

The Catholic Weekly Review.

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CANADA.

Reddite quæ sunt Cæsaris, Cæsari; et quæ sunt Dei, Deo.—Matt. 22: 21.

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AN INTELLECTUAL LEADER.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF JOHN HENRY CARD. NEWMAN.

I.

There are names the mere mention of which is an epitomized history of great events. When an individual becomes so identified with any movement, whether as promoter, opponent, or victim, that its history cannot be given without incorporating with it a portion at least of his history; so, conversely, his name cannot be mentioned without suggesting to the thoughtful mind the train of events with which he was so intimately connected. Thus are bound together for all time the life of John Henry Cardinal Newman, and the history of the reaction towards Catholicity which has been so remarkable a feature of the religious growth in England in this century.

In many Catholic publications of late years has appeared the representation of an old man, in ecclesiastical garb; the face thin, and much wrinkled, mouth sunken; eyes evidently weak; hair snow-white. This is the Newman of to-day when he has exceeded the great age of fourscore.

Earlier portraits show a sweet, grave, firm mouth, dark eyes, lustrous, and full of intelligence, though perhaps never strong, as spectacles appear very early; and abundant dark hair. The shape of the head and features is said to resemble that of Julius Cesar. A fascinating face it is, and with good right; for it is the face of a man who, intellectually, and morally, stands a 'king among the sons of men;' a man whom all classes of his countrymen love and reverence, and of whom all Catholics are justly proud.

John Henry Newman was born February 1st, 1801, so that he lacks very little of being as old as the century. His father, John Newman, a London banker, was of pure English and Puritan extraction. His mother's maiden name was Jemima Fourdrinier. He had two sisters, Harriet and Jemima, one of whom married Rev. Mr. Mozely, and the other, Mr. Mozely. Those who think that Charles Reding, in Loss and Gain, represents Newman himself will notice that Mary Reding also married a clergyman.

His brother Francis, beginning life under the same religious influences as his distinguished brother, has reached the opposite pole of belief—that of pure liberalism.

Among the early playmates of the present Cardinal was one two years his senior, who was destined to fill as large a space in the political history of the land of his birth as Newman in the religious, and to shine with equal lustre, though on a lower plane, in its literature,—I mean Benjamin Disraeli.

Newman took delight very early in reading the Bible, he tells us. Long years after he speaks with affection of the influence of its "grave and majestic English" in forming the character. From his very infancy he had a love of religion, and a rare capacity for accurately comprehending the mystical.

At fifteen he fell, he tells us, "under the influence of a definite creed, and received into his mind impressions of dogma." This belief in dogmatic as opposed to emotional religion has been the key note of his life. That a positive, objective revelation had been made by God to man, and that man can be saved only by receiving it—this idea firmly fixed in his mind has been the central belief to which all others were referred. His first teaching was Calvinistic, and he experienced a conversion, "of which," he says in his Apologia, "I am yet more certain than that I have hands or feet." It is characteristic of his gentle, loving nature that the mercy of his own supposed election to salvation occupied his mind quite to the exclusion of others being pre-destined to damnation. On this he did not dwell at all.

He has given us, with great minuteness, the course of his religious opinions and the various parts played by men and books in forming them. One feels astonished at the ease and accuracy with which he recalls mental impressions received when a mere boy, and the careful analysis with which he follows their development or obliteration. It was at fifteen that he resolved to be a celibate and a missionary. At this age, too, he could make his own, and repeat opinions drawn from the works of such men as Hume and Paine. He also made a collection of Scriptural proofs of the Trinity; and he tells us that, in reading Milner's Church History, he was "nothing short of enamoured" of the quotations from the Fathers. It was an abiding love.

He was graduated from Oxford at the remarkably early age of nineteen, and shortly after, at the age of twenty-two, was elected Fellow of Oriel College there. This means of income came opportunely at a time of sorrow and financial embarrassment—shortly after his father's death. The family removed from London to Horspath, and shortly after to a home once occupied by Jean Jacques Rousseau at Newnham.

In 1824 he took orders, and soon after occupied a curacy at Oxford. His first sermon was from the text, "Man goeth forth unto his work and his labour until evening." "It was not, perhaps, an altogether undesigned coincidence," says Mr. Jennings, "that the last sermon he preached at St. Mary's, before resigning the living in 1843, should have been from the same text."

In 1826 he became rector of Oriel, a year later was appointed one of the examiners for the degree of B.A., and in the following twelvemonth was presented to the living of St. Mary's, with an adjoining chaplaincy of