

many hymns on the same themes, and on similar aspects of those themes, and not a few of his later hymn are ineffective repetitions of earlier poems.

He was often careless of rime and rhythm; he seldom removed even obvious blemishes from his hymns after they were in print.

Doubtless, too, like every poet, he spoke to his own generation with peculiar intimacy of sympathy, and with peculiar precision of language; and doubtless the Church, in the exercise of its *nobile officium* will gradually sift his poems, approving some, and rejecting some.

Yet in reading them, to borrow Matthew Arnold's remark about Wordsworth, one is struck not only with the good work which he has done, but with the large quantity of that good work. He is the chief hymn-writer of Scotland. He ranks with the chief hymn-writers of England, with Watts, with Wesley, with Heber, with Keble. The hymns of no other modern writer are equally popular with his on both sides of the Atlantic. Let us inquire why his hymns hold such a place.

They are *poetic*.

We may describe a hymn as a well-ordered expression of spiritual emotion, having its end as well as its source in God. Such are the best of Dr. Bonar's hymns.

They are never exponents of Church Calendar, or of Church system; they are rarely suggested by external circumstances. They glow with emotion, sometimes intense, sometimes tender. They are never meditations only; they are the voice of the soul awakened by the contemplation of spiritual truth, by the experience of spiritual life, and turning to God, the living God. They are brightened by the play of gentle fancy, they are colored with Nature's tints. They are wrought in obedience to the dictates of genuine yet unobtrusive culture.

They are *Child-like*.

They are written by one who has been born from above, who has entered a new world, of whom it might be said:

The common sun, the air, the skies.

To him are opening paradise;

by one who has "lost himself" in the love of his Father, and will not waste a thought upon freaks of experience, or subtleties of style, but simply pours forth his heart in song.

They are *Manly*.

They are never gushing, never mawkish, never falsely sentimental. They are written by one who cheerfully encounters the facts of life; by one who courageously accepts his calling as a servant and a soldier of the Lord; by one who is willing to spend and be spent for Him.

They are *Hopeful*.

They are written by one who sustains himself with the assurance that, in no selfish sense, all things are working together for good by one

whose thoughts are ever turning towards the dawn of an eternal day; by one who associates the fulfillment of his aspirations with the coming and the kingdom of our Lord; by one who values the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as the sign and seal of present and of final bliss.

They are *Sympathetic*.

They are sympathetic in *variety of tone*; sometimes reflective, sometimes plaintive, sometimes cheerful, sometimes exultant; they are sympathetic in *aim*, written by one of like passions with ourselves, by one whom life has tried and tested, by one who is eager to encourage and to strengthen his fellows, "by the comfort wherewith he has been comforted of God."

These are some of the qualities which distinguish Dr. Bonar's hymns; these are some of the qualities which have made them a manual of devotion, and a treasury of song; these are some of the qualities which lead us to believe that many, very many, of his hymns will be prized by the Church of Christ during the years to come.

FIRST-CLASS BLUNDERERS.

J. H. ENGLE of Kansas quotes the general freight agent of a large railroad, who says he will in the future employ no young man who smokes cigarettes, and that he intends to get rid of all now in his department who smoke them. "Eighty-five per cent.," he says, "of the mistakes made in the office by my two hundred clerks are traceable to the thirty-two who use cigarettes."

Thirty-two would be less than one sixth of the two hundred clerks employed. They would be entitled to make about sixteen per cent. of the mistakes made in the office. Instead of being content with their proper share of blunders, which would be sixteen out of a hundred, or one for two men, they make eighty-five out of a hundred of the blunders, or about two and two-thirds blunders to every smoker; while the hundred and sixty-eight non-smokers have only fifteen mistakes to divide among them, which give not quite one mistake to eleven non-smokers, against two and two-thirds blunders made by each smoker.

Now is not that a pretty outlook for a young smoker who wants to do business, earn a living, and fill some important position in the world? The idea of a young man, or a boy, muddling his head and making a blundering fool of himself for the sake of sucking a poisonous, dirty little roll of tobacco, opium, and other abominations!

The Chinaman said, "Drink make Chinaman number one fool." If that is so, the cigarette fiend ought to count for "number two!"—*Scl.*

"There is nothing noble in being superior to some other man. The true nobility is in being superior to your previous self."