

Organiser, of the Diocese, paid us a visit to observe the methods of Sunday School work in a country parish. She was pleased with the children's work, and congratulated the superintendents. Many helpful suggestions were exchanged.

Mr. Alan Hosking, an Ormondville boy from the Auckland Training College, is spending the vacation with his mother, and has assisted the vicar with services—much to the delight of parishioners. We would like to see more young men follow this example, and take their part in the offices of the Church.

At a meeting of mothers at Makotuku it was unanimously decided to form a branch of the Mothers' Union in this parish. Arrangements were made for the first meeting to be held on 21st August.

—S. B. R. CORBIN.

CHURCH MUSIC.

From the interesting paper in the Gazette on Church Music, many articles could be written on the different portions of the Church service, viz.:—"Choral or plain" singing, or more correctly speaking, "chanting of the Psalms," "hymnody," "organist and vicar," "boy choristers," "congregational singing." But I will content myself with the most vexed question of chanting the Psalms.

There are several points one must remember. Firstly, that there are several different barrings by eminent compilers who are competent authorities in their idea of pointing; for if we take a given sentence, "The choir sang well," it is plain that each word can be emphasised and so render a different meaning to that sentence. So in the editions more or less in common use we get the following pointings or barrings:—

- (a) The Cathedral Psalter, 1878, edited by Sir John Stainer, etc.
- (b) The A. and M. Psalter, 1878, edited by Dr. Monk.
- (c) The New Cathedral Psalter Superimposed Notes, 1909, edited by Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Martin, etc.
- (d) The Parish Psalter, 1928, edited by Dr. Nicholson.
- (e) St. Paul's Cathedral Psalter, 1934, edited by Dr. Marchant, etc.

Take Psalm XC., verse 1, 2nd half

- (a) From one gener|ation| to an|other.
- (b) From one generation| to ano|ther.
- (c) From one gener|ation| to an|other.
- (d) From one gener|ation| to an|other.
- (e) From|one gener|ation to an|other.

Now take Psalm CIV, verse 4, 2nd half

- (a) and his minis|ters a|flam- ing|fire.
- (b) and his| ministers a|flam- ing|fire.
- (c) and his minis|ters a|flam- ing|fire.
- (d) and his| ministers a|flam- ing|fire.
- (e) and| ministers a|flaming|fire.

We notice in these comparisons that the modern Psalters do not have the accent, neither has Dr. Monk's edition, 1878.

Therefore it is evident that from the foregoing examples all are not agreed as to where the bars should be placed. And yet we must recognise that there is a decided attempt to make the chanting of the Psalms more in keeping to the meaning of the words.

If eminent authorities cannot agree as to the correct placing of bars, choristers, whether they belong to Cathedral or country parish, must of necessity have something to guide them, and if choristers must have this guide it points out clearly that the members of the congregation must have a guide as well. Perhaps this is where the error of pausing on the accented syllable has crept in, by endeavouring to give the congregation an indication where the change of the note of the chant is about to take place.

This dwelling upon the accented syllable is not necessary, nor is it desirable, and more often than not distorts the sentence. For instance, in "Nunc Dimittis" the 2nd half of the 1st verse "ac" in "according" is generally unduly lengthened; in fact, in one edition "ac" is definitely given twice the note value of either of the two other syllables. Again in "Te Duem" second half of verse two, "The Father," "the" is given twice the length of either of the syllables of "Father." Another example is "Venite," verse 4, where the first

syllable of "corners" is given a note three times the length of the other syllable.

We have only to read many of the verses and then listen to the singing of the psalm to realise how words are very often unduly emphasised. But by careful practice and co-operation these errors can be remedied.

But there is one thing certain, and that is if the congregation is to join in the psalms some indication must be given in their books where the note is to change.

Choirmasters have taught their choirs to dwell upon the accepted syllable, and choirs by their use of this have taught the congregation, and naturally where this has been done for years it is going to be a very difficult problem to overcome. We cannot ask the congregations not to join in the psalms, but, on the other hand, should encourage them to join in as much of the service as possible.

Then the question comes, how can we help the congregation in chanting and improve the rendering of the psalms? Firstly, by studying each psalm carefully, verse by verse (it is well worth it) at choir practice—not merely run through the psalms. Secondly, by chanting them with the same accentuation as we would use if we read them, and that would mean that we would get away from the long used method of singing each note its full value, which makes a chant more like a metrical hymn tune. No note of the chant should have a definite length; the words should decide the length of the sound.

Let us take a few examples, and for these we take them from the Cathedral Psalter, 1878.

Psalm XIX., verse 3:

There is neither| speech nor
language;

But their| voices are| heard
a| mong them.

Would it not be clearer if we stressed slightly the words "speech" and "voices," and that no stop be made till the change of note on the word "speech," also "nor" should be a shorter sound.

Psalm XX., verse 1:

The Lord hear thee in the| day
of| trouble;

The name of the| God of| Jacob
de| fend thee.

Would not a slight stress on the