

you know,' said Bob, inquired what had happened to distress him. 'On which,' said Bob,' for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him. 'I am heartily sorry for it, Mr Cratchit,' he said,' and heartily sorry for your good wife.' By the bye, how he ever knew that, I don't know.'

'Knew what, my dear.'

'Why, that you were a good wife,' replied Bob.

'Everybody knows that.' said Peter.

'Very well observed, my boy.' cried Bob. 'I hope they do. 'Heartily sorry,' he said,' for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way,' he said, giving me his card,' that's where I live. Pray come to me.' Now, it wasn't,' cried Bob,' for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us.'

'I'm sure he's a good soul.' said Mrs Cratchit.

'You would be surer of it, my dear,' returned Bob,' if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn't be at all surprised - mark what I say. — if he got Peter a better situation.'

'Only hear that, Peter,' said Mrs Cratchit.

‘And then,’ cried one of the girls,’ Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself.’

‘Get along with you.’ retorted Peter, grinning.

‘It’s just as likely as not,’ said Bob,’ one of these days; though there’s plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and when ever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim — shall we — or this first parting that there was among us.’

‘Never, father.’ cried they all.

‘And I know,’ said Bob,’ I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.’

‘No, never, father.’ they all cried again.

‘I am very happy,’ said little Bob,’ I am very happy.’

Mrs Cratchit kissed him, his daughters kissed him, the two young Cratchits kissed him, and Peter and himself shook hands. Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God.

‘Spectre,’ said Scrooge,’ something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead.’