

FATHER FABER AS A HYMN WRITER.

IN ALL ages and among all nations mankind has ever employed poetry to express the deepest and noblest of its thoughts, and the men who compose the Holy Catholic Church have followed this universal rule, clothing in form of verse the most touching parts of the gospel story. As the *Adeste Fideles* tells of the birth of the Infant-Saviour, so the *Stabat Mater* paints in heart-rending colors the last dread scene on Calvary; or it may be some great theological mystery is brought nearer to our comprehension by the sweet song of an enraptured saint; and what more beautiful example than the *Pange Lingua* of St. Thomas can be quoted?

Now we in these latter days have been blessed by three hymn-writers in the Anglo-Saxon tongue, of whom we may dare to say that, as long as the English language is spoken, their names will be held dear the world over. Cardinal Newman, whose *Lead Kindly Light* has taken hold of both continents, Father Caswall, the compiler of so many exquisite translations from the Breviary, and, thirdly, Father Faber, who for many years was Superior of the London Oratory. It is to the hymns of this last one we would call particular attention.

Born and bred in the Establishment, for many years Father Faber officiated as a clergyman of the Church of England, but when in early middle life he was led into the fold of the Church, then it was that he used more especially his fertile poetic gift to the greater glory of God, in composing those beautiful songs of praise which are heard from ocean to ocean and from pole to pole.

The late Cardinal Newman stated to a friend of the writer of this article that of all this gifted author ever wrote, the hymn *Mother of Mercy* appealed to him the most.

“ Mother of Mercy, day by day,
My love of thee grows more and more;
Thy gifts are strewn upon my way,
Like sands upon the great sea-shore.

Though poverty and work and woe
The masters of my life may be,
When times are worst, who does not
know

Darkness is light with love of thee!

But scornful men have coldly said
Thy love was leading me from God;
And yet in this I did but tread
The very path my Saviour trod.

They know but little of thy worth
Who speak these heartless words to me;
For what did Jesus love on earth
One-half so tenderly as thee?

Get me the grace to love thee more;
Jesus will give if thou wilt plead;
And, Mother, when life's cares are o'er,
Oh, I shall love thee then indeed!

Jesus, when His three hours were run,
Bequeathed thee from the cross to me;
How can I rightly love thy Son,
Sweet Mother! if I love not thee!

It has been remarked that no one but a convert from Protestantism could have composed the above verses; it may be so, for in England, where in the last half-century very many have entered the fold, *Mother of Mercy* is known and sung by every devout and loving child of our Blessed Lady.

But Father Faber has left behind him so many beautiful hymns addressed to the mother of God, that it is impossible to single out any one as superior to the others. *Immaculate! Immaculate!* and *Hail Queen of Heaven* are among the best known, but they are very closely followed by *O Turn to Jesus*, a hymn-prayer in behalf of the holy souls. *Jesus Our Love is Crucified*, a passion hymn, was, we believe, especially written for the Oratory Church, where on