

tend "to bring into contempt the religious earnestness and scriptural tastes, which then distinguished a large portion of the public." This characteristic of Jonson's works, by enhancing the value of the supplanted religion, cannot fail to give the reader a much more favorable idea of Catholicism. A number of very devout poems, such as the beautiful "Hymn to God the Father," are also ascribed to his pen and are worthy of a more enlightened author.

Around Jonson's name we find grouped a little band of Catholic poets who, though more or less forgotten, are not the less deserving of mention. Ben himself was never tired of singing the praises of one of them, Henry Constable. As he was a staunch adherent of the forbidden faith, prejudice has drawn the veil of obscurity over Constable's works. He was a noted sonnet writer, and his compositions "In praise of God and of his Saints," contain many beautiful sentiments. One sonnet in honor of the Blessed Virgin is deserving of particular notice as treating of the Immaculate Conception, though it was three centuries later before that common belief became a dogma of faith. The once pre-eminent fame of Sir William Davenant, Jonson's successor as Poet Laureate, has also suffered for his religion. Southey terms him "a poet of rare and indubitable genius," while Scott has praised his vigorous conception and felicity of expression. He strove hard to improve the literary standard, and partially succeeded in restoring it "to its natural rank in society as an auxiliary of religion and virtue." His poems are models of morality, a very rare thing at that day, and are decidedly Catholic in tone. Davenant's contemporary, the noble poet priest, Crashaw, owes a great deal of his present reputation to the praise of his friend and co-worker, Cowley. The line marked out by Southwell was the one Crashaw chose to follow, and he has beautified our literature with many noble religious poems. Besides a great intensity of pious feeling, these display much energy of thought and wealth of diction. The "Epigrammata Sacra" has evoked from Coleridge a well-merited tribute to Crashaw's "power and opulence of invention." This work contains that beautiful passage,

"The modest water saw its God and blushed."

William Habington was another Catholic poet of the time who has been saved from oblivion by the merit of his works. His