The Surprise at St. Andrews.

St. ANDREW'S had achieved an agreeable notoriety for its singing, and the choir had gained such distinction under its new leader, that at Christmas, Easter, and other special services the little church was always filled to its greatest capacity. It was the habit of the leader to plan some little surprises now and then for the aristocratic little circle that composed the congregation of St. Andrew's; once it had been a lady singer from a neighboring city, who sang contralto with such volume that she eclipsed the basses; again it was a small boy whose clear voice charmed and delighted that select audience.

The parishioners of St. Andrew's could well afford these little surprises; they were mostly bankers, retired business men, and well-to-do merchants, who paid their $500 per annum, and expected something interesting in return.

It had somehow leaked out (though the leader's wife was sure she had told but one other woman) that the attraction for the coming Easter Sunday was a noted lady singer from abroad, who had won tumultuous applause from the music-loving world at Berlin and Paris. She was to sing that grand production of Benton's, "The Confession," and this, with the addition of five new singers in the choir, had so aroused the interest of the community that on Easter morning the little church was crowded in aisles, vestibules, and stairways.

After the usual opening selection by the full choir, and the prayer, the new singer rose and all eyes were immediately fixed upon her. The organ sounded soft and low, playing the first few bars of the interlude, then the singer began. She was hardly through the first line, however, when she was joined by another voice, a voice which came from the gallery opposite the choir. The singer from Berlin stopped, surprised and indignant, and looked across to see who had dared make this interruption. She saw a woman with pale, thin face, but glorious brown eyes, standing in the front row in the gallery, her hand clasped on the rail and her eyes fixed on the ceiling above.

Her voice, which was at first soft and low, swelled and strengthened till it filled the church with a melody pure as the notes of a bird; it rose and fell with the cadences of the music like a boat lapped to and fro by a gentle tide. The audience, forgetful of dignity or decorum, turned in their seats and gazed with rapture at the singer pouring forth such notes of liquid sweetness. But when it came to the words, "But as I am, O God, forgive and take me back," the voice sank to a tone tender and pleading as a young mother soothing her firstborn.

It seemed more like a thing divine than like a human voice as it rose, now almost drowning the organ, now falling till it was little more than a whisper, but every note penetrating to the farthest corner of the church. The sexton, who had at first started to silence this disturber, stood beside her with bowed head as if in the presence of a saint.

But she seemed unconscious of them all, her eyes were fixed on the brass crucifix above, from which the eyes of the dying Saviour looked down as if in pity on the face upturned to him. She must have read that look of pity and forgiveness, for when she sang the last words there was a smile upon her lips as if she saw beyond the stained glass and frescoing of the ceiling, saw and read her pardon.

She stopped and all was still. Back in the corner a woman sobbed, and as the organ sounded for the second verse there were many eyes from which tears were streaming. The second interlude was played but no voice came to the listening audience.

Suddenly there was a commotion in the gallery; the singer, who had remained standing, her eyes fixed on the cross above, had swayed and fallen. There were many willing hands to bear her out into the sunlight, but though the beautiful brown eyes were still open, and the smile still upon her lips, there