

## MARTHA SIDES

*(The CRATCHIT family home. MRS. CRATCHIT and the children sew mourning clothes).*

MARTHA

*(reading from the Bible)* "...and He called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

*(MRS. CRATCHIT puts down her sewing, covers her eyes).*

MRS. CRATCHIT

The color hurts my eyes. They're better now. It makes them weak, the candlelight. And I wouldn't show weak eyes to your father when he comes home for the world. It must be near his time.

MARTHA

Past it rather. But I think he's walked a little slower than he used to, these past few evenings, Mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT

I have known him to walk with -- I have known him to walk with Tiny Tim on his shoulder very fast indeed.

PETER

And so have I. Often.

MARTHA

And so have I.

BELINDA

And I.

MRS. CRATCHIT

But he was very light to carry and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble, no trouble. And there's your father now.

*(CRATCHIT enters.)*

MARTHA

Father. How cold and tired you must be!

CRATCHIT

Hello, my dear. *(HE embraces his daughter)*. God Bless you, this Christmas Day!