

THROWN IN

BY NEWTON MacTAVISH

THE CHOIR

*Effect of
Early
Training*

BEING young and therefore enthusiastic, I always arrived early at church, and oftentimes I was the first member to take his place in the choir. I mention this merely to show that we had no high-toned notions as to wearing surplices or entering in a body. Some of us came early and some late, taking our places as we came, but each one was imbued with the determination to sing his *possible*. I was the only juvenile member. Perhaps that is not a noteworthy distinction, but it is not every man who can boast that he was a boy soprano and sang in a village choir at the age of ten. As to myself, if I had any quality at all as a singer I attribute it to ancestry and early training. For my grandfather used to sing the baritone part of "Larboard Watch" with me on his knee, and my mother taught me the scale before I could read. Consequently my attainments were discussed at apple-paring and quilting bees, for there was some local pride in the fact that I could go up to high C until I reached the age of fourteen, when my voice cracked; that Henry Perkins, our well-known basso, could go down to low C if in form, and that when we struck these two notes, these two extremities, together, as frequently we succeeded in doing, especially at tea-meetings and socials, the sound produced, as Maria Smith confided to my mother, could be likened only to the hosannas of the blest. So that whatever honour there might have been, it was divided equally between Henry and me.

Henry, like an astute politician, always arrived a few minutes late, but always in time for the first hymn. I can see him now coming through the door, patting his hair into shape and feeling to make sure that his dicky is inside his waistcoat. He is slightly bow-legged, and his toes turn outwards as he walks up the aisle.

*Hosannas
of the Blest*

The minister is announcing Hymn 146, to be sung to the tune of "Balerma". Henry steps on to the dais erected in