

## Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

### THE HOME SONGS

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Every true home has music and song in it. It springs up in the marriage festival and grows like a grand oratorio through all the coming years. In the early days of married life it exists in pleasant and sweet thoughts hymned in the loving heart of the young wife, that steal over her lips like the murmur of bees, until, accustomed to the sound, the tone swells into clear, full notes of reverberating song as she plies her thrifty needle, or sets her house in comely order, making it evermore beautiful—a palace for her prince to enter. But soon these songs become exceedingly tender, because they minister to another dear new life. They are changed into lullabies to soothe the little one to sleep; or into playful, laughing carols to please it while it is awake. All through the early days the babe is drinking in the melody as the daisies drink the dew, and it is being affected by the strains, bright and airy, plaintive and sad, bold and impressive, as the pansies are painted by the sunbeams. These first breathings of song upon the open, unprotected spirit of the child weave into it feelings that afterwards appear in forms of sentiment, desire, preference—in a word, character. The simplest aria never wholly dies away or is altogether fruitless. It tells upon the heart. It becomes the basis for some spiritual fabric in the future. And as the child's mind expands the song suffers change again. It sweeps into serious, solemn chanting of the sacred psalms and hymns, endeared by a thousand precious memories of the past; or into kindly trilling of the old love songs or patriotic airs, so laden with tender feeling that they melt the soul unconsciously. Strange strains are these, haunting the memory, flowing into the consciousness, bursting into rapturous song, or martial air or soft subdued praise. They come and go as they will. They revive in the mind, and for a time die out again, yet never utterly pass away. They abide for ever. And these songs that come and go, like summer birds, sink into the soul of the growing child, like living seeds into the soil, to spring up and grow on through all the time to come. How thrilling they are. They pour out of the beating heart into the heart of him who hears, filling it with pleasing emotions. It is told of Sir Walter Scott that sometimes of an evening he took his guests to an arbour on his lawn, and let them hear the distant music of a sacred tune. It came from the cottage of one of his dependants, and fell touchingly on the ear of the great minstrel himself. Ah! if the distant cadence of an old covenanting melody thrilled their hearts, how must it have blessed the joyous, free, receptive hearts of the children in the lowly home? Tunes penetrate to the profound depths of the spiritual being, and are retained there as in a phonograph to enrich the memory of the past, and to rouse and stimulate the nature to a higher, purer, nobler existence. They give wings to the soul on which to rise.

Seldom do we think how much meaning lies in a tone, or how much might it exerts upon the soul. Wherein lies the charm of music? In its changes of tone to express sweetly and feelingly the sentiment uttered in the psalm or hymn or song. The Greeks had a keen appreciation of this, and they made music one of the principal branches of education. Indeed, it was with them a synonym for culture in general. They believed that by constantly playing martial airs the people became infused with the spirit of bravery. And so of all other kinds. Each touched and acted upon different emotions; soothing or exciting or enraging the men according to their nature. Homer makes Ulysses say that the happiest part of man's life is

When at the festal board in order placed  
They listen to the song.

Aristotle discusses wisely on the moral effects of music on the soul. He says: "Anger and mildness, courage and modesty, and their contraries, as well as all other dispositions of the mind, are most naturally imitated by music and poetry. This is plain from experience, for when we hear these our very soul is altered." "Different harmonies differ from each other so much by nature, that those who hear them are differently affected, and are not in the same disposition of mind when one is performed as when another is, the one for instance, occasions grief, and contracts the soul as the mixed Lydian; others soften the mind and as it were dissolve the heart; others fix it in a firm and settled state. Such is the power of the Doric music only; while the Phrygian fills the soul with enthusiasm." "From what has been said it is evident what an influence music has over the disposition of the mind, and how variously it can fascinate it; and if it can do this, most certainly it is what youth ought to be instructed in." There is a whole volume of philosophy on this subject in these words. Every age confirms them and illustrates them. We have often seen it exemplified in the children. The tune and sentiment of the hymn or song they sing, being

well mated, enter into them and breathe through them. They march about singing: "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war!" Their eyes sparkle with delight, as a glimmer of the meaning comes home to them as they sing: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." They become sober and meditative as they sing: "Just as I am, without one plea," or "Rock of ages, cleft for me." How cheerily they chant the charming hymn: "There is another world they say; Oh so bright! Oh so bright!" And they seem to become rapturous as they see the gates flung wide open because "Jesus died, Jesus died." The child's mind and nature are like the harp which is responsive to the touch of the harper, expressing the feeling in the heart of him who touches it. And how much of this is done unconsciously. The mother sings and the children learn her songs by instinct. These songs are a principal part of the treasure with which the youth enters upon life. They abide with him and bless him. The song is like the amber that preserves the fern or moss. It keeps beautifully fresh words, incidents, scenes, aye, whole reaches of existence, so that when the song is sung all associated with it rises into the consciousness and lives again, and the instruction that lies in them once more comes home to the heart and conscience. It comes with the silence and boldness and power of a vision.

How they teach him to love his native land, and to see in Christ a Saviour, and to fill the flying moments with much needed duty. The national songs become to a child part of his religion, as they awaken a love for his countrymen and kindred, and also for the soil he treads. All are dear to him, and all the records of the past touching them precious. He goes forth with a right manly gladness to look at the mountains and lakes and rivers and plains of his country, and say: "This is my own, my native land." The plant must love its soil and feel kindly toward it, to flourish in it. So it is with man, love to his native land is a first grace. Others spring out of that. His country's psalms and hymns are a school of religious life for him. They teach him more than he is ever able to reckon up. Dr. Norman Macleod says: "My aunt Mary was a woman of strong sense and judgment, very accomplished and cheerful, and while most exacting as to obedience and good conduct, was exceedingly loving to me while I was with her. She gave me all my instruction, religious and secular; and used in the evening to take her guitar and hum over to me old Scotch songs and ballads, till I not only picked up a great number, but acquired a taste for them I have never lost."

It was Watts' hymns for children which gave the Rev. Rowland Hill his earliest religious impressions. Thomas Scott, the commentator, had the same experience under the same instrumentality. He says: "A hymn of Dr. Watts' (in his admirable book for children) entitled 'The All-Seeing God,' at this time fell in my way. I was much affected with it, and having committed it to memory, was frequently repeating it; and was thus continually led to reflect on my guilt and danger." I have read a story of a little girl singing a song which carried to a weary heart direction to the Source of all Blessing. The little girl lived in an alley with her mother. She was ragged, unkempt, thin and pale, but her tangled hair showed a glint of gold in it when the sunlight fell upon it. She sang snatches of popular airs which she had caught from the hand-organ, bits of operatic music she had heard whistled over, and at last Sabbath school hymns she had learned in the Mission School. She sang as the birds sing from the force of nature. One of the hymns she sang was:

What a friend we have in Jesus,

She sang not to herself alone. At a window which opened into the alley sat a woman, whose thin face bore traces of want and sorrow, and her eyes were red with weeping. She stitched away wearily, pausing every now and then to wipe away the hot tears which welled to her eyes and dimmed her vision. The work must be completed soon and she had no time to indulge her grief. Half unconsciously she listened to the childish voice, and the notes floated through the open window to the woman whose poverty and friendlessness had grown to be a burden too heavy to be borne. Why should she struggle on any longer under the load of sorrow and loneliness? She had no friend, no one to help her with love and sympathy. Then the song swept in upon her to meet her soul's need. "What a friend we have in Jesus."

Are you weak and heavy laden?  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Saviour, still our refuge,  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
In His arms He'll take and shield thee.  
Thou wilt find a solace there.

Clear and sweet every word came to the woman who sat with bowed head and clasped hands. Ah! she had a friend, although her cloud of sorrow had been so dark that He had been obscured from her vision for a time. The mists cleared away, and she saw Him again and heard the precious promise: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,

and I will give you rest." She would go to this Friend and lay her burden of grief at His feet, and as she went it fell from her heart as did Christian's burden at the Cross. "Here, you Sallie, come in here!" called a harsh voice, and the sweet notes of the little singer died away in affrighted silence, and she sprang to obey. But her work was done. She had been unconsciously one of God's messengers to carry peace and comfort to a weary, heavy laden soul.

What encouragement is here to fill the home with the sound of sacred song, songs full of the truth of the Gospel, songs that may bless the singer and the listener. How grandly the songs of Luther and Charles Wesley, and Margaret Queen of Navarre helped on the Evangelical work in their times. What they did on a large scale, the little ones may do on a small scale.

Songs serve other purposes. Richard I. was discovered in his foreign prison by a song. Once a tribe of Indians made a raid upon a village of white settlers in the United States, and many parents were killed, and among the booty carried away was a little girl. Her mother still lived, but her heart was broken over the loss of her child. For a long time, through years, she sought her child with this question on her lips: "Where can I find her? where?" At last, after many years had passed away, a report reached her that there was a white maiden among the red people nearly 1,000 miles away. She set out at once over prairie and marsh. There was no rail, no road, only moor and river and mountain. After long, toilsome travel she reached the camp. There was the girl, grown and so altered! She was Indianized, but she still bore marks of being of white descent. When her mother tried to get near her she repulsed her, and she knew not what to do. But love is full of invention. The thought came to her that she might remember her early songs. So the mother sat down and began to sing a sweet lullaby that she had always sung her little one to sleep with. At first she listened listlessly, but in a little while the maiden began to listen. It was carrying her back to her early home, and she stood as if all her soul had got into her ears. The song unlocked the cells of memory and in a little while the girl was in her mother's embrace. The home songs gladden the heart, instruct the mind, refine the nature, lay up a treasure of sweet and precious memories that bless the life beyond all computation. How then, should we seek to multiply the songs, and see that they are the most choice and the best, so that life may be enwreathed with garlands that never die?

### OUR DUTY TO THE INDIANS.

Special sermons were preached in the Winnipeg churches relating to the close of the rebellion and the return of the volunteers to their homes and peaceful pursuits. In Knox Church the Rev. D. M. Gordon, B.D., gave two able and thoughtful discourses suggested by recent events in the North-West. From his evening sermon, as it appears in the *Manitoba Free Press*, the following extract is taken:

The Indian requires a firmer kind of treatment. The first lesson he has to learn is that there is a power in the country so much greater than his own that he need not dream of resisting it; but that it is a power that will protect the honest, the peaceful, the industrious, while it is prompt to punish the wrong-doer, and therefore there must be a force in the country that will prevent all chance of an outbreak, though the results of the late disturbance in which rebellion was so completely crushed may convince the Indian how helpless he is against the whites. Yet while he must be convinced of the folly of rebellion, much must yet be done if he is to become a self-supporting citizen. It will be necessary to introduce a variety of occupations, and not confine him entirely to farming, for farming is far removed from his old occupation of hunting, and even among ourselves not all men are fit to be farmers. It may be necessary also to abolish the system of chiefship, so that the Indians, like their white neighbours, shall hold their land as families and not in severalty; and it may also be necessary that the Indians be more rigidly restricted to the reserves set apart for them. We have no sympathy with any policy of extermination; it is neither right in point of Christian morals nor expedient in point of policy. These are steps that may be taken by the Government; yet, after everything is done by the Government that Government can do, much remains for the Christian churches of the country to perform. Our recent campaign has opened the eyes of many to the claims of the Indians upon our Christian character. We have come among them with a higher civilization, but we have almost failed to make them in any sense partakers of it. The Indian, with few exceptions, has yet to learn what is meant by a Christian home; and while we must bring the influences of the Gospel to bear upon them as far as may be in our power, I do not mean that we should confine ourselves to the mere proclamation of the Gospel message, but that we should aim to make our Indians partakers of all the blessings of our Christian civilization. Had the one hundredth part of the cost of the late rebellion been expended in missions during the past five years, I