

Author and Journalist.



N eminent authority on literature is credited with the assertion that the three cleverest writers in England to-day are G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and George Bernard Shaw. However true this may be, it is obvious that the writings of Chesterton and Belloc should be of particular import to Catholics in pursuit of intellectual culture, inasmuch as the philosophy of both is essentially Catholic and antagonistic to the indifferentism to defined truths so rampant in this materialistic age. Both have employed intellects of undoubted power to courageously defend Christianity against the attacks of modern sceptics and scoffers, but it is with the stronger and more remarkable of these two writers that this sketch has to deal—with his philosophy and the unique and startling manner in which he presents it to a literary world where his name has already become a household word.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was born at Campden Hill, Kensington, England, on the 29th of May, 1874. He went to St. Paul's School when about twelve, and after an elementary education of some five years, his father—a draughtsman by profession—recognized in him extraordinary literary ability, and allowed him to withdraw from school and devote his time to literary pursuits, after which he began to review works for *The Bookman* and contribute letters and articles to some of the weekly English periodicals, over the signature "G. K. C." As an able critic has said, "In the autumn of the year 1899, no one outside of his own circle had ever heard of G. K. Chesterton; in the spring of 1900, everyone was asking every one else 'who is G. K. C.?' Before the year was over, his name and writings were better known than those of men who had made reputations while he was still an infant. There is no example in the last fifty years of so dizzy a rise from obscurity to fame." To-day this well-deserved renown is claiming the admiration of the New World, and while his works are not numerous, they are so meritorious as to be worthy of the attention of all students of good literature.

Chesterton's fame is summed up in the title his admirers have accorded him, viz.—a master of paradox. He clothes his philosophy in a robe of grotesque metaphors, which seemingly convey to the mind an impression that all of his books were written