

Go, Christian, go to the pleasure party, to the theatre, to the tavern, and learn how to honour the songs of Zion, and their author, in the use of them, by observing how the votaries of sensual enjoyment honour the songs of Burns, of Byron, and of Moore, and their authors. Go then to the men of the ages that are past, who felt that they were not their own, but a "purchased possession," bound to glorify God in their bodies and spirits. Step into an assembly of Christians of the fourth century, where "the women, the children, and the humblest mechanics, could repeat all the Psalms of David, and were thus at all times prepared to praise God, in any circumstances, in a form of his own inditing." (Apost. Con.) Put yourself under the conduct of Jerome, and he shall lead you to see Bethlehem and its environs. "Here you cannot walk out into the fields, but you will hear one, while he holds the plough, singing Hallelujahs; another, while he reaps, entertaining himself with Psalms; another, while he prunes the vines, singing some of the words of David. We have no other songs or ballads in this province." Ask Theodoret, Bishop of Cyprus, of the following century, for information on this subject, and he will tell you, that "they that minded no other book of the Scriptures, yet had this (Book of Psalms) so by heart, that both in their houses, and in the streets, and in the highways, they are wont to recreate themselves by singing of those holy songs." Strada, the Jesuit, is represented by Witsius as saying, "That translation of Hymns," by Marot and Beza, "though abandoned and condemned by the Catholics, was zealously and pertinaciously retained by the heretics; and the custom of singing Psalms in the French language, according to the fashion of the Genevese, in companies, in places of public resort, and in shops, became, thenceforth, a peculiar characteristic of the heretics." A glorious characteristic truly! and one which they could not have displayed, if the eye must be fixed upon the book, if line after line must be parcelled out by one who reads for the accommodation of others, if they had not had the Psalms by heart.

It is of no small importance that the tune should be precisely adapted to the song. The selection of a tune cannot be left, without a demonstrable impropriety, to the discretion of a chorister, or precentor, however skilful. Again, we must pay a visit to the theatre, or the youthful frolic, for instruction. The same tune may be, yet seldom is, used in connection with different songs, except the song with which it was first used has become almost obsolete; but the same song is always sung in the same tune. The adaptation of the tune to the song is thus secured. When the song is announced, already we know the tune, and on the other hand, the utterance of the notes of a particular tune usually is sufficient to suggest the song. They are almost indissolubly associated. The union of different voices