Scrooge & Poverty

Stave ONE

Exposition: “Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner!” (Dickens 2)

“There’s another fellow, my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas.” (Dickens 3).

“Are there no prisons? … And the Union workhouses? Are they still in operation?” (Dickens 4).

“I don’t make merry myself at Christmas and I can’t afford to make idle people merry.” (Dickens 4)

“If they would rather die they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.” (Dickens 4) — speaking about poor people.

Stave THREE

Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present observed the Cratchit family’s poverty, their happy bond and Tim’s health.

Scrooge: “Tell me if Tiny Tim will live.” … “I see a vacant seat,” replied the Ghost, “in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die. None other of my race will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.” Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit. (Dickens 22)

Idle [adjective]: avoidance of work, or lazy. In the Victorian Era, there was a popular belief that poor people deserved their fate because they lacked ambition, or were lazy. Children worked long hours in factories and people in debt could be sent to prison.