

am butcher, under whose burly weight and hurly-burly notes the whole music-gallery trembled and shook. To give pungency to the instrumental department, therefore, a hautboy was added; but the vocalists felt it a point of honor to outscreeam the instruments, and the miscellaneous voice of James Gripe, the miller's son, who sang tenor, treble, or counter, just as it happened, was put into requisition for extra duty to match the hautboy. James Gripe could sing very loud; but the louder he sang, the more you heard that kind of a noise that it produced by singing through a comb. It used to be said of him that he sang as if he had studied music, in a mill during a high wind. To the two flutes and the hautboy were added two clarionets, because two of Gripe's younger brothers were growing up, and had a fancy for music. Young Grubb, the son of the butcher, began soon to exhibit musical talents, and accompanied his father at home on the violoncello which instrument, with the leave of the rector, was added to the church band in a very short time,—a time too short, I believe, for the perfection of the performance.

The rector, dear good man, never refused his leave to any thing, especially to what the singers asked; they might have had leave to introduce a waggon and eight horses if they had asked; but still the rector did not like it, and every time he was called upon to christen a child for one of his parishioners, he trembled lest the young one should have a turn for music, and introduce into the gallery some new musical abomination. It was next discovered that only one bass to so many treble instruments was not fair play, so to the violoncello was added a bassoon, and to the bassoon a serpent. What next?—nothing more at present; but if the movement party retains its ascendancy, triangles and kettle drums may be expected. The present state of Snatcham choir is as follows. In the first place there is Martin Grubb, the butcher, a stout robust man of about fifty years of age, having a round head and a red face, with strong, straight, thick brownish gray hair combed over his forehead, and reaching to his very eyebrows. He is the oldest, the wealthiest and the most influential man in the choir. He sings bass, and is said to be the life and soul of the party, though there are no great symptoms of life and soul in his face, which is about as full of expression as a bullock's liver. Then there is young Martin Grubb, who is a bit of a dandy, with black curling hair, and whiskers of the same pattern, pale face, thin lips, long chin and a short nose; his instrument is the violoncello. James Gripe is the leader of the treble voice, with occasional digressions as above noticed. And, in addition to the two younger Gripes, Absalom and Peter, who play the clarionets, there are Onesiphorus Bang, a shoemaker, who plays the first flute; Isaachar Crack, a rival shoemaker, who plays the second flute; Cornelius Pipe, the tobacco-pipe maker, who plays the bassoon; Alexander Rodolpho Crabbe, the baker, who plays the haut-

boy; Gregory Plush the Tailor, who plays the serpent together with divers others, men, boys, and girls, who make up the whole band.

The renowned choir has for a long time considered itself the *ne plus ultra* of the musical profession, and consequently equal to the performance of any music that was ever composed. The old fashioned psalm tunes are therefore all banished from Snatcham church, to the great grief of the worthy rector, whose own voice is almost put out of tune by hearing Sternhold and Hopkins sung to the tunes of 'lovely nymph, assuage my anguish,' and such-like Vauxhall and Saddler's Wells music. The members of the choir too, like other political bodies, have not much peace within unless they war without. If any attack be made upon their privileges they stick together like a swarm of bees; but at other times they are almost always at loggerheads one with another. Old Martin Grubb wields a precarious sceptre, for James Gripe is mightily tenacious of his rights, and resists, tooth and nail, the introduction or too frequent use of those tunes which superabound with bass solos. Grubb and Gripe, by way of an attempt at compromising the matter, have latterly been in the habit of taking it by turns to choose the tunes; and their alternate choice puts one very much in mind of the fable of the fox and the stork, who invited one another to dinner, the fox preparing a flat dish of which the stork could not avail himself, and the stork in return serving up dinner in a long necked bottle, too narrow to admit the Fox's head. When James Gripe chooses the tune, he flourishes away in tenor and in treble solos, leaving the butcher as mute as a fish; but when the choice devolves on Martin Grubb, he pays off old scores by a selection of those compositions which most abound in bass solos. And in such cases it not unfrequently happens that Martin, in the delighted consciousness of a triumph over his tenor, treble and counter-tenor rival, growls and roars with such thundering exultation, that the gallery quivers beneath him, while his son saws away at his violoncello as though he would cut it in half from very ecstasy. Cornelius Pipe and Gregory Plush also spend as much breath as they can spare, and perhaps more than they can spare conveniently, in filling the vast cavities of their respective serpent and bassoon.

All this disturbs and distresses the feelings of the worthy pastor, who thinks it possible and feels it desirable, that public devotion should be conducted with a little less noise. It appears, indeed, and no doubt the choristers one and all think so, that Snatcham Church and Sternhold and Hopkins's psalms were all made to show forth the marvellous talents of the Snatcham choristers. They think that all the people who attend there come merely for the music, and that the prayers and the sermon have no other use or object than just to afford the singers and other musicians time to take breath, and to give them an opportunity of looking over