

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

PSALM AND HYMN TUNE BOOK.

MR. EDITOR,—Now that Hymnology has been fairly discussed in the General Assembly, and a committee appointed to compile from the many hymn-books now in use those best fitted to give expression to the varied emotions felt in the heart and experienced by every child of God, most likely a variety of metres will be selected, requiring tunes of peculiar construction. I would therefore humbly suggest the appointing of a Musical Committee, to make the necessary adaptation. My suggestion may seem premature, but as this is a very important matter, the intervening time may be wisely spent in calling forth the views of those members of our Church who take an interest in our congregational psalmody. In discussing this important part of our service, let us take as our motto the language of the Psalmist, "Let the people praise Thee, O God, let all the people praise Thee." Besides agreeing to the above motto, we will also all agree in having our tunes harmonized in four parts, to suit the natural constitution of the human voice. If then we are to sing in harmony what kind of harmonies shall we use? Those which suit the organ with its full, rich chords? or those which gratify the melodical flow of the human voice? By adhering to our motto we will certainly choose the latter. The Established Church of Scotland erred, I think, in choosing the former. Mr. Monck, an organist, was appointed to select, adapt, and harmonize tunes for their Psalm and Hymn Book. With what success? I am sure many will agree with me when I say that nearly one-half of the tunes will never become Congregational. The harmonies are full and rich, but many of the basses are beyond the ordinary compass of voice; the singer can only growl, not sing them. There is also a want of melodical cadence in the parts. The melodical flow of the harmony parts should be simple, and natural in their design, and about as easily committed to memory as the treble part. Unless one can get a familiar with the harmony part suited to his or her voice, as those who sing treble, I fear the spiritual enjoyment of the part of singers will be greatly lessened. We should, therefore, prefer "thin" chords for the sake of a melodical cadence of voices, or the singers must writh amidst crabbed intervals, throwing summersaults over harmonical precipices, and probably ending in harmonical suicide. We should guard also, against having the tunes written in too high keys, for the higher we keep the AIR, and the lower we keep the BASS, the larger the number of people are we keeping from joining in the praises of the sanctuary. Many of the minor tunes in the "Established Church Psalmody" will never become congregational in Canada. I have never heard good congregational singing where a variety of tune-books are used. The moment a leader of psalmody indulges himself, or gratifies the whims of fastidious members of the congregation, by introducing some "exquisite and beautiful" tune not in the people's tune-book, the people will begin to find their tune-books of no use, and will neglect to bring them. Of course if we use one book exclusively throughout our churches, every one will have to make great sacrifices of favourite tunes, for the public good. The hymn and tune-book should also be used in the Sunday School, so that the children could take part in the public service. No wonder our congregational singing is every year becoming worse and worse, thus necessitating the cry for organs to help us, when we bear in mind our children are taught hymns and tunes at the Sunday School, that are never used in congregational service. The rising generation at length come to fill the places in the sanctuary their parents occupied, but with entirely different ideas and tastes regarding church music. Their sympathies are not in accord with their seniors. The *Old Airs* possess no heart-stirring associations for them. Solos, duets, trios, so that the fine voices may be heard and admired, is what the rising generation wants. Display is the musical besetting sin of the day. In conclusion I would suggest.

- 1st. That the Assembly appoint a musical committee as soon as the Hymns are selected.
- 2nd. That all the most improved, modern methods, in the getting up of the book, such as classifying the Psalms and Hymns, according to their emotional character, passages which are to be sung *softly* printed in *italics*, those which are to be sung *loudly* printed in small CAP-

TALS. 3rd. Music forming upper part of book, words under, bound together, cut in centre, so that the leader can turn up any tune required. 4th. If musical short score be determined upon by the Committee, in order to group the parts closer for the organist, I would suggest that Hamilton's patent Union Notation be adopted, for the following reasons: The Union Notation unites the Sol-fa with the common notation by printing the initial letter D. for Doh, R. for Ray, etc., in the head of the note. In an open headed note semibreve, minum, etc., a black letter; in crochett, quaver, etc., a white letter. Those acquainted with music will at once perceive the usefulness of that notation in short score, and its advantages over all other notations for vocalizing. The tenor part, when written in the bass staff has hitherto presented a difficulty to many singers, but with the aid of the Union letters it becomes comparatively easy. Should a competent musical committee be appointed, I see nothing to prevent our Canada Presbyterian Church Hymnal being a model hymn-book, wedded to thoroughly congregational hymns; resulting in each congregation taking an awakened interest in this important service, and all striving to serve God with their best gifts of praise. Such is the prayer of yours truly,

Peterborough, July 2nd, 1878.

TAILLON'S ANTI-PARTY PROCESSIONS BILL BOILED DOWN.

Monsieur Taillon, one of the members for Montreal, has brought into the local House a Bill for the suppression of party processions. The following is, in reality, the substance of it:

Whereas the badges of the Orangemen and Young Britons are offensive to Roman Catholics, because they regard them as tokens of rejoicing on account of a victory won by Protestants over Roman Catholics, fully two hundred years ago, be it enacted by our Most Holy Father, the Pope, etc., etc., etc.

(1). That the said Orangemen and Young Britons shall not be allowed to walk in public procession.

(2). Nothing in this Act shall apply to Roman Catholics. Though the public procession of the Host be, according to the Council of Trent, in honour of a victory gained by Popery over Protestantism, and also in direct violation of the Treaty of Capitulation, and, therefore, illegal, they shall have full liberty to keep it up if they choose to do so. They shall have full liberty to make so much noise by said procession that Protestants shall be disturbed in their so-called worship, yea, forced to close their so-called churches for the time being. They shall have full liberty to stop by said procession Protestants going to church. They shall have full liberty to curse, jeer at, or beat any Protestant who shall not take off his hat, or fall on his knees before what Roman Catholics themselves cannot prove to be anything more than a flour-and-water lozenge. They shall have full liberty to put into back yards or ditches, any horses and carriages on the route of the procession the owner to bear any loss thereby caused.

(3). This Act to be hurried through, so as to come into force before the twelfth day of July next, in order to prevent said Orangemen and Young Britons from marching in public procession on that day. T. F.

Melis, Que.

PROBATIONERS' SCHEME.

MR. EDITOR,—Both Probationers and the Church are indebted to you for allowing discussions in your paper on the Probationers' Scheme. Had it not been for these the General Assembly would not have given it the consideration they did. No one will deny that it has its faults, but, on the other hand, too much irrational and unjust language has been used in speaking against it. One member who spoke rather warmly on the subject, belongs to a congregation that requested the Presbytery to allow them to supply their pulpit—which means to shut out the preachers—yet has twice called a probationer. Another congregation that made the same request has also called a probationer. So much this is, after all, in favor of the scheme.

The conduct of Probationers who refuse to preach in a congregation after it has called was also condemned. If this be fact, can any of your readers blame those who decline to preach in a congregation after it has called, if it excludes them from its pulpit before calling? It is unreasonable to deny to another the

liberty which one claims for himself. After a congregation has called it is no longer a vacancy, and, consequently, is no longer for Probationers.

More can be said for the scheme *per se* than against it. Circumstances now require a change in its working, not its abolition. Its suspension would soon be followed by its re-adoption. Probationers, in some cases, would learn how difficult it would be to get vacancies. Some vacancies, on the other hand, would find it very difficult to get supply for their pulpits. If the grace of long-suffering leads some congregations to endure one or two who may be sent to them, the virtue of obedience to the powers that be, and not their own choice, leads Probationers to not a few of the pulpits they occupy. One congregation that tried its hand at self-supply, had to entreat the convener of the Mission Committee to resume sending men who were on the list. They found the task to be more difficult than was supposed; and in the end they called a Probationer.

It would never do to give full supply to every vacancy from the list: yet there is no pulpit that ought to be shut against us. For some city pulpits care would be required in the selection of those sent to them. But a sense of the ludicrous is aroused when one sees a congregation which offers six, seven, or eight hundred dollars, striking an attitude and saying, "We won't have men from the list, we will supply our own pulpit."

The Free Church of Scotland plan was lauded. It is only two years old. Let it complete the perfect number before it be set up as a pattern for us. There are some, in Canada even, who can tell sorrowful tales about the treatment of Probationers in that Church.

The plan adopted by us is the same as that followed out by the Secession Churches in the Old Country. In the U. P. Church, it seems, there are two divisions in their list. Those on the first get as full supply as possible, the others get it occasionally. When a Probationer has been three or four years on the first division his name is transferred to the second. All complaints, made by Probationers or congregations, are submitted to a special Committee. Such grievances as they can redress are so at once; those they cannot be remitted to the Synod. Let some plan of this kind be matured and adopted in Canada, and there will be fewer complaints about Probationers and vacancies. The preachers in this Church are paid in accordance with a graduated scale. The minimum will now be about \$8, the maximum \$16, and board. In the Free Church they show faces on Saturday night, backs on Monday morning, and after paying travelling expenses, what they get may keep a mouse from starvation.

The Probationers, as a whole, have been misrepresented as idlers. More than one on the present list does as much per centage of pastoral work in visiting, especially the sick, attending Sunday School, and conducting weekly prayer-meetings as almost any minister. Seeing that they are only about a fortnight in a place, and strangers, it is not to be expected that they can visit every family. Nor have the elders time or inclination to go round the congregation with any or every Probationer. If it is a delicate matter for them to take a Probationer through congregations, is it not more so for him to go unasked? Besides, those who sign a call are, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, influenced by a minister's pulpit performances rather than his pastoral work.

If the Assembly were more scrupulous about its reception of ministers from other denominations, and Presbyteries more careful about the names they send to the Central Committee, there would be fewer complaints. The discipline of the Church must be very lax when a Presbytery sustains a call to a man that has not been received by the Church and ordains him; or puts on the list the name of a man whom the Assembly declines to admit, or sends out among the vacancies in its bounds one whose request for admittance it declined to grant.

If the Church would discover and apply a remedy for that unrest which is so prevalent within it, and use means to protect both congregations and ministers against a few unreasonable, heartless, or wicked Diotrepheses, who leave no means untried to turn their minister out of his charge, there would be fewer resignations, fewer translations, and fewer old men on the list.

A temporary expedient will not remedy the evil. A committee would require to be appointed to receive and take evidence, the same as a Royal Commission, which is appointed to examine civil abuses, and sug-