

A. PREPARATORY WORK.

PLACE OF THE CHRISTMAS CAROL
IN LITERATURE

I. PLACE OF THE CHRISTMAS CAROL IN LITERATURE.

Note 1. In 1843 Dickens began to write his Christmas stories, of which it is difficult to speak without exaggeration. The most wholly beautiful production of Dickens is, perhaps, his *Christmas Carol*. If ever any individual story warmed a Christmas hearth, that was the one; if ever solitary self was converted by a book, and made to be merry and childlike at that season, "when its blessed Founder was himself a child," he surely was by that.

"We are all charmed with your Carol," wrote Lord Jeffrey to its author, "chiefly, I think, for the genuine goodness which breathes all through it, and is the true inspiring angel by which its genius has been awakened. . . . You should be happy yourself; for, to be sure, you have done more good, and not only fastened more kindly feelings, but prompted more positive acts of benevolence by this little publication, than can be traced to all the pulpits and confessionals since Christmas, 1842." Perhaps not that; but the story filled many old hearts with the vigorous youth of charity, and thrilled young souls with a sympathetic love of man, that drew them nearer to God.—*From The London Review, 1867.*

Note 2. There are four more Christmas books. *The Chimes*, and *The Cricket on the Hearth*, almost equal to the Carol; and *The Battle of Life*, and *The Haunted Man*, which have never been as popular as the first three.