

tain. For nearly two hundred years only psalms were used in public worship. The metrical version first used was that of Sternhold and Hopkins, published in 1562. Sternhold died fifteen years before Shakespeare was born. He had been groom of the bed-chamber to Henry VIII. and Edward VI., and also impropiator of the buildings and lands of the Priory of Bodmin. Whatever may be thought of the poetical abilities of him and his co-editor he had a thorough knowledge of the original Hebrew, and such competent judges as Bishops Beveridge and Horsley defend his version as just and accurate. Old Thomas Fuller says of Sternhold and Hopkins, "they were men whose piety was better than their poetry, and they had drank more of Jordan than Helicon." That their version was loved, learned by heart, and sung by so many generations of worshippers, throws around it a sacredness and a charm. Of course, its obsolete words, bad couplets, and other literary blemishes, unavoidable when it was made, render it unfit for use at the present day. Yet was it so much admired that any innovations on "this time-honoured version" were denounced as sacrilege, and even the celebrated Romaine argued as if the words of Sternhold and Hopkins were the words of the Holy Ghost, which it were impiety to depart from.—This version was superseded by that of Tate and Brady, in the church of England, in 1696; while Rouse's version—that still in use—was sanctioned by the assembly of the church of Scotland in 1650.

But, in course of time, both in England and Scotland, men's minds were gradually leavened with more liberal ideas; and as their spiritual stature was elevated, their theological horizon widened. The rigid rule, excluding all hymns from public praise, began to be assailed, doubted, undermined, and was at length relaxed, as unwarranted by scripture. In Scotland, as early as 1648, the desire for spiritual songs not included in the psalter, was so general that the General Assembly employed Mr. David Leitch on "a paraphrase of the songs of the Old and New Testament." The matter was again considered in 1706, and at last in 1745 a collection of translations and paraphrases was published, which, after revision, was in 1781 "allowed to be used in public worship, in congregations where the minister finds it for edification." This forms our present collection of paraphrases and hymns, the enlargement of which many now earnestly desire.

The beginning of the eighteenth century was the era of a native hymn literature in England, which has yielded many noble hymns; some of them will bear comparison with the best of German or ancient hymns. Gradually they won their way

into the praises of the sanctuary, meeting a want that had long been felt, promoting true piety, diffusing evangelical truth among the masses, and enriching devotional thought and language. A rich stream of sacred song welled out and continues to flow, making glad the city of God.

The limits of this paper oblige us to pass lightly over the earlier English hymn writers. Among these, Bishop Jeremy Taylor, so universally known as the author of "Holy Living and Dying," and many other works, stands conspicuous. He published a volume of hymns entitled "The Golden Grove," replete with warm devotion and that exuberance of imagination and richness of language which constitute him the eloquent Chrysostom of the English pulpit. It was however conceived in the quaint style of that day (1650); and its unnatural conceits and artificial fancies soon caused it to be consigned to oblivion. George Herbert, whose works are still popular and will long be dear to every genuine lover of poetry, may also be reckoned a hymnist. His hymns, however, are better adapted for private reading than for public worship—hymns for the heart rather than the voice. Hence but a very few from Herbert's *Temple* find a place in modern hymn-books. George Withers (1624) is the author of "Songs and Hymns of the Church," extracts from which are to be found in most collections of sacred poetry, but few if any are found suitable for singing.

There is one verse which we have all been accustomed to sing from our earliest years—which, generation after generation, has been sung for the last century and a half,—and yet perhaps few know more of the author than the name, and many not even so much as that. I refer to the Doxology,—

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye Heavenly Hosts;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

The author is Bishop Ken, who was born in 1637 and died in 1710. The poet, James Montgomery, says of this Doxology, "It may be doubted whether there is a stanza of four lines, in the compass of our literature, which has been so often remembered, repeated and sung. It is a masterpiece at once of amplification and compression. Of *amplification*, on the burden "praise God," repeated in each line; *compression*, exhibiting God as the object of praise, in every view in which we can imagine praise to be due to him—for all his blessings,—yea for all blessings, none coming from any other source; praise by every creature, specifically invoked here below and in heaven above; praise to him in each of the characters wherein he has revealed himself in his