

THE MONTHLY RECORD,

OF THE

Church of Scotland

IN

NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK AND ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOLUME XXIV.

MAY, 1878.

NUMBER V.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."—Psalm 137, 4-5.

CHURCH MUSIC.

SERMON BY T. DEWITT TALMAGE, D. D.,
DELIVERED IN THE BROOKLYN TABER-
NACLE.

"And they had two hundred and forty and five singing men and singing women." Nehemiah, vii. 67.

The best music has been rendered under trouble. The first duet that I know anything of was given by Paul and Silas when they sang praises to God and the prisoners heard them. The Scotch Covenanters, hounded by the dogs of persecution, sang the psalms of David with more spirit than they have ever since been rendered. The captives in the text had music left in them, and I declare that if they could find, amid all their trials, two hundred and forty and five singing men and singing women, then in this day of gospel sunlight and free from all persecution there ought to be a great multitude of men and women willing to sing the praises of God. All our churches need arousal on this subject. Those who can sing must throw their souls into the exercise, and those who cannot sing must learn how, and it shall be heart to heart, voice to voice, hymn to hymn, anthem to anthem, and the music shall swell jubilant with thanksgiving and tremulous with pardon. Have you ever noticed the construction of the human throat as indicative of what God means us to do with it? In only an ordinary throat and lungs there are fourteen direct muscles that produce 16,383 sounds, and thirty indirect muscles that produce 173,741,823 sounds, and the human voice can produce seventy-one trill-

ion, five hundred and ninety-two billion, one hundred and eighty-six millions, forty-four thousand, four hundred and fifteen different sounds. What does that mean? It means that you should sing! Do you suppose that God, who gives us such a musical instrument as that, intends us to keep it shut. Suppose some great tyrant should get possession of the musical instruments of the world, and should loek up the organ of Westminster Abbey, and the organ of Luzerne, and the organ of Haarlem, and the organ at Freeboor, and all the other great musical instruments of the world—you would call such a man as that a monster; and yet you are more wicked if, with the human voice, a musical instrument of more wonderful adaption than all the musical instruments that man ever created, you shut it against the praise of God.

*"Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;
But children of the heavenly King
Should speak their joys abroad."*

So that I am ready now to say what I said at one of your concerts—if a man can sing and will not sing, he deserves to be sent to Sing Sing! Music seems to have been born in the soul of the world. The omnipotent voice with which God commanded the world into being seems to linger yet with its majesty and sweetness, and you hear it in the grain-field, in the swoop of the wind, amid the mountain fastnesses, in canary's warble and thunder shock, in brook's tinkle and ocean's pean. There are soft cadences, in nature, and loud notes, some of which we cannot hear at all, and others are so terrific that we cannot appreciate them.