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THE NEW CURATE.

CHAPTER III.—ECLIPSE OF THE LONE STAR.

"I'm afraid it won't do, sir. The singers won't like to be turned out of their places in the gallery."

"I should like to turn the gallery out as well as the singers," responded Ralph. "But that is a work of time; meanwhile——"

"Couldn't the new organist teach them as well as the others?"

The curate repressed an outbreak of impatience, remembering the sacred looks of those same old singers upon his pointed canticles, and their amazed repudiation of any knowledge of notes.

"Teach them! Why, there is nothing in them to teach. They don't even know the musical alphabet. There is not one of them who could sing up the diatonic scale of C Major, not to speak of the Doric style, and what would they understand about tonal chanting?"

The old clerk's eyes had opened gradually to their full width during this speech, but when it came to tonal chanting, he gave it up in despair, and let his shoulder drop, with a bleak sort of look at the new instrument.

"It's all very well as far as it goes, but there isn't a man or woman in the whole parish but what misses the good old organ. Talk of sound! there was, as much in one of those pipes as there is in this thing's whole body. But it's all the same, for that matter, be it man or beast; if he's old, shove him away, his time is up. Will you bring the keys, sir, or shall I stop to lock the door?"

"No, I am coming. A great shame that there should be any necessity for locking church doors."

"I remember a time when there was a bass viol, and a fiddle, and a clarionet in that there gallery. I thought an organ was the tip-topper for a church," said the clerk, with exasperating significance.

When he got no answer, he proceeded to mutter something about the minister at the Ebenezer Chapel being glad enough to have the old singers, if so be they were turned out. It was too much for Ralph's forbearance. The insolent, pseudo-