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LITERARY THESIS

"THE CATHOLIC ELEMENT IN ENGLISH LITERATURE"

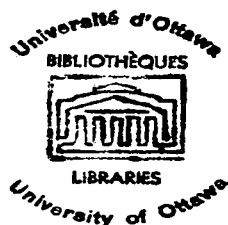
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"THE SPIRIT OF CATHOLICITY HAS EVER ~~THE~~ PERMEATED
THE WORKS OF POETS AND WRITERS OF WORTH". *Literary thesis*

(M. A. D. G. O., June 1925)
BY

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OTTAWA, CANADA.

OTTAWA, MAY, 1925.



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FOREWORD.

The within Thesis represents the genuine efforts and the most sincere, innermost thoughts of the writer on a subject, which to-day, is before the world in a most controversial and prominent manner. The work embodied within the confines of these pages was not accomplished without a tremendous expenditure of energy. For months I have read extensively and intensively and every poem and work mentioned within has been carefully read by me to say nothing of scores of books and poems which I had of necessity to read in order to obtain lines breathing Catholicity. Notwithstanding the unlimited amount of study I have devoted to the subject, I have been but able to touch upon the compass of the matter. The Thesis I have named "The Catholic Element in English Literature" or "The Spirit of Catholicity has ever permeated the works of Poets and writers of worth". I have for the sake of clarity, divided my work into two separate parts. I have held up primarily to the mirror of scrutiny, Catholic poets and writers, born unto the Faith, who attained the zenith of success and whose Faith was assuredly no barrier to their brilliancy of mind and purity of life. In the latter part of my work, I have endeavoured to prove that the spirit of Catholicity was the dominant note, the all impelling motive, the source of imagery and inspiration in the works of many non-Catholic poets who were leaders in the literary world. From a mass of poems and books, I have selected scores of lines which fundamentally and essentially Catholic and which are incontrovertible arguments as to the spirit of Catholicity being the natural impetus to successful poetic endeavour. Very little has been logically written and collected on the first part of my work and absolutely nothing that I could find by search or enquiry on the latter part. I have nevertheless endeavoured to build up a case for the Church which I think will bear cross-examination. If it seems but fragmentary, it must be borne in mind, that I have undertaken a tremendous task but the inadequacy of my attempt, will I think, be compensated for by the sincerity which I have at all times tried to engender into the work.

Language belongs to all of us and if we to-day quote the words and lines of poets and writers unconsciously, we cannot be accused of plagiarism. Sometimes it is impossible to improve upon the language of the poet and again it is oftentimes necessary to use his language lest we kill the beauty of his thoughts. I have in all sincerity endeavoured to steer clear of plagiaristic tendency and have placed quotation marks around borrowed phrases. Ninety per cent of the effort is absolutely my own humble outburst, the balance of the fractional percentage I have indicated as belonging to the minds of others but have become so imbedded in our language to-day that we can claim it as our own common speech.

For helpful and valuable suggestions I am deeply indebted to Dr. Thos. O'Hagan, Katherine Bregy, Litt.D., Rev. Dr. Thos. O'Donnell, Father O'Meill, of Washington, D.C. and the Reverend Rector of the Ottawa University, Father F.X. Marcotte, O.M.I. If I did not obtain from these courteous scholars volumes of material, I certainly received kind attention and suggestions here and there which kept me from wandering too far afield.

Ottawa, May 11th, 1925.

William M. Unger.

M.J.

Thesis.

The immensity of the subject which I have chosen for this Thesis appals me and has filled me with an effluvia of desolation and disconsolateness when I ponder deeply on same and realize the magnitude of my task. To dispel my clouds of gloom and discouragement I sought light and guidance from probably some of the most erudite people of the day ranging all the way from University Presidents, Literateurs, Poets and Writers to the humblest student of Arts. Have we any outstanding Catholic poets and how do they compare with our Non-Catholic poets? Did you ever notice that in the works of all poets and writers of worth both Catholic and otherwise the Spirit of Catholicity has ever permeated their works, that this Catholic proclivity, this trend towards Rome is inseparable from lasting Poetry? The invariable reply couched in polite and kindly form intimated that undoubtedly there were many illustrious Catholic poets, that there was a noticeable Catholic element in the Poetry of renowned Non-Catholic writers but at best there was but fragmentary information upon the subject. Assuredly we have noticed that writers and poets without the precious gift of Faith have manifested an inborn Catholic spirit which unconsciously or designedly shone forth throughout their works as a beacon of inspiration. But to discuss the matter at length would be a stupendous task. Hence my fit of ennui. And so I know full well that you will realize that to launch forth into a dissertation on the subject of the Catholic Element in Literature is a prodigious, monumental undertaking. The mantle of responsibility for such a work must fall on more able and worthy shoulders. Years of arduous introspective intensive reading would be absolutely indispensable. But one can do only his best. My attraction for this particular subject has been strong for years and thus buoyed up with this enthusiasm I have decided to crush any discouraging barriers and to crystalize my own thoughts and ideas and observations into a concrete form, resorting to extrinsic aids only when absolutely necessary. In this tedious and arduous effort upon which I am embarking I sincerely trust that the powers that be, realizing the difficulty and gigantic proportions of my endeavour

will in their ^{verdict.} season Justice with mercy.

To attack this vast and extensive subject in a haphazard fashion would be absurd and would undoubtedly cause mental disturbance to myself and to subsequent readers of this essay. To one of the legal profession and more particularly to one who has been fortunate enough to imbibe learning at a Catholic University where logic and philosophy was dispensed with unerring skill, some scheme is absolutely necessary even if literary style is sacrificed upon the altar of lucidity. It is therefore my intention to discuss the subject from a twofold aspect. Primarily I shall select with care and precision those essentially Catholic writers and poets who to my mind are in equal rank with the Non-Catholic poets of fame and distinction, yes those Catholic poets whose gems of the muse shine with resplendent vigour undimmed by the passage of time. I shall not follow my selections chronologically but shall select from different ages, confining my choice, to save time, and space to the Catholic poets and writers principally of English birth. Of their works, I shall touch but in a cursory fashion. The latter part of my Thesis I have reserved for a brief discourse on Non-Catholic writers and poets whose works would lead us to believe that they were upon the threshold of the Catholic faith, suspended as it were, twixt Heaven and earth. In many of their works the spirit of Catholicity has ever been present. They have often made the face of Catholic truth more beautiful than even Catholic poets. Directly or indirectly they have been inspired and prompted by the teachings and dogmas of Holy Mother the Church and have been guided and influenced by her sane, lofty, logical and elevated tenets. I shall endeavour to bring before you various lines and quotations to substantiate my contention relative to this Catholic spirit, lines which cannot fail to impress, lines which are truly and essentially Catholic, yes lines which have so indelibly impressed me as being poetical and lyrical outbursts which might have been penned by a poet born unto the Faith.

There is a conception or rather a misconception which has existed from time immemorial that Catholicism is something that hampers, restrains and even cripples the output of human genius; that from

Catholics we may not look for literary effort that is either abundant or of any worth; that the Catholic creed is a curb upon thought, paralyzing and tramelling same, while in reality it is the very door to freedom. How often have I heard this absurdity prated about in clubs, at luncheons and in literary circles. How often have I smothered my rising resentment at such egregiously asinine remarks from men who should have known better and how often, being goaded to speech, have I launched forth into a heated and vitriolic tirade in defence. My contention is and ever has been that rather than the possession of the Catholic Faith being an impediment, a barrier to literary success, it is on the contrary an impetus to endeavour, an inspiration, a prolific source of wonderful imagery as we shall see in the discussion of the various Non-Catholic poets, particularly as exemplified by Shakespeare. "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I shall build my Church and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it". Would Christ have been less generous to the sons of that Church in the distribution of mental capabilities and attainments than he is to our separated brethren? Assuredly no. The Catholic religion has withstood the fire and sword of persecution and calumny for over 1900 years. Has it not been a long record of glorious successes in every walk of life? Cannot I then logically contend that rather than restraining and hampering the very opposite is true? Catholicism is a strengthening and life-giving force, a tree bringing forth perennial fruits for the healing of the nations. It is nourishment, light and air for the human soul and therefore is an unfailing inspirer of great and lasting art and of real literature. Let me not be considered so absurd and illogical as to aver that a man's religious beliefs and fervour can of themselves make of him a poet and writer. They will make him a Saint but not of necessity a Dante, a Newman or a Shakespeare. Natural genius, intellectual endowments and a broadened mental horizon, culture and environment must play their part to form and build up the great writer. But I do unhesitatingly and unreservedly and with vehemence maintain that given the rest and conceding the natural ability and conditions present, the possession of the Catholic Faith, its illumination of the world's darkness, its action on the soul's principles and feelings, instead of being a barrier, is the most

valuable of all possessions to a man of genius, no less as a writer than as a man and that without it, he lacks the most potent stimulus, guide and support in noble creative work, the most inspiring revelation of truth and beauty. "Catholicism", says Matthew Arnold, "from its antiquity, from its pretensions to universality, from its really widespread influence, from its sensuousness, has something European, august and imaginative. Protestantism presents from its inferiority in all these respects something prosaic, mean and provincial". And Milton referring to his physical blindness said that "Knowledge at one entrance is quite shut out", which I understand as do many others in the sense that the light of the Catholic religion is quite cut off. The physical blindness is not comparable to that interior blindness of the mind and soul which is blind to God's fatherhood and governance, blind to the love manifested in Christ's redemption, blind to that city set on a hill which is Christ's Church. That Church was never concerned much with fostering literature as a business but she plays the most important part in literature and art because she cannot help herself. Why? Because she is the living representative of God on earth. She must diffuse life and light. Her beauty and splendour must supply the noblest themes and impulses to man's soul in search of beauty and enamoured of all that is good, holy and pure. To those who ridicule my statement that the possession of Catholicity is a necessary adjunct to lasting literary success rather than an impediment I can say with sincere and glowing enthusiasm: "Glance back through the pages of history to the centuries that have passed on and witness how the Church of Christ when the pagan art of Greece and Rome was dying out, stifled in immortality and sensualism, steeped and debauched in licentiousness, caught up its falling pencil and taught emancipated slaves in the catacombs and barbarians in the forest to create forms imbued with a loveliness not of this earth. Her liturgy shaped in all decorum, fostered the incipient arts of music and literature and cradled the drama when in its infancy. Look at that Emerald Isle, Isle of Saints and Scholars, what a wonderful title! Glance at those marvellous cathedrals in France, Belgium and Germany, unequalled in their external and internal perfection. Their art and sculpture remain the envy and despair of succeeding generations. In the Middle Ages, so called Dark Ages, which reputable historians admit as the greatest of all ages,

she stood forth as the indisputable mistress of all the intellectual effort and literary achievement that made that time so memorable." I must of needs desist. My enthusiasm carries me away. But it is strange and sad that ignorance, bigotry and hostility to the Church have succeeded in denying all that the Church and her sons have done for literature. The triumphant and beneficent action of the Church is denied and minimized and the offsprings of the Reformation are elevated to places of first rank.

If one has studied philosophy and history one must admit no matter how grudgingly that the Protestant creed from its negative and materialistic tendency was and is unfitted to give birth to a poet. Milton and Keble are called the Poets of Puritanism and Anglicanism. But they are not proofs to the contrary of the foregoing statement. Milton has been ranked above the Catholic Dante as an Epic Poet, yet his vision of the world beyond is materialistic, prosaic and dull and he fails just where the voice of the Seer should speak. This is because the Creed of Calvin forbade mystery. Because Milton's mind did not have that benign influence of Catholic philosophy and theology. "The Catholic Church", says Cardinal Newman, "is the poet of her children, full of music to soothe the sad and control the wayward. Wonderful in story for the imagination of the Romantic, rich in symbol and imagery, so that the gentle and delicate feelings which will not bear words, may in silence intimate their presence or commune with themselves. Her very being is poetry, every psalm, every petition, every collect, every versicle, the cross, the mitre, the churible, is a fulfillment of some dream of childhood or inspiration of youth". How much of the Divine element did Milton or Keble have? Did they have the never failing guidance of the Catholic Church, its beautiful ritual, its channels of grace, its sweet consolations? No, but on the contrary through the Reformation or rather deformation they had a ritual dashed to the ground, trodden on and broken piecemeal, prayers clipped from the Bible, pieced, torn out and shuffled about at pleasure until the meaning of the composition perished and what had been gems of Catholic poetry was no longer even good prose. Antiphons, hymns, benedictions, invocations were shovelled away, scripture lessons were tortured into heavy chapters, unwieldy and feeble. Poor misguided Keble's happy magic made the

Anglican Church seem what Catholicism was and is. Compare Milton's treatment of the supernatural with that of Dante. There is no comparison. Was Dante's gift of faith a handicap to his brilliancy? On the contrary without it he would not have been Dante. Glance at his realistic treatment of the supernatural. How he creates an impression so precisely scriptural. Why? Because he works on the lines of dogma, true philosophy and mystery, the ideal of the supernatural fixed for him by his faith. Milton on the other hand was forced to draw on his own human and utterly inadequate conceptions and instead of becoming sublime he appears grotesque. Milton, it has been said, "brings down Heaven to earth and makes spiritual things terrestrial. Dante by his gift of Faith transports earth to Heaven and thus becomes sublime".

And so out in the great big world it is one continual argument and fight against bias, prejudice and bigotry when one is forced to defend and prove that Catholic faith and ideals tend to produce good poetry rather than detract therefrom. Sometimes it seems superfluous to argue and point out the immense influence, formative, directing and inspiring which has been exerted upon literature and poetry by the Christian Gospel and the Catholic Church. It must ^{be} remembered, however, that the one business of the Reformation is to protest tacitly or audibly against the Catholic Church and its children and its protests with utter disregard for truth and at a cost of ignoring and misrepresenting all that lies deepest and all that blooms fairest in the field of literature. Having regard to the present object of this Thesis I must not digress for time will not permit me to expatiate at length upon the part played by the Catholic Church in the field of literature and of the immense, far extending and profound influence that the Church has exercised in the literary world. Were I to attempt such a pleasurable and close to my heart task my efforts would be inadequate but I may safely aver that the feebleness of my effort would I think be compensated for by the sincerity of same. My effort will of necessity be fragmentary but I shall adhere to strict veracity and shall try to keep my enthusiasm within its proper confines.

Literature in the English language, at least, if we accept as English the Anglo-Saxon speech, which is as different from the English of today as German or Dutch, goes back to the eighth century after Christ. As the English have always had a tendency to monopolize

every commodity including language and territory, we are conceding the claim, as time will not permit argument of the contention. Admitting the English claim, my contention in favour of the influence of the Church is infinitely stronger. The remains of that era testify to a christian culture that had taken firm root on pagan soil and was producing healthy flowers and fruits. From Canterbury and Augustine in the South, from Iona and Columcille in the North had come the precious seeds together with the zeal and love that fostered them. What were the great names in Anglo-Saxon literature and what manner of men bore them? Caedmon and Cynewulf, Bede and Alfred, Alfric and Dunstan. Were they pagans, were they followers of that disgruntled Monk and Voluptuous monarch? Assuredly no. They were monks and priests and one layman, nobly devoted to his Church. Would my Non-Catholic friends deny that these names are worthy of mention? From an unbiased Protestant of cultured mind I am conceded these names. From the prejudiced whose intellects are warped the names are not even grudgingly conceded but I am told that they are mediocrities. But admit or deny it, the truth is manifest. It was on the bleak Northumbrian headland of Whitby, in the hut of the herdsman Caedmon, within the monastic enclosure of the Abbess Hild, that English poetry began its long and splendid career. Caedmon was a Monk and a real Poet. Cynewulf, a genuine religious poet, was a Monk of Lindisfarne. The Venerable Bede, England's first historian needs no laudatory comment. The admirable Alfred, the brilliant Alfric, the indefatigable schoolmaster of his age, St. Dunstan the accomplished Archbishop and Chancellor, were Catholics, truly and sincerely. And these brilliant men assuredly did not find their Faith a barrier to their unqualified success.

Reluctantly I must leave this period and leap over the Middle Ages and pause at the dawn of the Renaissance where we meet the notable figure of Chaucer. Chaucer was a thorough Catholic though it has been said, not an ideal one. To Chaucer and his Catholicism we are indebted for an unrivalled portrait of the true Catholic Priest. This he has painted with a touching realism in the prologue of "The Canterbury Tales". Surely I will concede that as one reads Chaucer one notices the almost fierce and crude satires. But he

is a satirist of persons and abuses but never loses respect for venerable institutions. Compare him with the poets of his age, yes even of succeeding generations and he stands comparison very well. The cold cruel scrutiny of poignant critics have left him still perched high upon his pedestal of fame and his position in literature can be traced to his Catholicity and his Catholicity alone.

Although I have leaped the Middle Ages my heart would say one word in reference thereto. History recites for us in dark colors the plagues and calamities of the Middle Ages but the literature of those ages present a much truer story of their brilliant sunshine, their joyous pieties, their intellectuality. Never was there so much interest in Music, never was there such an enthusiastic devotion to Poetry. Might I ask: who kept the musical and poetical muse bubbling with infectious animation? Priests and Catholic Monks and Christian Catholic laymen, imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The Catholic Spirit of the Middle Ages, that constructive force which raised every structure of art worth looking at died out, killed by the English persecutors. It had stood on two points, belief in God and man. Theology and philosophy were written into its poetics. No poet or writer or even workman of those times would have admitted that religion could have been excluded from life and art. But this spirit that had sent thousands of its representatives to death for a Roman holiday, gradually became quiescent. The sacred temples were desecrated and profaned. During four hundred years of English history, the Catholic Spirit which had saved Europe from Paganism was stamped upon and condemned. And what a change from the gay, inspiring brilliancy of the middle ages where Catholicity prevailed. What a change when the Renaissance and Reformation dominated England. These two ill-assorted movements broke up the spiritual unity of Christendom. Of the Renaissance in England I have little to say as my subject does not embrace a discussion of any particular era. In passing I will say that it was a triumph for Puritanism and the partial submerging and eclipse of the Catholic Spirit. Hand in hand with royal and aristocratic greed it began its reign with the pillage of Catholic Colleges and Universities and defenceless monasteries. In the name of spiritual emancipation it destroyed in Church and College the books.

poems and manuscripts and artistic treasures essentially Catholic, accumulated through centuries. The result? The death knell of the esthetic sense, the passing of the noble thought, culminating in a frightful hideousness that eventually dominated the Victorian era.

I am now tempted to delay on the Elizabethan Period but must hurry on reserving for future consideration the one outstanding Poet, Shakespeare, whom I shall endeavour to show, was very much Catholic in Spirit if actually not in possession of the Faith. The notable personage of the following period, is Milton whom I will discuss briefly later on as I have already touched upon his grasp of the Spiritual in comparison to that of Dante. Contemporary with Milton however springs up once more the Catholic spirit, after a period of darkness, loneliness and boredom in England. The Catholic spirit was revived and resuscitated once more through the outstanding Catholicity and genius of Crashaw, who carries the soubriquet of "intensely Catholic Poet". There developed now a deep concern with the beautiful faith of the past, with its sacraments and sacramentals, its priests and saints, with its manifest confidence in the voice of God, Singers took up the Catholic lyre with an abounding joy and unrivalled brilliancy. Then followed the ages dominated by Dryden and Pope. They probably did not have the religious fervour of Crashaw but they were practical Catholics and men of renown. They were undoubtedly the greatest literary men of their times unsatisfactory as they might be as Catholics, but nevertheless they were genuine Catholics. "Good life be now my task, my doubts are done", exclaimed Dryden upon his conversion to the Church. His facile pen was not slowed down by his embracing Catholicity, nor was his brilliant mind dimmed. If he were clever before his conversion, he was doubly so after his reception of the gift of faith. Pope's constancy was proved when he refused a laureatship, the prize offered him to renounce the Church of his baptism. "Pope", says Mr. O'Hagan, "exemplifies the saying that one may be born unto the Catholic faith and practice its tenets and pass to the great beyond as a Catholic and yet portray very little of his Faith in his works". But if he did not ooze Catholicity he was not critical of its dogmas and his works contain many Catholic references and were pregnant with logic and

literary style.

Next in the procession of celebrities we meet that illustrious character, Dr. Samuel Johnson. I could be excused from considering Dr. Johnson here amongst the Catholic poets because he has been claimed as a Catholic, but if that cannot be proved conclusively at least it is admitted that he was essentially Catholic in his writings. However, I must reluctantly consider Johnson as a Protestant poet with strong Catholic tendencies. The 18th century of which Johnson was the outstanding figure was probably the least Catholic of all the Catholic centuries. As a result, it was a century of gloom, despondency and despair culminating in insanity. The brightness of the Middle Ages had vanished. The Catholic ideal was neglected and viewed with indifference. Without God, without religion, without faith, and yet it has been called the "Age of Reason". Glance at the list of clever men who wrote aimlessly, without the guiding rudder of faith. Parnell and Beattie, Broome, Budgell, Savage and Burns, inebriates. Chatterton blew out his brains while four of the greatest, Swift, Collins, Smart and Cowper, died hopelessly insane. Rather a paradox to call it the age of reason.

But we find a refreshing change in the early part of the 19th century. It was the beginning of a romantic revival, a revival once more of the Catholic Spirit, a return to God, to the ancient faith. It was an emancipation from Puritanism, the recovery of Catholicism. Scott, Wordsworth and Moore all voiced some notes of the old inspiration. The Catholic spirit became so strong once more that even the sensualist Byron thought his place was in that Catholic Church wherein he caused his daughter to be brought up. Even Shelley drew nearer to Catholicism. Coleridge and De Quincy were Non-Catholics, but ^{enthusiasm for them} were burned out about 1825 and a few years later the fragmentary and feverish visions of paradise were replaced by a genuine Catholic revival. As I have stated the Catholic spirit had been quiescent for some years now. At last came the surprise. A disciple of Rousseau, Francis-Rene de Chateaubriand delved into the romantic past and accepted the old faith and published the first part of "La Genie du Christianisme". In this and in subsequent defences of the Catholic spirit he presents Christianity as a port amidst the

storm. This is the impression which has been conveyed to me by a cursory perusal. The movement which followed this learned Frenchman's effort was unsteady, but it had its effect. Literature sometimes rose to great heights; one day up on the crest of the wave of popularity, the next down in the depths, sometimes approaching the sublime, sometimes ending in abject failure and disenchantment. The Catholic revival in England at this time was probably due to a man whose books are little read, yea who is almost unknown today, but whose brilliancy, sincerity, profound knowledge and lively faith entitled him to a more exalted seat in the hall of fame. I refer to Kenelm Henry Digby whose books "The Broad Stone of Honor", "Mores Catholici" and "Compitum" are veritable encyclopedias of christian piety and virtue. It was through Digby that the Catholic spirit entered once more into the literary world. It was Digby that illustrious men followed in the future, it was Digby who moved the mighty pen of Ruskin. Digby was a convert to the Catholic faith and an ardent defender of that precious faith which God had infused into his soul. He practiced his religion with an ardour and strength and humility, testified to in every page he wrote. As I study the opening chapters of "Mores Catholici" I marvel at the beauty and force and vividness of his description of the middle ages. He says in part "The middle ages were ages of the greatest and highest grace to men, they were ages of faith, ages of art, intellectuality and prosperity, when all Europe was Catholic. They were ages of honour to God when vast temples were seen to arise in every place of human concourse, ages of sanctity which witnessed a Bede and an Alcuin, a Bernard, a Francis, ages of vast and beneficent intelligence which displayed the intellectual gifts of an Anselm, a Thomas of Aquinas, a Michael Angelo, a Raffaello, ages of poetry which saw and heard a Caedmon, a Dante, a Calderon and a Shakespeare, ages of heroism which produced a Tancred, of majesty which knew a Charlemagne." In the chapters which follow he brings a wealth of testimony to prove his every statement, the activities of the Church, monastic life, missionary spirit, the effort for peace, the serene contemplativeness of philosophy and religion. For this work alone he should be remembered and read. To me it has been a wonderful surprise and pleasure to read his "Mores Catholici" for it contains a plethora of arguments which one

can use every minute in upholding the glory of the Church and the brilliancy of her poets and artists.

It will be understood I trust that my reference to Catholic poets must at best be fragmentary and incomplete. It would be beyond the realm of possibility to deal extensively with the Catholic poets in a thesis of this limited nature but my purpose will be served by bringing before you the fact which even Catholics are prone to forget, that there are Catholic poets and writers whose gems of poetry and lines of profound thought and beauty place them in equal rank with those claimed by our separated brethren. Catholics need never feel chagrined and shamed at the calibre of their own poets of the past for our spurs have been won and the bigot critic forced to accept the judgment of the literary world as an unappealable verdict.

Were I to devote the requisite time and space to do adequate justice to the illustrious, renowned protagonist of the Oxford Movement, Cardinal Newman, whose unsurpassed intellectual and religious activity glorified Holy Mother Church and led back to her bosom innumerable erudite scholars, I would of necessity be compelled to attempt to write a large sized book. Can our separated brethren point to a man among their own with intellectual attainments approaching in any degree those of Newman? Where could they find a man with equal gigantic mental capabilities? Where will they or any one else for that matter find a man who could fathom the dark and complex soul and set down his findings with the clearness of a log book? As a Protestant he was clever, as a Catholic his mind became an all consuming brain. Even the Protestant Disraeli has confirmed the opinion that Newman was the most powerful thinker in England during several centuries. Indisputably he possessed a remarkable mind, and was gifted with unusual powers of expression combined with a vigorous personality. England was moved by the glory and fervour of his creed. He was the sower of God's seed and wherever he passed, faith sprang up from the roadside. Protestants even of today extol and sing his "Lead Kindly Light". Was his Faith a barrier to his intellectual progress, to his brilliant success? Rather the Causa causans. It is not within the confines of my work to mention the half-hearted support which he received, of his heart wrung by denunciation and

failure. His delicate sensibilities were pierced. He did not understand the Irish mind nor did they comprehend his motives. But I must not digress. Newman as a Catholic writer and poet is before me not Newman the diplomat or politician. In my own Alma Mater have I not been thrilled and held enthralled by the perusal of his "Dream of Gerontius"? Who has not ploughed through his "Idea of a University" and read with benefit his "Apologia Pro Vita Sua"? One commentator has aptly put it when he said that when reading Newman one feels that all his intellectual discoveries have been anticipated. He undoubtedly is a master mind possessing all the keys to every chamber of the soul. He has explored the darkest and aired and lighted them up with a touch divine. Newman was a poet with all the delicate sensibility of an artistic nature. It has been said of Newman that he was an Ignis Ardens who fed on the saving of souls. My Non-Catholic friends would scout and scorn this feature but at least they are forced to admire his vivid and lucid statement of a proposition, the brilliancy of his illustration, the subtlety of his intellect, the searching qualities of his soul and the incisiveness of his reply. Newman probably belongs to the realm of religion first and then to literature but he is the acme of perfection in both. Volumes could be written on this illustrious Cardinal, one thought suggests another, one's enthusiasm grows with close study and perusal. The point I am endeavouring to bring out in regard to the Catholic Spirit is clearly exemplified through Newman and were I to desist from discussing further Catholic writers and poets I could rest my case with success and without fear of contradiction or discomfiture. For Catholic Newman, poet and writer and thinker extraordinary, and master mind was equalled by few if any, and surpassed by none, ^{possessed} of a style which was the perfect reflex of the man, even unfriendly critics have written that "it is the nearest to perfection that our speech can show, that when ^{at} its best, a better is hardly conceivable."

Newman though peerless did not stand quite alone among Catholics of his own time. I thrill with legitimate pride and enthusiasm when I refer my friends to that holy priest, able scholar and brilliant historian, John Lingard, whom I had the pleasure of studying at my Alma Mater, whose immense work, doubly monumental and immense in its fairness and honesty, stand alone as an impartial and

authentic history, a wonderful heritage to the civilized world. Doctor Saintsbury has testified that it still remains the best history of England by a large margin. When one considers the source of this surprising eulogy and commendatory comment, one can realize what must have been the erudition and scholarly attainment of Lingard. A member of a small persecuted minority, belonging to a creed cut off from the natural opportunities, ^{he} won his spurs and enjoyed the rewards of his learning.

In passing I am but able to direct your attention to Cardinal Wiseman who found time to write his delightful "Fabiola" and who preached and lectured incessantly on theology, science, history and literature. William G. Ward is worthy of mention also as an assister in the spread of the Catholic Spirit. He was undoubtedly unmatched in metaphysical and theological speculation. As a contrast to Ward that beloved Priest, Father Faber, gave his strength and genius to the creation of devotional literature. "At the Foot of the Cross" would win him his laurels. Cardinal Manning was a writer of powerful self-analysis. A brilliant man he undoubtedly was and worked indefatigably for the Church and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Cardinal Herbert Vaughan did valuable work for English letters but we must reluctantly hurry by him and others of equal worth. These cardinals while they laid deep and sound foundations of ecclesiastical polity did not forget art and they are mentioned here in a cursory way to but show that the possession of the faith of Christ is assuredly not a handicap to the possession of poetic and artistic and literary ability. The space devoted to them is not to be construed as commensurate with their genius.

The Catholic Spirit thus moved forward slowly but surely in the English world of letters. Those who held that Catholics were mentally impoverished were surprised and nettled. The literary achievements of the Church's representatives were glorious victories over bigotry and prejudice and a vindication of the faith within them. And let me say here and may I be pardoned for the digression, that Catholics do not appreciate the genius and ability of their own brilliantly gifted brethren. None are more indifferent to poetry and good literature than the average English speaking Catholic. The Catholic poet has to combat indifference and apathy among his own people. Catholics seem to prefer the sensational, yellow press; the scurrilous novel, the questionable poetry of an irreligious mediocrity. Why? That is the question.

The Catholic Poet should be read. For the Catholic poet is essentially a true poet. He has behind him an ancestry of image makers, a radiant Mother who has made of nature a divine plaything. Has not the soul been fed with Bread and Wine? What a source of inspiration! And then the bitter tragedy of the cross with its merciful redemption of mankind. The seven sacraments, symbols of power and channels of grace are prolific sources of inspired thought. The poet who is a child of the Catholic Faith instead of being handicapped has a heritage of untold wealth. He believes in the awful future, the "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns". He realizes the nothingness of life and the length of eternity and therein finds the beauteous thoughts to which he gives living form.

For the last seventy or eighty years, Catholic poets have been contributing to English verse some of its sweetest and grandest notes and indubitably its most heart soothing and soul strengthening ones. Some of these poets have not yet received their due and proper recognition; they probably never will. The apathetic attitude of Catholics is to blame again. And yet if Catholics have not given sufficient attention to their own poets, many Catholics of cultured mind and thousands of Non-Catholics have studied and browsed over the works of a wonderful trio of whom I am about to say a few words. And that illustrious Catholic triumvirate, Coventry Patmore, Gerald Hopkins and Aubrey De Vere well merit the unstinted praise of the whole literary world. Catholics need make no apologies for them for they are poets who do not have to shine by reflected glory nor take second place to any Non-Catholic poet.

Patmore was a convert and intensely Catholic. He has been called "The Poet of Love" and not without cause. He won undying popularity by his poem "The Angel in the House" which treated of domestic love and domestic life. Today when marriage is considered by many as more or less of a joke, a trifling undertaking, it is elevating and refreshing to turn to Patmore who says that the high and constant purity of matrimony is vivified by the splendid variety of the soul. He perceived the things that are hidden in the nature of man and defends the noblest and oldest of human institutions with

unsurpassed vigor and originality. The great work of his later years is grouped under the title "The Unknown Eros" which are a series of odes and lyrics wherein love is treated in its most mystical aspect. He draws an analogy between divine and human love and refers to God as "The Husband of the Heavens" and "The Deathless Lover of the Soul". Possibly his odes fail to attain the universality of appeal which the great Catholic lyrics "Dies Irae" and "Te Deum" possess but they were true to life, honest and sincere. Probably I could not do better than quote the opinion of so representative a critic as Edmund Gosse, "It is my firm belief" he says, "that the influence of Patmore as a master psychologist of love human and divine will steadily increase and a future generation will look back to him with homage and respect". Patmore possessed a devout and enthusiastic acceptance of Catholicism, a daring originality and an independence of thought. He understood the human side of life. Religion alone had power to regulate the winds and currents of the storm tossed soul. He found felicity, to quote himself, with her twin sister certitude, in other words, peace in the truth, the Catholic faith.

For Gerald Hopkins, the literary world possesses not even tepid enthusiasm. One Non-Catholic commentator refers to him as a man hopelessly entangled in a fatal ascetism, guilty of an absurd devotion to Mary, a hypochondriac and melancholic. His devotion to Mary is why we have selected his name for comment and why thousands are now cultivating him. For devotion to Mary could never be absurd, no matter how ardent. His references to Mary are sweetly and beautifully uttered. He might be termed the poet of silence and while he has left no sparkling gems according to the biased critics who know not and love not Mary, it is an unquestionable fact that he is no mediocrity and his name is ever worthy of mention. His poetry was typical of himself, cryptic but so expressive. There is also exhibited in his verse, great descriptive powers. "The Blessed Virgin compared to the air we breathe" is a truly, fervent and powerful Marian hymn. Father Hopkins' life was a veritable crucifixion and was reflected throughout his verse, sad but intellectual. He sang of God, the controller of men's wills as no other English poet has done. It is true that there are probably a scant number who will enthuse about his poems but as a Poet of Mary he

should be read at least by all Catholics and by those in other religions who aspire to the beautiful. He sought refuge in the arms of Mary from the torments and storms of life and in this particular type of verse he makes a distinct, forcible, contagious appeal which is delicate, sweet and irresistible. And so the spirit of Catholicity permeated and saturated his works and for this reason and his devotion to Mary, he is destined to live at least in the hearts of the selected few.

Had Aubrey De Vere not been guided by the light of God's grace to seek refuge from the storms of the world in the bosom of the church it is doubtful whether he would have been anything more than mediocre. This statement will be challenged but the proof of same is in the fact that before his conversion he was floundering around and penning nothing of any appreciable worth. But after his advent to the Church his brilliancy shone forth with a lustre inseparable from a truly religious mind. His religious fervour possessed a sweetness and a rigour of sincerity. His influence on souls was remarkable. His poetry was genuine, pure and sparkling. He may not have wrestled from Wordsworth his laurels as "Poet of Nature" but he did surpass him in the "sanctification of the common shrine". His description of natural scenery is lucid and ecstatic and his legends of the saints draw forth a consolation not found in many works. He was the first to put the Celtic thought into English verse and he may as a result be considered as one of the forerunners of a most important literary movement. To select the best from his innumerable gems would be difficult but forced to a choice, I personally would incline to "Sorrow" and "Our Human Life". Herein he has sympathetic thoughts and ideals touched with spiritual refinement, the spirit of Catholicity again permeating and predominating. As I have said, he may not outshine Wordsworth nor rival Shakespeare but it is admitted that he sincerely courted great, grave and religious thoughts. He was Catholic in that thorough, practical way which does our religion honour and credit. He continually visited, yea, haunted the shrines where God manifested himself and his subjects always turned on the idea and images of God as an inspiration. Whether the world will eventually pay him that respect and homage which is but his due, is problematical. But regardless of the biased opinion of some in the literary world, he was a poet whose aims were grave and high. His philosophy was sound and his verse as

"gentle vesper lamps casting forth shadows of spirituality and an odor of sanctity". As a man he was a veritable saint.

If religion is the paramount consideration in life or at least should be and as a combination of intellectuality and philosophy with true religion are the prime requisites for a real poet, then conclusively have I proved to my skeptical, prejudiced and uncharitable Protestant friends that Patmore, Hopkins and Aubrey De Vere are true poets in every sense of the word and because they were the exact definition of what a poet should be, their Catholicity was reflected in their every line and their place at the shrine of the muse, is therefore indisputable.

But if the doubting critics, adamant to every Catholic achievement, and oblivious to her son's brilliant poetic efforts were not yet ready to concede the truth by the fame and laurels won by some of these whom I have mentioned already, they were forced to bow through public opinion to the genius of a Catholic poet who suddenly appeared in their midst. Assuredly those who came to scoff remained to pray. I refer to Francis Thompson. There is no controversy as to his place in poetry. He is among the selected few, at the top. He is comparable only to Shakespeare and is without doubt the greatest product of English Catholicism during the 19th. century. It is said that he was a master "more adored than Browning or Skelly" and was raised to a pinnacle of fame, a pedestal of glory upon which he rests triumphant. Thompson did not, as did some of the poets I have presented to you, have to find his way laboriously and belatedly into the shelter of a Church hitherto unknown to him. He had but to creep back into its familiar shelter as into the shadow of a rock in a desert land, to that Church which has so often proved a veritable oasis in the arid desert of thought. Thompson's sorrow and his Faith combine to give to the world some of the most penetrating of spiritual poetry. No one has ever doubted his remarkable intuitive power, nor the inspiration of his poetry. None have refused him homage. I cannot attempt an analysis of his works. The task would be too gigantic, too stupendous even were the effort within the environs of the object of this thesis. The object is to touch but in a fragmentary way upon that important fact that the spirit of Catholicity has ever permeated the works of poets and writers of worth. In Thompson this is exemplified to an enormous degree. In passing I must of necessity mention two of Thompson's masterpieces, which will live on until Michael the Archangel sounds his trumpet. In

"The Hound of Heaven" and "The Ode to the Setting Sun" is found a singular union of richly sensuous imagination with deep spiritual insight, ~~the~~ beauty of language and description with an intensity of feeling. They enter and flood the soul like "chantings of some grand liturgy." Thompson's poems are in truth a spiritual interpretation or novel imagining of Catholic ritual. Father O'Neill very aptly and appropriately enunciates my idea, "Thompson built up his lofty rhyme as if in emulation of a Gothic Cathedral, piling up the richness of detail and symbolism, the wealth of line and color into a perfect harmony of adoration, of adoration converging on the high altar below and the great sacrifice there perpetually immolated" Of formally devotional literature Thompson has written but little. "Ex Ore Infantium", "Assumpta Maria" and a few others. But one cannot fail to notice that all through his works the spiritual element is the one commanding, predominating thought. Religion was more than emotion to him. It was true philosophy, it was something practical and indispensable. Throughout his mystical poems which form so large a proportion of his work, there burns a most poignant message, the message, the primal story of God and the Soul, which thrills and holds in its thralldom in that magnificent ode, "The Hound of Heaven". I could not possibly terminate my comments on Thompson with more precise and beautiful language than that employed by Katherine Bregy. His works are a precious heritage. "His words" says Miss Bregy "are those of a poet whose heart has already endured the charring of God's insatiable flame, who in death was yet to look down upon the whitening harvest of his art". How does he compare with the best of Non-Catholic poets? There is no comparison. He will endure while time is, for his works are memorable for their artistic beauty and deep human sympathies and in the final analysis for their essential Catholicity and deep spiritual profundity and elevation.

Probably less gorgeous but hardly less spiritual is the poetry of a feminine mind of whom I shall devote but a few lines altogether disproportionate to her importance in the world of letters. I have in mind Alice Meynell whose gifts of song have brought to letters qualities of gold as did her sisters of old, Mme. de Sevigne, Jane Austin, St. Theresa and others too numerous to mention. The delicacy and reticence of her poetry is considered by some as even more spiritual than Thompson's. Her poems and essays made felt the inner voices of a disciplined and cultured Catholic soul. Her poems are simple but sweetly spiritual. They are a

ature of ideas, visions and prayers. One who has read her poems "Renunciation," "Maternity" "Christ in the Universe" "The Fugitive" and "Hearts Controversy" will understand why the Laureateship was offered to her. Her treatment of life in exquisite, philosophical and essentially Catholic. To use the words of a learned French commentator it seems "Trop raffine pour ce monde" And with Alice Meynell the Catholic spirit came into it's and advanced rapidly. To estimate her position in the world of letters is not difficult. Her place is assured. When one can earn such unstinted praise from Ruskin as is embodied in his words "The finest thing I have ever seen or heard in modern verse" then beyond doubt her claims to a place in the hall of fame are indisputable. She has indubitably "Kept the fastidious of art, when others masters were content with it's honesty".

Such poems and poets as have been referred to by me so disjointedly and incompletely are rare in any generation. That they are Catholic products causes one a thrill of justifiable pride. And yet the list is very incomplete. If time and space permitted I could point out much more Catholic achievement deserving of the highest commendation. I would gladly dwell on the fine accomplishments and genius of Wilfred Blount, also on Louise Guiney and her famous work, "Monsieur Henri". From the latter would I gladly traverse the short expanse to the youthful Digby and his remarkable verses made in homage to the loveliness of God. His poetry is a tribute to our faith. One pauses in wrapt admiration while reading his "Dum Agonizatur Anima" which is written after the style of man's "Dream of Gerontius". Yes, did I not fear to digress too much I could recite for you, brilliant efforts of manifold sons of the church infinitum et ad nauseam. Could I not descant at length upon the sweet-Irish note of Katherine Tynan, the exquisite jewelry in verse of Father B., of Adelaide Proctor who found her way into the Catholic Church and thereafter found herself. All these poets possess a common faith, hope and charity. Not over these need Catholics shake their heads, and wail and groan aloud as have wailed the Non-Catholics, J.A. Symonds, poet and litterateur and other poets of his persuasion who are poets of unbelief, doubt, rebellion and despair, who sing with poignant intensity of the grim reality of the universe, the irrationality of life, the illusory and transitory nature of our hopes and who seeking comfort in the things of this world find none. Without the abiding faith of Christ and the guiding light of Rome they are rudderless ships in the sea of life.

And now I pass from the austere spiritual lives of those Catholic poets who were safe within the portals of the Church to those poets who were Catholic, yet were on the verge of moral turpitude, but who emerged from the darkness of Erebus into the arms of the Church of Christ, which for over 1900 years has saved from Spiritual shipwreck, millions of souls, ^{again} came to their aid. Pause momentarily at the name of Oscar Wilde and his "De Profundis", consider Ernest Dowson and his deeply Catholic poem on the mercy of God "Extreme Unction". These two poems from two brilliant Catholic intellects whose religion was more or less quiescent are poems of true worth and breathe Catholicity in every line. Probably the Catholic Spirit did not save ^{their mortal lives but it did unquestionably save} their immortal souls. That Catholic Church which had saved the world and art beyond a doubt inspired rather than retarded the poets of note. In proof of this I would point to the sources of their inspiration. Francis Thompson we are told borrowed copiously from the Breviary, Patmore sought St John of the Cross, Shakespeare as I shall endeavour to prove later on found his imagery in the Catholic liturgy and ritual. Within our very reach we have Theodore Maynard, the Catholic poet of laughter and religion. And what more beautiful Catholic work has been done than the verse of the English Catholic poetess, Helen Parry Eden. Her verse is read and accepted by non-Catholics with enthusiasm. Her verse is the soul, not "thesophic banality" but ~~is~~ intensely spiritual poetry. What more beautiful and admirable description of a Catholic belief can be found than the description in her poem "The Purpose of Amendment":-

"So when the absolution's said
Behind the grille and I may go
And all the flowers of sin are dead,
And all the stems of sin laid low,
And I come to Mary's shrine
To lay my hopes within her hand.
Oh, in how fair and green a line
The seedling resolutions stand."

Notwithstanding the beauty of such lines it is strange how deeply rooted are the fangs of prejudice and narrowness and Catholics by their difference contribute to this lamentable state of affairs. If Catholics would lend an attentive ear to the achievements of their own writers at a revelation it would be for them and then armed with this knowledge they could silence the battery of adverse and unjustifiable criticism levelled at Catholic efforts. And if Catholic poetry continues to advance spontaneously, imbued with the spirit of Christ and with a richness of imagery and candour, with such fervour and piety as has been manifested

thus far, then it's position in the world of letters is secure. Asserting as it does the stability of the universe, it will reign supreme while the earth rotates. For the Catholic poet if a true Catholic must advance because as has said a French critic "The poet is a child and the Catholic poet is a normal and obedient child, and thus in more ways than one are the words fulfilled "Only children shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven"

But bigotry is a hideous monster that never admits fairness to others not of its persuasion. Early in the 19th century Bishop Wilberforce, prejudiced but clever, snorted petulantly and truculently that "everything that is Romanish is a stench in my nostrils" And today the same narrow viewpoint while perhaps not so poignantly and openly expressed stalks abroad. But the insuppressible Catholic spirit refused to be smothered. The Protestant divine mentioned above like many others had failed to realize the huge inroads which the Catholic spirit had made in English thought. Catholic writers and poets, brushing away as did Lingard, insuperable obstacles and adverse public opinion, marched forward triumphantly unfurling the banner of Christ like true Christian soldiers and reached the throne of the muse victoriously and gloriously. And the 19th century continued to witness the progress of the Catholic Spirit onslaught to fame. And the shining lights of this epoch turned as did the masters of old to Europe and the Catholic Faith for its inspiration. I need but mention one name which immediately conjures up a spirit, there is no controversy as to him. I have in mind John Ruskin. To discuss his works I am unable, but his name is established. He has insisted that half of life and a better half is beauty and Christian art and above all religion. And upon this foundation he has built everlasting effectiveness and fame.

Following closely upon our own beloved Ruskin, came the brilliant Walter Pater whose verse today is eagerly sought after. His style is inimitable and so meticulous and beautiful that it merited commendation and unstinted praise from the most bigoted and poignant critics of the day. Bourget says his style is perfect. But I am not particularly concerned with his style or rhetoric but with that fervent appeal, that religiously instinctive touch which rendered the beauty of nature "something like a sacrament". Pater weakened somewhat in his fidelity to his Faith and became pagan and hedonist in some of his

writings but he subsequently recovered himself. But for all of his lapse the spirit of Catholicity was indelibly imprinted in his writings as may be particularly seen in the perusal of his famous "Marius the Epicurean" where the hero accepts Catholicity, in all its beauty in preference to paganism and its pleasures.

When one is merely selecting Catholic celebrities at random and when one has such a magnitude of stars to gaze in wrapt admiration upon there is a tendency to digress and an inclination to touch upon too many, with the result that the patience of the reader and examiner will be sorely taxed. And so I crave indulgence and pardon if I cast a cursory glance in the direction of Lionel Johnson. A Catholic poet and a real artist he surely was. His soul was in his art, his art was God. "God is the essence of art and grows not old" He found the beauty of life in the moral law. His grasp of the spiritual and the unseen was marvelous. He sang of the mercies of God and the wondrous beauties of nature. His religious fervour was reflected in his appealing poetry. In the possession of the Catholic faith, he stood squarely and securely upon a solid rock. He proved unquestionably that Catholic tradition was a source of inspiration which kindled the muse's flame and that its roots lay in the religious spirit which Christendom had trained to the lovely service of the Cross.

My enthusiasm at first dormant upon the subject of Catholic poets and the Catholic spirit in poetry has become revived and resuscitated as I have delved into the pages of the past. It has caused me to digress but for that digression I feel confident I shall be pardoned. And if that enthusiasm leads me on to wax voluble upon other Catholic notables, other personages not poets, I am sure I will again be forgiven. Pure literature takes the form of poetry but there are other fields of applied literature which to many appear more practically important than poetry. Consider the region of history, economics, education, science and prose fiction. It has long been an ardent ambition of mine to place before the scoffing public the names of a few Catholic historians, economists, scientists and educationists. What a revelation that list would prove to those who consider Catholics retrogressive and mentally inferior. And for a few brief moments I shall consider a few of our illustrious historians and prose writers whose works are lasting monuments in the field of letters.

There are various ways of recording history. An imaginative

genius with a flagrant disregard for evidence and veracity and with a biased and warped intellect, may write of historical events and as long as Catholics are insulted and their achievements belittled, the book sells. Mr. H.G. Wells of whom I have heard so much since the great war belongs to a modified type of this category. The second method is honest and endeavours to wrest from the past the true facts, the story and the lesson. It is a tireless inspection of records and of monuments to an impartial, unbiased account of the events of the past. Catholic historians have grappled with this problem in a thoroughly able and Catholic manner. I might advert to Newman's "Sketches of History" or with justifiable pride point to T.W. Allies and his widely read "Formation of Christendom" which is a complete and crushing reply to the theories of Gibbon and is a monument and marvel of erudition and incisive criticism. I am tempted to linger over the works of that great Benedictine, Cardinal Francis Gasquet who has sifted a vast amount of evidence relative to the crucial movement in England's story, The Reformation. Who has not read Gasquet's "Eve of the Reformation" and has not marvelled at its contents? One rises from reading this monumental volume with a feeling of reluctance and is impressed with the incontrovertible fact that here is a history as it ought to be, stripped of conjecture and pagan philosophy and conscious that therein millions of lies have been slaughtered. Of the greatest historian and most widely read at the same time, I have already referred to in a brief paragraph following my discussion of Newman as poet and writer. Were I permitted to add another word to what I have already recited with regard to Lingard it would simply be this that Lingard wrote at a time when Catholics were scoffed at and scorned and he decided to write a history "which Protestants would read". And he succeeded beyond even his own fondest anticipations. The well known Protestant Historian Hallam, made Lingard's reputation as an historian secure when he said that Lingard's fairness and accuracy were perfect. Lord Acton said that Lingard was never proved to be wrong and this dictum still prevails today. If no other Catholic ever wielded a pen John Lingard, Priest of God, historian Extraordinaire, would have been sufficient to immortalize and perpetuate Catholic ability.

I must of necessity pass by the all absorbing subject of Catholic biographers altho the world's literature has been enriched by literary gems in the form of biographies. Who could dispute the

place in literature of Father Alban Butler and "His lives of the Saints". of Wilfred Ward and his "Lives of Newman and Wiseman" and of Agnes Strickland and "The Lives of the Queens of England". Was their Catholicity an impediment to their fame, ability and success? Assuredly no. Rather was it the prime cause of their unqualified successes.

And now coming to our own immediate times, do we have to look far for intellectual giants among our Catholic writers? Are there any Protestant writers who surpass or even equal the depth and richness of their writings? Enthusiastically I say no. Protestants cannot distort their faces in supercilious scorn at the names I am about to mention. ^{present for you that} Let me, illustrious quartette, G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire, Belloc, Mgr. Benson and Canon Sheehan. What a brilliant assemblage of scintillating satellites. Go to any other form of organized religion and find their equal. These men are Catholics and are men of extraordinary intellectual vigour of untiring industry and of immense output. Two are converts and two are Catholics from birth. But all are alike in owing their strongest impulses and inspiration to the Church. Chesterton long before he bowed to Rome had discovered the valuable secrets known to the Catholic Middle Ages. A glimpse of heaven came to guide him, the voice of Christ was heard and answered. With Dryden he could explain "Good life be now my task, my doubts are done". And now he is a true leader of modern thought full of ideas, essentially Catholic, read and admired and respected by all, irrespective of creed, wielding a facile pen, full of fire and of cheer.

Hilaire Belloc is a Frenchman but devoted his time to English literature. He has a strong grasp of the Catholic idea of civilization. The Catholic Church with him was not a vague philosophy but a compact organization and to it he anchored secure from the storm. He is a stylist of high rank and an historian something akin to a genius. Whether he traces out modern Europe in its evolution from the Roman Empire or the French Revolution from its myriad obscure origins or elaborates upon the political economy, he is always original in his ideas, weighty with the results of study, logical in thought and forcible in exposition. It would be difficult to examine his works in detail. I would suggest his fascinating narrative on "The French Revolution" wherein the indispensable French logic is beautifully exemplified. "The Path to Rome" challenges attention to its craftsmanship. His book "The Servile State" has been read by millions.

crystallizes into a few phrases, sturdily moulded together to withstand criticism, irrefutable and logical, the basis of the instinctive opposition to the Church of Socialism. Through all his works lies the deep and permanent Catholic Spirit. Every page bears the imprint of the Creed. In "Europe and the Faith" he shows most cogently that the hope of Europe from turpitude and anarchy lies in a return to the Faith. He shows how Europe was originally moulded together and civilized by Rome, how the Church preserved and transformed the culture of the tottering and sunken empire and how the unity thus established was dissolved by the Reformation. His ideas have been taught before by St. Augustine, by Newman and by Bossuet, but never before have they been set down so symmetrically and arrestingly in one book.

Admittedly one of the most brilliant of prose writers, Belloc in this book has collected many stanzas that favourably suffer comparison with the best English lyrics. Belloc has written on everything and on nothing says nothing. As a non-Catholic critic, recently, but he is never dull, never a bore. As an essayist he is a universal figure. Each essay is a stimulant. Belloc has rendered a great service to Christendom. He has aroused in Catholics a better understanding of their glorious ancestry and of their duty. Blessed with a powerful mind and a facile pen his logical French mind has fed on Bossuet, Pascal and Taine and will not be weaned from Catholic principles and the experience of history. Bregy says that it is a characteristic of the French mind that it should love truth and laughter. The mirth of Belloc is not the humour which is the meat of English Literature but rather "the wit that is the kindly vine of France's thought" Belloc has done more than any other modern writer to uphold steadfastly the social principles of Christendom and to restore these to a position of public importance. Accepted as a great mind and writer in every corner of the globe where intellect and culture hold sway, his name will live long after he has gone to his reward, a striking tribute to the sincerity and simplicity of his faith, an eloquent answer to scoffers and critics who with egregious asininity bellow blatantly that within the Catholic Church there are few, if any, intellectual giants or brilliant litterateurs.

Concerning the brilliant and well known Mgr. Benson, I have this satisfactory reason for not saying much, that is that both he and his works are known to all and appreciated. Probably his books are not as well known as they deserve to be, such is usually the fate of good literature. Usually the "best sellers" thrashy and sensational are more in demand. Nevertheless, Ben-

's novels have qualities that never fail to impress. They are unique in their combination of a strong and high spirituality with great skill in the technicalities of fiction. Being concerned largely with spiritual values, he never wrote without a religious purpose. He is never tiresome and possesses a style which pleases. His books are written breathlessly and ethely with a virility and satisfying zest. His popular "Oddfish" is as fascinating and as impressive as a sermon, "Come Rack, Come Rope" and "By Authority" moves to tears and enthralls. Another of his works "Initiation" reaches the depths of the Catholic faith and proves that the solace to be derived from the Catholic religion is immeasurable. Benson was essentially an artist with a finesse of craftsmanship that places him among the foremost fiction writers. His achievements are such that Catholics may well be proud of them and may point with pride and security to his brilliant record throughout. He showed the world that a book can be intensely interesting, in style and rhetoric perfect and yet be Catholic in its tone and moral.

With Benson may be mentioned Canon Sheehan who probably, less successful as an artist, nevertheless gave the world in "My New Curate" a book which has been hailed everywhere as a charming adventure in a fresh field of fiction. The well known John Ayscough merits attention as the Catholic representative in literature of an attitude towards life that is both humorous and deeply religious. I can merely refer to Francis Marion Crawford the popular Catholic novelist whose narrative instinct and skillful romancing places him at the head of the "best sellers". In "Marzio's Crucifix" and "The White Sister" Crawford has injected considerable Catholic sentiment. Crawford is not the greatest Catholic novelist but he was a practical Catholic who achieved success to a considerable extent and with his scholarly attainments and keen analytical mind would have been among the immortals had he realized the stupendous power which lie in the novel. If time and space did not forbid I need not stop here in the enumeration of Catholic writers of good fiction. The brilliant work of Canon William Barry will survive the test of time. Writers like Leslie Moore, W.R. Francis, Francis Maurice Egan, Isobel Clarke and Theodore Maynard stand forth prominently in the field of fiction writers, upholding in no depreciated way the fame and honor of Catholic effort and achievement.

The Catholic novel may not have a record for sales but it will endure for its spirituality and wholesomeness. The world to-day demands

nsation and exhibits a morbid curiosity to see the mysteries of sex
 posed. Catholics do not and cannot indulge in filth, in a pandering to
 e senses. Catholic writers must and do treat souls as surgeons treat
 dies, practically and without sentimentality. "That flesh is mortifying,
 t it out" is the point of view. Catholic writers do not dress up
 mortality in ornate language and meretricious allurements, leaving the
 flesh below the wound black and spreading danger. The Catholic writer
 tips off the dressing and slashes straight to the corrupt part, no matter
 w deep the knife must go. The texture of the Catholic mind in this
 gard and the point I am endeavouring to make is clearly exemplified
 that supremely uncontroversial and popular novel of Sir Philip Gibbs,
 e eminent Catholic writer, entitled "The Master of Life". In this novel
 Catholic woman is dragged through the divorce courts by a dissolute
 otestant husband, a wretched remnant of dissipated humanity, on a diabol-
 ally trumped up case where the evidence was all fabricated. After the
 vorce she refuses to marry altho in love with another man, because she
 nsiders herself still married. "A piece of folly" the world says "A
 olish sacrifice" but the truly Catholic writer does not sacrifice
 nciple upon the altar of expediency to satisfy morbid cravings of a
 rient curious world. This is the Catholic spirit ~~to~~ which I have been
 stantly referring and the Catholic writer with that spirit and the non-
 holic writer with that same spirit of Catholicity will in the final an-
 sis prevail, will survive when the thrash and filth of the so called
 ular writers are discarded. The Catholic view is based upon spiritual-
 and belief in the soul. It is strong and insistant, cold and austere.
 m and infinitely human. It glows with that same pure white light with
 ch it shone in the first centuries and with which it will continue to
 ne until the final reckoning.

What have we seen in this rapid and far reaching survey of Catholic
 ts and writers? Surely from the series of living examples which I
 ve selected, we have seen what a stimulus, what an inspiration, what an
 lift Catholic christianity is to literature. We have seen that in English
 terature Catholicism was a dominant force during those long ages which
 eceded the rending in twain of England's religion: that after that
 nentable severance, it maintained in spite of outlawry and persecution
 e unique eminence as the chief nurse, educator and inspirer of whatever
 s best in artistic ideals and achievements. We have seen its fruits ~~and~~

in the serenity and sanity of Patmore, in the joyous good sense of Chaucer in the rapturous vision of Crashaw and Thompson, in the manifold supremacy of Newman and in the facile pen of Ailaire Belloc. Did time and space permit we could have seen the lamentable fruits of the loss or rejection of Catholicity, in the gloom, bitterness, recklessness, immorality and despair of so many spirits capable of incomparably better things. Without that spirit of Christ I could have shown you how poets outside the faith and those indifferent ones born into the faith, simply wasted away in barren revolt against truth, in the futility and mire and desolation of mere human passion. Such indeed is the bankruptcy and despair of literature without religion, without the guidance of the true spirit.

The final allotment of the objective undertaken in this essay, deals, as I have already mentioned, with the Catholic spirit once more, not the spirit among Catholic poets but that impressive Catholic trend, that true Catholic spirit which seems to permeate the works of many poets and writers not of the Catholic persuasion. It is ^{an} intensely interesting and important element in literary circles and I am sure my lack of thoroughness in grappling with the subject will be condoned. The discussion of this particular feature of the Catholic spirit must of necessity be but fragmentary, but shall be compensated for by the sincerity of the effort.

If I were asked for a test which separated literature from the mass of filth and innocuous musings and vaporings which is not literature, I would say that literature is the expression through the aesthetic medium of words, of the dogmas of the Catholic Church and that which is out of harmony with these dogmas is not literature. One does not necessarily have to be a Catholic to be a poet but I do say that unless a poet or writer has consciously or unconsciously assimilated the final dogmas, the eternal truth as promulgated by the Church then that poet will never write lasting literature. The Catholic dogma is the witness under a special symbolism of the enduring facts of human nature: It is the voice that tells us that man is not the creature of a "se. se movere" doctrine, but a soul confronted by the source of all souls. When you grasp this point you will realize then that to write good literature one must at least be subconsciously Catholic, that is Catholic in spirit. It has always been from the altar of Catholic truth that the spiritual torch of poetry has gone forth, (next page)

a beacon of hope and light and has been handed down the centuries to inspire and sustain. From Chaucer to Spencer down to the poets of today the Catholic Church has been a source of inspiration. The value of literature and art depends upon its spiritual endowment. If it is essentially spiritual it is vain and innocuous. Goethe tells us that the epoch in which faith prevails is the marked epoch of human nature full of heart stirring memories. The epoch in which unbelief prevails, even when for the moment they have put on the semblance of glory and success, inevitably sinks into insignificance in the eyes of posterity which will treat it as waste its thoughts on things barren and untruthful". Dante, probably the greatest of Catholic poets was a living representative of the time in which he lived and which was called "The Age of Faith" and his "Divine Comedy" will live on forever. Shelley on the contrary lived in an age of religion and revolution and falls far short of Dante in his very admirable work "Prometheus Unbound".

To delve into the vast field of Poetry and select therefrom lines reeking with Catholicity and redolent of holiness, will be recognised as a stupendous undertaking and to be plenary in my efforts would be a practically impossible task. My attempt shall be but cursory and superficial and I shall select but a few non-Catholic poets for comment and shall quote some of the lines which have impressed thousands as embodying sentiments that might well have been given utterance to, by one born unto the faith.

Milton has been called the Great Religious Poet, the glory of Protestantism. He certainly was a Protestant poet but hardly a Christian poet even though he achieved fame by writing "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained". In the 13,000 lines which comprise these two latter works, but which were devoted to the Passion and death of Our Saviour. Francis Thompson says of Milton "that he always lacked a little poetic poverty of soul, a little detachment from his poetic richness: he could not forget that he was Milton". And while he had some religious sentiments running through his works, he was not very Catholic in his view and so I turn from Milton to that dominating figure of the 18th. century Dr. Samuel Johnson, whom I have already mentioned. We cannot claim him as a Catholic but we can and do claim that his Catholic sympathies were very manifest, that he constantly disconcerted his friends and has discomfited his critics by his affection for Catholic things, persons and ideas. One who has read

oswell can see at a glance how he draws out Johnson on the Mass, purgatory, indulgences and invocation of the saints, and see how Johnson champions the Catholic cause, with the ability of a Catholic theologian. No Catholic was Johnson in his sentiments and writings that the people referred to him as a Benedictine. He did not unfortunately, receive the gift of faith, but he was thoroughly imbued with the Catholic spirit, and his brilliancy is chargeable largely to the Catholicity of his taste.

Byron has been caustically criticised and reproved for the quality of his lines and I must admit that he did give expression to sentiments which were far from Catholic in their morality but if he wavered in spots, yet there is much of his work which is truly admirable and very Catholic in trend. Witness his "Ave Maria" which is a beautiful invocation to Mary, the Mother of God. He seems to have felt that if his passion would allow him to follow his best lights, his place would be in that place of God in which he caused his daughter to be brought up.

Shelly was in many respects a Catholic and in his latter years he drew very close to Catholicism. Was ever a more beautiful and lovely tribute paid to the Mother of God than the following poem?

Seraph of Heaven, so gentle to be human
Veiling beneath that radiant form of woman
All that is insupportable is Thee
Of light and love and immortality,
Sweet Benediction in the Eternal curse,
Veiled glory of this lampless Universe,
The moon beyond the clouds, though living form
~~Among the Dead,~~
Thou star above the storm
Thou wonder, Beauty, "harmony of Nature's Art.

With such sweet reverence for the Blessed Virgin as expressed in the above lines, one is apt to attribute the sentiment to a Catholic yet and wonder how a non-Catholic could pen such beautiful lines. Both Byron and Shelly were brilliant minds and strongly inclined towards the faith but the final gift was never given them. They are sad examples of the ruin caused by lack of religion, and by an education and atmosphere entirely non-Catholic.

A great and true poet must have philosophy and the philosophy must of necessity be Catholic. The philosophy of St. Thomas, Scholastic philosophy, broadens the mental horizon and imbues the soul with qualities which are reflected in poetic outbursts. Very often men of genius are not imbued with religious principles or with philosophy and although enviably

owered with vision and mental attainments are sunk in an effluvia of
 of moral desolation and spiritual bankruptcy. They may have a philosophy
 but it is the philosophy of a Voltaire or a Swinburne. Most writers
 have been profound philosophers and we see this when we recall such men
 as Plato, Aristotle, Dante, and Goethe. And although many clever writers
 have had no philosophy, they are stylists of note and fascinating writers
 but certainly not profound thinkers. Witness Anatole France. He was a
 great writer but had no philosophy. He certainly was not a profound
 thinker and the greatest proof of this contention is that he withdrew
 from the Catholic Faith in which he was born and reared and lapsed into
 intellectual skepticism and spiritual nihilism. He knew how to write
 and had an inimitable style. His best work will take its place in the
 stylistic sense among the French classics and will be read in the schools
 with that brilliant assemblage of French immortals, Ronsard, and Moliere,
 Bossuet and Fenelon, Pascal, Lemaître, Lacordaire, and Loti. But he will be
 read as a stylist only. What an intellectual giant Anatole France would
 have been had he possessed a Catholic philosophy. Another example of
 intellectual pride, of a soul blinded by scepticism and false philosophy.
 And so I am right in contending that without Catholic philosophy a poet will
 never be a resplendent figure.

Wordsworth whom I shall commune with for a moment altho not a
 Catholic had the Catholic spirit and that fine philosophy to which I have
 already referred. He will probably be remembered and read for generations
 to come. He taught Catholic truths. His works have the Catholic spirit
 the sweet, consoling trend of Catholic truth and the dogmas of Catholicism.
 His undoubtedly inspired his soul. His tribute to the Mother of God
 is probably unparelled and no Catholic poet has ever approached these lines
 in beauty and tenderness:

Mother whose Virgin Bosom was uncrossed
 With the least shade of thought of sin allied
 Woman, above all women glorified,
 Our tainted nature's solitary boast.

Again the same poet has penned lines probably less famous but
 none the less beautiful:

Blissful Mary, Mother Mild,
 Maid and Mother undefiled,
 Save a Mother and her child.

The reason for Wordsworth's genius and brilliancy is apparent
 if for no other cause than that he was saturated with Catholicity. For

legiance to the Mother of God and admiration and respect for Her is sufficient inspiration to place a poet with natural ability among the immortals.

There are a great many Catholic critics who frequently relegate to oblivion all poetry which has not its origin in Catholic imagery and inspiration. A poet's work however, should not be criticized because he is a Catholic or a Protestant, but because of his lack of beauty and religion in the poetry to which he gives effect. Browning and Tennyson were not Catholics and we cannot and do not accept their philosophical theories and religious tenets but we can and do give them credit and admiration for their splendid poetic creations and award them unstinted praise for their artistic minds. But as great artists they were Catholic in spirit if not ~~nomine~~. And if they are great they may thank that Catholic spirit that they arrived at famous heights. And why not? For it is at "the altar of Catholic truth, that all great art lights its torch" Browning's most stupendous work was probably "The Ring and the Book". It is essentially Catholic in substance and spirit and emphasizes the fact that Browning like many others was at his best when close to the "Shrine of Rome" His poem on "Midnight Mass" might have been penned by a Newman, a Faber or a Newman.

Tennyson, Poet Laureate, nurtured and reared in the environs of bigoted England, possessed a mind which was truly Catholic in spirit, even if at times it did waver. His best work in the opinion of many is "The Idylls of the King" and is built upon a Catholic bulwark. Again in that beautiful elegy "In Memoriam" the Catholic pulse beats with a philosophy deep and true, each and every passage breathing Catholicity. The light of faith did not explore the deep recesses of these souls, it is because God in His inscrutable ways did not see fit to bestow the gift upon them. But the rays of faith had begun to permeate and light was slowly penetrating. The sources of their poetry and the inspiration of same could not have been more Catholic. Why I ask, if the possession of Catholicism was considered a barrier to poetic success, did the non-Catholic poets write so tenderly on Catholic truths and dogmas? Because they realized that at the Catholic element, the spirit of Christ was to be found only in that religion and that without that beautiful inspiration their efforts would be futile, their lyrical outbursts, flat and insipid.

And so the procession of Catholic inclined poets goes on, each one drawing on the Church and its ritual for light and inspiration. Gabriel Rossetti and his sister Christina are taken for born Catholics and one would conclude from a perusal of their works that this conjecture was quite justifiable. Their works are sound and widely read. Why? Because essentially Catholic in spirit. And the strength which they manifest lies in their inheritance which was Catholic. Several generations ago the Rossettis were Catholics. They have been groping in the dark since, but the insuppressible, irresistible spirit of that Catholic inheritance continually bursts forth. The life of Christina Rossetti has been a groping realization of that Catholic instinct. It is said of her that she was scrupulously careful not to thread upon a scrap of paper in the street lest it should bear the Holy Name. Would that many Catholics were as careful in the uttering of that Holy Name. Christina Rossetti's writings are so Catholic that one commentator has said that it might well have been done upon her knees. Her verse is the song of christendom, plaintive and delicate as she makes the soul bow before the soul. If she did not find her way into the Church, she was assuredly united with its soul even as Keble and Ward.

Were you to roll back the pages of the past and delve into the works of Charlotte Bronte, of Carlyle, of Scott, Coleridge, Keats, Austin, Thackeray and even our old friend Dickens, you would marvel at the wealth of Catholic sentiments expressed therein. In their finest utterances the Catholic note has been dominant. Grey in his "Elegy" has all the essentials of a Catholic in his very philosophic considerations of the vanity of the world and the aspects of death. I could, if space permitted, refer you to that very popular writer George Eliot, who began the spiritual type of novel. She had a religious heart amid the agnostic circumstances of her later life. Had she written all her books along the lines of "Scenes from Clerical Life" and that serious religious book "Adam Bede" her power would have been insuperable and her writings might well have been the results of a brilliant Catholic romancer so Catholic were the sentiments embodied therein. There is a spiritual quest

in most of her works or if not exactly a quest, a situation, a crisis which can only be dealt with by inspiration or conscience. Conscience looms large in most of her books. Whatever defiance of God and man and morality there may have been in her personal life, her novels are moral to the core, her knowledge of Catholic ritual and dogma perfect and her treatment of marriage, admirable and essentially Catholic.

Looming up on the horizon stately and serene is a figure which will always demand attention and admiration and in that personage of whom I am going to speak, there is reflected a Catholic spirit which is truly remarkable for one who never found his way into the Church, dangerously close as he was at times. I refer to Longfellow of Evangeline fame. The spirit of Catholicity has assuredly permeated his works, was the source of his imagery and inspiration. Longfellow probably would not have been heard of were it not for the inspiration he received from Catholic objects and sources. When a poet pays tribute to the Mother of God then I maintain he has gone right to the source of inspiration and assistance. Witness his Marian tribute which ranks with that of Shelly and Wordsworth:

"If Our faith has given us nothing more,
Than this example of all womanhood,
So mild, so merciful, so strong, so good,
So patient, peaceful, loyal, loving, pure,
This was enough to prove it higher and truer,
Than all the creeds the world has known before".

One cannot fail to be impressed by the beauty and tenderness and sincerity of these lines which might well have been the crystallized thoughts of a Catholic muse. If we follow Longfellow to Europe we find that he went to Catholic places of art for inspiration. Two great Catholic artists fascinated and enthralled him. One was Michael Angelo whose stupendous frescoes he admired in the Sistine Chapel. In Longfellow's "Lay of Ancient Rome" there is a plethora of Catholic scenes and references. Longfellow's other great inspirer was the one and only Catholic Dante. Dante found his inspiration we are told, in two subjects, the Church and Italy. Dante we know has written with remarkable vigour of the Church. We see this in his fervours of St. Francis, the philosophy of St. Thomas, and the psalms and the Canticles in which the church celebrates the prerogatives of Mary; we see in his writings the fight which the Church constantly makes against schism and sin; we see

the weakness of human nature, which even within her own army constantly impedes the Church in her fight and finally the glorious end of faith, hope and charity in the eternal contemplation of the Blessed Trinity. This was the theme of Dante, this guides his observations as he makes his way through Hell and Purgatory and with Beatrice through Paradise. And this Catholic Dante with his thoroughly Catholic teachings and unsurpassed poetry was the inspiration of Longfellow and the subject of his constantly returning thoughts. Longfellow has written no nobler lines than his succession of sonnets on the "Divina Commedia". Glance at this sonnet relative to his visit to Italy and see therein the true Catholic thought and spirit:

"Oft have I seen at some Cathedral door,
A Laborer pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden and with reverent feet,
Enter and cross himself and on the floor,
Kneel to repeat his Paternoster o'er".

When Longfellow visited Dante's tomb at Ravenna he penned another tender sonnet mingling the memory of the Cathedral with its incense and devotions:

"I enter and I see in the gloom,
Of the long isles, O Poet Saturnine,
The air is filled with some unknown perfume,
The congregation of the dead make room,
For thee to pass, the votive tapers shine,
Like rocks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine,
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb,
From the confessionals I hear arise,
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
And lamentations from the crypts below,
And then a voice celestial that begins,
With the pathetic words "altho your sins,
As scarlet be" and ends with,
"as the snow".

It would be difficult to find any other luminary upon the poetic horizon who has given expression to such Catholic thoughts and to such a clever devout description of confession. But beautiful as are these exultations relative to Dante and Italy still how peaceful, like the paradise of the blessed "arrayed as a petaled rose" was his Catholic description of the worship at High Mass:

"I lift mine eyes and all the windows blaze,
With forms of saints and holy men who died,
Here martyred and hereafter glorified,
And the great rose upon the leaves displays,
Christ's triumph and the angelic roundelays,
With splendour upon splendour multiplied,
And then the organ sounds and unseen choirs,
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love,
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost,
And the melodious bells among the spires,
O'er all the house tops and through Heaven above,
Proclaim the elevation of the Host".

That is poetry in which there is a thrill, an inspiration, a substance which is animated. If Longfellow did not have the Catholic imagery, the spirit to urge him on, would he have been the immortal bard that he is? And we may safely answer, without that spirit of Catholicity he probably would have been a mediocrity.

In his admiration of Michael Angelo and Dante, Longfellow was drawn closer to that Church which was his inspiration. He loved Italy and Rome and remarked that no one born in Rome could live elsewhere. Altho he never formally joined the Church, he knew its dogmas and its teachings and loved Catholicism. His references to the Church and Catholic practice are true to the slightest detail. He is more Catholic than a Catholic born unto the faith. He realized that the Church though the ark of salvation, was no mechanical system for insuring it but was akin to the sun and the shower, letting fall her benefits on any ground that is ready to receive them. The Church was the salt of the earth in Longfellow's estimation and her savour is to be found in many dishes. Glorious, certain and unchanging is that Church of God. Cheerfulness, patience and charity, consistency and hope rise like towers from her foundations of faith and truth. This was Longfellow's view towards the Church. He unfortunately only saw the Church from the outside. If he had only seen within; if he had only realized the Faith; if he had acknowledged the truth that inspired the Divina Commedia, that Faith which bore up and consoled Evangeline in her years of weary searching for Gabriel Lajeunesse, that Faith which built the enduring Churches of Luxemburg and Bruges, what a powerful and wonderful poet he would have been!

"And above the Cathedral door ways,
Saints and bishops carved in stone,
By a former age commissioned,
As apostles to our own".

So it is with Longfellow in all his works, the Catholic element, the Catholic inspiration and spirit. His thoughts were all centered on religion and the Church as may be witnessed again in his "Outre-Mer" and "Hyperion". All art to him was from God and the Church was the source of his inspiring verse. Unfortunately he died without the bosom of the Church but his memory will be revered by all lovers of real

poetry and by Catholics in particular for his respect and treatment of everything Catholic and as a poet who verily indeed exemplified the Catholic Spirit.

Of necessity and with reluctance I must allow the works and expressions of many Non-Catholic poets to pass without scrutiny and comment but it is my intention to select one more Non-Catholic poet for discussion and to attempt to analyze his religious sentiments and to show that the Catholic Spirit permeated all his works and provided him with the necessary inspiration to reach the top most rung of the ladder of success. William Shakespeare, the greatest English Poet, is so saturated with Catholicity that many have suggested that he was a Catholic. It is also said that the age of Shakespeare is the glory of Protestantism. This claim has been made time and again but the answer is not so simple nor is it conceded without an argument. Carlyle says that Shakespeare and his period was a blossom of medieval Catholicism. I submit that Shakespeare may very possibly and with reason have been a Catholic but he cannot possibly have been a Protestant. If he were a Protestant, why did he not display his Protestantism? He had every inducement to do so; all his compeers did. Shakespeare on the contrary did not. There is no touch of Protestantism in any Shakespearean scene. No attempt to gratify the mob or Queen Elizabeth with an anti-Catholic fling, and he would certainly have received a chorus of praise and a position of preferment from Good Queen Bess had he vilified the Catholics. On the other hand, if Shakespeare were a Catholic, it would not have been safe for him to display his Catholicism. It would have been fatal to him and ruinous to himself and his actors and patrons. The absence of Protestantism in his plays is a strong, if not conclusive, proof that he was not a Protestant. But it cannot be said that Catholicism and the spirit of Catholicity were not present and permeating all his plays. His plays are saturated with a theology and a philosophy which are deeply, intensely and traditionally Catholic, which are "mightiest in the mightiest". Extracts from his tragedies, histories and comedies, from the stories of Lear and Macbeth, from all the turbulence of human passions, are redolent of Catholicity and in them may be seen the lessons of the Catholic school and the Catholic pulpit.

As I have said, one is forced to admit that a poet is usually the product of his particular time but an impartial examination of Shakespeare's writings will make clear that he was no product of the Reformation. There is no doubt that the chief poetic characteristic should be imagery and it is undoubtedly by symbols that the poet's theme, the spiritual, the ideal, the supersensuous, finds expression. Of all poets Shakespeare is the richest in his creative power. He has a figure and metaphor for every thought. Most of his imagery is drawn from religious sources. He was free to choose from the new creed of Luther, the disgruntled monk, from Calvin and from Cranmer and others of their ilk, but did he? No, the object of his predilection, the source of his imagery, is the ancient Faith and he introduces the Catholic Church, her priests and doctrines and ritual, not like Spenser, jeeringly and falsely nor like Marlow with his jibes as to superstition, but with respect and reverence, as the natural representative of things pure and high, noble and true and as a result to be treated with due honour and reverential awe. With dignity and reverence he speaks of "Pontifical robes and vestments". And so on without number, Catholic imagery is continually manifested in his writings. He puts before us temples, altars, priests, monks and nuns, the Mass, sacrifice, patens of gold, chalices, incense, relics, holy cross, the sacraments of Baptism, Penance and Holy Eucharist and Extreme Unction, details of ritual as for example the "Benedictio Thalami". All these and manifold other Catholic rites and images are introduced with a delicacy and fitness inseparable from a mind habituated to the Church's tone and trend of thought. When he wrote an anti-Catholic play as King John, he was careful to expurgate therefrom all stories of indelicacy against nuns and monks, knowing that at such particular times such stories of ribaldry would be a sweet morsel of scandal and salaciousness for the mob. From the Protestant Creed he chose his characters of hypocrisy and duplicity as witness Falstaff and Halofernes but he invariably turned to the Catholic faith for all his sacred and noble images.

Shakespeare has been accused of coarseness and uncouthness and of lines teeming with sensuality but one must bear in mind the times in which he lived and remember that customs and the particular epoch often

shape morals. Language which was accepted in Shakespeare's time would be considered very bad form to-day. The pagan styles of to-day which we accept as custom and as having been passed by the supreme court of sartorial adjudication, would have been considered grossly immoral in the days of our grandparents. So one must not condemn Shakespeare too much for Shakespeare loved purity and in Hamlet he severely scores Hamlet's mother for her indiscretions. He refers to her second marriage as an act,

"That blurs the blush and grace of modesty
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose,
From the fair forehead of innocent love,
And sets a blister there".

Again lilies are considered the emblem of chastity and Shakespeare says,

"Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds".

With Shakespeare as with Dante, the pagan fable is made the preacher of Christian truth. One of his most Christian and Catholic dramas in its moral teaching is "The Tempest". The same Catholic teaching and spirit is found in "Cymbeline" and in "The Midsummer's Night Dream" where the Christian Catholic idea is conveyed through a heathen rite or myth. He took what was true in paganism and rejected what was false and this has ever been the work and endeavour of Christian Catholic poets.

In "Measure for Measure" the heroine has a choice between her brother's death and her own honour and Shakespeare makes her say:

"Better it were a brother died at once,
Than that a sister by redeeming him,
Should die forever"

which of course means that it would be better for the brother to die mortally than for the immortal soul to perish in perdition. To the Catholic, Isabella the heroine represents the noblest ideal, the brightest and most blessed of his heroines.

Consider for a moment Shakespeare's philosophy of love. It is essentially Catholic. The object of true love with him is the eternal truth, goodness and beauty. Love and religion with him become identified and religion like love bears a sacrificial character. Is it not only in the Catholic religion that the idea of sacrifice is found? Without

the sacrifice of the Mass the Catholic religion would not be that wonderful institution that it is. Shakespeare recognized the all important meaning of sacrifice and from it came his inspiration.

As a student myself of Scholastic Philosophy, it is doubly interesting to probe into and investigate the philosophy of Shakespeare. He undoubtedly adhered in philosophical matters to the Scholastic system. He is distinctly a Thomist in his doctrine of the genesis of knowledge and its objective character; the formation of habits, intellectual and moral, and the whole operation of the imaginative faculty. He was opposed to Pantheism and insisted on the subsistence of each human being. Des Cartes "Cogito Ergo Sum" did not appeal to him. There is no doubt but that from Shakespeare's Catholic philosophy and logic was derived his unequalled power of delineating character. His adherence to Scholastic philosophy is a proof of his antagonism to his particular time. The ease and accuracy with which he employs the Scholastic theories and principles, as the vehicle of his deepest thoughts, show that with a master mind like his, poetic and philosophic truth are one.

It is remarkable how Catholic Shakespeare is in his view of the vanity and emptiness of the world. The indisputable characteristic of his writings as manifested in his dramas and poems, is his philosophy of the nothingness of the world. Never did he extol the pride and pomp of earthly greatness but on the contrary he constantly reminds us that "mightiness meets misery". In "The Tempest" he warns us that

"The great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rock behind".

which is the Catholic view on life with of course the additional promise of eternal bliss for those who observe the teachings and warnings of God's Church. Gray in his "Elegy" has emphasized the same fact when he says:

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth ere gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The Paths of glory lead but to the grave".

What Catholic Missionary ever gave utterance to more stirring words on the utter futility of seeking happiness in this

world than did Shakespeare when he said:

"What win I if I gain the thing I seek,
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy,
Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week,
Or sells eternity to get a toy?"

Which the Missionary speaking for the Church would say:

"What would it profit a man to gain the whole world
and suffer the loss of his own immortal soul?"

From these scattered and isolated excerpts and quotations selected at random, as they occurred to me, from the whole tenor of Shakespeare's writings, from the Catholic principles and Scholastic philosophy which he constantly advocates and acts upon, from the sources of his wonderful imagery, everyone, except those utterly bereft of intelligence and impartiality must admit that the greatest of English poets was not the product of the Elizabethan age nor the prodigy of Protestantism but rather of Catholicism which is the source of all true art and herein lies the secret of his marvellous power and the inexhaustible, impenetrable vitality of his work.

Turn for a moment to Shakespeare's "King John". We find the illustrious poet defending Catholic doctrines and the Priests of God while other writers of his time reviled them. So in all of his Historical plays, he displays a knowledge of Catholic dogma and Canon Law which might well emanate from the holy lips of a Catholic Divine. He discusses the prerogatives of royalty, their source, nature and extent, the conditions of its lawful tenure, all as a Catholic Theologian. The relations of the Church and State, the reasons which justify rebellion, the causes of a Nation's decay, with a true Catholic ring and spirit. How Catholic is the view expressed by Richard when he says:

"I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage".

After reading Shakespeare's Henry V, one must of necessity pause in astonishment at the essentially Catholic spirit manifested therein. The King is the mirror of Christian Knights. His trust in God as depicted by Shakespeare is a source of edification and might well be emulated by all of us. He prayed to God before the battle and implored his assistance and he gave thanks to God immediately after

the victory. The character of his faith is clearly expressed. He believes in purgatory, in alms giving and prayer and fasting for the souls detained therein. Shakespeare's portrait of the Catholic here is comprehensive and true to the slightest detail.

In Henry VI, Shakespeare places the following words in the mouth of Henry's wife:

"All his mind is bent on holiness,
To number Ave Marias on his beads,
His Champions are the prophets and the apostles,
His weapons, holy saws of sacred writ,
His study is his tilt yard and his loves,
Are brazen images of canonized saints,
I would the college of Cardinals would choose him Pope,
And Carry him to Rome,
That were a fit state for his holiness".

Assuredly respectful and thoroughly Catholic. These thoughts must have emanated from a Catholic mind. Contrast these lines with Shakespeare's sweeping and acrimonious denunciation of that voluptuous, licentious Monarch, Henry VIII. This libertine is severely scored as the perpetrator of iniquity; the ruthless sacrificer of a pure and noble wife for a licentious caprice. The dissolute reprobate Ann Boleyn is called a "Spleeney Lutheran" and Cranmer is called "the servile minister of their passions under a cloak of religion". He is also called the "arch heretic" who has crawled into favour. Were Shakespeare not Catholic in spirit and in mind would he have attacked such exalted personages of the royal line? I think not. It is only in the Catholic Church that one finds a denunciation such as this for the Church is no discriminator and when immorality and dishonesty stalk about in high places it is attacked and routed regardless of the rank of the offender.

In Henry V we read the following lines:

"And we will hear, note and believe in heart,
That what you speak is in your conscience washed,
As pure as sin in baptism".

I hardly think one would require greater proofs of Shakespeare's belief in Catholic truths and dogmas if not indeed of his religion. These lines are simply another way of enunciating the Catholic doctrine of the justifying effects of the Sacrament of Baptism, "Ex opere operato" as I remember my St. Thomas. If Shakespeare did not possess Catholicity he certainly had a thorough grasp of its ritual and dogmas for in them he has derived his greatest sources of inspiration and his art is centered

in and around Catholic beliefs. And why not? For the center, the core and the essence of true art is Catholicity.

And thus in all Shakespeare's historical plays the Catholic thought and principle and devotion is perfectly explained and respected and held up for admiration.

In Lee's life of Shakespeare it is stated that the renowned poet wrote over five hundred sonnets. Most of them were written on such grave subjects as philosophy, religion and love. Richard Simpson tells us that a comparison of Shakespeare's theory on love with that which has found favour with Christian writers will show the identity of his views with those of the leaders of religious thought. The philosophy of love as taught first by Plato and purified and completed by St. Augustine, Boetius and St. Thomas is a definite, comprehensive and coherent system. In that philosophy which is the philosophy I had the privilege of studying, the object of love is the good, the act of love is the tendency or the movement toward its attainment and in its secure possession love is perfected, quies in bono being the essence of beatitude. And this is the Catholic philosophy which Shakespeare adheres to. He states that love is the first beginning, the sustaining principle and the final end of all things. Man as a reasonable being finds his good in the love and acquisition of truth and in the possession of absolute truth alone is his perfection attained. Is this not the very essence of Catholic philosophy? Can anyone gainsay this? I think not. Consider for a moment the beauty and truth of these lines:

"Him first to love, great right and reason is,
Who first to us our life and being gave,
And after, when we fared amiss,
Us wretches from a second death did save,
And last the food of life which now we have,
Even he himself in his dear sacrament,
To feed our hungry souls unto us lent".

No more impressive lines could have been penned by a Catholic theologian to more beautifully and tenderly express the great acts of Divine Love, Creation, Redemption and the Holy Eucharist. Shakespeare must necessarily have been thoroughly Catholic, otherwise he could never have given effect to such beautiful thoughts. For a non-Catholic poet

even though he may know something of our beliefs cannot express them unless he actually embraces them and believes them. What does he mean by "the food of life"? The Body and Blood of Christ and nothing else. "I am the Bread of Life" said Christ and Shakespeare without the slightest doubt accepts the doctrine.

I am forced to concede that when one reads some of Shakespeare's sonnets, there appears a strain of vulgarity and in some cases, licentiousness. But admitting that even as Dante did, he lingers in the presence of the temptress and sinks into moral turpitude at times, where his lower impulses stifle reason and conscience, still when he recovers himself he describes the blackened soul, its loathing and remorse, when the heat of passion is past, with a philosophical and theological accuracy that is admirable and thoroughly and essentially Catholic.

Of Shakespeare's love plays, I am too incompetent to speak. In passing I will say that in the best known of this class of play, "Romeo and Juliet" the Catholic spirit is dominant throughout. Shakespeare respects the Monks and holds with the Church on the question of suicide. "Heaven has fixed its canon against self-slaughter". The Friar's advice is in accordance with the purest morality. He manifests anxiety for the purity of the souls entrusted to him by insisting on the discipline of the Church that engaged couples should not remain together alone in their clandestine relationship until married:

"Violent delights have violent ends,
And in their triumph die like fire and powder,
Which as they kiss consume".

To say the least an admirable Catholic warning and a truth indisputable.

In the early part of this thesis, I have quoted references to the Mother of God which I found among the works of some non-Catholic poets. I thought they could not be equalled. But in reading Shakespeare's "All's well that ends well" we come upon several lines thoroughly Catholic put into the mouth of the Countess when she hears that her son has renounced his lawful wife:

"What angel shall bless this unworthy husband?
He cannot thrive unless Her prayers,
Whom Heaven delights to hear and loves to grant,
Reprieve him from the wrath of greatest justice".

This is an expression of Catholic belief in the intercessory power of the Mother of God. Shakespeare undoubtedly meant prayers to the Holy Virgin and herein affirms distinctly and emphatically the characteristic doctrine which so materially distinguishes Catholicity from Protestantism.

One cannot fail to be impressed when perusing "Twelfth Night" and "As You Like It" as one sees the wealth of Catholic references and the Catholic spirit and sentiment expressed therein. Catholics have an undying love and respect for their Priests. Shakespeare appreciates this respect and reverence in the speech of Olivia who reverences the Priest very much and considers it of paramount importance that the Priest should be present at her wedding:

"Now go with me and with this Holy Man,
Into the Chantry by; there before him,
And Underneath that Consecrated roof,
Plight me the full assurance of your faith,
That my most jealous and too doubtful soul,
May live at peace".

It would be well for every Catholic young man and woman to consider marriage by the Priest as the one and only proper course to pursue. Note how Shakespeare refers to "the consecrated roof". He knows that the Catholic Church is consecrated to God; he knows that the Consecrated Host, Christ himself lives on day in and day out in the Tabernacle of the altar and he gives full vent to his Catholicity in those beautiful lines above quoted. Protestants do not claim that their Churches are consecrated; the Catholic Church alone could be meant by this allusion. Why if this illustrious poet was not a Catholic, or at least thoroughly conversant with the teachings of the Church, did he turn to Catholic imagery, to Catholic sources for all his inspiration, for all the gems which he has left us? Let the critical scoffers answer this and then they will be forced to admit the truth, or ^{be} covered with shame and confusion.

Shakespeare then makes the Priest declare the indissolubility of marriage and expresses clearly and accurately the Catholic doctrine that the contracting parties are themselves the ministers of the sacrament of matrimony and that the Priest is only the appointed witness:

"A contract of eternal bond of love"
Confirmed by mutual joinder of your hands,
And sealed in my function, by my testimony".

And so I say that if Shakespeare were not a Catholic, he at least possesses a grasp of Catholic doctrine which would put to shame many Catholics born unto the faith.

In the "Winter's Tale" one is deeply impressed and enthralled by the remarkable instances of Catholic imagery. In one passage, describing the Holy Temple in Rome, Cleomenses is made to say:

"I shall report,
For most it caught me, the celestial habits,
(Methinks I so should term them) and the reverence of
the grave wearers,
O the Sacrifice!
How ceremonious, solemn and unearthly,
It was in the offering!

The idea of the Sacrifice of the Mass is undoubtedly here suggested and with what reverence and respect does Shakespeare discuss this all important matter, this source and foundation and inspiration of our religion. Wiseman has described the Mass in wonderful terms but he does not improve on this master mind. And from his descriptions of the Mass I turn once more to Shakespeare's beautiful tribute to Mary again extolling her power, her tender pleading at the bar of Divine Justice:

"You have not sought Her help,
Of whose soft grace,
For the like lost,
I have her sovereign aid,
And rest content".

And again as an echo of St. Bernard's prayer:

"So Mighty art thou Lady and so great,
That he who grace desireth and comes not
To Thee for aidence, fain would have desire,
Fly without wings".

And yet in the world to-day we meet many who asseverate with smug complacency and with dogmatic arrogance that Catholicity is a hindrance to art; that the Catholic spirit is not productive of the best poetic effort; that the source of inspiration and imagery can be found in material things of life. And in the face of such ludicrous, absurd statements, it is shown beyond the shadow of a doubt that the greatest poets the world has ever seen or is likely to see were either Catholic in faith or the source of their poetic impulses and imagery was very Catholic. And Shakespeare, the Peer of all, goes straight to Catholic doctrine for beauteous thoughts, and to Mary the Mother of God for inspiration.

Dr. Thomas O'Hagan says that because Shakespeare refers in "Hamlet" to "sulphurous flames" it is no evidence of Shakespeare's Catholicity. Probably not, but it is conclusive evidence of Shakespeare's knowledge of Catholic dogma and doctrine, and gives evidence of what I have been endeavouring to show in this thesis, that the Catholic Spirit permeates the works of poets of note. The reference to purgatory again shows that Shakespeare invariably turns to Catholic sources for his imagery. For Shakespeare does not treat the matter of purgatorial expiation in a scoffing, flippant manner but with dignity and respect and awe. The ghost's description of his unhappy state points unmistakably to the doctrine of Purgatory.

Consider the depth of meaning contained in this speech:

"Cut off even in the blossoms of my sins,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,
No reckoning made but sent to my account,
With all my imperfections on my head".

"Unhousel'd" undoubtedly means without Communion.

"Disappointed" means not in a fit state or not appointed or prepared by absolution. "Unanel'd" is certainly without Extreme Unction.

"No reckoning made" can convey to our minds nothing else except that no confession to the Priest had been made. If these channels of grace are not taken advantage of, if they are neglected a man goes to his account, to his final reckoning with all his imperfections on his head, with all his sins confounding and condemning him. If a soul has been fortified by the last rites of Holy Mother Church and by Confession the soul goes to its final judgment in a state of grace. Could Shakespeare enunciate this Catholic doctrine so succinctly, so beautifully, so sincerely, were he not imbued with an intense Catholic Spirit? Were Catholic imagery and Catholic thoughts and convictions a bar to his wealth of wonderful expressions, his power of delineation? Even the most biased, the most warped in intellect cannot gainsay this.

What strikes one most forcibly in perusing many of Shakespeare's plays particularly "Hamlet", "Measure for Measure", "King John", "The Tempest", and "As You Like It", is his exhortations regarding preparedness of the soul for the great hereafter. In "Hamlet"

he speaks of "the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns". Before Othello murders Desdemona he mutters:

"If you bethink yourself of any crime,
Unreconciled as yet to Heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight,
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit,
No Heaven forfend, I would not kill thy soul".

If Shakespeare were not essentially Catholic in spirit and in conviction would he be so apprehensive of the unprepared condition of the soul before the Eternal Judge? Would he constantly insist on the soul being purged from sin? I think not. Protestants as a rule look lightly upon this matter claiming as they do that when Christ died he saved mankind once and for all. A comforting doctrine if one can believe it and reconcile it with common sense and justice.

And Shakespeare continues to persist and protest that no criminal should be punished capitally until he was prepared to die and meet his God. Isabella pleads with Angelo in "Measure for Measure":

"How would you be,
If He which is the top of Judgment,
Should but judge you as you are".

Again the Duke finds Bernardine,

"A creature unprepared, unmeet for death,
And to transport him in the mind he is,
Were damnable".

And so on ad infinitum, Shakespeare pleads for everyone even the hardened criminal that all might have an opportunity of making their peace with their God.

Time and time again, in lines without number, Shakespeare refers to the Priest of God and the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Altar. He makes Petroclous say:

"As humbly as they used to creep,
To Holy Altars"

And Troilus says:

"An altar and thy brother Troilus,
A Priest there, offering to it, His own heart".

The sacrificial view of religion is held strongly by Shakespeare. The Sacrifice of the Mass, the Real Presence makes the Catholic religion so sublime, so substantial and enduring and Shakespeare recognizes this. One is also struck with his views on the state of grace. In Troilus and

Cressida he makes a character say "you are in a state of grace", which expression is foreign to any other religion except the Catholic faith.

The Catholic doctrine of moral responsibility is strikingly illustrated by Shakespeare in his views on conscience. Richard III exclaims:

"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain".

Compare the speech of the Duke of Clarence in Richard III, with Catholic teaching:

"I'll not meddle with it, it is a dangerous thing,
It makes a man a coward, a man cannot steal
But it accuseth him, a man cannot swear but it checks him,
A man cannot philander with his neighbor's wife,
But it checks him".

In "Macbeth" the voice of conscience warns Macbeth against the murder of Duncan and but for the promptings of his fiendish wife, he would have kept his soul unsullied. After Macbeth steepes his soul in sin by the foul murder of Duncan, remorse seizes him and he groans aloud in an agony of spirit:

"Better be with the dead,
Whom we to gain our place have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie,
In restless ecstasy".

Thus does Shakespeare depict conscience and remorse in a truly Catholic fashion. And so the dominant Catholic note is struck in almost every line. The so-called glory of Protestantism finds no inspiration in the made to order religion of Cranmer, Luther et al but turns to the Grand old faith which has endured the fire and sword of persecution for over two thousand years, turns to the Kingdom of Christ upon earth for inspiration knowing full well that nothing to inspire or conjure up a spirit could be found in a soulless religion.

The Catholic Church has ever warned its children against the occasion of sin for it is said that he that loves the danger shall perish therein. Shakespeare accepts this teaching with sincerity and conviction and promulgates it constantly. To his Mother Hamlet says:

"Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness,
To the next abstinence, the next more easy,
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And Master the Devil or throw him out,
With wondrous potency".

which is the Church's exhortation to practice mortification and self-abnegation and conquer the flesh. Laertes warns his sister Ophelia against the possible overtures and machinations of Hamlet:

"Fear it Ophelia, fear it my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot of danger and desire".

And in "Troilus and Cressida" hark to this warning:

"We tempt the frailty of our powers,
Presuming on their changeful potency".

In other words, avoid the occasions of sin for the spirit may be willing but the flesh is weak. Hearken to the voice of conscience is Shakespeare's warning for with him the voice of conscience was the voice of God and an act against conscience was an act against God. Which I submit is Catholic philosophy and Theology in essentia.

Suicide is frowned upon and forbidden by the Church and as I have already mentioned Shakespeare unhesitatingly and unreservedly accepts this doctrine:

"O that the everlasting hath not fixed,
His canon 'gainst self slaughter".

In "Cymbeline" we read:

"Against self slaughter,
There is a prohibition so divine,
That cravens my weak hand".

And in "Lear":-

"You ever gentle gods, take my breath from me,
Let not my worser spirit, tempt me again,
To die before you please".

Shakespeare possessed a truly Catholic sense and grasp of the enormity and heinousness of sin which is exemplified by his ready acceptance of the doctrine of eternal and temporal punishment due those who transgress the laws of God. He argues that eternal punishment is meet and proper and thoroughly consistent with Divine Justice. With Dante, the illustrious Poet he refers to the eternal pain and loss for the soul consequent "on one grave lapse" which certainly means mortal sin. If a matter is not grave, it is merely

a venial sin. But a mortal sin unforgiven in the Tribunal of Penance begets eternal punishment except of course the sin is forgiven through the mercy of God by an act of perfect contrition before death.

As to the necessity and efficacy of prayer, Shakespeare frequently speaks. Grace and divine aid can only be obtained through prayer. Prayer is the very essential element of life. Shakespeare realizes this and in many of his plays he refers to the necessity of prayer. Portia strays about,

"By holy crosses,
Where she kneels and prays"

And in "Hamlet" there is a soul stirring appeal embodied in the words:

"The Queen that bore thee
 Oftener on her knees than on her feet,
 Did every day she lived".

In "Othello" there is a line which enunciates the Catholic Doctrine, when it says "Prayer must be made with fasting".

In Macbeth we read that prayer works miracles for St. Edward cures the sick by

"Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
 Put on with holy prayers".

And returning to "Hamlet" we find a beautiful reference:

"What is prayer but this two fold force,
 To be forestalled ere he come to fall,
 Or pardoned being down".

And so one sees at a glance that Shakespeare was either a born Catholic or else had the spirit of Catholicity in his very veins. Conscience with Shakespeare as I have said is man's guide, and God's law, His rule. Free will aided by grace and prayer are the means by which man masters his lower nature and curbs his proclivity toward evil and rises to higher things. This is Catholicity in its very fundamentals, in its very quintessence. I submit therefore that I am not subject to correction when I state that the works of poets and writers of worth must be Catholic in spirit if they are worthy of even honourable mention, if they hope to survive the passage of time and the poignant criticism of the world.

With Shakespeare as with the Church, virtue was beauty and sin was deformity which is the teaching of the Church so admirably expressed by Pope,

"Vice is a monster of such horrid mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen".

And Shakespeare's heroines always represent virtue unsullied, religion, conscience and truth. Sin is upbraided and denounced, not admired and dressed up in ornate language and held up to the multitude as something to be sought after. Shakespeare regards women, as God made them, as a power for good to be honored and respected. Immorality and loose virtue is allied to murder. It "steals from nature, man already made";

"And sin I know another doth provoke,
"Murder's as near to lust as flame's to smoke".

No moralist, no theologian and no social worker was more severe, more sweeping in his denunciation against vice than was Shakespeare. He assails it at every opportunity with the vehemence and zeal of a Catholic missionary.

Did space permit and did I not fear that I have already transgressed the limits of my work and the time allotted me by the powers that be, I could go on indefinitely and with real genuine pleasure and dissect the works of Shakespeare holding up for your thoughts and perusal thousands of Catholic references. His belief in God, in the immortality of the soul, in eternal punishment, in God's prerogatives of Justice and mercy is manifest in all his works. His moral teachings are eloquent sermons. As Coleridge says "he has no interesting adulteries, or innocent incests or virtuous vice". He never holds up for our emulation that which reason and religion teach us to detest. And he did not as they do to-day clothe sordidness and salaciousness "in the garb of virtue". He warns us against

"Fond lascivious metres to which venom sound
The open ear of youth does always listen".

He continually warns us against, unbelief, against false philosophy, against the empty and superficial things of life. He exhorts us as does the Priest of God to be on guard against the wickedness of the world, to remember the shortness of time and the length of eternity.

To prepare our souls for the final reckoning. "There is more philosophy in Heaven and earth than is dreamt of in your philosophy" says Hamlet to Horatio. How Catholic, how consoling, the very embodiment of truth. He performs the poet's true function, "the cleansing of the sick soul" and he can do so so ably because his mind is Catholic. He does so with charm and beauty and power for the Catholic spirit has permeated his very being, the light of Christ's Church has poured light into his own soul and that radiance is reflected in his every thought. The truths he enunciates, the cogency with which he expresses them and the lucidity of his expression results from his incline to the Catholic Church, from his embracing of Catholic Theology and Scholastic philosophy. And I feel I am safe in saying that had Shakespeare not gone to Catholic sources for his imagery and inspiration, had God not favoured him with the light of Faith, had not Catholic philosophy and theology been his main weapons, instead of being the greatest English poet, he would have been an utterly insipid mediocrity, steeped in false philosophy and given to innocuous vaporings and platitudes.

After perusing this voluminous manuscript, it might seem to the casual observer that the contents reflected a discursive rambling, a desultory jargon or even with Disraeli one might accuse the writer of being inebriated with ^{the} exuberance of his own verbosity. But whatever my readers may say of my efforts, and whatever dearth there may be of literary style, logic or even rhetoric, altho I have endeavoured to observe the rules as laid down by the laws of logic and arrangement, I trust that the thesis will be construed in the light of all difficulties under which one labours when attempting such a monumental task. At all events I have been sincere and painstaking in my search for Catholic sentiments in the works of Non-Catholic poets. And I trust that my critics will season justice with mercy. It will be obvious that a tremendous amount of even cursory reading is necessary to even touch in a fragmentary way upon the Catholic Spirit in English poetry. My task is nearly done. I have endeavoured to show with sincerity and personal conviction that Catholic poets and writers and scientists are leaders and second to none; that the Catholic religion and the possession of that faith instead of being a barrier, as is suggested by some to-day, an

impediment to poetic effort and success is a real impetus, the causa causans, the real source of all genuine poetic outbursts; that the Spirit of Catholicity permeated the works of these poets and writers and is the real reason why their works will endure. I have endeavoured to show, admittedly in a cursory and inadequate manner that non-Catholic poets who achieved lasting fame possessed the Catholic spirit, respected and held sacred Catholic dogma and belief and derived their inspiration and imagery from Catholic sources and things Catholic. I have selected after a terrific amount of reading, certain lines from these non-Catholic poets which corroborated my contention that the spirit of Catholicity permeated their works. If I have lingered in a protracted manner upon Shakespeare and his works, it is because he is more widely read than the others and because he is called the "Glory of Protestantism" and because to-day there is a real controversy as to his religion. I have not discussed Dante, the brilliant, immortal Catholic poet, nor the equally brilliant French poets for space would not permit and I was reluctantly forced to confine myself to the English poets and writers.

Poor as were my efforts, I have made a feeble attempt to show that one can be a Catholic and still a real, genuine, interesting poet or writer, and to dispel that illusion prevalent in the minds of non-Catholics and even in the minds of some of our own, that one cannot be a Catholic and be a successful writer. I have endeavoured to prove that there were and still are Catholic poets and writers who can write, and who at the same time are sound practical Catholics not indifferent waverers like Conrad and even Marion Crawford. For the Catholic cannot compromise. He goes the way of Anatole France or Maeterlinck or in the way of Belloc and Francis Thompson. There is no middle course. A Catholic can write for the Saturday Evening Post and still not be a good writer. But one cannot be a good Catholic and think profoundly on the deepest problems of life without being a thorough Catholic writer. For the real poet and writer, religion, art and life are joined together and the one gives aid to the other. Sometimes the aid of religion is direct, as when the Mass inspires the musician, or the Crucifixion a painter, or the Annunciation a poet. But whether direct or indirect, the vital force of religion is always present shaping the artist's personality, giving him

new insight into life, patient and humble always giving a true perspective, always exercising the imagination and the mind and emotions in the proper direction, always clarifying the vision and making it more beautiful. More children of the Catholic Faith have been great artists than of any other creed or philosophy that the world has ever known. And if the number is not larger still, it is not, as I have endeavoured to show because of the lack of inspiration and freedom and wondrous beauty, which the Catholic Church, the Church of Christ provides them with. That the non-Catholic writers achieved fame and brilliancy, is chargeable, I maintain, to that Catholic spirit, that grasp of the Catholic perspective with which God favoured them. Yes verily indeed has the Catholic spirit permeated the works of poets and writers of worth. And without that sustaining force, that vital factor, these writers would not have achieved success and their works would have been relegated to oblivion long ere this. Those who criticize the Church and her illustrious sons and utter diatribes against the Church, owe it to that Church that they can speak at all. For without the Church of God, mankind would have been wallowing in sin and debauchery, in invincible ignorance, in darkness and despair, for the Catholic Church alone is responsible for keeping alive the light of literary erudition and without its efforts that light would long since have been extinguished.

The world has tried paganism and brutalism. It has tried to find satisfaction in the anarchy of Pantheism, it has tried to do without God, to war on Christ as did Julian the Apostate, to bar Him from her schools, her councils and deliberations. But the exclusion of the Church, the suppression of the Church, the putting away of God, ends in abject failure. The Church of God must again lead the way. Her poets and writers must again take up the pen. Protestantism is dead, it is disintegrating. The wanderers from God will find refuge and inspiration within the gates of the Church. Peace, warmth and light lie therein and therein only.

This is the age of the printed word. This is the time when Catholic writers have an opportunity as never before to show their real worth for they have behind them brilliant and illustrious traditions.

Their course will be difficult, their progress slow and discouraging for it must be admitted that to-day millions of Catholics spurn and ignore the Catholic writer and poet and make an ideal of him who barter his talents for the superficial brilliance of fame and gold. But the Catholic poet and writer need not be discouraged. His reward may not be in filthy lucre, in whimsical fame, but in the final reckoning his reward will be commensurate with the good that he has done. And the Catholic writer and the Catholic citizen can cast his eye retrospectively over a list of illustrious names which will prove an inspiration for him and conjure up within him a true poetic spirit. He can turn to the Non-Catholic poets of yesteryear and behold them turning to God's Church for light and inspiration. And the Catholic has nothing to be ashamed of when reviewing the successes in the literary field, nothing to apologize for. High up on the pedestal of lasting fame the Catholic poet reigns supreme, protected from the heresies and false philosophies of life and with him those less fortunate poets who did not possess the precious gift of faith but who were imbued and blessed with the spirit of Catholicity.

We will continue to hear of the incompetency of Catholic writers and poets, of their inferiority; of the glory and brilliancy of pagan poets and writers who weave their petty romances and tell their tiny, puny tales. They have their hour of puffy glory. But they are eventually lost in the miasmatic vapours of the slough. We must endure such idiocy, such absurdities. *Silentium est aurum.* The brilliant record of the past is the best argument. The Catholic poet who is really a poet will forge ahead with the all compelling aids at his command. There will be critics, there will be adverse comment; there will always be bigotry and prejudice. But the poet possessed with the true Catholic spirit and the philosophy of St. Thomas may smile complacently and continue to burn incense at the throne of the Muse, bearing in mind the words of Christ,

"Thou art Peter and upon this Rock,
I shall build my Church,
And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it".

-----FINIS-----