

our churches is throttled by incessantly thrusting upon them new tunes. Where this praise-encumbering process is not allowed, choirs complain of monotony and staleness. For the same reason they might demur at the staleness of the hymns, for they never go beyond the collection of the book; and even the Bible might on this ground be charged with a defect in point of freshness. The German melodies have become historical by long use; ours are not likely to become such with our novelty-loving tastes.—*German Ref. Messenger.*

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## MEMORY.

We are apt to forget what a remarkable instrument the human memory really is. More than two thousand years ago, Plato expressed the apprehension that a habit of receiving assistance from, and trusting to, written books, might enfeeble the mind. His remark is valuable as involving an expression of opinion by one who had, perhaps, heard the entire *Iliad* recited by a rhapsodist, to effect that the powers of the human mind, deprived of all literary aids, are well fitted for thought and recollection. Numerous illustrations will occur to the reader, casting light and countenance on Plato's observation. Italian story-tellers repeat long scrolls of their country's poetry. The ballads of a people descend, as the minstrelsy of Scotland descended, in substantial correctness, generation after generation. A Daseent, inquiring into the tales of Norway, and comparing them with similar tales elsewhere, finds that the popular memory, acting in branches of related kindreds parted for a thousand years, retains circumstances and occurrences with such minuteness that the identity of a tale which has crossed the Himalaya and Ural mountains, skirted the icy solitudes of the north, and arrived finally in the green valleys of England, can be distinctly traced. When the human mind is conscious that a prized treasure is confided to its sole custody—when memory is its own book—the characters are clearly impressed, and the clasps which bind the whole are strong as iron.

The recollection of any man, who had impressed his contemporaries as the Christ of Tacitus palpably had impressed his, would be keen and vivid in the popular mind for at least one hundred years. It would be so in our own time, and we can scarcely conceive how much more likely it was to be so at the commencement of our era. The crystals of memory would for such a period continue angular in their forms, brilliantly vivid in their facets.—*Buyne.*

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## THE GOSPELS.

It is an exhibition of mental confusion or culpable ignorance to launch forth into expressions of vague admiration in reference to their style and fiction. Their literary qualities, strictly so-called, are of no pre-eminent order. They possess, indeed, one quality which, in literature as in life, is the basis of all excellence,—self-evident, unflinching truthfulness. But they bear no trace either of wish or of ability to enhance the interest or impressiveness of what is related by the manner of relating it. Their au-