

the river above the village is soon lost sight of in its windings among the hills. A Hudson's Bay post stands picturesquely with its white painted residence and outbuildings on a tongue of land on the farther bank of the Mattawa, projecting into the Ottawa with a bold headland several hundred feet high almost directly in front. On this same side of the river, and but a few hundred yards from the foot, stands a Roman Catholic church. This is the farthest up village on the Ottawa. A government road extends all the way up the Ottawa river to this point and terminates with a most substantial wooden bridge across the Mattawa. It is a village of great importance in a lumbering point of view, and in fall, when men are going up to the shanties, and again when the lumber is being brought down in the spring, is a place of great activity, as well as during the winter, when supplies are being sent in to the various lumbering depots. It is suffering much at present, like every place in this region, from the great depression in the lumber trade. It is thought, however, it may yet become a place of considerable trading importance, but that remains to be seen, and will depend very greatly upon the effect produced by the new railway which is being built from Pembroke to the southern end of Lake Nipissing. As this was the extreme limit of my trip on the Ottawa river, and as this sketch has already grown to such length, I shall for the present stop by saying, "to be continued."

W. D. BALLANTYNE.

JOSEPH COOK'S LECTURES.

MR. EDITOR,—The three pamphlets containing Rev. Joseph Cook's lectures were received as per order some time since. Not to say that I am pleased with the investment would seem like ingratitude on my part. Simply to say I am pleased would be to say too little, and to say more by way of commending them, where the lecturer is in the zenith of his fame, would be like the moon trying to show how brightly the sun shines by reflecting his rays at midday. Yet she pays him no mean compliment by doing much the same thing in her own quiet way on the dark side of the earth. That Mr. Cook was a *thinker* among scientists and divines I fully believed before reading these, for his fame had preceded them, but beyond that one cannot help admiring how completely those thoughts are under control while expressing them. Like a skilful general marshalling his troops for battle, confident of a victory, knowing exactly the strength and tactics of the enemy, his forces are made to do service just when and where they are needed, now the advance guard, now the main line of battle, then with one masterly effort supports and reserves are brought into line for the final onset. Midst the rattle of musketry and booming of cannon the reader fancies the foe overpowered and almost unconsciously is raising his hand to his hat to join in the shout of victory. A good tonic for the dyspepsia of modern thought! Wish you good success in circulating such a healthful literature in this age of sickly sentimentality.

"ONLY AN ARMOR-BEARER."

CHURCH PSALMODY.

MR. EDITOR,—It has been said, not to strike while the iron is hot, is a great waste of labor. I have read with much interest the articles as they have appeared in your columns from time to time affecting the psalmody of our churches. I am glad to find so much good feeling evinced, and such a characteristic oneness of sentiment running through all the contributions. None of us understand alike, and none know all things. I trust by this mutual interchange of opinion, we shall all be benefited and led to right and sound conclusions. All are agreed that the music of our services is important, that it is largely unsatisfactory, and that it needs to be cultivated and improved. The question has been asked by a former correspondent, How can the improvement be brought about? I want just to touch upon one important aspect of this question. The remedy is not to be found by engaging a new praise leader, by securing a large and expensive organ, by manufacturing music for the people, nor by adopting a new Hymn and Tune book, even though it should be authorized by the General Assembly. The most common-sense remedy, as it appears to me, was given at the commencement of these articles in an extract from Mr. Curwen's paper, "On the Service of Song," so heartily approved by Prof. McLaren in his able letters. Both the gentle-

men urge that classes should be established, "not for plodding wearily through the hymns for each Sabbath and learning them by ear, but for learning to read simple music at sight."

The ability to read music at sight, that is, mentally to decipher the printed notes, and form a correct conception of how the music should sound by looking at the printed page, lies at the basis of a true musical education. Very few among the thousands who are studying music are able even to read a plain Psalm tune at sight; and it is not unusual to find solo singers who are obliged to have their parts taught them, having really no knowledge whatever of how the piece should be sung by simply looking at the notes. If the singer has not acquired the ability to read at sight with facility, however thorough his acquaintance with the theory of music, he must always labor at great disadvantage. The future psalmody of our churches will to a very large extent be determined by the efforts we are putting forth in this direction. If ever we get hearty, united, vigorous, intelligent psalmody, it can only be brought about by much painstaking labor, by earnest and well-directed efforts in the impartation of that knowledge which will enable the people to read simple music at sight.

The following quotation is made from Mr. Curwen's "Teachers' Manual." Teachers of Mr. Curwen's or any other method would do well to possess the book:

"The one great hindrance to the popular and easy use of music is to be found in the complex heterogeneous system of notation by which it is commonly presented to the eye. This notation (that is, the Staff in ordinary use) crowds so many unnecessary difficulties on to the threshold of the science as to discourage the majority of learners, and fails so entirely to render obvious and prominent its leading principles, as to conceal the real simplicity of music and veil the wondrous beauties of its inner temple. . . . The Staff notation has grown—grown with the theory and practice of music. It is not an instrument made for teaching purposes, governed by some one intelligible principle which will guide and help the learner, but an aggregation of contrivances which have in the course of years grown into great complexity. Every step in this direction has closed the door of music to thousands of would-be singers."

Some may ask, Can the power to read music be easily acquired? The answer is, yes, if Mr. Curwen's or the Tonic Sol-fa system be used. The majority of our own people have not the remotest idea of the power and extent of the Sol-fa movement—its wonderful success in Scotland, England and elsewhere, and the increasing demand for it in this country. This, as your last correspondent remarks, is much the best and easiest way of learning to read music. I am aware that, by some, the followers of the Tonic Sol-fa system have often been regarded as a species of musical dissenters banded together for the disestablishment of the Staff notation. We who use the Staff notation need not fear any such results.

This system has no hostile designs against the ordinary notation; in truth, it is perfectly friendly to it. The large majority of the Tonic Sol-fa pupils learn the Staff notation. It is, in fact, the easiest way of mastering it. I agree with the general run of "Chorister's" remarks. I do not think that Hamilton's Union Notation will assist us much, for this reason. Those who have learned the Staff notation do not seem to need it, as it seems to add incumbrance. I would rather Sol-fa the Staff from a knowledge of key relationship, than have to look into the eye, or head, of a minim or crochet. To me it would only make it more crochety. The Sol-faist does not need it, he would prefer his own tune language, pure and simple.

I write as an old notationist, but am fully persuaded of the great advantages the Sol-fa system affords the singer.

I have commenced teaching Mr. Curwen's method, and do intend to teach it with all my might, because I am convinced of its undoubted superiority to every other method, combining as it does the prerequisites "Easy, Cheap and True." In our church here we have a choir of twenty voices, sixteen of which sing from the Tonic Sol-fa notation. The books we use both in church and Sabbath school can be obtained in either notation. In connection with classes conducted last winter in the same church, fifteen pupils passed the elementary requirement in music, and as many more are earnestly working in this direction. This means fifteen singers added to our Psalmody for life.

I hope your readers will excuse the reference to the work in which I am engaged. I simply state these facts, that those who may be appointed to compile our new tune-book may take the hint that our friends who use Curwen's method, have some claim to consideration. I say for myself, by all means let us have a book published in both notations.

Hoping the committee will soon be appointed; that they will be practical musicians—men who understand their business and the Church's need. I am yours, etc.,

PRAISE LEADER.

PSALM AND HYMN TUNE BOOK.

MR. EDITOR, - I think "Precentor" has done good service in calling attention to the necessity of a Tune Book in connection with our new Hymn Book. I agree in the main with what he says. Hymns and tunes should be bound up in one volume. Words should as far as possible be wedded to tunes, as they will thus preserve their hold upon our memories and affections. And this I think an objection to having the leaves cut in the centre. With regard to Hamilton's Notation, I think it altogether unnecessary. It would not aid those using the Established Notation, and as to the Tonic Sol-faist, he does not need such crutches. If he understands Sol-fa properly, in about six months he will master enough of Old Notation to sing all the music in an ordinary tune book. No, let us have our Tune Book written in the old system. And when Sol-faists increase sufficiently to demand a book in Sol-fa, Messrs. Curwen & Sons of London will get it up as cheaply as any other firm. I do not agree with "Chorister" regarding metres. I hope our book will not be limited to common, long, and short metres. Some very beautiful poetry is written in peculiar metre, and our book would be incomplete without such. Were I on the committee appointed by the Assembly, I would suggest the adoption of one of the three hymn books, as that would save all trouble regarding music, etc.; and the English Presbyterian Hymn Book should have my vote, as it is well adapted to all purposes, congregational and musical. At any rate we are all glad something is being done; and should a musical committee not be appointed, we may have confidence that the committee already in existence will do its best to ascertain from the musicians of the Church what is most required.

TONIC.

THE Old Catholic cause in Switzerland advances slowly, and it now numbers from eighty to ninety thousand adherents in the different Cantons. It advances also in its progress towards a correct theology, but in this also slowly. At the late Synod it was finally agreed, after an earnest debate, to allow the laity to receive the communion in two kinds—that is, partaking of the cup as well as of the bread. The cup was withdrawn from the laity in the twelfth century, and the Old Catholics are going back, therefore, to the custom of the primitive Church. Its motion is in the right direction. May it be guided unto the end.

How shall we dare to behold that holy face that brought salvation to us, and we turned away and fell in love with death, and kissed deformity and sin?—*Jeremy Taylor.*

WATCHING without praying is self-confidence and self-conceit. Praying without watching is enthusiasm and fanaticism. The man who knows his own weakness, and knowing it, both watches and prays, is the man that will be helped and not allowed to fall.

"I DON'T forbid you to speculate," said an old Scotch divine, speaking to a young minister, as his gray head bent over the grave. "I like speculation; I have speculated much myself; but now that I am an auld man, I want to settle down upon the facts, and tak' up wi' the theology of the auld wives and the bairns."

I KNOW HE IS THINKING OF ME.—Dr. Cullis tells, in one of his reports, of an aged Christian who, lying on his death bed in the Consumptives' Home, was asked the cause of his perfect peace, in a state of such extreme weakness that he was often entirely unconscious of all around him. He replied: "When I am able to think, I think of Jesus; and when I am unable to think of Him, I know He is thinking of me." And to how many of the Lord's dear, suffering children have the words of the Psalmist come with sweet consolation, "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me."