

THE WEAKER VESSEL

sort of mystery about Mrs. Tanqueray, which no doubt would be explained in the last act. At present, since Tommie Lake had had a rest, it was better to put Mrs. Tanqueray back in the Parish Magazine, and go through Mr. Blinkthorn's Service again. Her stepmother, she remembered, had said that when he gave them the première of the *Magnificat*, they had all thought it was Handel at least. To Eleanor's taste, modern for no reason except that it was modern, 'Handel at least' expressed a state of opinion that Mrs. Ramsden had not contemplated. To Eleanor, it seemed that Mr. Blinkthorn's *Magnificat* was "at least Handel," if not worse.

Yet the very sound of the organ, now that it was not obscured and overscored by voices that did not know what singing was, suggested all sorts of dreams. If you firmly put in certain stops evoked by treading on the foot-pedal, which brought out "Mixture," and banished the *Vox Humana*, and a terrible batlike note that "Diocton" made, it was possible to make sounds so sweet that it did not much matter what they said. The tone of certain stops—a "Gamba" in particular—was, unlike the "*Vox Humana*," like a human voice. There might be, almost must be, somewhere up there behind the stencilled pipes a melodious throat in mysterious utterance, and she played a short extemporized phrase on it, accompanying it with a few quiet chords on the Stopped Diapason. Somehow—somehow it was like an assertion of some truth against disagreeing opinion. It said its message; it seemed careless whether the tone of the others was against it or for it. They murmured and grumbled, but the confident voice outspoke them. And then she came back from the vague dreamland, and found that it was only Uncle Evelyn beginning to "put down the mighty." This would not do at all. There had to be more "expression," and she tumbled the mighty down in the famous chromatic passage from the pedals. There! there was expression!

Eleanor suddenly threw back her head and laughed, and, holding on the last chord of the final "Amen," she pulled out every stop in the organ, coupled the pedals on to the great, and the great on to the swell. She opened the swell-box. And then, with full organ, she played "*La Donna e Mobile*" right through.

"And that's all, Tommie," she called to the perspiring bellows-boy.

It was all, but it was quite enough, for the Mothers' Meeting, presided over by Mrs. Ramsden, was that day convened in the