

Christmas Candies and Nuts



Christmas Decorations

A GENERAL LINE OF NOTIONS
TOBACCO, CIGARS, PIPES

Pencils, tablets, box stationery. Large line of post cards.

National Biscuit Company's Goods,
Coffees, Teas and Spices

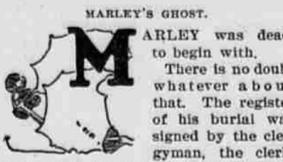
E. R. TROMBLA

CHRISTMAS CAROL

BY Charles Dickens

The famous Yuletide tale which, with its story of Tiny Tim, has touched millions of hearts and wrought for human kindness.

Chapter One



MARLEY'S GHOST.
MARLEY 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 doornail.

Mind, I don't mean to say that I know of my own knowledge what there is particularly dead about a doornail. I might have been inclined myself to regard a coffin nail as the deadest piece of iron mongery 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 doornail.

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.

Scrooge never painted out old Marley's name. There it stood years afterward above the warehouse door—Scrooge & Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge & 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, shriveled 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.

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 3, but it was quite dark already.

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 beaten 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.

"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?"

"Come, then," returned the nephew gayly. "What right have you to be dismal?" Scrooge, having no better answer ready, on the spur of the moment said "Bah!" again and followed it up with "Humbug!"

"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."



"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 forever.

"Let me hear another sound from you," said Scrooge, "and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation."

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

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?"

"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 humor 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.

At length the hour of shutting up the counting house arrived. With an ill will Scrooge dismounted from his stool and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out and put on his hat.

"You'll want all day tomorrow, I suppose?" said Scrooge.

"If quite convenient, sir."

"It's not convenient," said Scrooge, "and it's not fair. If I was to stop half a crown for it you'd think yourself ill used. I'll be bound."

The clerk smiled faintly. "And yet," said Scrooge, "you don't think me ill used when I pay a day's wages for no work."

The clerk objected that it was a poor excuse for served that it was only once a year.

"A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every 25th of December," said Scrooge, buttoning his greatcoat to the chin. "But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning."

The clerk promised that he would, and Scrooge walked out with a growl. Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern and, having read all the newspapers and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner.

ESTABLISHED IN 1872

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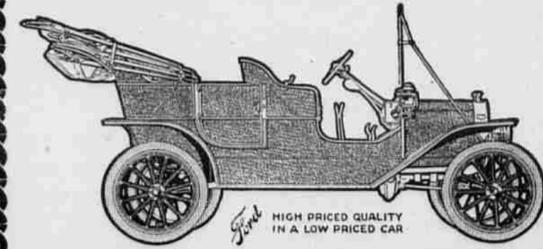
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