

that he was talked about, and that all eyes would be turned upon him, all ears—as he expected—wide awake to receive the sermon he had prepared so elaborately. He could see that the children pointed at him; men and women stared openly, and ladies and gentlemen cast furtive glances towards him. He was seen but not known; and he did not care to be known to his parishioners as a Seltorne of Repton, one of a good county family, and a near neighbour; these were the accidents he desired to shake himself free of. For himself alone, his untiring energy and his genius, he must be known and appreciated.

And then, somehow, he scarcely knew how, amidst a clatter and confusion almost deafening; having had his toes trodden upon and his progress impeded more than once by small boys eager to press forward to their seats at the altar railings, he had reached the reading-desk, and was glad to hide his face in sheer confusion and shame. For the sake of common decency, was that the style of thing these people were accustomed to? Moreover, when he had recovered himself a little and stood up to read the prefatory sentence, the cracked bell which had stopped once began to tinkle again sharply, as though rejecting at the first view all idea that the clergyman in the desk could be the right one, and clamouring for some other. And then there was a rush of nailed shoes to the stairs of that hideous gallery, and an audible cry of "Charlie, Charlie, he's in, stop her!" till the curate's cheeks burnt afresh, and he was afraid to look upon the congregation facing him. He need not have troubled himself; such little solecisms as these were too common to excite much notice. When he did look up, at the close of the first lesson, wondering what caused the delay and the peculiar wheezing noise in the gallery, he became aware that the organ was what is popularly termed a "grinder," and that as the air escaped, it took considerable time and labour to get up the steam at all. When it did start however, it went on bravely, and ground the requisite number of bars long before the few feeble singers had got through the words.

And then came the Psalm. Even while he gave it out the curate's eye travelling down the page counted eight verses, and he gave himself up for lost. He thought of the "grinder" in a country church in the west, which could not be stopped at all, but had to be carried out and set on a tombstone to grind itself down. He thought of everything he could think of in his endeavours to drown those hideous sounds, and the pitiable distortions of Tate and Brady. His great passion was music, and as he thought now, by the fireside, of that organ and that singing, involuntarily his shoulders rose and his hand went over his ears.

All through the service, too, there were arrivals; some noisy and breathless, some quiet; but all taking their seats bravely, as though they were used to it. But the amazing part of the whole thing, was to see that most of these people took keys from their pockets to unlock the pew doors. That at any rate, must be stopped.

And then the sermon; that great work which had been put together piece by piece, the very pith and marrow extracted from hours of work; revised, corrected, gloried over. How the gloom crept on and deepened, over those hopes and aspirations of his! Of what use was the well-considered sentence; or the studied rhythm of his prose? A few upturned faces there were, but from time to time they turned wearily to the clock stuck in front of the gallery; some slept and the children played with the notes in the straggling sunbeams. To put a climax upon this up-hill work, the old clerk waking up suddenly at a momentary depression of the preacher's voice, lost his presence of mind and