

"The race is not forever got
By him who fastest runs;
Nor the battle by those people
Who shoot the longest guns."

And here is another selection from this same book:

"O God, break thou their teeth at once,
Within their mouths throughout;
The tusks that in their great jaw bones
Like lions' whelps hang out."

We should be thankful that in place of such doggerel as this, our hymn-books contain the inspired productions of such consecrated scholars as Watts and Wesley, Bonar and Doddridge, Ray Palmer and Fanny Crosby, Charlotte Elliott and Frances Havergal, Cowper and Newton. But after all, it is not so much in the words we utter as in the spirit of our worship. Some one has said that in times gone by the saints occupied hardwood seats in their plain sanctuaries, and sang, "My God, the spring of all my joys"; then all the people sang. Nowadays, the worshippers sit on soft cushions in elegant edifices, while the paid quartette sings for them or to them, "Art thou weary; art thou languid?"

Many humorous situations have occurred in connection with music in the church. I hope I may not be transgressing the bounds of my paper if I relate two or three anecdotes along this line. A western clergyman, noticing that the choir seats were unoccupied when the time for beginning the service had arrived, arose and innocently remarked, "I see that all the choir are absent this morning; let the congregation rise and sing 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.'"

A clergyman in Pittsburg, Pa., married a lady with whom he received a dowry of \$10,000 and a fair prospect of more. Shortly afterward, while occupying his pulpit, he gave out the hymn, read the first four verses, and was proceeding to read the fifth, commencing, "Forever let my grateful heart," when he hesitated, a-hemmed, and exclaimed, "We will omit the fifth verse," and sat down. The congregation, attracted by his apparent confusion, read the verse for themselves, and smiled almost audibly as they read:

"Forever let my grateful heart
His boundless grace adore;
Who gives ten thousand blessings now,
And bids me hope for more."

A minister was once preaching in a church where the singing was led by a precentor. The hymn, "I love to steal a while away," was announced. The chorister tried a tune, but when he got as far as "I love to steal," found that the metre would not suit. Then he tried another, but stuck when he got on as far as "I love to steal." Being of a persevering nature, he tried the third time, but with no greater success. The minister then arose, and with something of a smile said, "Dear friends, the fact is very much to be regretted. Let us pray."

Rev. John Adams preached for thirty years at Durham, New Hampshire, when some difficulties

brought about his resignation. At the close of his farewell sermon, he asked the congregation to sing, "to the praise of God and their own edification," the first three verses of Dr. Watts' version of Psalm 120:

"Thou God of love, thou ever blest,
Pity my suffering state;
When wilt thou set my soul at rest,
From lips which love deceit?"

"Hard lot of mine! my days are cast
Among the sons of strife,
Whose never-ceasing brawlings waste
My golden hours of life."

"Oh, might I fly to change my place,
How would I choose to dwell
In some wild, lonesome wilderness,
And leave these gates of hell."

Not many years ago, a minister in one of the Eastern States fell, as will sometimes happen, into a difficulty with his choir, which, for some time, prevented their accustomed attendance. At length the choir relented, and appeared, as heretofore, at the usual time of service. The minister most unexpectedly saw them in their places, and in due time, looking very significantly in their direction, arose and read the hymn:

"And are ye wretches still alive,
And do ye yet rebel?"

And now in conclusion, let me urge upon you all the duty of offering praise to God. Upon almost every page of Holy Scripture we are urged to this privilege—it is as important as prayer. We all believe in singing, but we so often regard it simply as an ornamental appendage to the service of the sanctuary. In too many cases is a careful supervision over chorister and choir neglected; and, as a consequence, in many churches there are persons leading the service of praise whose lives are in direct opposition to God's will; and in numberless instances choirs contain men whose mouths are reeking with oaths and liquor and tobacco, and women whose thoughts never rise above the vanities of earth. All this is wrong—sinfully wrong. A good voice must not be, as it too often is, the sole passport to the company of those who lead us in the service of song. No one should be there but converted people, with consecrated hearts and voices. From such choirs the Gospel in song would come with power to those who hear. Singing should be the direct personal offering of each worshipper to his Maker. Therefore, make a joyful noise unto God, and praise the Lord in the assembly of His people. Treasure your hymn-book, for it represents the consecrated talent of all ages and lands and sections of the church. Use it in your private devotions. If you find it difficult to sing the hymns, read them, that these song-birds of the church may find an abiding home in your memory, and fill your whole being with their melody.

Finally, friends, if music on earth is so sweet, what will it be in heaven! Some of us find it hard to strike the right tune here, but there every voice will be vocal with praise, and every