

great that the appeal to the individual heart is lost. This is not the same as regards "The Dream of Gerontius" for the oftener we read it, the more its power and beauty and peace grow upon us.

In the opening stanzas we are taken to a scene most impressive, a scene that awaits each and everyone of us—the death-bed of a dying person. Gerontius typifies no particular individual but the dying Christian, the dying Catholic. The soul on earth sees itself as it will be at the moment immediately preceding death; as it will be when strengthened by the last sacraments and upborne by the prayers of its friends, it reaches the bar of judgment.

Gerontius now about to be judged feels that he must fail and in consciousness of the need of assistance he cries:

"Jesu, Maria—I am near to death,  
 And thou art calling me; I know it now—  
 Not by the token of this faltering breath,  
 This chill at heart, this dampness on my brow,  
 (Jesu, have mercy! Mary, pray for me!)—  
 'Tis this new feeling, never felt before.  
 (Be with me, Lord, in my extremity!)  
 That I am going, that I am no more.

How realistic is this death scene! Imagine the moment in which Gerontius is dying. The priest in his surplice and violet stole recites in company with all those present the litany for the dying. How our attention is drawn to the impressive and consoling rites which the Catholic church alone holds out to her children at this sacred moment. Gerontius is thinking of the eternal hours and years in this, his last hour on earth. He feels that now he is sinking into the utter darkness from which he came. For a moment, the soul again gains strength and utters in the well-defined speech of the church:

"Firmly I believe and truly  
 God is Three, and God is One;  
 And I next acknowledge duly  
 Manhood taken by the son."

How short has been the time since the soul left the body for it seems to Gerontius that the Subvenite is not yet finished when the soul is at the very throne of judgment. He is in the