

The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman.

JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN

was one of the most remarkable men of the present century. He was remarkable both on account of his great intellectual gifts, and on account of the vicissitudes of his long and eventful career. During the best part of three score years he has been at all times a notable factor in the history of the religious movements of the age. Mr. Austin, an acute critic, accurately described him as "the man in the working of whose individual mind the intelligent portion of the English public is more interested than in that of any other living person." Whether as Oxford preacher, or Anglican reformer, or Tractarian disputant, or Catholic controversialist, or Roman Cardinal he has continually filled a large place in popular interest. Whatever people may have thought of his creed, they never had two opinions about his vast mental endowments. As theologian, dialectician, philosopher, historian, critic, poet and preacher, he has made a great and enduring mark. Skilful in controversy, earnest in all matters of belief, pure and high-minded in every action of his life, sincere when the world, with all the captiousness of the *odium theologium* deemed him insincere, he has filled with a noble record the long chapter of his fourscore years. To most Englishmen his features, through the agency of the camera, are familiar enough. They will readily recall his keen, ascetic face, as aquiline in character as that of the great Conde—a face worn with the deep furrows of one who has thought much, and troubled much, and, perhaps, suffered much. Still more will they recall the various episodes of his life—his early fame as a preacher, his identification with a movement which was then thought, and is still thought by many to have had for its effect, whatever may have been its aim, the introduction of a Romeward spirit into the Church of England; his ultimate secession to Rome; his influence over a large body of waverers when the Catholic fever was at its height; his controversies; the honours conferred upon him in his old age; and his quiet sequestered life at the Edgbaston Oratory. They will recall, too, how the sense of bitterness caused by his secession—the sense of betrayal, so to speak—long since gave way to a feeling of respectful confidence when his true character was laid bare, and the world came to recognize that every action of his life had been inspired by the deepest and holiest convictions of conscience. "It is not necessary," says one of the most appreciative of his biographers, Mr. Henry Jennings, M.P., himself a Protestant, "that one should be a communicant in the Church of Rome to cherish an admiration bordering on reverence for the eminent Oratorian. No man in this world—not even the self-mortifying saints of the Roman hagiology—ever led a holier life in the sense of purity, and piety, and devotional earnestness and conscientious zeal. Few men have ever handled the weapons of polemical warfare with a more consummate skill. Not very many have rivalled him in the productiveness of his intellectual life, or in the variety of his intellectual gifts."

John Henry Newman was born in London in the year 1801. His younger brother, Francis, starting from the same point, and influenced at the outset by much the same training, arrived at conclusions diametrically opposed to his own. While the one drifted to religious liberalism, to pure Theism in fact, the mind of the other was gradually schooled to the opposite pole of Faith. How the result came about in the case of the more celebrated of the two may be read in that remarkable work, "The *Apologia*," an autobiography in which the Cardinal unveils his life, his opinions, the influences which had operated upon him, and the changes he had undergone, with a candour that has caused it to be compared to the "Confessions" of St. Augustine. During the early part of his childhood Newman lived with his father in Bloomsbury Square. It is not a little remarkable that one of his early playmates should have been Benjamin Disraeli. According to one writer "on most Saturday afternoons in

the last year of the first decade of the present century, two boys, aged respectively nine and five, might have been seen playing in the gardens of Bloomsbury Square, London. The boys, both natives of the Square, offered the most complete contrast to each other in appearance. The younger, whose head was profuse with long, black, glossy ringlets, was a child of rare Jewish type of beauty, and full of life and activity. The other was grave in demeanor, and wore his hair close cut, and walked and talked and moved in a way which in young people is called 'old fashioned.' He was of pure English race and Peritan family. The names of these children denoted these differences as much as their appearances. The one was Benjamin Disraeli, the other John Newman." Both of these lads had a great future before them; one becoming Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the other a Roman Cardinal.

Young Newman first went to a private school and thence to Oxford, where he graduated with honours in 1820, and was soon after elected to a fellowship of Oriel. The influences under which he was thus brought were of the most intellectual kind. Newman's academical career assumed at once, both on account of his splendid gifts, as well as through the associations of Oriel, the promise of conspicuous brilliancy. University tradition tells of his wide scholarship, his omnivorous reading, his retentive memory and his clear methodical intellect. In 1824 he took orders and was appointed to a curacy in Oxford. His first sermon was preached from the text "Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening;" and it was not perhaps an altogether undesigned coincidence that the last sermon he preached at St. Mary's before resigning from the Anglican Ministry, should have been from the same text. He soon gained a reputation as a preacher. His style was wonderfully lucid, his language coloured with the rich glows of a picturesque imagination. Of action and dramatic effect he had none; but what he lacked in the Demosthenic qualification of an orator he made up for in a voice of singular and persuasive sweetness. We get many beautiful descriptions of the man from his contemporaries, and the impressions left upon their minds by his preaching. "There was a stamp and seal upon him," says Mr. Gladstone "there was a solemn sweetness and music in the tone, there was a completeness in the figure, taken together with the tone and the manner, which made his delivery singularly, attractive." "A sermon from him" Mr. Froude has said "was a poem, formed on a distinct idea, fascinating by its subjects, welcome—how welcome!—from its sincerity, interesting from its originality even to those who were careless about religion; and to others who wished to be religious, but had found religion dry and wearisome, it was like the springing of a fountain out of the rock." Another of his contemporaries, Canon Oakeley in his Notes on the Tractarian Movement "gives a graphic picture of Newman as a preacher. "His delivery of Scripture" he writes "was a sermon in which you forgot the human preacher; a drama in which the vividness of the representation was marred by no effort and degraded by no art. He stood before the sacred volume as if penetrating its contents to their very centre, so that his manner alone, his pathetic changes of voice, or his thrilling pauses, seemed to convey the commentary in the simple enunciation of the text. He brought out meanings where none had been even suspected, and invested passages which in the hands of the profane are often the subject of unbecoming levity, with a solemnity which forced irreverence to retire abashed into its hiding places."

His appearance about this time is graphically described by Mr. Froude: "He was above the middle height, slight and spare. His head was large, his face remarkably like that of Julius Cæsar. The forehead, the shape of the ears, and nose were almost the same. The lines of the mouth were very peculiar, and I should say, exactly the same. I have often