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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

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THE place of Cardinal Newman among recent masters in the eloquence of the pulpit is peculiar—is, in fact, unique. In him we encounter a man who, besides being a preacher of illustrious name, presumptively claims, that is, claims by wide consent of imposing opinion, the rank of a permanent classic—a permanent classic of the highest order—in English literature. This state of the case with the present subject will justify, if it does not demand, a correspondingly differed course of critical discussion.

John Henry Newman, during one prolonged stadium of his career, suffered under an undeserved adversity of public judgment as to his character and conduct. But this wrong against him was amply righted at length, perhaps more, even, than amply righted; and, in the total retrospect of his life, he must be pronounced a select and singular favorite of fame and of fortune. He died recently in an odor of sanctity that filled the English-speaking world.

For a quarter of a century before his death, it had been the habit and tradition of enlightened critical essayists and of the higher periodical press to praise his style as the final consummation of everything noble and beautiful in expression that contemporary English literature had to show; and, when at last his death made it seem necessary that appreciation should pass into eulogy, then there were not wanting those who would have it that John Henry Newman's prose was, upon the whole, the very best writing, of whatever time, in the English language.

In the conscious presence of such a universal fondness, grown a fashion, for eulogizing, to criticise calmly, disinterestedly, without prepossession on the one hand, and, on the other hand, equally without opposition unjustly exaggerated to make the balance just, will certainly be a little difficult; but it is that, precisely that, which must here be attempted. For it is of the very idea of really profitable criticism that it shall be, as far as possible, absolutely uninfluenced,