

and arranging their books for the next outbreak of musical noise. So little attention do the Snatcham choristers pay to any other part of the service than that in which themselves are concerned. That during the whole course of the prayers, and in all the sermon time, they are whispering to one another, and conning over their music books, sometimes almost audibly buzzing out some musical passage, which seems to require elucidation peradventure to some novice; and Master Grubb the younger is so delighted with his violoncello, that he keeps hugging the musical monster with as much fondness and grace as a bear hugs its cubs, and every now and then, in pleasing anticipation of some coming beauties, or in rapturous recollection of some by-gone graces, he tickles the sonorous strings with his clumsy fingers, bringing forth whispers of musical cadences loud enough to wake the drowsy and to disturb the attentive part of the congregation. And then the good rector casts up to the musical gallery a look, not of reproof, but of expostulation, and thereupon Master Grubb slips his hands down by his sides, and turns his eyes up to the ceiling, as if wondering where the sound could possibly come from.

The supplicatory looks of the musical baited clergyman are on these occasions quite touching and most mutely eloquent: they seem to say—'Pray spare me a little: suffer me to address my flock. I do not interrupt your music with my preaching; why should you interrupt my preaching with your music? My sermons are not very long, why will you not hear them out? I encroach not on your province, why will you encroach on mine? Let me, I pray you, finish my days on earth as pastor of this flock, and do not altogether fiddle me out of the church.' But the hearts of the 'village musicians' are as hard as the nether millstone; they have no more bowels than a bassoon, no more brains than a kettle drum.

Another grievance is, that these Snatcham choristers have a most intense and villainous provincialism of utterance: it is bad enough in speaking, but in singing they make it ten times worse; for they dilate, expand, and exaggerate their cacophony till it becomes almost ludicrous to those who are not accustomed to it. The more excited they are, whether it be by joy or anger, the more loudly they sing, the more broadly they blare out their provincial intonations; and it is very seldom indeed they ascend their gallery without some stimulus or other of this nature. If they be all united together in the bonds of amity and good will; if Master Grubb have suspended his jealousy of Gripe, and if Gripe no longer look with envy and hatred upon Grubb; if some new tune be in preparation wherewith to enrapture the parishioners; if there be in the arrangement tenors and trebles enough to satisfy the ambition of Gripe, and bass enough to develop the marvellous powers of Grubb,—there is a glorious outpouring of sound and vociferation, which none but the well-discip-

lined ears of the Snatcham parishioners can possibly bear. The walls of Snatcham church must be much stronger than those of Jericho, or they would have been roared to rubbish ere this. But if the agreement of the choir be the parent of noise, their disagreement is productive of much more. More than once the Grubb and the Gripe factions have carried their animosity so far as to start two different tunes at the same time. And what can be done in such a case? Who is in the wrong? If the Grubb faction were to yield, they would betray a consciousness that they had not acted rightly in their selection of a tune; and if the Gripe faction were to withdraw from the contest, or to chime in with the Grubbs, they would seem to show the white feather: so they battle it out with all their might and main, and each party must sing and play as loud as possible, in order to drown the noise of the other. After church time the Grubbs threw all the blame on the Gripes, and the Gripes retort the blame on the Grubbs, and a man need have the wisdom of a dozen Solomons to judge between them. So excited with passion, and puffing, and singing and playing, have the parties sometimes been after a *flare-up* of this kind, that they have looked as tired as two teams of horses just unharnessed from two opposition stage coaches; nay, the very instruments themselves have appeared exhausted, and an active imagination might easily believe that the old big burly bassoon, standing in a lounging attitude in one corner of the gallery, was panting for want of breath. Such exploits as these, however, do not frequently occur, and it is well they do not; when they do, a reconciliation generally takes place soon after, and an apology is made to the good pastor, more, perhaps from compassion to his infirmities than out of respect to his office or his years; and his mild reply is generally to the following effect—'Ah! well my good friends, I think another time you will find it more easy to sing all one tune: I marvel much that ye don't put one another out by this diversity of singing.'

There is also another mode in which the parties manifest their discrepancy of opinion, or discordancy of feeling, and that is by the silence of half the choir. Now one would think that such an event would be a joy and a relief to the good man, who loves quiet; and so it is physically, but not morally: for though his ears relieved from one half of the ordinary musical infliction, yet he is mentally conscious that evil thoughts are cherished in the breasts of the silent ones, that they who sing are not praising God in their songs, and that they who sing not are not praising him by their silence.

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—“Captain Parry invited me to an Esquimaux concert, in which five ladies, and a gentleman performed. Their tunes were monotonous, but sung in good time; all the women had remarkably sweet voices. In return for the songs the officers treated the natives with some instrumental music. The wife of Okotook appeared to have a very accurate ear, and seemed much distressed at being unable to sing in time to a large organ.”

*Lyon's Arctic Voyage.*