

The Church thus places praise on the same ground as prayer ; and as the minister leads the latter, in which the people unite, so, under his direction, his "assistants" sing such tunes that the people may with facility follow their lead.

It is true, that some persons cannot sing, but many now silent would, by encouragement, acquire a practice of chanting, inasmuch as the chants are permanent ; and also of singing the Psalms and Hymns, inasmuch as the minister may confine his "assistants" to such tunes, that the congregation may become familiar therewith.

The Choir, then, are not a *substitute*, but assistants of the "minister and people." They occupy a prominent position, and have great influence on the congregation. *They are to sing suitable tunes, with becoming reverence.* As to the *tunes*, you must have noticed that there is a disposition to substitute the light airs of the day, for that solemn music suitable to the majesty of divine worship ; to transfer to the church, with some modification, the performances of the theatre and drawing-room ; a disposition which is increased, in that many persons come to church merely for the music, and such music as is most agreeable to their own worldly taste. And then, again, the leader and other members of the Choir, having often no heart for God's prayer, have none for His praise, and regard their singing rather as an exhibition to man, than a sacrifice to God. Sometimes, after the most solemn service, the pious members of the congregation, with the minister, are shocked at some waltz or quick step, as though a ball were terminated, instead of sinners dismissed. But the Church, foreseeing the danger, wisely enjoins upon the minister to "suppress all light and unseemly music," and thus by his selection of *what* is to be sung, and (if necessary) the accompanying *tunes*, suitable music is secured, *if he do his duty.*

The music, however, may be very appropriate, and yet the Choir set a very *bad example*. A modern writer thus explains :—"Even at the present time, to my certain knowledge, there are Choirs in our Church to which a pious churchman cannot resort, without being pained with the most palpable violations both of decency and reverence on the part of some of the principal performers. In this, the organist is discussing the merits of some speculation with some friend, perhaps the leader, during the reading of prayers. In that, during the sermon, one is turning the leaves of a music-book, and with a (hardly) suppressed whistle, studying some new piece for rehearsal. In another, a member does not think it necessary to remain during the sermon ; but, as soon as singing is over, will take up his hat and leave the church." And you yourself must have noticed laughing, talking, not conforming to the postures, but walking about and sitting when the congregation knelt, and a general regarding of the two Lessons only as convenient pauses for finding the places, and other improprieties. In addition to this, there is a peculiar disposition to *IRRITABILITY*, so that *offence is taken from* some supposed slight, because such a tune is sung, or such an one is not sung ; because a book was not offered, or a prominent seat retained—some will leave without *any* apparent cause, and some churches are happy that they have not a *yearly* rupture.

Now this has a most pernicious effect upon the *Choir members themselves* ; for it is a law of our nature, that the practice of religious duties, without their proper spirit, has a peculiarly hardening influence on the mind. It tends, moreover, to grieve God, who complained that His "people drew nigh with their lips, while their hearts were afar off," and who regards "the multitude of sacrifices," without "pure hands," as "vain oblations" and "abominations." Moreover, while *all* sin *disqualifies for Heaven*, irreverent praise peculiarly does so, because the prin-