

## NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

**PSALMS IN HISTORY.**—The Huguenots, before the battle of Coutras, knelt and chanted the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; because his mercy endureth forever." Seeing their attitude of supplication, some courtiers cried, "Behold, the cowards are already begging mercy?" "No," answered an old officer, who knew their way, "you may expect a stern fight from the men who sing psalms and pray."

The anecdote illustrates the part the Psalms have played in history, especially in the throes that accompanied the Reformation. The forty-sixth Psalm, "God is our refuge and strength," is the basis of the battle-hymn of that great Revolution, Luther's "A strong tower is our God." The sixty-eighth, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered," was known among the Huguenots as the "Song of Battles." Savonarola chanted it as he marched to the most precious pyre ever lighted in Florence. After the victory of Dunbar, Cromwell and his army sung the one hundred and seventeenth Psalm, "O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people." No man knows what a great part the Psalms have played in the lives of men. These poems, which reflect every praiseworthy emotion, have associated themselves, like the rain and the sunlight, with all sorts and conditions of men, women and children. The penitential groanings of the sixth Psalm, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger," have been sobbed out by Catherine de Medici, John Calvin, and Mrs. Carlyle. It might be properly called the "Universal Psalm of the Penitent."

When the eloquent, erratic Edward

Irving was dying, he gathered up his strength and chanted, in Hebrew, the twenty-third Psalm, the Shepherd's Song. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," whispered Scotland's greatest metaphysician, Sir William Hamilton, and then breathed out his spirit. The parting word of Luther, of Knox, of John Huss, of Jerome of Prague, and of countless martyrs and saints, was the fifth verse of the thirty-first Psalm: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit." The northernmost grave on the face of the earth is near Cape Beechy, on the brow of a hill covered with snow. In it is buried the body of a member of the Nares expedition. A large stone covers the dead, and on a copper tablet at the head is engraved a part of the seventh verse of the fifty-first Psalm: "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Never was a "A Prayer of Moses, the man of God," the ninetieth Psalm, read amid more solemn circumstances than on the occasion of the burial of one of the victims of the accident upon the Matterhorn in 1865. Three English gentlemen and their Swiss guide lost their lives. The almost formless bodies of three of them were found on the glacier below the mountain, and on one, that of the Rev. Charles Hudson, was found his Prayer-book. Taking it reverently in his hands, a clergyman, present with the searching party, read from it the ninetieth Psalm. The mourners stood around the grave in the centre of a snow-field, never before trodden by man. Above was the frowning mountain and the cloudless sky. Bronzed-faced guides and sorrowful friends leaned on their alpenstocks, while the minister read the Prayer-book