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THE POETS OF THE OXFORD MOVEMENT.



THE principal actors in the famous revolution of English thought and religion known as the Tractarian Movement, were not only profound thinkers—in the theological and scientific sense of the word—but many of them were besides sweet singers. Can a man of deep thought be otherwise than a poet? The profound thinker being one who seeks truth, and who finds it, then must he also recognize its beauty; and if Beauty be but the splendor of Truth, so the poet is the lover of Beauty in Truth. We can thus understand how such earnest and grave and learned men as John Henry Newman, Frederick Faber, and John Keble found in poetry their true element. These are the three men whose names are most prominently connected with the great religious transition of the nineteenth century. From similarity of taste and themes, Cowper and Wordsworth might also be placed in this group, for, although not of the Oxford agitation, they have much in common with the brilliant trio. They all speak in the same strain; gentleness, simplicity, naturalness, and deep, quiet feeling, characterize them all. As a contrast to this group of poets, there is another equally famous, possessed of equal, if not superior, genius—Shelley, Keats and Byron—the poets of passion, of intensity and of un-