

growing fewer; his school of preaching is losing its votaries, while imitators of Mr. Jones are increasing.

The reason, we think, is this—that in preaching, as in everything else, there are certain fashions and styles, and these fashions and styles are adapted to circumstances, if, indeed, they do not spring directly from circumstances. It would be pleasant to think otherwise—to think that the Sermon on the Mount, or Paul's sermon on Mars' Hill, would be the type for all time to come. This, however, is not to be. So there have been schools of preaching almost as diverse as schools of painting, and, as the nineteenth century produced Turner, a man different in style from any other painter that ever lived, so it has produced Sam Jones, a man equally unlike in style his other brethren of the cloth.

But as centuries do not produce men without good reason, and as every man is more or less the reflection of his own age, moulding it perhaps to some extent, but generally much more moulded by it, so there are excellent reasons for the existence of the Rev. Sam Jones and his peculiarities.

We are, in the first place, under the influence of a recoil from the limp and conventional sermon that used to soothe our forefathers to drowsy slumber. A recoil generally leads those under its influence to extremes, so that one who had been accustomed to churches where the congregation either peacefully slumbered or sat bolt upright in uncomfortable seats, would probably be a little surprised to see in the churches ministered to by the Rev. Sam Jones "Laughter holding both his sides," "quips and cranks and wreathed smiles" following in close succession. The laughter is not, however, the result of frivolity on the part of either preacher or congregation. It is the result of an effort on the part of both to lessen the amount of formalism that has hitherto been held necessary in matters pertaining to the church.

There is another reason in these changes, lying more deeply hidden, but no less efficient. The age, aiming always at the practical, has demanded that the church and its ministers shall aim at the practical. Vague theories, dogmas, scholastic arguments, are out of keeping with the spirit of the times. Now no one has seen this more clearly than the Rev. Sam Jones. He is intensely practical. His illustrations and anecdotes are derived from everyday life. With theories he troubles himself little. He appeals to the philosophy of everyday life, and his doctrine is that which metaphysicians would call one of "common sense." Is it any wonder, then, that a congregation, composed of hard-working and practical people, welcome a man like him with more enthusiasm than they would bestow on the most erudite scholar or silver-toned orator? We speak of Sam Jones, but we use his name to designate a whole class of preachers who form the modern school of preaching. In our own city there are at least two clergymen whose style of pulpit oratory, differing as widely from each other as both do from the American revivalist, are well worthy of study. The Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, of St. Andrew's, is one, and Professor Clark, of Trinity College, the other. To what we have termed the modern school they do not altogether belong, inasmuch as both of them avoid with the utmost care the sensational. They do, however, cultivate the practical. The chief characteristic of Mr. Macdonnell's preaching is his intense earnestness, manifested in every gesture, word, and thought; the chief characteristic of Prof. Clark, his application of ripe thought and broad intellect to the practical questions of the day. It is no flattery to say that both of these clergymen exhibit the best elements of the older and the modern style.

Whether Mr. Jones and his school of preaching is durable or not is a question hard to answer. It is always difficult and perhaps dangerous to distinguish between what is durable and what is not, in questions involving taste and opinion merely. Probably there will be modifications, leaving the pulpit better to this extent that formalism will be reduced to a minimum, and clearness and directness will be necessary to success.

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### IN DIVERS TONES.\*

THERE are few announcements in which the Canadian literary public might be expected to feel a livelier concern than in that of the appearance of a volume of verse by Professor Charles G. D. Roberts. For a long time they that watch and grow not weary over the germination of the divine art beneath our northern sun have comforted themselves with Professor Roberts' performances. The vehicle of his pen has carried Canadian thought further we think along metrical paths than any other of British inspiration. Such bays as have been wrested from our silent forests, so full of ideality yet so unproductive of it, are his. And lest this be construed into meagre and unwilling concession we must add that they have been more than fairly won.

"In Divers Tones" is an apt title for the poems to which it has been

given. They are all short. One, "Actæon," is sustained for nearly ten pages; there is not another that passes five. And their tonic quality, rather than any difference in form or colouring, though many exist, distinguishes them chiefly. Facile expressions they seem of a nature whose moods are set in many keys. We see much in them of graceful descriptive power, of beauty in thought and diction, and of that subtle poetic inspiration that informs all true art, but we seem to hear more. We find ourselves bending to catch the strain of the song, half forgetful of its burden. "Divers" indeed, are the notes our poet strikes, and not all lent and blent to one harmony. All along the scale from this from "The Marvellous Work":

Not yet, for all their quest of it, have men  
Cast wholly by the ignoble dread of truth!  
Each of God's laws, if but so late discerned,  
Their faiths upgrew unsuckled in it, fills  
Their hearts with angry fears, perchance lest God  
Be dwarfed behind His own decrees, or made  
Superfluous through His perfectness of deed,

to this from "La Belle Tromboniste":

The dinning cymbals shrill  
Kiss and clash,  
Drum and kettledrum at will  
Roll and clash;  
But that trombone over all  
Toots unto my heart a call—  
Maid petite and trombone tall,  
*It's a mash!*

Sweet bells jangled out of tune in all verity! We can hardly forgive the ringer for the discord they make. It would have been so easy to have left out "La Belle Tromboniste"; and the bad taste of her is so obvious! How could an idyl possibly be sounded upon a trombone!

So few, however, are the liberties Professor Roberts permits himself to take with his Muse, and so many are the legitimate fruits they have cultivated together that it would be unfair to both to dwell longer upon such verses as have, we think, been revived from dead numbers of *Life*, where their sepulchre was meet. And when this poet writes seriously he prefers classical themes, songs of moods, and pictures in which the mood-inspiration is so subtle and so important a pigment as to thrill the reader's veins with some suggestion of the painter's bliss. As might be expected, Professor Roberts is happiest among the "lesser-bound Bœotian hills," or the shady glades of Peneus, or listening anywhere to the gods and the demigods that whisper still from their distant solitudes across the chasm of the years to some favoured mortals. Here is one of his haunts, described in irregular measure of pure music, with clear and lovely imaginative power, and a stress of tenderness that is very charming:

How through the cleft of its bosom goes sweetly the water Peneus,  
How by Peneus the sword breaks into purple and blue!  
How the long slope-floored beech-glades mount to the wind-wakened uplands,  
Where, through flame-berried ash, troop the hoofed Centaurs at morn;  
Nowhere greens a copse but the eyebeams of Artemis pierce it.  
Breathes no laurel her balm but Phœbus' fingers caress,  
Springs no bed of wild blossom but limbs of Dryad have pressed it;  
Sparkle the nymphs, and the brooks chime with shy laughter and calls.

The fitful beauty of "The Pipes of Pan," and the calmer, higher, more sustained repose of "Actæon," whose sad story one can almost hear the low-browed Greek woman-philosopher telling, make, we think, the strongest intellectual claim of the volume. The gentle, minor soul-singings are very plaintive and sweet, but the note is seldom held long enough, as in "Dark" and "Mist." There is strong vitality in many of the purely descriptive pieces, in which, however, is also to be observed sometimes a deficiency in climax, as in "The Slave Woman." Exquisitely simple thoughts come often to the poet through scenic associations, as this from "On the Creek":

But, Dear, keep thou in mind  
These moments swift and sweet;  
Their memory thou shalt find  
Illumine the common street.

And thro' the dust and din,  
Smiling, thy heart shall hear  
Quiet waters, lapsing thin,  
And locusts shrilling clear.

To sum up criticisms of Professor Roberts' verse, we might say that it is somewhat lacking in balance, in symmetry of thought and measure, in that development which is the result of infinite painstaking. The most perfect thing in the volume is the "Ballade of Philomela," an unpretentious little song, of which every line bears a distinctly necessary relation to the whole, and the whole is an integral idea. This is less characteristic of the poems generally than their genuine merit makes highly desirable. The book is full of twitterings and flutterings among low green branches, very soft, very sweet, very musical, but not to be accepted without demur, in view of the loftier flights of song of which this gifted Canadian has shown himself capable.

S. J. D.

\* "In Divers Tones." By Charles G. D. Roberts. Montreal: Dawson Brothers.