

Shared Thoughts

Our latest member David Smithies has kindly agreed to allow publication of extracts from a recent communication to David Shacklock;

"My only tenuous connection with Sabine Baring Gould is that he recorded for posterity five of the songs of my x 3 great uncle Roger Luxton, 'The Song Man'. (A pity that SBG, judging some of Roger's lyrics indelicate, bowdlerized them somewhat, but I believe the originals are deposited in Plymouth Library).

I have also sung 'Onward Christian Soldiers' with gusto amidst vast and enthusiastic congregations in West Africa and in India and I am sure that the great man would have been pleased with the zeal with which we bombarded the gates of Heaven!

So, through discovering *Songs of the West* and with Sybil's encouragement, I have begun to appreciate the true worth - indeed, the genius, of Baring Gould and am the more entranced as I am able to extend my reading.

...I have been hugging myself with delight this morning as I have riffled through the two volumes you have sent.

"As I drove along, I chanced on an umbrella maker, trudging through the snow..." (page 132 of *Strange Survivals*). Schubert or Mendelssohn, reading that line, would have seized upon it to swell their cornucopias of *Leider* - SBG, high in a gig, sheltering under his scarlet tyrolese umbrella; the trudging artisan, dropping his pedestrian gamps in astonishment.

Then again, in *Village Preaching* (page 30) expounding

John 1: 22: "What sayest thou of thyself," he writes; "If you were to ask this question of almost everyone, and to accept 'their own estimates of themselves, you would form the opinion that the world was full of the most estimable fellows possible..."

There are jewels on every page. All this and 15 children, too. It makes one proud to be British.

Thanks David(s).