

STAVE FIVE

THE END OF IT

Yes! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

5 "I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!" Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. "The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. O Jacob Marley! Heaven and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob; on
10 my knees!"

He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions, that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call. He had been sobbing violently in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with
15 tears.

"They are not torn down," cried Scrooge, folding one of his bed-curtains in his arms,— "they are not torn down, rings and all. They are here — I am here — the shadows of the things that would have been
20 may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will!"

His hands were busy with his garments all this time; turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of extravagance.

25 "I don't know what to do!" cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath, and making a perfect Laocoön¹ of himself with his stockings. "I am

¹ **Laocoön** — A Trojan priest of Apollo, who, with his two sons, was strangled to death by serpents that rose from the sea. See a classical dictionary for the story of their fate. In the Vatican at Rome is a sculptured group in marble, representing the victims. It was discovered in 1506 and must have dated from the fifth century.