

Read the following extract from Stave 2 of the novel and then answer the question that follows. In this extract, the Ghost of The Christmas Past is showing Scrooge the moment from his past: Belle is breaking off their engagement.

For again Scrooge saw himself. He was older now; a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Ghost of Christmas Past.

‘It matters little,’ she said, softly. ‘To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.’

‘What idol has displaced you?’ he rejoined.

‘A golden one.’

‘This is the even-handed dealing of the world!’ he said. ‘There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!’

‘You fear the world too much,’ she answered, gently. ‘All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?’

‘What then?’ he retorted. ‘Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you.’

She shook her head.

‘Am I?’

‘Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man.’

‘I was a boy,’ he said impatiently.

‘Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are,’ she returned. ‘I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you.’

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present Scrooge’s attitude to money?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents Scrooge’s attitude to money in this extract
- how Dickens presents Scrooge’s attitude to money in the novella as a whole?