

their original key again, and with "Mixture" on the organ and a scale passage, broken when convenient to T. Ferris, from the basses, the anthem ended in a burst of bucolic merriment.

Alice Ramsden, half-sister to the organist, and whole daughter to the conductor, was sitting at the end of the organ-bench, turning over when necessary, and manipulating stops when Eleanor had her hands occupied.

"You vamped a good deal, didn't you, Nellie?" she asked, in a church whisper.

"Yes, of course. Did you ever hear such sickening stuff?" said Eleanor.

"We plough the fields and scatter," said Mrs. Ramsden. They did so, but at the end of the first verse Mrs. Ramsden beat her hymn-book with the rolled-up copy of T. Ferris's anthem.

"The organ, I think, might use a little more expression," she said. "For instance, we will take 'But it is fed and watered' very *piano*, and the Vox Humana would produce a good effect. We will take the last four lines of the verse in unison, and if the organ could give us some fresh harmonies—— Organ, please."

The organ gave them some fresh and Futurist chords. Unfortunately, several of the tenors and basses forgot that the piece was to be sung in unison, and their part-singing against Eleanor's most original harmonies produced an extremely weird and curious effect, which sounded like a realistic and modern rendering of a rough Channel crossing. Again Mrs. Ramsden beat on her hymn-book.

"In unison, please," she said. "And the organ a shade more secular."

Eleanor sighed. The organist had been suddenly stricken with influenza, and she had been press-ganged into his place when she was in the middle of a most entrancing and surptitious reading of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." How the work in question had got into the Vicarage at all she did not know; all she knew, after a single glance at it, was that she wanted nothing so much as to read it, and that it must be read surreptitiously. So she had taken it into the orchard under cover of the Parish Magazine, and had got to the middle of the second act when her stepmother came out and informed her of the indisposition of Mr. Courtney. Choir-practice was imminent, and now by her side there lay the Parish Magazine with the dubious play lurking in the middle