



they, I should say!"

wardly and began;

talk about the music."

"Git up, there, Jim, g'long with ye!" exclaimed Mr. Davis. "You're putty sharp, Marthy; ef you was to look through the hole

in one of my millstones and see the other a

grindin' you'd think you saw clean through both, wouldn't ye? hay? but I don't think you'd make much of a hand to run a church, Marthy. Hay?"

And so, with good-natured obstinacy the

discussion was continued until Mr. Davis helped his wife out and led the horse into the

Now that the chorister knew that there was a feeling that his services were not required, the parish committee hoped that he would relieve them of discomfort by resigning voluntarily; but weeks passed and Hezekiah retained his place without a word. So

at last it was determined that he must be

kept silent. So the spokesman continued:

"Neighbors," he said with a trembling voice, "I can't make no change. I've stood

voice, "I can't make no change. I've stood up in the loft there more'n fifty years and haven't missed but two Sundays. I've sung the good old music that you and I, Philander, was brought up on, and I can't sing much else. I've kept the choir together for you, and if the money stood in the way (Hezekiah

received \$50 a year) I'd keep it up for noth-

ing. No, don't say 'taint money; I know

that: I know you want a high toned quartet

and that you're willing to pay. But-I've

The old chorister bowed his head upon his

hands, and the parish committeemen wished

they had not come. Mr. Davis rubbed the back of his head and his colleagues looked

"We hate worse'n thunder to hurt your feelin's, 'Kiah, hay?" he began again, when

the chorister stood up and interrupted him.

"I know," he said; "you don't want to tell me I'm too old. But, praise the Lord! I'll

not stand in the way of the parish's grod. I

But the committee was not wholly lacking

in human sympathy, and it was agreed that Hezekiah should sing until the end of the

year, and the chorister consented, though

with less appreciation of the favor extended

to him than most of the committee had ex-

"Blessed if I didn't feel sorry for the old man," said young Deacon Goodspeed, speak-ing of the matter several days later. So did

a good many others, but as the end of the

year approached the sympathy lost its keen-ness, and in the same degree the ambition of the younger members increased, so that eventually the desire to have a big display of

music on Christmas led to another call on

Hezekiah, the result of which was that the old chorister yielded his place at once with-

church, the sexton had blown out the lights and locked the heavy doors behind him. Bleigh bells jingled faintly away out of hearing, and the slow footsteps of the sexton erunching on the half trodden snow mingled with the tones of the clock in the high tower, striking ten. Then a door inside the vestry opened, and out of a closet where brooms

opened, and out of a closet where probing and dust pens were kept an old stain came besitatingly. He made his way very slowly up the broad stairs to the main meeting room. At the door leading to the shoir left he paused a moment. His hand was on the knob, but he turned it not. More slowly than

done my best, neighbors."

resign right here."

out a word of protest.

ought to be something of a change."
Hezekiah could hold out no longer.



near the summit of the hill, but so is, and all but a few of the farmers around out have to toil upwards in order to reach had dozen stores there and the three hurches. Perhaps the original settlers of stern Massachusetts had an eye, or two, or the beautiful, for there is not a habitaon in Berkshire county that commands a more extensive or picturesque view. The tives of Tilbury seldom mention the scenry, but not many years ago it attracted the dimiration of wealthy people from a disance, and they set up their summer homes here. It made a marked change in the vilage, the more because a portion of the new omers found it pleasureable to remain brough the winter. It was thus that evil ntered and brought unhappiness to Heze-

My mind wanders back to that time when as a child I listened to his stentorian tenor voice leading the singing from the choir loft of the ancient Congregationalist church. there were two long services every Sunday nen, and I recall that when the new preacher oined in the movement to abolish the afteroon sermon Hezekiah was one of those who tood hardest for the old custom, and when the inevitable reform was finally accomdished, the sturdy chorister never looked apon his minister in the same light that he had before. He was more faithful than ever and sung all the louder as if to make up in tervor for lack of apportunity; but when the daring divine finally went his way, and another preacher took the pulpit, the chorister alt as if a great burden had been lifted; as If the parish had escaped a most dangerous

The years turned steadily along and Heze-tiah overcame every difficulty that choir leaders are subject to. He pacified the jealous consecutive Sundays all alone when the choir deserted him in high dudgeon because he refused to approve of a new anthem book, and in many other ways demonstrated his Atness for the work until prosperity in the shape of summer visitors fell upon Tilbury. Then begen a quiet, insidious trouble, as im-perceptible at first as the approach of old age, that eventually overcame him.

The first manifestation of revolution came

in a division of opinion in the parish over the choice of a new preacher, for old Mr. Spooner had begun to feel that he was somehow in the way, and he resigned before the people were fully aware that they wanted to bear a new voice. There were two leading cardidates for his place, a young and eloquent preacher and a zealous worker, and an elderly man against whom not a word could be said. The newcomers in Tilbury, joining hands with the younger members of the church elected the young man, and as the contest had not been long or determined, there was a speedy healing of differences and to lack of harmony. Even then Hezekiah fold a vegore presentiment that all would not be well with him, but several months passed before he received any direct intimation that the part h would appreciate a change in the choir loft. The first he heard of it was in a discussion among his singers at a Saturday evening rehearsal. It was not meant that he should hear, but he entered the vestry unexpected.v. Sam Hinckley, one of those very basses who had been patiently trained

by the chorister, was saying:

"Wall, I shall be sorry to see the old man's feelings hurt, but he can't expect to lead

And protty Maria Jasper, tacitly under-stood to be Sam's sweethcart, responded

sharply:
"But I think it's just too mean, and if Kiah has to go I follow. That's all!" And then they all saw the chorister coming down the aisle, and a painful hush fell upon them. I wekian bowed gravely as he ap-

proached the group and said: "Good evening, neighbors." That was the way he always addressed the choir at rehears is. Perhaps he avoided a greeting to

each individual from fear of arousing jeal-The celebration of the kindly festival began with a musical service on Christmas eve.

The new quartet was in place and Hezekiah sat with the audience. In deference to old time custom some of the hymns were sung by the entire congregation. The old chorister tried to sing with the others, but after a few how the term somehow get antangled in his ousy by seeming partiality. At all events I never heard of his varying the formula. He continued, as he referred to a small slip of When the Lord wills we will all go, and

not till then. It is not our part to meddle with what is in His hands. The minister has bars the tears somehow got entangled in his voice, and, as he could not sing and weep too, he stopped singing. When it was all over several of his neighbors approached him to say that they didn't think there'd been any improvement, and Hezekiah shook each one by the hand and answered nothing.

The last gossiping couple had left the chosen hymn 207 for the first piece. We will sing it to the tune of 'Cambridge.'"

At that rehearsal and during service next day everything went as usual, but report of the talk that Hezekiah had heard flew about the parish quickly, and not a few remarked that the chorister looked unusually grave.
"I callate," remarked Mr. Davis, the sheep

raiser from Ram's Hill, to his wife as they drove home after meeting; "I cal'late 'Kiah Martin feels his years a growing on him; hay?"
"And I cal'late, Philander Davis," returned Mrs. Davis, with significant emphasis, "that it ain't so much his nateral years he feels as the loss of his friends."
"Sho! Marthy, he ain't lost no friends,

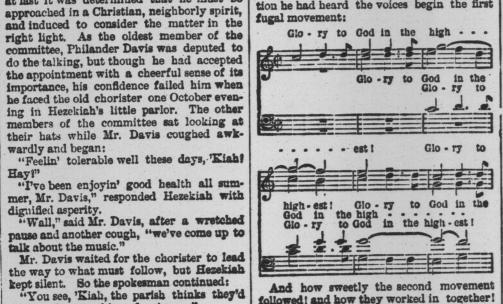
The hain't; I think jes' 's much of him 's eyer I did, an' yit I'm 'bleeged to admit that whim a man gits along in years it's time for him to let stouter men hold the plough.

, the fact was that Philander Davis

some on the walls, and here and there the laurel worked words "Emanuel," "Glory to God in the highest," and so on, that had been placed there with great toil by the young men and women of the parish in honor of the day so near at hand; but had you been there you would have seen only the patriarchal form of the chorister with a sadly bitter look on his face gazing at the gloom about the on his face gazing at the gloom about the pulpit. Was he thinking how often he had stood solemnly thus while the minister was

the lamp from his socket he held it so that he could see, and presently drew forth the ancient collection of anthems, every tune in which he knew by heart, so sacred to him, and yet so speedily hidden away where it should serve nobody. He replaced the lamp and turned the pages to "Coronation," the first piece sung by a choir under his direction more than a lifetime ago. Fondly he looked at the familiar notes and then, his chest thrown out and his head held up, he sung the grand old tune and its magnificent words with all the fervor and all the power words with all the fervor and all the power words with all the fervor and all the power that his voice ever had commanded. From beginning to end the hymn rang through the deserted gloomy church, and Dr. Williams, driving by in haste to attend the ills of a far off patient, wondered that the rehearsal should have been continued so late. When the book still open and his head still up, but the tears were coursing down his face in

At last he sank into a chair, and with a great pang at the heart he saw upon the bench beside the volume of newfangled tunes a little book of manuscript music. When he was a young man of not more than 50 Hezekiah had taken it into his head that he would write music, and the several anthems that he write music, and the several anthems that he had composed in pure harmony, but with crude progressions, had been laboriously copied into books, and had been used occasionally ever since in church service. What had they been doing with his music? Was it not enough that they should discard him in his old age, and his ways and his books, without hunting up his feeble but earnest compositions to laugh at them? That could not be forgiven! With melancholy could not be forgiven! With melancholy fingers he turned the leaves. His inspection stopped at an anthem for Christmas, composed on words taken literally from the Scriptures. There it was, with its introductory recitative for bass, and a double fugue, as he called it when the angular charges and are recommended. as he called it, when the angels' chorus was reached. His wife had sung the treble before she left the choir, and when with patient resignation he had laid her in the grave, his daughter had performed her part, and since she married and moved away the anthem had not been sung. With what grand emo-tion he had heard the voices begin the first fugal movement:



And on earth peace, good will to men. I

And now it was all held up for the smiles of a modern quartet!

"Gracious massy! Hezekiah, wake up! wake up 'Kiah; you'll ketch your death of

It was Peter Stone, the sexton, dumfounded by surprise, shaking the old chorister violently by the shoulder. Painfully
Hezekiah raised his head.
"Merry Christmas, Peter; I'd rather stay
here," he said feebly when he saw where he

Peter laughed almost hysterically and tugged away persistently at the old man's "Come down to the fire," he exclaimed; "the choir will be here right away to re-

searse for the service." "Yes, I'll go," answered Hezekiah, and with great difficulty he dragged his stiffened limbs down the stairs into the vestry, where the furnace was already roaring with a freshly made fire. He submitted to be rubbed and slapped by Peter to induce a quicker circulation of his blood, but he gave no clear answer to the wondering inquiries as to how he came to be locked into the church over night.

Presently the organ upstairs began to sound. Hezekiah shivered and Peter rubbed him the harder. Then the voice of the bass in the new quartet was heard reciting:
"And there were shepherds abiding in the

The old chorister listened with staring eyes. Could it be? The long recitative came to an end, and then all the voices took up in proper order the angels' chorus.
"What does that mean, Peter?" exclaimed

Hezekiah, starting up. "Why, 'twas meant as a Christmas surprise in your henor. They're gain' to sing

your piece."

The old chorister broke away from the sexton and hobbled up the stairs. When he reached the organ loft they were singing "And on earth peace, good will to men."

Heakiah waited until they were done, and then in a low, grave tone that startled the singers, he said:

"I wish you all a merry Christmas, neighbors. Twe had hard feelings against you, and I pray that God will forgive me and cause you not to look unkindly on a old man. This is more than I deserve."





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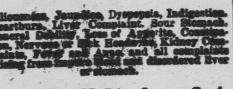
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