

or violins; the pitch fork or the tuning pipe of the precentor is all that we can tolerate in this respect. The precentor, a most important personage in our Churches, conducts this part of the service, sometimes with, but most frequently without the aid of a choir or band. He may be a man of good parts, and accomplished in the art and science of music. But this, alas! is not generally the case. Most frequently our precentor is one who can shout and make a noise neither musical nor melodious in its character, and who, in the selection of his tunes or in the mode of their expression, has little or no regard to the subject of the Psalm. Sublimity and pathos, mourning and joy, judgment and mercy, are all mingled together in a recurring monotony of sound. These anomalies would not be tolerated in the place of amusement, and we wonder how they come to be thought decent in the house of God. Church music, were we to judge from the difficulty of obtaining even a tolerable precentor, and that too in city congregations, would seem to be one of the lost arts. It is devoutly to be wished that as some attention has been drawn in Scotland to this matter, and a normal school instituted for the training of precentors, we too in Canada will ere long experience the beneficial influence of this movement. If we wish to improve our Psalmody, we must obtain better precentors. It is vain to expect that a congregation will ever sing better than its leader, or that it can ever sing with melody to the leading of an unmusical precentor.

If the precentor is not all that might be desired, what are we to expect from the people? Alas! it is too true that we have much to mourn over in the way in which they praise God. In the first place, many have evidently no right idea of what worship really is, or of its solemnity and importance. It is frequently spoken of as the *preliminary* part of the Sabbath service; as if it were only an introduction, or a kind of decent preparation for the more serious business of the preaching, and not indeed the first and chiefest business of the day. The result of this is that many without shame or regret enter Church after the service is well advanced, and think themselves in time if they only hear the sermon. But a more prevalent and serious evil than even this, arising out of the want of a proper idea of worship, is that many do not sing at all. They act as if singing was no business of theirs, and they seem during the time of praise to be wandering upon the mountains of vanity. Ladies are much to blame in this matter. Their voices are naturally musical, and they possess more generally the faculty of song than do their brothers or husbands. Many of them are besides taught the art at the cost of much time and money. The Church has a special claim upon them in this part of her service. It is not much that a woman can do in the Church. She is prohibited from speaking or ruling, but she may counter-balance these disabilities by adding to the beauty and charm of the worship by the melody of her voice in praise.

Discord is the true name to give to much of our Church music. Some, ambitious to be heard above others, sing out of all harmony with their neighbours, and few sing with any regard to correct time. The Psalm thus drags its "slow length along," and the sweet melody of true music which thrills the soul with a tremor of ecstasy is seldom heard in our Churches. Why may we not follow the example of the old saint who "during the singing of Psalms stood in an erect posture, never studying his ease by leaning or supporting his body. His look was often raised heavenward; his countenance in a manner shone, and his whole frame involuntarily followed the direction of his soul?" We can sympathize with the reply which he made to the monkish pun "that he seemed fonder of Psalms than of Salmon. It is a fact, says he, but my disgust is also excited when I see men not duly attentive to them." What an analogy, bad Salmon and bad Psalming! Some may say that it is of no consequence how we sing provided we sing with the heart. Much truly may be excused in one