

Keen Appreciation of a Master of the English Tongue.

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ANGELA HENRY.
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LIFE OF WHAT KIND?

If this be life, if it be life to impart a tone to the court and uses of Parliament, to ministers of state, to law and literature, to universities and schools, and to society: if it be life to be a principle

DR. BROWNSON.

light, and on which I turned my face.

spirit of those essentials to ultimate
restoration of body and soul that are
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THE CHARM

OF NEWMAN

ENTIRELY Baffles Description

Keen Appreciation of a Master of the English Tongue.

Augustine Birrell, the English Minister of Education, and known as an essayist long before he came into public view as a statesman, some years ago wrote an essay on "The Style of Newman" which is worth reproducing as an admirable piece of literary criticism and as an incentive to Catholic readers to familiarize themselves with the work of the great convert who is by common consent one of the greatest masters of the English tongue. The following excerpts from Birrell's essay will repay perusal.

The charm of Dr. Newman's style necessarily baffles description; as we might one seek to analyze the fragrance of a flower, or to expound in words the jumping of one's heart when a beloved friend unexpectedly enters the room.

One can, of course, heap on words, Dr. Newman's style is pellucid, it is animated it is varied; at times icy cold, it oftener glows with a fervent heat, it employs as its obedient and well-trained servant a vast vocabulary and it does so always with the ease of the educated gentleman, who by a sure instinct ever avoids alike the ugly pedantry of the book-worm and the forbidding accents of the lawyer and the stiff conceit of the man of scientific theory.

VARIETY OF STYLE.

Dr. Newman's sentences sometimes fall upon the ear like well-considered and final judgments, each word being weighed and counted out with dignity and precision; but at other times the demeanor and language of the judge are hastily abandoned, and substituted for them, we encounter the impetuous torrent—the captivating rhetoric, the brilliant imagery, the frequent examples, the repetition of the same idea in different words of the eager and accomplished advocate addressing men of like passions with himself.

Dr. Newman always aims at effect and never misses it. He writes as an orator speaks, straight at you. His object is to convince, and to convince by engaging your attention, exciting your interest, enlivening your fancy. It is not his general practice to address the pure reason. He knows (he well may) how little reason has to do with men's convictions.

"Do not want," he says, "to be converted to a smart syllogism." In another place he observes: "The heart is commonly reached, not through the same—but through the imagination by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, and by description. Persons influence us, voices melt us, books subdue us, deeds inflame us."

Dr. Newman, reclusive though he is, has always got the world stretched out before him; its unceasing roar surrounds in his ears as does the murmur of the ocean in far inland shell.

In one of his Catholic sermons, the sixth of his "Discourses to Mixed Congregations," there is a gorgeous piece of rhetoric in which he describes the people looking in at the shop windows and reading advertisements in the newspapers. Many of his pages positively glow with light and heat and color. One is at times reminded of Fielding.

A QUIET HUMOR.

Humor he possesses in a marked degree. A quiet humor, of course, as befits his sober profession and the gravity of the subjects on which he loves to discourse. It is not the humor that is founded on a lively sense of the incongruous. That kind though the most delightful of all, is apt, as he is in the hands of the great masters, the men whom you can point upon your fingers, to wear a slightly professional aspect. It happens unexpectedly, but all the same we expect it to happen, and we have to our laughter ready.

Newman's quiet humor always shows us unawares, and is accepted gratefully, partly on account of its intrinsic excellence and partly because we are glad to find the "Elgin" male with Paul's bad girl-doing house.

There is room for mirth in his heart. In sarcasm Dr. Newman is pre-eminent. Here his extraordinary power of compression, which are little sort of marvellous in one who has so much a talent for expansion, comes to his aid and enable him to squeeze into a couple of sentences readings, argument, judgment and action.

DEADLY WEAPONS ARE HIS.

Had he led the secular life, and adopted a Parliamentary career, he would have been simply terrific, for weapons of offence are both numerous and deadly. His sentences slash—his invectives destroys. The pompous high-placed imbecile mouthed his platitudes, the wordy socialist with his oven full of half-baked thoughts, the ill-bred rhetorician with his tawdry aphorisms, the heartless hate-producing satirist had gone down before his sword and spear.

But God was merciful to these sinners; Newman became a priest, and by privy counsellors.

And, lastly, all these striking qualities and gifts float about in a pleasant atmosphere. As there are some even in England when merely

to go out and breathe the common air is joy, and when, in consequence, that great tyrant, our bosom's lord, "Sits lightly in his throne," so, to take up almost any one of Dr. Newman's books, and they are really numerous—between twenty and thirty volumes—is to be led away from "evil tongues," and the "sneers of selfish men," from the mud and mire, the shoving and pushing that gather and grow round the pig troughs of life, into a diviner ether, a purer air, and is to spend your time, in the company of one who, though he may sometimes astonish, yet never fails to make you feel (to use Carlyle's words about a very different author) "that you have passed your evening well and nobly, as in the whole of wisdom, not ill and disgracefully as in brawling tavern supper rooms with fools and noisy persons."

"Anything," says glorious John Dryden, "though ever so little, which a man speaks of himself—in my opinion, is still too much." A round opinion most surely, and yet how interesting—are the personal touches we find scattered up and down Dryden's noble prefaces.

PRECISION HIS WATCHWORD.

So with Newman—his dignity, his self-restraint, his taste, are all the greatest stickler for a stiff upper lip and the consumption of your own smoke could desire, and yet the personal note is frequently sounded. He is never afraid to strike it when the perfect harmony that exists between his character and his style demands it is sound, and so it has come about that we love what he has written because he wrote it, and we love him who wrote it because of what he has written.

Let me give a chance specimen of the precision of his language. The passage is from the prefatory notice of the Cardinal prefixed to the Rev. William Palmer's "Notes of a visit to the Russian Church in the Years 1840, 1841." It is dated 1882, and consequently the writing of a man over eighty years of age:

"William Palmer was one of those earnest-minded and devout men, for years since, who deeply convinced of the great truth that our Lord had instituted and still acknowledges and protects, a Visible Church—one individual, and integral; Catholic, to be spread over the earth, Apostolic, to be continued with the Apostles of Christ, and Holy, as being the dispenser of His Word, and Sacraments considered it at present to exist in three main branches, or rather in a triple presence, the Latin, the Greek, and the Anglican, these three being one and the same Church, distinguishable from each other by secondary, gratuitous and local, although important characteristics.

STERN ACCURACY.

"And whereas the whole Church in its fulness was, as they believed, at once and severally Anglican, Greek and Latin, so in turn each one of these was the whole Church; and it followed that; whenever any one of the three was present, the other two, by nature of the case, were absent, and therefore the three could not have direct relations with each other, as if they were three substantial bodies, there being no real difference between them except a mere accidental of place.

"Moreover, since, as has been said, a given territory there could not be more than one of the three, it followed that Christians generally, wherever they were, were bound to observe and had claim to be recognized that one ceasing to belong to the Anglican Church, as Anglican, when they were at Rome, and ignoring Rome, as Rome, when they found themselves in Moscow.

"Lastly, not to acknowledge this inevitable outcome of the initial idea, the Church, viz., that it was both everywhere and one, was bad logic, and to act in opposition to it was nothing short of setting up altar against altar, that is the hideous sin of schism, and a sacrilege. This I conceive to be the formal teaching of Anglicanism."

The most carefully considered judgment of Lord Westbury or Lord Cairns may be searched in vain for any examples of stern accuracy and beautiful aptness of language.

ORATORICAL RUSH.

For examples of what may be called Newman's oratorical rush, one need not far look—though when taken from their context and deprived of their conclusion they are robbed of three-fourths of their power.

Here is a passage from his second letter addressed to the Anglican Society of 1833. It is or the Life of the National Church of England:

"Doubtless the national religion is great. It is a great power in the life of us, it yields an enormous influence; it represses a hundred foes; it conducts a hundred undertakings; it attracts men to it, use them, rewards them; it has thousands of useful homes up and down the country where quiet men may do their work and benefit its people; it attracts vast sums in the shape of voluntary offerings, and with them builds churches, prints and distributes innumerable Bibles, books of tracts, and sustains missionaries in all parts of the earth.

"In all parts of the earth it opposes the Catholic Church, denounces her as anti-Christian, and strikes the world against her, and destroys her influence, and her authority and consequence here and elsewhere.

"In all parts of the world it is a religion of gentlemen, of scholars, of men of substance and men of personal faith at all.

LIFE OF WHAT KIND?

If this be life, if it be life to impart a tone to the court and the houses of Parliament, to ministers of state, to law and literature, to universities and schools, and to society; if it be life to be a principle

of order in the population, and an organ of benevolence and almsgiving towards the poor, if it be life to man, men decent, respectable and sensible, to embellish and reform the family circle, to deprive vice of its grossness and to shed a glow over avarice and ambition; if, indeed, it is the life of religion to be the first level in the queen's crown, and the highest step of her throne, then doubtless the National Church is replete, it overflows with life; but the question has still to be answered: life of what kind?

For a delightful example of Dr. Newman's humor, which is largely, if not entirely, a playful humor, I will remind the reader of the celebrated imaginary speech against the British Constitution attributed to the Potemkin family, and supposed to have been delivered at Moscow in the year 1850. It is too long for quotation, but will be found in the first of the "Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England." The whole book is one of the best humored books in the English language.

If I may suppose this article read by some one who is not yet acquainted with Newman's writings, I would advise him, unless he is bent on theology, to begin not with the "Sermons," not even with the "Apologia," but with the "Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England." Then let him take up the "Lectures on the Idea of a University," and on "University Subjects." These may be followed by "Discussions and Arguments," after which he will be well disposed to read the "Lectures on the Difficulties Felt by Anglicans."

If after he has despatched these volumes he is not infected with what one of those charging bishops called "Newmanism," he is possessed of a devil of obtuseness no wit of man can expel.

HIS POETRY APPEALING.

Dr. Newman's poetry cannot be assessed without a word, though an ill-fitted to do it justice. "Lead kindly Light," has forced its way to every hymn book and heart. Those who go, and those who do not go to church, the fervent believer and the tired-out sceptic, here meet on common ground.

The language of the verses in their terse sincerity seems to reduce all human feelings, whether fed on dogmas and holy rites or on man's own heart, to a common denominator.

The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on."
The unbeliever can often say no more. The unbeliever will never willingly say less.—Augustine Birrell

Did They Regret It?

Three Great Converts Answer to a Stock Calumny.

The former associates of those who in the Catholic Church are fond of setting that the converts keenly regret their course, that if their pre-knowledge had been as complete as their after-knowledge they never would have taken the step, that they suffer great distress of mind when they see at last just for what they have let themselves in for. A contemporary quotes the statements of the three most prominent converts of the last century, Cardinal Manning, Cardinal Newman and Ormes Brownson, in which this calumny is disposed of with a fervor and length of faith that leaves no doubt how these great luminaries regarded the grace of conversion. They have been reproduced many times, but continue to make edifying and instructive reading.

CARDINAL WISEMAN.

"To the author of "Recollections of Cardinal Wiseman." Manning wrote under date of April 16, 1861 (he is then Dr. Manning, of St. Mary's, Weymouth):

"(Your telling me of my expected return to Protestantism gives me the joy of saying that, from the hour that I submitted to the Divine Voice that speaks through the one only Catholic and Apostolic Church, I have never known much as a momentary shadow of doubt pass over my reason or my conscience. I could as soon believe that two and two make five as that the Catholic faith is false or Anglicanism true."

CARDINAL NEWMAN.

"A postscript to his famous "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk," published in 1871, Newman says:

"From the day I came as a Catholic (this now close upon thirty years), I have never had a moment's misgiving that the communion of Apostles is that Church which Rome sets up at Pentecost. . . . I have never for a moment hesitated in my conviction, since 1845, that it was my clear duty to join the Catholic Church as I did then, and that, in my own conscience, it would be to deprive . . . myself for a moment have I wished to turn back: never have I ceased to thank my Maker for His mercy in enabling me to make the great change; and never has He let me feel shaken by Him, or in distress of kind of religious trouble."

DR. BROWNSON.

"With like vehemence of soul wrote Dr. Brownson, at the close of the same year, in announcing his disaffection of the Review, which cost him so much of his personal character and is so completely the expression of his mind."

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
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I have recently received a letter addressed 'A Catholic,' telling me that Bishops and clergy have no conscience in me, and, when they can no longer use me, they will repudiate me, knowing that I am too independent, when brought to the test, to submit to their tyranny. The letter serves me to exhort me to open a correspondence with Dr. Dollinger, to inform the Council of the Vatican to turn the Review to the defence of the 'Old Catholics.' By doing this, it assures me I may become immensely popular, and gain the Review an almost unlimited circulation, and it might have added belief all my convictions and the whole Catholic faith, and damn my soul. If suggestions such as these could ever have moved me, I could never have become a Catholic. I did not seek admission into the Church for the sake of wealth, honors or popularity. If I am—as you I am—measurably unpopular with Catholics, I can say truly I have never sought popularity. I have rather despised it. Yet I have received more marks of conscience from our venerable bishops and clergy than I have deserved, and even more popular with Catholics than I ever expected to be. What of wealth? Why, what could I do with it, standing as I do on the brink of my grave? The generosity of Catholics, in an amity so securely secured, has provided for few personal wants. . . . What I want with wealth? What do I want for popularity, which I never sought, and on which I turned my

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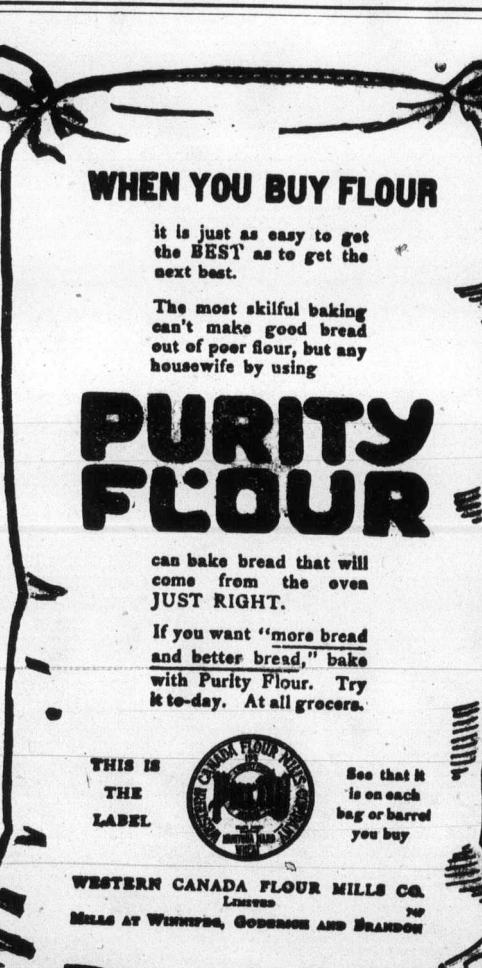
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back when not yet of age? I have, and I desire to have, no home out of the Catholic Church, with which I am more than satisfied, and which I love as the dearest, tenderest and most affectionate mother. My only ambition is to live and die in her communion."

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A Lesson From Oberammergau.

The people of Oberammergau, Austria, where the Passion Play is enacted every ten years, hit upon a great truth in the preparation for the representation of the Christ-life, choosing the actors ten years in advance of the time set for the play. When Mater, who has for three decades taken the character of Jesus, as a very young man, he was chosen for this great work, and trained for it by studying the qualities which made that short life a pattern for all time. He was expected to live in every respect. He blamed the life of Christ—a man set apart to become in his life, mind, body, spirit and personal resemblance as near a replica of the Christ as has ever been conceived by painter or poet. It is said that the likeness to Jesus artistic presentations is so striking that one feels as if in the very presence of the Redeemer.

Now, what is the great truth which this fact teaches? That "the most in due time becomes the outmost," the perfect spiritual life reproducing itself in the outward sem-

This furnishes a great object lesson for those who are interested in physical and spiritual development. It is not a miraculous change, nor the result of a so-called course of sessions, but it is a growth; as the perimenter florist prepares the soil, arranges the amount of sunshine the plant shall receive, irrigates with the necessary waters, and sings with infinite patience the growing flower to perfection; so the spirit of these essentials to ultimate perfection of body and soul that are

spoken of in Holy Writ, leaf and bud and flower until they reach "the fruit of the spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," and adds, "if we live in the spirit let us also walk in the spirit."

"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he," said the wise Solomon, so the semblance may not be put on for an occasion, but must be indigenous, or cultivated by strong self-control and ardent endeavor.

SEEKING THE SOURCE.

(From an Exchange.)

One of the congregation of a Texas parish was giving a dinner, to which the colored minister was invited. The reverend gentleman evidently was delighted with the goose served, and remarked:

"Dat am a berry fine goose, sah! Where did you get it?"

Now, for some reason or other the host didn't like the question, so he answered:

"Deed, sah, dat ain't fair. When you preach a berry good sermon, do I ever ask you where you got it from?"

Could Not Lie On His Left Side Heart Would Stop.

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