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## THE COBBLER

(Continued from page 20)

Week after week brought the cobbler regularly to our door, and every week some obstacle had arisen. There was strenuous competition between three of the colleges as to which should acquire him. The choir of the fortunate college which triumphed, had, eaten up with jealousy, petitioned the authorities against his advent. St. Anne's, Soho, had in turn put in their claim for his services, only to be brought into sharp conflict with St. Margaret's, Westminster. The Dean and Chapter of the Abbey itself had abandoned a promising cutting-out expedition on the conviction that his voice was too imperious.

In course of time the cobbler's purple ecstasy subsided into a chastened, but proud, resignation. "I am afraid they will never settle it," he said.

"It looks bad," I admitted.

"The fact is, sir, the Dean as good as said to me yesterday that, at all cost—at all cost—I must stay at St. Paul's."

It was about this time that the younger of the two girls married, and I fell upon gloomy days. An atmosphere surrounded the younger of the two girls which I missed greatly, when she had gone. I think the cobbler must have noticed my gloom; at any rate, he noticed her absence. "Lady gone away, sir?" he asked.

"Married," I answered, rather shortly.

"Dear, dear! Married, indeed, sir! And I thought—ah, well! We all have our disappointments, sir."

An extraordinary change came over his face. For a moment I thought he was stricken with sudden illness; I was alarmed, I confess, and he must have noticed my perturbation. "My face seems to express more than most, sir," he said with satisfaction; "I seem somehow to throw more into it. There was a funeral passing me in the High Street the other day, and I put on that same sympathetic look that you have just seen, sir. The widow—it was a husband as was dead—put her head out of the carriage window as though to say, 'Thank you; Mr. Boles.' My face somehow seems to express more than most. I'll leave the extra hymn-sheet, sir. No doubt, the lady would like to see it, and you can send it on."

I sent it on, and from that time the cobbler and I became great friends. I used to visit his shop, and acquired quite an affection for a rough bench which stood therein, and from which I could watch the play of his busy hands and the expression of his grey old face. He was always genial, this cobbler, and whether the condescension of the Dean or the opposition of an upstart young bootmaker over the way formed the topic of our conversation; I never heard him say an unkind thing.

One day the whim seized me to go to St Paul's and hear him sing. I had often wondered what manner of voice he really possessed, and I made up my mind to find out. Underneath the dome, and near the chancel, I found him, and, seeing a vacant chair behind him, slipped into it unobserved. When the Psalms began, his face lit up; his body swayed from side to side with the rise and fall of the music; with an impressive forefinger he beat out the time. But I heard no voice. I leaned forward, and strained my ears. No, not a sound, not a whisper! The mighty voice of the cobbler existed only in his imagination.

Meanwhile—not that it is a matter of any consequence—I console myself with the elder of the two girls.—Macmillan's Magazine.

## INAPPROPRIATE.

The late Bishop James Newbury Fitzgerald, in an address in St. Louis, once declared that sympathy, far more than eloquence or learning, made for success in the ministry. "Too many of us, through lack of sympathy," he said, "say the worst, the most inappropriate things. Thus a young Baptist friend of mine, condoling with a housebreaker in a jail, droned: 'Ah, my friend, let us remember that we are here to-day and gone to-morrow.' 'You may be; I ain't,' the housebreaker answered shortly."

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