

OWER ZARPLICED CHOIR

What a bodder da zeam ta be gwain on jist now, wie high church an low church voke, about Ritelizim. Well, I spoose as tha wordle gooes on, tis needvul ta av alterations now an then, ta meak things vit in wie tha times, var what done var tha last gineration wunt do var thase, an zoo till goo on, an things, I spoose, mist be aelterred vrom time ta time, ta zuit tha advanced notions a voke. Bit in dalin wie legious matters, da want a good deal a what I'm aveard a goodish vew o' ower Passens hant a got, an that's tact; if tha had, ther hooden be zich a outcry an how de do, wen anything is about ta be interduced var ta meak Church ar Chaple zarvices better an brighter. I can well recollect what a bodder ther wur in a zartin Chaple wen tha choir vust began ta zing tha *Te Deum*, an chant tha *Psalms*. Lots a voke laved tha Chaple, declaren as how twur nuthen bit Popery, bit lar bless ee twis wondervul how thay zoon zettled down ta it, an hooden av it left our var anything now. Wur tis wie a good many o' ower Church Passens, thay da zeam to want ta fooce "ther own ticklar doctrines an sarrymonies" down vokes droats, wie a ram rod as twur; this is a girt mistake, an tha caas a haaf tha bodder, much a which cood a bin avoided if tha Passens had a got tha zense an tact ta call ther members together, an ta caamly an quietly taak things auver a bit. I'll gie ee a hinstance on't. Ower village can bwoast o' as good a Church Choir as ther is in tha Zalsbury district, mmost a tha men voke belong'd ta tha village band, had good voices, an understood music well, an tha bwoys too had zom nayshun good voices. Well, tha Bishop wur gwain ta hold a confirmation in ower Church, an ower vicar wur

terryable anxious we shood put on zarplices, an waak in percession vrom ee's house ta tha Church, bit at tha practice auvernite, ya zee, a diden zaay a word about it, ony hoped tha zingin hood goo as well as it did then, an that every man an bwoy in tha Choir hood be ther nex day ta meet ee an tha Bishop at tha Vicarage. Zoo nex day, every one on ess wur ther, an a axed ess ael inta his draain room, an a zed, "Now Choir men an bwoys, tha Bishop av yeard a goodish bit about our Choir, an yer excellent zingin, an I want yer all ta put on thease yer zarplices which I've procured var tha occasion, at much expense, an waak in procession vrom here across ta tha Church." A coose tha bwoys wur plazed enuff, an zeamed ta jump wie joy at tha thought on't; Bit we men voke wur het ael up in a heap wie tha thought on't. "Well," zaays Zam'l Barnes, tha wooldest an laden man a tha Choir, "I've a zung a good many years in Church, an out a Church, wieout ar a zurplice, an I'm drat if I'm a gwain ta put arn on now, jist ta zing avore a Bishop." Zoo every one a we men voke agreed wie Zam'l not var ta put em on, an as ya mid well gace ower Vicar wur terryable riled, an look'd as white's maggit wie dissapointment; bit like a wise an cautious man as a wur, he diden zaay much, ony "that ee wur verry sorry." Ya zee, if ee had mead a bodder, every man on ess hood a struck ther an then, an a coose that hood a bin terryable akurd, an vore tha Bishop too. Zoo we ael goes auver ta Church, took ower usual places, an tha zarvice an zingin went off wieout a hetch.

Well, at tha nex practice night, atter twur auver, tha Vicar invited ess inta the Vicarage ta zupper, an atter twur auver, an tha bwoys wur gon wom, a zaays, "Now men, I da want ta av a leetle taak wie ee ael

about the zarplices. I own I was wrong in axen yer ta put em on at zoo shart a notice; aelthough thay've cost me a good dale a money, I dwoant wish var ee ta wear em, unless ya can ael gree ta do zo. Ael that I want now, is ta taak the matter auver in a caam, quiet, an vrenly way.” “Well,” zaays Zam'l Barnes our spokesmin, “we ael respect ta you, zir, I dwoant think as ow we da want en; we can zing jist as well athout then as wie em.” “That I dwoant dispute,” zaays the Vicar, “bit my girt pwint is, that thay shoold be interduced, var the seek of appearance an uniformity, mwore especilly. Now let us teak ower Choir bwoys. Zom on em, as ya know, be zons a varmers, an zom, zons a leabourers. The varmers zons can, an do, com ta church in a zuit a broad cloth; the poor bwoys, who's voices ar quite as good, com, as ya know, in ther carderoy, tweed, or fustin zuits. The difference in ther dress is very marked, as thay zit in the chancel; therevore I would wish them ta appear in Church, clad ael alike, an dwoant ya think, men, the bwoys themselves woold think mwore of, an pay mwore reverence to ther devotions, wur thay ta veel thay wur ael on an equality in the house a God?” “Well ther's zummat in that,” zaays Zam'l, “we diden look at it in thic ar lite, ya zee zur.” “Then agean,” zaays the Vicar, “There's the Village Band a wich I think you are nearly ael members; the other day you wur askin var subscriptions, in order ta purchase a distinctive dress var yer bandsmen, an in wich I heartily agree, not that this dress will make any of you better musicians, bit its var appearance an uniformity I teak it.” “Well,” zaays Zam'l, “yer argymints be purty zound uns, I think, zur, ony yer knaa, tother day wen the Bishop wur here, it took ess ael zoo on the zuddent like, an we wanted ta think it auver, an taak about it amangst ourzelves,

dwoant ee zee zur? an wich I now promises ee we'll do, an let ee knaa tha result.” Well, tha upshot a thease yer conference wur, that tha next Haster Zundy every man an bwoy in tha Choir appear'd in white zarplices, an wich thay've a wor'd ever zunce, an I'm boun ta zaay, thay hooden lave off now var anything; an I mist zaay too, ther's a girt difference in tha haviour of tha bwoys, var avore, wie ther cwoat an jacket pockets vull a sweets, buttons, marvels, an a dozen other things bwoys can't zeam ta do wieout, thay wur figetten ael tha time tha zarmon wur gwain on; an a coose, now, wie ther zarplices on, thay caant get at ther pockets very well, an I'm boun ta zaay too, tha very poorest Choir bwoy thinks hiszelf as good as tha varmer's zon, wen he's in his zarplice. Zoo ya zee, as I zed in startin, da ony want a leetle bit a tact ta bring things about greeable ta ael parties consarned.