

Novel Notes

Issue 1



Introducing *A Christmas Carol*

To the Editor:

I am not one to write to the newspapers, but I must speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. I refer, Sir, to the young persons of London.

Are you aware, Sir, that one-third of the population of London is under fourteen years of age? That most of these young persons do not go to school? That many work twelve to fourteen hours a day in filthy, dangerous conditions and never see the sun? That many roam the streets of London, begging for bread or for a task to earn it?

*If you do not believe me, Sir, read the works of Mr. Charles Dickens. Pay attention to the scenes he depicts in *Oliver Twist* and in *David Copperfield*. He writes from life, Sir! We are all guilty of tolerating this cruelty and injustice. It cannot, and it must not, continue.*

*Yours most sincerely,
Lady Edwina Dawes*

FOR YOUR READER'S LOG

As you read *A Christmas Carol*, make a PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE chart in your Reader's Log. Jot down what Ebenezer Scrooge learns about himself as he visits each time period.

Writer Steals from Self

Fans of Mr. Dickens will notice something familiar about his latest work, *A Christmas Carol*. This is not the first time Mr. Dickens has written about time travel and how it changes the traveler. Who among you can recall an earlier story in which a band of goblins confronts an ill-tempered gravedigger

on Christmas Eve? They spirit him away to an enchanted cavern where he views holiday scenes of extreme poverty and extreme wealth.

Yes, the book is *The Pickwick Papers*, and the gravedigger is Gabriel Grub.



The Word PLACE

Ebenezer

Eben-ezer is a Biblical place name from I Samuel (7:12). There it means "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," a meaning that seems not to fit Scrooge at all—until the end of the story.

Imaginary Story Changes Lives!

All because of *A Christmas Carol*

- a home for disabled children was started
- a factory owner began closing his factory every Christmas and giving turkeys to all his employees
- the queen of Norway was so inspired by the book that she

presented each year to disabled children in homes and hospitals, signing the name of one of the characters in the book

- Charles Dickens read from the book at hundreds of charity functions and raised money to help people in need