

fect health, and free from cold,—which is expecting too much, at least in this country. From the exertion, he is apt to acquire a harshness of voice. Then, even in his best state, he may *humour* the time and tune of the singing, but he can hardly *command* them. If the people take a wrong turn in the music, all he can do is wait till they are done, and then strike the proper note. It is admitted that the thing can be done, but it does not follow that with instrumental aid it could not be better done. Then, with a precentor alone, there is no guide to harmony. The singing of parts suited to the individual voice is discouraged for want of such guidance as an instrument would afford. Let him have the aid of an instrument, and the following good effects might be expected to follow:—

In the first place, an instrument would keep up the pitch of the tune. It is well known that the pitch of a tune, unless the voice is assisted by an instrument, falls with each verse. Let leaders try ever so much, there will be some fall. As this subsidence will not be equal in the case of each voice, the tendency is to produce discord. The fact is also important, as showing that a certain amount of fatigue is experienced in singing without the aid of an instrument.

A powerful instrument would control a congregation sufficiently to compel them to sing in time and tune. Correct time is no mere musical whim. One may see the effect of good time upon the mind, in the simple beating of a drum, or the ringing of a bell. It is supposed to owe its power to a sympathetic effect upon the pulsations of the heart. Time and tune in music are the same as accent and intonation in speaking. The effect of these is well known. A good sentence can be turned into ridiculous nonsense, by wrong accent and inappropriate tones. Even drawling spoils its effect, and renders it powerless. Quite similar is the effect of wrong time and tune in a musical strain. These are their natural, and not artificial requisites. In a congregation where all the people join in the praise, as they are commanded to do, accurate and well-marked time is an impossibility, without the help of an instrument. By great pains, it may be nearly attained in common-time tunes. To secure it in triple-time tunes is simply impossible. Let any musician mark how such tunes as “Martyrdom,” “Balerna” or “Bedford” are sung by congregations, and even choirs.

The use of an instrument would diminish the fatigue which many persons, from sickness, weak health or want of practice, experience in singing. The larynx of the human throat is indeed the finest of all musical instruments, being formed by the wisdom of the Creator, and wonderfully adapted to give vivid and appropriate expression to the various sentiments of the human heart. This instrument, however, is composed of frail and delicate materials. One cause of fatigue in

singing is that each individual's voice has received a fixed pitch. If we suppose the musical scale, which comprises the whole compass of human voices, to be a ladder having 26 steps, then each voice will have on an average about 13 of these, and said 13 may begin at any point in the scale. The four parts set down in our tune-books are not a musical fancy. True science interprets the wants of nature, and these four parts are a natural necessity. The air and the contralto suit women and boys' voices, in various degrees, and the tenor and bass men's voices, in different degrees. Any other arrangement is a violation of nature. When, therefore, a tune is pitched to suit a choir, according to this natural arrangement, or at concert pitch, as it is called, and the great mass of the people take the air, the singing of some of the notes in almost all our tunes will fatigue the people. This is one of the causes of silence in congregations, led at concert pitch. When the singing of the people is kept in view, the pitch should be much lower than is usual, or than is comfortable, indeed, for concert singing. This is one reason, also, why the old chant and tunes of small compass, such as the old tunes of St. Paul's, York, Martyrdom, Balerna, Bangor, St. Neot's, Martyrs, Dundee, Coleshill, &c., are sung so much more easily by congregations than any of the new tunes. They were composed after the manner of chants, and intended to be sung by *all* the people. Their compass is small. The new tunes that observe this rule of composition, such as Siloam and Evan, are very easily sung by congregations. The voice not needing any straining, there is no fatigue experienced.

Another cause of fatigue is the variable health and strength of the people, and also of choirs. On a cold morning, after coming many miles to church, it is no easy matter to sing, sometimes. I have heard country choirs and precentors making sounds enough to drive people out of the church, just because their mouths and throats had been half frozen on the way to church. Great people, who are superior to the homeliness of singing psalms, may laugh at this; but it is a fact, notwithstanding. In these circumstances, where there is a multitude, some of whom are feeble, some old, some sick, and some untrained in voice, an instrument would be a great help and a great comfort. It is universally felt to be so. We see ladies almost invariably sit down to the piano when they sing. It is a practice of all nations thus to aid the delicate and expressive, but, at the same time, the weak and variable voice. The singing of the first hymn on record—that of Miriam—was thus aided.

The use of an instrument would enable us to sing larger portions of the psalms. The psalms are the great hymn and prayer-book of the church: “In any merry, let him sing psalms.” But owing to the modern innova-