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## CONTENTS:

THE MAYSTOKE CHORISTER, (concluded).....	17
Chapter 4.— <i>The Oratorio.</i>	
"    5.— <i>Death in Song.</i>	
SOME WAYS OF COLLECTING FOR THE DIOCESAN CHURCH SOCIETY, .....	20
HOLY DAYS OF THE CHURCH.....	21
NANTER, (With an Illustration,).....	24
POETRY.—An Old Sermon with a New Text, .....	25
SYNODS, .....	26
CORRESPONDENCE, . . . . .	27
COLONIAL AND FOREIGN CHURCH NEWS.....	28
EDITORIAL NOTICES, .....	31
Do.    ANSWERS, .....	32

## THE MAYSTOKE CHORISTER.

### CHAPTER IV.—THE ORATORIO.

**A**BOUT a month after I reached England, when I was staying with some friends at Southwich, the principal town in ——shire, there was a musical festival held there. Since my husband's death I had lost all taste for public amusement, but the idea of again hearing the "Messiah" filled me with a strange pleasure, and I determined to go. For some time I listened to the overture, with my eyes closed for its better appreciation and to shut out from my sight the gay and uncongenial sight of the extravagantly dressed audience. Suddenly I heard a hum of muffled applause run through the hall; and on opening my eyes I saw the singer who was to take the parts allotted to the tenor being led forward to the chair that was set for him in front of the orchestra. He seemed an old man with long white hair, and was evidently blind. The moment I saw him I experienced a thrill which runs through you when conscious of recognizing something which you can't exactly bring to mind. This sensation always annoys me dreadfully, and I was quite oblivious of the air that followed, puzzling my thoughts to account for the strange impression; but when I heard the notes of a well-remembered voice commence the beautiful air of "Comfort ye, my people," looking up with surprise, I recognised so clearly, that I felt astonished I had not done so at first, the familiar face of our old chorister David, and noticed that he bore his arm in a sling.

Very little inquiry sufficed to find out the abode of the now celebrated singer. He was living in handsomely furnished lodgings, and was rejoiced when he heard my voice, recognizing it instantly. His wife had grown into a fine matronly woman, whose clothes, if they were of finer material, were as neat and unpretending as ever.

After the first congratulations were over, I asked how it was that he had be-