

Musical.

Is it possible to Sing at sight?

About fifty years ago there was a choir in a smart little town in New Jersey, that gained quite a reputation not only in the village itself, but also for no inconsiderable distance in the country around. A number of its members had excellent voices, they met in frequent and enthusiastic rehearsals, and it came to be regarded as quite a treat to hear their vigorous performance of such music as they were in the habit of rendering. But the art of reading music was a mystery to them, as well as to their humbler brethren in other churches round about them. Their singing was mostly by rote, or from memory, with such help as they might derive from a vague following of the notes up and down the staff. How they acquired new tunes is a mystery. It must have been by a gradual process of absorption.

While in the full height of their honorable career, they were suddenly thrown into a state of wild consternation by a most startling announcement. They were told, on the highest authority, that there were people somewhere in the outside world who could actually take a piece of music they had never seen, and sing it off promptly and correctly just by looking at the notes. This was almost too much for human credulity; yet the authority was high and could not be set aside with a sneer, and so the subject began to be gravely discussed as one in which evidence must be allowed to weigh directly against all experience and common sense, "Is it possible to sing at sight?"

In the rapid development of the next thirty or forty years this skepticism was made to appear highly ridiculous. Yet history is said to repeat itself, and, in looking upon the condition of music at the present time, we are led to wonder whether there is not almost as much occasion for a discussion of that question now as there was fifty years ago. Of course we do not doubt the possibility of accurate sight reading, but where are the people who can do it? How many paid singers in the New York choirs can take a tune of moderate difficulty and sing it through correctly in time and tune without assistance? Not many, we verily believe. Excellent voices and taste they have, and marvelously quick perceptions which enable them to take their parts from the instrument as if by magic, so that it seems as if they were reading in the most orderly and systematic manner. But take away from them all helps and suggestions, and let them depend entirely upon their knowledge of the musical characters before them, and nine out of ten of them will prove to be lamentably deficient.

Can these things be improved, or does the Genius of superficiality reign so completely over the present generation as to render the case a hopeless one? This question, like many others, is much more easily asked than answered. Undoubtedly people can learn to read music. The question is, *Will they?* We unhesitatingly answer that they will not, unless prevailing ideas on the subject undergo a radical change. The prevalent notion seems to be, that the art of reading music should be acquired without the slightest mental effort. One consequence of this idea is that people are perpetually quarreling with the old system of notation, and any humbug who comes along promising to lead the world to the desired result by the royal road of a new notation, is sure to find plenty of followers. Now, why not use a little common sense in this matter? All the greatest musical minds of the earth have adopted this method of expressing their ideas (since it has been known) and have been satisfied with it. Is it likely, then, that any ingenious Yankee is going to revolutionise the whole subject by inventing a new set of characters? The truth is, that the difficulty is not in the notation, but in the *thing itself*, in music, and, certainly, no one will say that the art of music should be simplified or brought down to meet the demands of incompetency or laziness.

The only way out of this whole difficulty, is simply to acknowledge the fact that the ability to read music can only be gained, like any other accomplishment, by study and practice. The characters employed to represent music are few in number and very easily learned. In fact, there are only about thirty that are essential. We will engage to teach any class the whole art of reading music, in "twenty easy lessons," so that there will be no branch of the subject with which its members will not be familiar. But this will not make them fluent readers. It merely places in their possession the materials, of which they must gain the more perfect use by constant practice. Some practice would, of course, be afforded during the progress of the lessons themselves, but by no means enough to obviate the necessity of further application. We may say, then, in answer to the proposed question, that the faculty of reading the language of music is just as easily acquired as is the faculty of reading any other language, and, perhaps, no easier; and it is in vain to think of acquiring so valuable and desirable an accomplishment, without something of the same labor and study which are necessary in securing any other form of self-improvement.—*N. Y. Musical Gazette.*

Fanny Crosby, the Blind Poetess, has probably written more songs and hymns of a popular character, for Dr. Mason, Mr. Bradbury, Mr. Root, and Mr. Perkins, than any other authoress living or dead.

How to take a census of the children of a neighborhood—Employ an organ grinder for five minutes.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Prince Edward Island Association.

It is evidently very desirable for those who are united in Christian fellowship, to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Every measure, therefore, which verges toward separation is to be deprecated, and it should be cautiously avoided.

Having labored much on P. E. Island, and formed a pleasing Christian acquaintance with many valued brethren there united with the Baptist Associations of Nova Scotia, I have read, with surprise and grief, a statement made by my esteemed Bro. Davis, in which, after speaking of the new Association as distinct from certain denominations, he says, (C. M. Aug. 5th) "Neither are we Baptists in the sense of the Articles of the Faith and Practice of the Baptist Churches of Nova Scotia." Is not this tantamount to a declaration of non-fellowship with us? Wherefore this drawing apart? If our Articles be deemed unscriptural, let them be openly and expressly rejected; but if scriptural, why should they not be retained? By retaining them cordial union can easily be preserved and continued.

Our Churches on P. E. Island were dismissed by our Eastern Association, not to constitute a new denomination, but "to form an Association in harmony with this," and with the right to receive "other Churches of the same faith and order." (Minutes, p. 25.) Is the statement of Bro. Davis accordant with this arrangement and agreement?

I trust, however, with "A Delegate," that he has not expressed the view of the new Association; and respectfully request all concerned to reconsider the whole subject.

In the days of the Apostles, when the faith and practice of all professedly Christian Churches were the same, there was, of course no need of any summary, or brief and definite statement of the leading views entertained. But now, as all Protestants profess to make the Bible their rule of faith and practice, and yet are divided into various denominations, differing widely in their sentiments on some points, it signifies nothing for any denomination to allege, that they profess to do the same thing. Under existing circumstances it is obviously requisite for each separate body to put forth a candid statement of its leading views of truth and duty. The different denominations may thus know how far they are agreed, and so can unite, and in what respects they differ, and therefore must act separately. By this means, also, one who deems it his duty to make a public profession of faith, is afforded an opportunity to examine the sentiments of the different denominations, compare them with the sacred Oracles, and then unite with that body whose principles appear to him most accordant with God's word.

The folly of attempting to establish a *Creed* by human authority, and to enforce uniformity of belief, with the futility of such attempts, furnishes no valid objection against the presenting of a candid statement of the views entertained by any body of people, to be voluntarily adopted or rejected, as conscience may dictate. Obviously this bears no similarity to 'calling any man Father or Master;' neither is it at all contrary to the forbearance inculcated in Rom. xiv. 1-6. Honesty and fairness demand it.

It is well known that preachers belonging to a body of people who refuse to publish such a statement, in some cases when it suits their convenience represent their views as differing very slightly from ours; but if they can sufficiently succeed in "drawing away disciples after them," they make havoc of our Churches, take possession of our Meeting Houses, and expel us from them, as heretics. I am not disposed to conceal my colors in order to secure the cooperation of such friends. Instead of wishing to have "our position defined as little as possible," I wish to have it, and that of others, defined as *distinctly* as possible.

A published statement of our views is needful to remove and prevent misapprehension and misrepresentation. Our wise and prudent ancestors published a "Confession of Faith" in London "about the year 1643;" and "diverse impressions of it were dispersed abroad." It was republished in England in 1689, with the expressed approbation of many eminent men, including Hansard Knollys, William Kiffin, Benjamin Keach, &c., who testified to its usefulness. It was "adopted by the Baptist Association met at Philadelphia, Sept. 25, 1742." Our brethren say in their Preface, "We did conceive ourselves to be under a necessity of publishing

a Confession of our Faith for the information of those that did not thoroughly understand what our principles were, or had entertained prejudices against our profession," and "led others into misapprehensions of us."

The Free Christian Baptists of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have evinced candor and prudence by publishing a statement of their sentiments; and the second reason assigned for this is, "To remove the censures which evil-minded persons have cast upon us, by charging us with holding sentiments which we do not believe."

Unquestionably I am better acquainted with the Baptist Churches of N. S., N. B., and P. E. I., than any other Minister living; as I have laboured among them—travelling extensively—fifty-two years and a half; and I have never perceived an instance of idolatrous regard for our Articles, which are evidently esteemed by them only on account of their conformity to Scripture which we avow (Art. 3), to be our "only rule of Faith and Practice." I have known the use of them to do much good, but never any harm.

If I knew these would be the last words that I would ever publish, I would affectionately entreat my brethren composing the new Association, for the benefit of all concerned, at their next Session, to recognize, as they did formerly, the "Articles of the Faith and Practice of the Baptist Churches of Nova Scotia."

Their Friend and Brother,
CHARLES TUPPER.
Aylesford, Sept. 21, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger.

Vital Christianity.

How many of us who call ourselves Christians—followers of Christ,—live as Christ did?

We profess to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth, but are we? Pilgrims—those who look only towards the goal to which they are tending; those who, thinking solely on what may expedite their passage thither, are careless and unobservant of all physical ease or comforts which might make their journey pleasanter, but would not hasten it. And strangers, are they not such as know not the country through which they are travelling, and knowing it not, is it likely to attract them more than their own home to which no foreign land can in the least be compared? Are we like this? Are we strangers and pilgrims in this sense? My own heart gives a mournful answer.

Our Saviour says, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Now let us think in what way did Jesus differ from the world? Commencing at the earliest record of His public life, see how He, the All-holy, the King of earth and heaven, received the ordinance of baptism at the hands of a man, who, if he declares himself unworthy to loosen the latchet of his Lord's shoes, how much more unfit must he really be! Only try to comprehend for a moment the infinite condescension, the total self-abnegation in Christ's reply to John's remonstrance, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

Are we as willing to forego self, to forget we have a self, as it were, for the sake of God's glory, or the advancement of His cause? Have we any right after pledging ourselves to God's service, and giving ourselves as we say we have, entirely to Him, have we any right to own a self apart from Christ?

In our Lord's temptation there was no hesitation, no parleying, but prompt rebuke and determined resistance. And so on through the whole life of Jesus, nothing but an unceasing, constant remembrance of the purpose for which He lived. It is impossible for us to imagine that those around Him, with Him every day, could for a moment think of Him as one of themselves, as "of the world." Now this question forces itself on our minds, Are we like Christ in this, is our Christianity so apparent to the world that no mistake could be made as to whom we were serving, whether God, or Mammon?

As merchants, are we scrupulously upright, showing our love for the Word of God in obeying this precept in its most literal sense. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them?"

As professional men, whether ministers of the Gospel, physicians, or lawyers, have we "clean hands and a pure heart?" As politicians, are we ever mindful of the divine command, "Be pitiful, be courteous?"

In whatever rank or station of life we find ourselves, do we "esteem others better than ourselves," and "bear each other's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ?" Would to God we

could all give an unqualified assent to these inquiries.

My friends, my brothers and sisters, "these things ought not so to be." We who have put on Christ must stand more openly by our colours. We must show the world that our religion is not a mere show, but our very life, our joy, our crown of rejoicing.

These remarks are partially called forth by an incident which came before the writer's notice:—

A man who impressed the listener with a sense of his fervent piety and warm zeal in Christ's cause, was once spoken of in the writer's presence, as one who did not carry his religion into his business affairs, so far as to be strictly honourable in his dealings with other men, and in consequence of this, all his ardent professions of love to God were disbelieved in by the speaker. Here we see how God's cause was dishonoured and a slur cast upon the man's, perhaps sincere, but imperfect Christianity. Who of the world will be drawn towards the gospel of Jesus when such men as this are its representatives? M.

For the Christian Messenger.

Sunday School Festival and Concert at Kempt, Queens Co.

Mr. Editor,—

The Sabbath School is one of the most important fields for Christian labor at the present day. For, in it the youthful mind procures knowledge that fortifies it against the evils of ripening years—gives bent to the character, and in a measure shapes the soul for time and eternity. When we know the youthful mind to be as yielding as the undried clay, and as flexible as the tender twig, with what care and tenderness should the child be approached by the teacher, and how prayerfully and carefully should each lesson be studied and imparted; lest the wrong impression be made and the tender mind receive the wrong bent—for as the young mind is impressed and shaped so will it consolidate into manhood.

Many Sabbath Schools exist only in name, for want of interest in them on the part of parents and teachers. There are many ways that Sabbath Schools may be made interesting and attractive to children. Concerts and Festivals break the monotony—make a change and give variety which is so pleasing and interesting to youth.

In order to elicit on the part of the children an interest in the Sabbath School, the Church and friends at Kempt made for their children a Festival, which took place on the 10th inst.—Heaven smiled upon us in giving us a delightful day. Friends gathered from all around. At 1 o'clock, P. M., teachers and pupils marched in procession from the meeting-house to our beautiful festive grounds, which had been tastefully fitted up by the friends. The little ones gathered around the tables. God's blessing was invoked upon them, and their food. It was a sight truly touching to see about one hundred souls, all in the bud of life, seated at tables busily engaged doing justice to the good things prepared for them by their parents and friends.

After the children had done justice to the physical substantials, we retired to our meeting-house where the children treated us to an intellectual feast in the form of a Concert, in which the following programme was observed by our indefatigable superintendent, Bro. A. Harlow, Junr.

- Music.—led by Mr. B. F. Whitman.
- Prayer,—by Rev. P. F. Murray.
- Music.
- Each member of the school recited a verse of scripture containing the word "Spirit," giving book, chapter and verse.
- Music.
- Seventy Historical and Theological scripture questions were asked by the Pastor of the church.
- Music.
- Reading of Original Essays, Recitations of Poems, Psalms, &c.
- Rev. P. F. Murray gave a most pleasing and interesting speech on "The advantages enjoyed by the young of the present day."
- About \$17.00 were collected for the use of the school.

Yours in the work,
P. R. FOSTER.

Kempt, Queen's Co., Sept. 15, 1868.

The following Essay was composed by Miss Fanny Allison, and read at the above Sabbath School Concert.

THE BIBLE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE HUMAN MIND.

This book has for its author that Great, and Mighty Being, who created and upholds all