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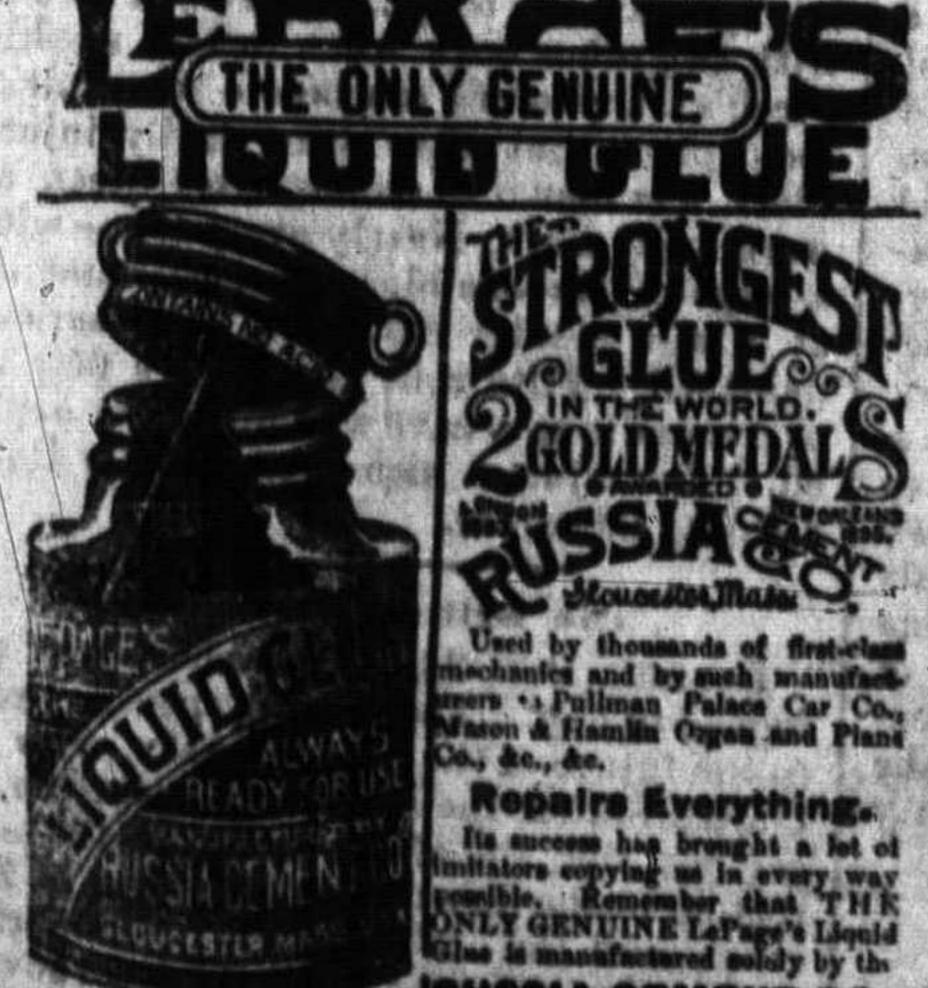
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mercial age there can be no good reason why Tilbury village should have been

pinced so near the summit of the hill, but so it is, and all but a few of the farmers around about have to toil upwards in order to reach the half dozen stores there and the three churches. Perhaps the original settlers of western Massachusetts had an eye, or two, for the beautiful, for there is not a habitamore extensive or picturesque view. The natives of Tilbury soldom mention the scenery, but not many years ago it attracted the admiration of wealthy people from a distance, and they set up their summer homes there. It made a marked change in the village, the more because a portion of the new comers found it pleasureable to remain through the winter. It was thus that evil entered and brought unhappiness to Hezekiah Martin.

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 then, and I recall that when the new preacher joined in the movement to abolish the afternoon sermon Hezekiah was one of those who stood hardest for the old custom, and when the inevitable reform was finally accomplished, the sturdy chorister never looked upon 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 ferver for lack of opportunity; but when the daring divine finally went his way, and another preacher took the pulpit, the chorister felt as if a great burden had been lifted; as if the parish had escaped a most dangerous affliction.

The years turned steadily along and Hezokish overcame every difficulty that choir leaders are subject to. He pacified the jealous sopranos, raised up new bassos, sung four 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 fitness for the work until prosperity in the shape of summer visitors fell upon Tilbury. Then began a quiet, insidious trouble, as imperceptible 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. Smooner had begun to feel that he was somehow in the way, and he resigned before the people were fully aware that they wanted to hear a new voice. There were two loading enudidates 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 no lack of harmony. Even then Hezekiah felt a vague presentiment that all would not be well with him, but several months passed before he received any direct intimation that the parish 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 unexpectedly. Sam Hinckley, one of those very bassos who had been patiently trained by the chorister, was saying:

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

And pretty Maria Jasper, tacitly under resign right here." stood to be Sam's sweetheart, responded "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 cher.ster coming down the aisle, and a painful hush fell upon them. Hezekia'n bowed gravely as he approached the group and said:

"Good evening, neighbors." That was the way he always addressed the choir at rehearsals. Perhaps he avoided a greeting to each individual from fear of crousing jealousy 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 chosen hymn 237 for the first piece. We will sing it to the tune of 'Cambridge.'"

paper in his hand:

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 cherister looked unusually grave. "I cal'late," rerarked 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, be ain't lost no friends,"

'Kiah hain't; I think jes' 's much of him 's ever I did, an' yit I'm 'bleeged to admit that when a man gits along in years it's time for him to let stouter men hold the plough. Hay?"
Now, the fact was that Philander Davis

was one of the few among the older heads in the parish who sided with the reforming element. Mr. is was ambitious for Tilbury and all in it, and he prided himself somewhat on being able to entertain new ideas after having passed the age of 50. At the last church meeting his support had been recognized by his election to membership of the parish committee, and he, therefore, was well informed on the restlessness of the younger members regarding the matter of music. It was the one point of serious difference between him and his wife, and she was not to be hoodwinked by his sophistry. "Don't tell me, Philander," she replied in

answer to his last expression, "I know just how you feel. You want to please the smart folks on the hill, and I haven't got a word to say against them, cept it does seem's if they needn't come to Tilbury and expect to run things in city style. They want a quartet, now, don't they? and they want to interduce new music, don't they and not let the congregation join in, 'cept on one hymn, don't they? and they're goin' to try to make Hezekiah step down on account of his age, and he been chorister for fifty years, don't they? aint they, I should say!"

"Git up, there, Jim, g'long with ye!" exclaimed Mr. Davis, "You're putty sharp, Marthy; of you was to look through the hole in one of my millstones and see the other grindin' you'd think you saw clean through both, wouldn't yet 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 barn to unhitch.

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 approached in a Christian, neighborly spirit, and induced to consider the matter in the right light. As the oldest member of the committee, Philander Davis was deputed to do the talking, but though he had accepted the appointment with a cheerful sense of its importance, his confidence failed him when he faced the old chorister one October evening in Hezekiah's little parlor. The other members of the committee sat looking at their hats while Mr. Davis coughed awkwardly and began: "Feelin' tolerable well these days, "Kiah?

Hay?" "I've been enjoyin' good health all summer, Mr. Davis," responded Hezekiah with

diguified asperity. "Wall," said Mr. Davis, after a wretched pause and another cough, "we've come up to talk about the music."

Mr. Davis waited for the chorister to lead the way to what must follow, but Hezekiah kept silent. So the spokesman continued: "You see, 'Kiah, the parish thinks they'd ought to be something of a change."

Hezekiah could hold out no longer. "Neighbors," he said with a trembling 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 clse. 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 nothing. 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 done my best, neighbors."

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 storn!y at him.

"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'il

in human sympathy, and it was agreed that Hezekiah should sing until the cud of the year, and the chorister consented, though with less appreciation of the favor extended to him than mo t of the committee had experted.

"Blessed if I didn't feel sorry for the old man," said young Doacon Goodspeed, speaking of the matter several days later. So did a good many others, but as the end of the year approached the sympathy lost it; keenness, 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

The celebration of the Lindly festival began with a musical service on Christmas eve. time custom some of the hynna were sung by the entire congregation. The old cherister tried to sing with the others, but after a few bars the tears somehow got cutangled 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 thero'd been any improvement, and Hezekich shook each one by the hand and answered nothing. The last gossiping couple had left the (Continued on page three.)

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JAS. JOHNSTON

music on Christmas led to another call on Henckish, the result of which was that the old charister yielded his place at once without a word of protest. Charles Charl

The new quartet was in place and Liezekiah AN EXTENSIVE VARIETY, CAREFULLY SELECTED

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