, cheerful young man of 22. Overcoat and top hat. Ruffled shirt, stock tie and collar as for Scrooge.

MISSION LASSIES--Dark skirts, capes, blue poke bonnets with red ribbon across front.

THE GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY--Long black robe. Black hood. Chains around waist, with toy money banks on chains. Take a skeleton false face and with gray and black and white grease paint make up your own face like a false face. Or if desired, wear the false face. Speak in low monotone.

FIRST SPIRIT--A little girl of 10. Long light hair. White Grecian draperies trimmed with tinsel. Crown of tinsel.

SECOND SPIRIT--Man dressed in a red robe, trimmed with sprigs of green pine. White cotton border to represent snow. Cap of white cotton.

THIRD SPIRIT--Use same costume and make-up as Marley's Ghost.

WAITS--White smocks, ragged trousers. Felt hats twined with red and green ribbon. Carry branches of holly.

MR. FEZZIWIG--Low shoes with pasteboard buckles covered with tinfoil. Short black trousers. White stockings. Fancy colonial coat and hat. White colonial wig. A short, stout man of middle age. Always laughing, moving around, etc.

MRS. FEZZIWIG--Middle-aged lady in gay colonial tuck-up dress. White colonial wig.

EBENEZER and DICK--Two young men in colonial costume. No wigs.

THE FIDDLER--White wig and whiskers. Long white smock. Hat trimmed with ribbons.

BELLA--Neat colonial costume of pink and white. Hair in curls.

THE CRATCHIT FAMILY--Old-fashioned costumes, faded and worn, but bright with cheap lace and gay ribbons. Peter wears a large white collar.