

neighborhood, and after an absence of 20 years from that part of the country, I was glad to learn that the preaching was still continued, and that there was a flourishing class of 20 members.

The practical lessons of this simple little narrative are too obvious to need special application. I will therefore leave that part to the reader; and will merely say to those who may be curious about the matter, that I succeeded in getting nearly all the stolen property returned to its rightful owners.

JOHN MATHEWSON.

Montreal, 1874.

### THE MASSACRE OF CHURCH MUSIC.

THERE has been an effort made for the last twenty years to kill congregational singing. The attempt has been tolerably successful; but it seems to me that some rules might be given by which the work could be done more quickly and completely. What is the use of having it lingering on in this uncertain way? Why not put it out of its misery? If you are going to kill a snake, kill it thoroughly, and do not let it keep on wagging its tail till sundown. Congregational singing is a nuisance, anyhow, to many of the people. It interferes with their comfort. It offends their taste. It disposes their noses to flexibility in the upward direction. It is too democratic in its tendency. Down with congregational singing and let us have no more of it.

The first rule for killing it is to have only *such tunes as the people cannot sing*.

In some churches it is the custom for choirs at each service to sing *one* tune which the people know. It is very generous of the choir to do that. The people ought to be very thankful for the donation. They do not deserve it. They are all "miserable offenders," (I heard them say so), and, if permitted *once* in a service to sing, ought to think themselves highly favored. But I oppose this singing of even the *one* tune that the people understand. It spoils them. It gets them hankering after more. Total abstinence is the only safety; for, if you allow them to imbibe at all, they will after a while get in the habit of drinking too much of it, and the first thing you know they will

be going around drunk on sacred psalmody. Besides that, if you let them sing one tune at a service, they will be putting their oar into the other tunes and bothering the choir. There is nothing more annoying to the choir than, at some moment when they have drawn out a note to exquisite fineness, thin as a split hair, to have some blundering elder to come in with a "Praise ye the Lord!" Total abstinence, I say! Let all the churches take the pledge even against the milder musical beverages; for they who tamper with champagne cider soon get to flock and old Burgundy.

Now, if *all* the tunes are new, there will be no temptation to the people. They will not keep humming along, hoping that they will find some bars down where they can break into the clover pasture. They will take the tune as an inextricable conundrum, and give it up. Besides that, Pisgah, Ortonville, and Brattle-street are old fashioned. They did very well in their day. Our fathers were simple-minded people, and the tunes fitted them. But our fathers are gone, and they ought to have taken their baggage with them. It is a nuisance to have those old tunes floating around the church, and some time, just as we have got the music as fine as an opera, to have a revival of religion come, and some new-born soul break out in "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me!" till the organist stamps the pedal with indignation, and the leader of the tune gets red in the face and swears. Certainly anything that makes a man swear is wrong—*ergo*, congregational singing is wrong. *Quod erat demonstrandum*; which, being translated, means *Pain as the nose on a man's face*. What right have people to sing who know nothing about rhythmic, melodies, dynamics? The old tunes ought to be ashamed of themselves when compared with our modern beauties. Let Dundee, and Portuguese Hymn, and Silver Street hide their heads beside what we heard not long ago in a church—just where I shall not tell. The minister read the hymn beautifully. The organ began, and the choir sang, as near as I could understand, as follows:

Oo—aw—gee—bah  
Ah—me—la—he  
O—pah—sah—dah  
Wo—haw—gee-e-e-e.

My wife, seated beside me, did not