



Tiny Tim Cratchit, Bob Cratchit's youngest child, has many physical challenges. He walks with a crutch, but many times his father carries him.

So it was on Christmas Eve, after Bob finally left the office of Scrooge & Marley. George Alfred Williams created this illustration, of Tiny Tim and his father, as the *frontispiece* of a 1905 edition of *A Christmas Carol*, published by The Platt & Peck Co. (Click on it for a wonderful view.)

The illustration's caption is:

He had been Tim's blood horse all the way from church.

The caption is a sentence lifted from Stave Three of the story: "The Second of the Three Spirits" (in other words, the Spirit of Christmas Present). It illustrates the moment when Bob Cratchit, who is late coming home from work, finally arrives with Tim.

All the other family members, who are already home, are excited about their Christmas-Eve dinner. Pleasing aromas fill their simple dwelling. But Bob doesn't see his older daughter Martha (who is hiding, to tease her father):

"Why, where's our Martha?" cried Bob Cratchit, looking round.

"Not coming," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"Not coming!" said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim's blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. "Not coming upon Christmas Day!"

Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"And how did little Tim behave?" asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

"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."

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs—as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby—compounded some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hob to simmer; Master Peter, and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession. (A Christmas Carol, pages 59-60, of the 1905 edition published by The Platt & Peck Co.)

Scrooge, of course, is watching this scene—unheard and unnoticed—with the Spirit of Christmas Present.

Credits:

Image, described above, online via Project Gutenberg.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Bob-Cratchit-with-Tiny-Tim>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Bob-Cratchit-with-Tiny-Tim>