

**A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN
NEW ENGLAND: WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF
REFORMERS AND PSALMISTS**

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A history of music in New England: with biographical sketches of reformers and psalmists by
George Hood

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By GEORGE HOOD.

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P R E F A C E .

EVERY one desires to know something of the history of the art or science in which he is interested. Divest architecture, or any one branch of the natural sciences of its history, and you take away the prime part of all that can interest. So music, if you leave its history unwritten and unread, becomes the mere plaything of the present, instead of the dignified and venerated subject that has been favored by princes and sages, Christians and prophets, ever since the world began.

It was this idea that prompted the writer to collect and arrange the materials for the following pages. His success in finding historical matter has far exceeded his anticipations ; and that which he supposed would end with the scanty materials for a

single lecture, has, by much labor, increased to a volume.

This book pretends only to be a history of psalmody, and to extend from the settlement of New England to the beginning of the present century.

In preparing this work, it has been the writer's constant aim, to give the facts as he found them; and if they seem broken or isolated, it must be remembered that, with such material, it was scarcely possible to make a full and consecutive history. The matter has been gathered by much labor, time and expense from different parts of the Union, and frequently in very small portions. The labor has been almost incredible. To show something of its difficulty, there are six consecutive lines that were unfinished more than one year; and the matter of which was gathered at more different times and places, than the number of lines, twice told. But with all its difficulties, the reader may rely upon the truth of the work. It must not, however, be expected that such a production should be entirely free from error; yet all who know its difficulties, will acknowledge its fidelity. Had the materials all been written, though scattered in different libraries, much of the present labor would have been saved; and were all the matter that has been written still in existence, the history would be far from meagre;

or, could that now wasting on dusty shelves, or stowed away in garrets, as useless and cumbersome lumber, be brought out, much useful information on this interesting subject might yet be obtained.

From the old controversial writers, the author has copied freely, preferring their own words to convey information, concerning the subjects upon which they wrote. When a quotation has been made from any book, the authority has been given; but not always in that which was verbal or written, and not printed. For the latter kind of information, the writer acknowledges his obligation to the late and lamented Mr. Holden, of Charlestown, Judge Mitchell, of Boston, and Rev. Dr. Pierce, of Brookline, Mass.; to the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Boston Athenæum, for the free use of their invaluable libraries; and also to those persons who have so politely furnished materials for the biographical sketches of their friends.

In the department of biography, information was obtained in part from books, and in part from correspondence and conversation with individuals. The information concerning the earlier biographies was obtained mostly from the writings of Cotton Mather, D. D., and from Allen's and Elliot's Biographical Dictionaries.

The writer fondly hopes that this subject will

not be deemed unworthy of attention. All things must have their beginning ; and this, though small, is important. We know that our music was mean ; but as we hope not to have a low seat among the nations, and as we hope in future to have a history of the art worth preserving, we would not lose the past, but gather it carefully up, and set it with the future, that the contrast may appear the more bright and beautiful. If the music was mean we must not deem it unworthy of notice ; and if the composers were ignorant, we must not judge them by our standard of right. They had not the means of studying the science critically, as we have, and the people for whom they wrote were far from being fastidious. But they lived and labored honorably, though in ignorance, and we should respect their intentions.

Believing that he has done what he could for the advancement of music, and for the encouragement of the church, the author presents this work to the musical world, as a veritable history of their art, and to the christian community, as a work that bears upon its pages no small share of the history of the church. It will illustrate the fact, that there has been no great revival of religion, without a corresponding interest in the improvement of music ; and no great improvement in music without an in-

crease of religion. If, in this work he has awakened inquiry, by giving interesting facts to the musical world, or words of encouragement to the church, he will esteem it his greatest possible success, and his very ample reward.

PHILADELPHIA, JANUARY 1st, 1846.