

upon it the shadow of the despairing gloom that had darkened his own life, but it is not so ; all is tranquil and cheerful. The ballad of *John Gilpin* shows that he was sometimes even more natural and realistic than Wordsworth. The Oxford trio excel both of these writers in style and in theme ; their classic elegance and polished beauty command admiration. Of the three Keble was perhaps the greatest poet ; Newman the most argumentative, logical reasoner ; Faber the best loved as a man, the holiest, above all he is deservedly the most popular spiritual writer of the century. In outward expression Keble in his poetry is the most deeply religious of the three. It is hardly possible to believe that some of his hymns to the Blessed Virgin are the work of any save a Catholic mystic. Both Keble and Pusey were men of strange dispositions. Pusey was not a poet ; his character was too hard and practical, too unsympathetic for that. He started the famous Tractarian Movement in the final result of which he was so deeply interested, yet in the thick of the battle, after Newman's unexpected resolve, he paused irresolute and for nearly forty years he maintained a position that causes our generation to suspect that the Reverend Doctor's life was all a grand humbug, unless it is possible for a soul to be content with a shadow for the substance, the dream for reality. Fortunately for Keble he died too soon to have this imputation cast upon him. In his hymns there is so much sweetness and depth of devotion that it is easy to believe he did not write for fame. We know for a certainty that it was only the efforts of Mr. Gladstone that induced him to publish his first volume of poems. It met with a most flattering reception, it was such a change from anything the English world had known for years. For the same reason Faber's poems were very popular. Both of these singers give us a more satisfactory view of life than Byron or Shelley or Keats ; after reading them one has no thought of suicide, one is urged to live and work to the full ; they seem to give a new purpose in life ; we almost feel, as they say, that earth is overflowing with heaven.

Newman is different in some respects from Faber and Keble ; he is intensely subjective. Every line he writes is the expression of whatever feeling is uppermost in his own heart. Like Dante he is highly imaginative and always philosophi-