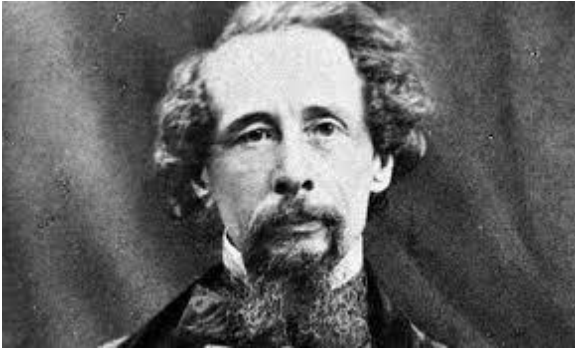


SOCAL DF GREETINGS



November 2023 Volume 14, Issue 7

NEXT MEETINGS

Date: Saturday, November 4, 2023
Time: 11:00 am PST

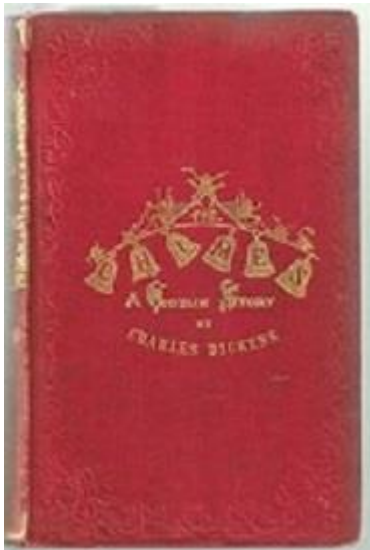
Place: ZOOM

Link: www.gladfellowship.org

Message Tim Clark

Discussion: *The Chimes*

Presenter: **Tom Savignano**



The Chimes 1844 1st Edition



A Proud Branch Member since 1984

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

We present to you the seventh newsletter of 2023. We are looking at *The Chimes* (*A Goblin Story of Some Bells that Rang an Old Year Out and a New Year In.*)

The Chimes is the second of the five Christmas novella's that Dickens wrote (and published by Chapman & Hall) in consecutive years, 1843-1848.

Within the contents of your SoCal DF Greetings, please enjoy a very entertaining feature that addresses the literary relationship of Ebenezer Scrooge and Gabriel Grub, **A Christmas Reverie**, by Kate Woodfield (Dickensian Winter Number 1932/33).

Your GRAD GRIND delves into the blossoming friendship between Dickens and illustrator John Leech, highlighted with three of Dickens' contemporary letters.

Of course, you are subjected to a *The Chimes* test...20 questions worth! Our presenter Tom has also offered you Talking Points to ponder and expounding upon when we discuss *The Chimes* in a few days.

Please also check out our back page for upcoming November Zoom Dickensian-related events. We look forward to seeing you Zoom friends this coming Saturday the 4th as Tom leads us and moderates our study of *The Chimes*.

Please see our website www.gladfellowship.org to find your Zoom link or contact Tim directly. There will be an email blast later in the week that will remind you of the meeting on Saturday.

A Christmas Reverie

By Kate Woodfield

"A Happy Christmas to you!" "A Happy Christmas!"

What a gladsome, jolly time it is! With its approach, how our thoughts turn naturally to Dickens and his many delightful Christmas Stories. The ideas his writings engender in discerning minds prove him verily and indeed a prophet and a teacher of kindness and goodwill, linked for all time with that sacred joyous Festival.

In 1836 *The Pickwick Papers* commenced publication, and into that book Dickens put the story of Gabriel Grub, the section, who was taught by the goblins, some useful lessons from life. In 1843 Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol*, herein Scrooge, the avaricious grasping money lender, learns his lessons from the three Christmas Spirits. Was it not on the foundations of that earlier story of Gabriel Grub that Dickens molded and built his *Christmas Carol* and brought it to perfection? The one was the child, as it were, and the other the adult, the fruit of riper years.

How many little pieces, how many small bricks to go to the making of a perfect building, only the builder can determine. The onlooker sees merely the finished structure, little dreaming or seldom thinking of the years of patient study and work expended on even the minute details of its construction. Dickens the builder thinks nothing too small or unimportant if it tends to the completion and ultimate perfection of the whole.

At the time of our first introduction to them, Gabriel Grub and Ebenezer Scrooge are kindred spirits, both being cross-grained, morose, unpleasant individuals. But the influence of the goblins on the one, and of the Christmas spirits on the other, change them so that they realize what a jolly, happy place the world really is if one looks upon it in the right way.

The Goblin King takes Gabriel to the goblins' cavern under the earth, where he is shown the pictures of a cheerful contented people who are happy because they work (the miserable Gabriel, hating work as he does, notes this with considerable surprise!), for they carry within their own breasts "the materials of happiness, contentment and peace. He sees that men who worked hard, and earned their scanty bread with lives of labour,

were cheerful and happy; and that to the most ignorant, the sweet face of nature was a never-failing source of cheerfulness and joy." And, above all, he discovered that "men like himself, who snarled at the mirth and cheerfulness of others, were the foulest weeds on the fair surface of the earth."

All this the goblins showed him, none too gently chastising him the while, and from the lessons he learned he is thereby converted into a better, happier, and kindlier man.

But Gabriel lacked the courage of his convictions, for Dickens tells us: "He was an altered man, and he could not hear the thought of returning to a place where his repentance would be scoffed at, and his reformation disbelieved. He hesitated for a few moments, and then turned away to wander where he might, and seek his bread elsewhere."

Poor Gabriel! Converted, but ashamed to show or admit it, and lacking the courage to face the music and teach others the happy and contented outlook he had himself learned somewhat late in the day!



Gabriel and the Goblin King

(continued on pg. 4)

GRAD GRIND

By Tim Clark, Chairman



Did You Know?

(Interesting Christmas Story tid-bits to whet the Dickensian Whistle)

As every Dickensian knows, John Leech (1817-1864) illustrated *A Christmas Carol*. This was the culmination of a seven-year petition by the young illustrator upon Dickens.

At the end of 1844, *The Chimes* was published. The thirteen illustrations for it were provided by four different artists – two of them Royal Academicians (which John Leech was not – to which we shall refer to later). Leech supplied five of the pictures.

As we all know, *The Chimes* was written in Italy; but at the end of November, Dickens made a special journey home to read the story to a select circle of friends at Forster's house. The novella drawing by Leech, representing the return of the unkempt Richard, required a slight alteration, and immediately upon arrival in London Dickens sent Leech the following letter:

*Piazza Coffee house
Covent Garden.
Sunday, December First, 1844.*

*My Dear Leech,
You have done gallantly for my little book. And I am greatly pleased with this new token of your talent and interest, believe me.
Will you come and breakfast with me here, tomorrow, at Ten? There is a slight alteration in one of your blocks (explainable in half a minute) which I want to tell you of.*

*Always
Faithfully yours
Charles Dickens*

I beg my compliments to Mrs. Leech. Mrs. Dickens and her sister, charged me with many kind messages to you both.

Leech promptly and readily made the necessary alteration, and Dickens addressed him the following letter of thanks two days later.

*Piazza Coffee House
Covent Garden
Tuesday Morning. (December 3rd, 1844).*

*My Dear Leech,
On coming home here, late last night, I found your note. The alteration in respect of the figure of Richard will be quite sufficient; and I assure you that your cheerful readiness to give yourself trouble on my account gratifies me exceedingly. It is a real pleasure to me to say so, and to work with you. I have the greatest diffidence in suggesting any change, however slight, in what you do – you are ready to make it.*

*Faithfully yours
Charles Dickens*

John Leech, Esquire



Leech became a member of Dickens' personal and private acting troupe. On September 20th, 1845, at Miss Kelly's Theater in Dean Street, Dickens and his friends made their first appearance in Ben Johnson's "Every Man in His Humour." Leech played the part of Master Mathew, which he sustained at the St. James Theatre on 15th November of the same year; at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, on 26th July 1837; at the Haymarket Theatre, London, on 17th May 1848; and at Lord Lytton's house, at Knebworth, on 18th, 19th and 20th November 1850. As evidenced in the following letter, Dickens took care of his troupe:

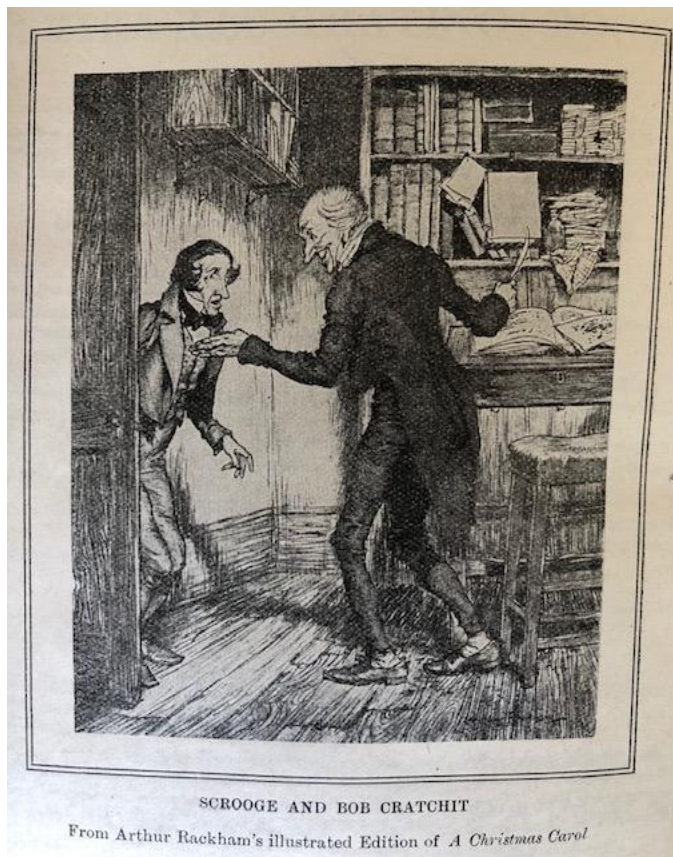
*Devonshire Terrace
Sunday Tenth August 1845*

*My Dear Leech,
Can you come here tomorrow (Monday) afternoon, by a quarter before 6, and not later? I have appointed the English Opera House tailor to come at that time; and I have found a picture, I think, which is the very thing for your dress.*

*Faithfully yours
Charles Dickens*

John Leech, Esquire

Now, Ebenezer Scrooge, that “squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, covetous old sinner,” had a reputation, if possible, more disagreeable and detestable than Gabriel’s, though there is not much to choose between them. Dickens tells us that nobody ever stopped Scrooge in the street and greeted him with gladsome looks. No beggars ever implored *him* to bestow a trifle. No little children ever asked *him* what o’clock it was. “But what did he care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance...”



But after his experiences with the three Christmas Spirits – Past, Present and Future – what happens to Scrooge?

They show him the shadows of his former self. He sees regretfully that he might have become a noble, kind and generous man, with a happy wife and children

surrounding him, making life a real joy. He sees many happy homes, as well as those under privations and trials, where the kindly Christian feelings of love and charity abound, and where the real Christmas Spirit abides, not only at the festive season, but all the year through, shedding its gladsome light on many a thorny pathway.

He learns how infinitely better and far happier are those who carry in their hearts always the true spirit of Christmas; how much more welcomed and more beloved they are everywhere! He sees that men like himself miserably cumber to the earth. He resolves henceforth to be kindly, neighborly, charitable and generous; to live in the Past, Present and Future, and to honour Christmas in his heart, and try to keep it all the year.

Which is the better man, the nobler, more genuine convert? Gabriel Grub, who flees from his neighbors to earn his bread where his is unknown, fearful that his altered manner would be ridiculed; or Scrooge, who bravely faces his fellows, knowing full well that he will be an example for good to the whole of his small world?

Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh and little heeded them. And evermore it was said of Scrooge that he knew how to keep Christmas well if any man alive possessed the knowledge!

(The Dickensian, Winter Number, 1932/33)



The Chimes Test

1. Is The chimes referred to as a Novel or Novella?
2. Where was Dickens when he wrote the story?
3. What sound at midnight inspired Dickens to write the story?
4. What friend illustrated Dickens reading *The Chimes* to his friends on December 3, 1844?
5. Who was the lead character, a poor elderly ticket porter?
6. What are the four parts that the story is divided into called?
7. What night of the year does the story take place?
8. Who is the daughter of the lead character?
9. Who is the fiancée of the daughter?
10. Who commissions our lead character to deliver a note to Sir Joseph Bowley MP?
11. Lillian, an orphaned niece, is homeless along with her uncle. Who is he?
12. What two entities are found by our lead character in the bell tower of the church?
13. In the vision, what becomes of Richard?
14. In the vision, what becomes of Will?
15. In the vision, what becomes of Lillian?
16. In the vision, what has Meg decided to do?
17. According to the spirits of the Chimes, what lesson is taught about mankind?
18. How is New Year's day heralded?
19. What is the culminating event of the story?
20. According to Dickens, what do the Chimes represent?



Trotty Veck (illustration by John Leech)

Tom's *The Chimes* Talking Points Discussion Questions for our Meeting November 4:

What passage in *A Christmas Carol* can be seen as a precursor to *The Chimes*?

As protagonists in their stories, what do Scrooge and Toby have in common?

Who do Alderman Cute and his two friends say is responsible for the plight of England's poor?

Does the scene between Toby and Cute and his two friends remind you of anything in the Old Testament?

After the above encounter, why does Toby keep repeating "Born bad!"

What role do the London newspapers play in the story?

Do you think the frontispiece of *The Chimes* accurately depicts the Bells as they appear in the story?

What is the symbolism of the small goblins that first emerge from the Bells?

What are the Bells accusing Toby of? Does he deserve these accusations?

What is the lesson that Toby learns from his dystopian nightmare?

After he wakes up, what completes his "conversion"?

What is your opinion of the happy ending?

SoCal Dickens Fellowship Officers

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<u>Treasurer</u>	David Pickett (951) 805-6099 davidjpickett@icloud.com
<u>Web-Mistress</u>	Laura Seiple Bmmie68@aol.com

Future SoCal DF Meetings

- **Saturday, December 9th:** We WILL meet at **Yvonne Daizadeh's** home (12 pm) for a potluck Holiday LIVE social gathering. Yvonne's address: 26203 Athena Drive, Harbor City, CA 90710.

Here are our agreed upon tentative dates for reading and discussing *Great Expectations*:

- January 13: GE (pt. I Ch. 1-14)
- March 9: GE (pt. I, Ch. 15-19, pt. II, Ch. 1-10)
- May 11: GE (pt. II, Ch. 11-20, pt. III, Ch. 1-5)
- July 13: GE (pt. III, Ch. 6-20)

If you would like to lead any of the scheduled four dates, please let Tim know and you will be penciled in!

Until further notice and resumed interest, all meetings are Zoom only

Upcoming Dickens Fellowship Sept. Zoom Events

- **Saturday, Sept. 4th, 1:00 pm EST: Friends of Dickens, NY (FDNY)**
www.thefriendsofdickens.org
Bob Sloan *Little Dorrit*, Book I Ch.23-29 (Hybrid)
- **Saturday, Nov. 4th, 11:00 am PST: Southern California Dickens Fellowship (SoCalDF)**
www.gladfellowship.org
Tom Savignano moderates *The Chimes*
- **Tuesday, Nov. 7th, 1:00 pm EST: Montreal Dickens Fellowship Montreal**
www.dickensmontreal.ca
Ellie Clavier moderates *A Tale of Two Cities (book II, Ch. 1-9)*
- **Monday, Nov. 13th, 3:00 pm GMT: Canterbury**
canterburydf@gmail.com
Mark Dickens presents *Henry Fielding Dickens- Dickens Son and a Judge*
- **Wednesday, Nov. 15th, 7:30 pm GMT: Aberdeen**
eadsummers@me.com
Stephen Carver presents *Harrison Ainsworth*
- **Saturday, Nov. 18th, 1:00 pm EST: Dickens Fellowship of New York (DFNY)**
www.dickensnewyork.com
Mark Halperin moderates *Martin Chuzzlewit* (Ch. 25-30)
- **Sunday, Nov. 26th, 1:00 pm PST: Santa Cruz Pickwick Club**
www.dickens.ucsc.edu
John Jordan moderates *Great Expectations* (book 1, Ch.18-Book II, Ch. 4)

This is our monthly request for you to consider our Annual Fellowship dues. Nothing has changed, \$20 for a single, \$30 for a duo. Memberships are rolling, so once you pay, your renewal is not due until a year has elapsed. And of course, we do not discourage any donation that exceeds the renewal! Aside from our annual International Fellowship dues, we donate the balance to local charities and sponsorships.