

The gay mockery of the Frenchman always peeps through the thin disguise of a serious vein occasionally used. Nothing of this sort is found in Dr. Holmes. He is pronounced in his dislike of what is called "Evangelical theology." For Jonathan Edwards he seems to have had an aversion, which, as his paper on the great divine* shows, renders him incapable of judging correctly either the man or his theology. But the Christian church everywhere is singing hymns written by the American essayist. Much of his writing has the tone of belief about it. He is never the flippant skeptic. In all that pertains to religious beliefs, his writings show moral earnestness, however far they diverge from Evangelical doctrine. And though he cannot be acquitted of a too bitter or acrid sarcasm in his flings (*e.g.*, his allusion to Jonathan Edwards's presidency of Nassau Hall, "Pages from an Old Volume of Life," p. 394), yet there are many passages in his writings breathing a lovely and chastened air of religious belief.

The sources of interest in Dr. Holmes's writings for a homiletical student are not wholly theological. They cover a wide field and touch on human interests in their deepest, most vital, and sometimes most sacred forms. The preacher not less than other men, rather far more, should take the well-known saying of the old Latin comedian Plautus as his own, and deem nothing foreign to himself which pertains to human life. If nowhere else, at least in the range of the authors he reads, he should obey this principle. There is an intellectual bigotry which turns up its nose at what are called the lighter forms of literature, as if they could do nothing for such intellectual superiority. Why should a preacher who can occupy himself with Kuenen and Kant and Kidd waste his time over such books as Birrell's "Obiter Dicta," Dr. John Brown's "Spare Hours," or Dr. Holmes's "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table"? Intellectual bigotry, like all other forms of bigotry, pays the penalty not only in narrowness, but, what is as bad, dryness. How fearfully dry some of our specialists in theological study do become!

Dr. Holmes has contributed three different forms of literature to our American development. He was first of all the poet, and his poetry now fills three volumes. Then he became the essayist, and in the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," "The Professor at the Breakfast Table," "The Poet of the Breakfast Table," "Over the Teacups," we have his most characteristic and most fascinating work. He has also tried novel-writing in his "Elsie Venner" and "A Mortal Antipathy," but it is not by his ventures in this line that he will live. If to all these we add such volumes as the "Pages from an Old Volume of Life," "Our Hundred Days in Europe," containing his lectures and addresses, his observations of the mother country, etc., we find thirteen volumes as the outcome of his literary career. This, too, in addition to his long labors as professor of anatomy. There is a lesson

* "Pages from an Old Volume of Life," pp. 361-401.