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## The Catholic Spirit In Modern Poetry

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THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT IN MODERN  
POETRY



A Thesis presented in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Bachelor of Arts Degree in  
Education

by

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Xavier College,

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B I B L I O G R A P H Y

THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT IN MIDERN ENGLISH LITERATURE...Shuster  
 CATHOLIC TRADITION IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.....Carver  
 CARDINAL NEWMAN.....May  
 CARMINA.....English, Cath.  
 Poetry Soc.  
 LIVING AUTHORS  
 ENGLISH LITERATURE.....Shuster,  
 Brother Leo,  
 Sheeran.  
 LIFE OF NEWMAN.....Wilfred Ward  
 IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY.....Newman  
 COLLECTED POEMS.....Meynell  
 SONNETS AND VERSE.....Belloc  
 POEMS...:.....Chesterton  
 MAGAZINE ARTICLES

Gerard Manley Hopkins ..... AMERICA  
 Hopkins and Newman ..... AMERICA  
 Alfred Noyes, a Poet in the City of God.. AMERICA  
 Some Notable Converts-Noyes..... THE MISSIONARY

LECTURES

Cardinal Newman and the Triumph of Failure..D. Dobbins,O.S.F.  
 (Given at the Hotel Plaza, New York, March 9, 1931)  
 The Life and Works of Alice Meynell .....Don Urban  
 Butler,O.S.B.  
 (Given in New York under the auspices of the  
 Good Shepherd Auxiliary)

MODERN CATHOLIC VERSE.....Maynard

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THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT IN MODERN POETRY

"And in each thing I love of sky and sod,  
I see the wondrous work of Christ, My God."

All art has its underlying philosophy. Poetry which is one of the highest branches of art, has its philosophies which vary greatly indeed. Some poets hold as their philosophy that the highest form of beauty is purely natural and they sing the praises of beauty of form, figure etc. Others hold that the highest form of beauty is intellectual and these praise and glorify the beauty of a well ordered mind. While others hold that man was made for God, and that God is the highest form of beauty. These attempt to portray the relationship of man to God, and see in all things a reflection of the Creator. This last named philosophy is the Catholic philosophy of art. By Catholic, we mean nothing biased or sectarian, but that broad outlook upon life which every man who dares to call himself a Christian should have.

After the Protestant Reformation in England, everything Catholic was despised and oppressed. Catholic men and women were crucified on a cross of hatred and prejudice. The word "Catholic" dared not be breathed lest the walls about one respond with the horrible sentence, "Death". In times such as these when one must struggle for very life, when all energy must be expended on self preservation, there is little time for the expression of the beautiful. Consequently under this terrible strain, Catholic literature, especially poetry, died, as it were, and as the enemies of Catholicism thought, never to be reborn.

Materialism, Paganism, Pantheism, and Atheism held sway. Men traced everything back to natural causes, and "unknown was written over the name of God." Pagan philosophy was taught and advanced by the great thinkers of the day and true philosophy was stifled and choked.

"England was a nest of songbirds". Yes, a nest for birds that sang shallow, meaningless songs, of birds that praised an effect and forgot the cause, of birds that saw only the shell and forgot the heart. But there were other birds, silent birds who had almost forgotten how to sing, who could only utter cries of distress as they fled from or fell preys to the hawks that pursued. These silent birds were Catholic men and women in dingy cells awaiting death or sitting in some dull, cheerless room expecting each moment to be brought to justice to be accused of the greatest crime of the day, the crime of being a Catholic. Sometimes they sang as the swan sings just before he dies, a few lovely strains, and then - silence.

But truth and beauty can never die, for through the thorns of unbelief, through the slime of paganism, through the black storms of persecution, the Catholic spirit has worked its way slowly but surely to the foreground into its own.

"The spirit of the sixteenth century fought hard to kill Catholicism" but in the early nineteenth century was born a David who was to slay the mighty Goliath who had dared Catholic literature for almost two centuries. It was a movement started by a confirmed Protestant, a man whose name is almost synonymous

with the movement, for one cannot say Oxford Movement without at the same time seeing written, as it were, in blazing letters, the name John Henry Newman at the head of the list of men responsible for the great activity.

The Oxford Movement, as we all know, was a movement started in the nineteenth century by a group of Oxford men in an attempt to get back to "the spirit and the doctrine of primitive Christianity". They realized the destructiveness of liberalism in the church and saw as its only cure a return to the doctrine of the Fathers. We are interested here in the Oxford Movement only in so far as it had its effects upon literature and these effects can best be traced through a study of the life of John Henry Newman its leader.

Newman was born in London February 21, 1801 of middle class parentage. His father was a London banker and his mother traced her ancestry back to Huguenot emigres. The home life of Newman as a boy was always peaceful and reticent, governed by restraint and conventions, very eccentric, and quite a bit unsocial. There was not very much religion in his home except for the fact that the King James version of the Bible was read with great diligence. The boy Newman was very shy, quiet, cared little for the rougher games, was very sensitive, and delighted in "dreamy thinking," "unknown influences" and "magic powers". At the age of fifteen he experienced a Calvinistic conversion from which he drew the conclusion that "there are two and only two self-evident beings—myself and my Creator."

Newman was unusually religious and unusually curious, especially about the truths of religion. Added to his religious fervor was the gift of a high intellect. His early training was received at Ealing. Later he went to Trinity College where he received his B.A. in 1820, and was elected Fellow of Oriel College in 1822. His original intention on going to Oxford was to study law, but his religious inclination was so great that he turned from the study of law and took orders in the Anglican Church in 1824.

Newman's omnivorous intellect was never at rest. He was constantly seeking truth. The death of a favorite sister made him realize that the material world was only illusory, and that the only real things were "spiritual realities veiled by externals". At Oxford he grew to love and make many friends who thought along the same lines as he.

Being in an atmosphere where the spirit of Liberalism was slowly creeping in, Newman as well as his associates, felt a keen interest in the ancient church. He also saw about him the indifference to purity of doctrine which had crept into the Anglican Church, and he believed that the only remedy for this state of affairs was a return to the doctrine and practices of the Fathers. Trying to accomplish this end, Newman realized the difficulties of the situation, and the insufficiency of his own knowledge concerning these doctrines. The questions to which he gave his closest attention were these: What were the reasons for believing? What had the Fathers taught? How had the Church of

England become the inheritor of that teaching? Nothing could quell the eagerness with which he sought to answer these questions. In his enthusiasm to answer them he made an intensive study of the history of the Arians, which for a time completely absorbed his interests. In his study Newman came upon the truth that the Roman Catholic Church was the true custodian of the spiritual life given by the Savior. He found to his surprise, and may I say in all charity, to his disappointment that he was in error and that true Apostolicity lay in the Catholic Church and not in the Anglican Church.

Having been brought <sup>up</sup> in an atmosphere thoroughly anti-Catholic, Newman's realization of the truth of his findings could not help but be shadowed with doubts. Added to his early beliefs were the thoughts of breaking with fond associates, friends, and with the Oxford that he so dearly loved. It was at this period of his life when the storms of doubt had almost overwhelmed him that he wrote that appealing prayer "Lead Kindly Light or The Pillar of the Cloud" asking God for guidance.

"Newman never understood the conservatism which safeguards institutional life". His beliefs and practices were those that he found satisfactory in the light of his own experience." His greatest desire was to render easy for others the way to the goodness, the splendor, and the peace of God.

The movement continued; many Oxford followed Newman yet the church of England showed no unsteadiness. A few Anglican Bishops murmured about the "Romanizing tendencies" but these



protests were very indistinct. During this time the state issued a number of decrees suppressing certain sees in Ireland. Newman resented the interference of the state in church affairs and preached a series of sermons from the pulpit of St Mary's which "analyzed the depths of Christian doctrine." These sermons were followed by tracts called "Tracts for the Times" which took up one by one the practices of Apostolic Christianity. Each one leaned more and more toward as his associates said. With the publication of Tract Ninety, England was convinced that Newman was thoroughly Roman, and he was forced to leave Oxford.

He retired to Littlemore a retreat which he had prepared during his spiritual leadership. There still remained for him one long problem to solve, and in the midst of his pain, entering into semi-monastic life with a few friends, he set about the task to find out "What is the visible organization to which Divine revelation has been confided?". The results of his intense study proved that that organization was none other than the Roman Catholic Church. Newman was no longer groping; no longer was there the slightest shadow of doubt. He was received into the Catholic Church October 8, 1845 and two years later was ordained a priest. Only those with a truly understanding heart can realize what it cost this convert to break from fond associates, dear friends, and from the Church which in his early manhood he so dearly loved.

The Oxford Movement drew from Newman the greater of his best works, and an attack from Kingsly who accused him of

insincerity brought forth his "Apologia Pro Vita Sua" "An Account of My Life" which is a masterpiece of English Literature. Kingsly was completely overcome by the answer from Newman. Newman continued to write in defense of the Catholic Church.

He was made rector of the University of Dublin. It failed and its only lasting result is "The Idea of a University" in which he sets forth the principles upon which a university should be based. After a series of disappointments and failures he was appointed a cardinal in 1879, returned to Birmingham Oratory of which he was director and died August 11, 1890.

In spite of the fact that he was misunderstood by friends as well as enemies, Newman had many fine qualities. First and foremost he was an apostle, he was a poet, tender and charming, "he was a lover of nature and music was his solace. He was gifted with a delicate sense of humor and he practiced what he preached."

His greatest works are done in the field of prose, but we are interested in him here as a poet. Strictly speaking, Newman is a poet in the truest sense of the word but not in his poetic composition must we look for his poetry, but in his prose; for he is truly a master of poetic prose. Although he is a master of rhetorical expression and his poems show great dignity and harmony, his poetry is too intellectual and does not sing its way to the heart as poetry should. "Lead Kindly Light" is an exception to this rule for in this prayer surely

"heart speaketh to heart". "The Dream of Gerontius" is considered his masterpiece of poetry and is regarded by many as an English classic.

In discussing the poetry of Newman, we should keep in mind that his poetry is only a secondary contribution to literature. His lyrics are the best and " for the most part are very simple expressions of his moods". Although he is not primarily a poet, we give him special mention here for it is through his efforts that the spirit of Catholicism was revived in literature.

To the casual observer, Oxford today is very much the same as the Oxford of a century ago, but under the shell strong evidences of Catholicism are seen. On the faculty there are many prominent Catholic professors and tutors. Among the students there is an ever increasing number of Catholics each year. There is a Catholic chaplain for these students at the University. There is also an increasing number of small halls and hostels whose special idea is to bring Oxford back to its Catholic culture. These halls have been established by various religious orders, and each fittingly commemorates its founder. The memory of Roger Bacon has been honored by dedicating a monument to him. What then has been the influence which has caused all these changes? There is but one answer: the influence of a beloved son of Oxford, John Henry Newman. Would not they have come about without his influence, one

might ask? Perhaps, but of one thing we are sure: the changes would not have been accomplished so soon. Last but not least, the ever increasing number of Oxford men who are constantly finding their way into the Church shows that the influence of Newman is still alive and at work at Oxford today.

Through the far reaching influence of Cardinal Newman, many Catholic poets have arisen. Those to whom we shall give special mention in this discourse are :Gerard Manley Hopkins, whose life in many respects resembles that of Newman, Coventry Patmore, correctly styled the "Laureate of Wedded Love", Francis Thompson whose outward appearance was in strong contrast to the sublimity and mysticism of his thoughts, Alice Meynell, whose mysticism carries her even to the gates of Heaven, PadriaC Colum, Chesterton, Belloc, and Alfred Noyes, whose works stand out as a symbol of the far reaching effects of Newman and of the steady increase of the Catholic spirit in poetry today.

Gerard Manley Hopkins was a close friend and follower of Newman. He was born at Stratford not far from London, received his early training at Cholmondeley Grammar School, entered Balliol College at Oxford, left Oxford to teach in the Oratory at Birmingham, entered the Society of Jesus, preached for a while in London then returned to Oxford to serve at St. Aloysius Church. For a while he worked in the slums of Liverpool. Later he became professor at Stonyhurst, was appointed classical examiner at Dublin, having been

elected Fellow of the Royal University or Ireland. He died five years later of a fever which he contracted.

As a child he was fond of drawing, and had an intense passion for music which, having been neglected, never amounted to any worthy production except that it helped to form his exquisite sense of rhythm and meter. While at Oxford, Hopkins began his friendship with Newman through correspondence. His first letter was one asking for an interview with Newman because he wished to become a Catholic, and wanted to settle his mind as to his immediate duty at that time. The interview was granted, and Hopkins and Newman became fast and loving friends.

His conversion and entrance into the Catholic Church was accompanied by heartaches such as Newman had experienced when he himself found the right way to God. The parting with fond associates, the severing of bonds that held him to Oxford, and the almost fatal break with those nearest and dearest to him, his own family strongly disapproving of his conversion, were keenly felt by him as Newman had felt them before. With all these crosses made heavier by the sensitiveness of his nature, was he laden; yet " he never swerved or faltered until he laid his mind and heart at the feet of Christ in His Church".

Father Hopkins possessed a rare poetic gift. Had not his life been so rigorous, his poetic expressions would have placed him high among the poets of England. Dr. Robert

Bridges, the poet laureate said that he possessed great personal charm, humor, and the most attractive virtues of a tender and sympathetic nature.

Among the few but very beautiful poems of Hopkins which we possess is "Rosa Mystica". Thoroughly Catholic in content, this very beautiful poem wends its way into the heart of the reader by its loveliness of expression and its sublimity of thought.

Although Hopkins does not enjoy popularity and probably never will, a few understanding hearts will pause for a moment to drink of his tiny fountain hidden away behind the roar and whirl of modern verse.

Another son of whom the Church can boast is Coventry Patmore, the third great poet of the Victorian Age. He was born in Essex in 1823. For the most part his education was received at home and in a haphazard fashion. In youth he took an interest in science " which he pursued almost with the fervor of an Edison". Having been brought up in an irreligious atmosphere, in his early life he prided himself on being an Agnostic; but led by instincts " which in his case always overtopped the slower methods of reason", he came safely to a love of religion.

He obtained a position as librarian in the British Museum which enabled him to take care of his family and, at the same time, afforded enough time for him to follow his career as a poet.

Many of Patmore's ideals tended towards Catholicism, but because of the quiet creed of his first wife he made no efforts to realize his dreams. After her death, however, he went to Rome to study religion. The result was his entrance into the Catholic Church. After his conversion, his works became more spiritual due partly to his new faith and partly to the character of his second wife.

Patmore's chief aim in life was the writing of poetry, and in that he rose to the heights of the third great poet of his age. His poetry differs from that of almost every other poet in the singularity of his theme. It is true that poets of all ages have always sung of love, but almost always they sing of impersonal love, frustrated love, sinful love, anticipatory love, but rarely, if ever- nuptial love. Patmore's song of love does not die with the ringing of wedding bells but continues through the every day life of the united pair glorifying pure and holy wedded love. He sees in a thoroughly Catholic sense the worth and meaning of marriage.

"The Angel in the House" is perhaps the best known of his poems, and is considered his masterpiece. This poem is an account of the bliss which he knew in his own wedded life. He shows here that love is an avenue by which two souls united in the holy Sacrament of Matrimony, wend their way to God. Although this poem was written before his conversion to Catholicism, it does not fall far short of the Catholic

ideal. "The Unknown Eros", a poem of his later life, is a group of odes in which he shows the analogy between Divine and human love.

The keynote of Patmore's works is sublimation. In all, he attempts to show God's all consuming love for man. Some of them are highly visionary and mystical, while others, like "The Toys" are simple and human. In this poem he takes us from a common incident in life even to the throne of God.

Patmore's works do not make a popular appeal, perhaps because they are so pure. But they have served as a powerful antidote against the advocates of free love. He shows that love can only be real, genuine, and pure when regulated, and that regulation is religious faith which "nurtures and disciplines love in the infinite circle of the wedding ring".

After a period of prolonged suffering, Patmore departed this life in 1896, but his memory will always live primarily because of his individuality. For, as Alice Meynell says, "he is the master- that is, the owner of words, that owned by him are unprofaned, are as though they had never been profaned; the capturer of an art so quick and close that it is the voice less of a poet than of the Muse".

Patmore is also a writer of prose but our chief interest with him here lies in the field of poetry.

Again from her bosom, the Church sends forth a son in the person of Francis Thompson. Derelict though he was, he



became not only a writer of lyric poetry, but a master of the lyric. He wrote no narrative in verse such as Scott, nor dramatic poetry as Fields, but used the lyric exclusively, exercising himself in it in a great variety of moods and meters. Like the lark, the music of his lyrics soars upwards from the earth until it is lost in the boundless blue of the sky.

For both Patmore and Shelly Thompson had the highest regard but he surpassed them both in sublimity of his works. He has " all of Shelly's power and passion and magnificence of imagery", but infinitely more, for added to these qualities, he has a firm faith and philosophy of life. Like Patmore, his words are artistic and his works religious but his depth of thought is greater and his " sweep of emotion " and fullness of life are such as Patmore never knew.

The outward appearance of Thompson is in strong contrast with the purity of his soul. A social outcast, ragged, unkempt, sickly and stained with laudanum though he was, his soul was pure and unspotted, and his mind was capable of fathoming the depths of "The Hound of Heaven".

It is through the kindness of the Meynells that we know Thompson. He was born at Lancashire in 1859. His parents were devout converts to the Catholic faith. His father was a physician and almost always his patients were among those who could not pay. Thompson's early education was obtained at Ushaw. Later he thought of studying for the priesthood but being advised to seek another vocation, he

turned to the study of Medicine at Owen College. This held no attraction for him, and after a time he found his way to London to follow his career as a writer. In London he sank to the depths of a social outcast, was threatened with the dreadful disease of consumption, and addicted to the terrible habit of taking drugs.

In the Spring of 1888, he found his way into the office of Wilfred Meynell, the editor of "Merrie England" a magazine which was being edited to revive the Christian faith. Thompson inquired about a manuscript which he wish to have published. Meynell recognized the worth of the work but could hardly believe that the derelict before him was its author. However, the Meynells befriended him and did all in their power to rescue <sup>him</sup> from the disease which threatened him and from the habit of drug. But the horrible white plague had taken its toll and in 1807 he passed from a life of suffering to his eternal reward.

"The Hound of Heaven" is not only his masterpiece, but it is a masterpiece of English literature. Its theme is built upon the sound Catholic Philosophy which in the words of St. Augustine cries out: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, Oh God, and our hearts are restless ever till they rest in Thee". It is the story of a soul fleeing from God, seeking consolation in human affection, in the companionship of little children, in the wonders and beauties of nature, in the delights of art, but finding

that none of these will satisfy. At last it turns to God, Who in His love has pursued continually only to hear these words so loving and so consoling:

" Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me?  
All which I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might'st seek it in my arms.  
All which thy child's mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home  
Rise, clasp My hand, and come."

The beauty, splendor, perfection, and sublimity of "The Hound of Heaven" hides, to some extent, the beauty of his other poems. His "Sister Songs" written in honor of the two little Meynell girls is very impressive, is perhaps the most impressive of his compositions. His works, as a whole, are highly mystical; for example, the "Orient Ode" and the "Ode to the Setting Sun" are poems in which he sees, in the things of creation, a reflection of the love and beauty of God. Never a wind blows a loose lock of his hair, never a blade of grass grows at his feet, or a tiny flower lifts its head among the grasses wet with dew, but Thompson sees in each creature a reflection of God, the King and Creator of all things.

Thompson is also a writer of remarkable prose the best being his "Shelly" and "the Life of St. Ignatius Loyola". Like a rose whose perfume rises sweetest when it has been crushed, so the spirit of Catholic literature having been crushed, sends out its sweetest perfume in the works of Francis Thompson, the mystic.

Thompson, like all other finite creatures, has his defects. Very often he was over elaborate; his glorious flights of fancy often led him into extravagance of diction and imagery. Grammatical constructions are sometimes mismanaged" and the works show lack of inspiration. However, the worth of his better works more than doubly repays for his shortcomings.

Following Thompson in the mysticism of her works is Alice Meynell. Intense spirituality and consciousness of God in the universe characterize all of her works. She is the first literary woman to take an active part in the revival of the Catholic spirit in English letters, and like women of all ages, she brings to literature that "intimacy, restraint, and delicacy of emotion". Her works show intense purity and reserve. No woman ever felt more keenly yet expressed her feelings with less display of emotion. "Renunciation" and "Maternity" are two poems which show this reserve, although they are the expressions of a woman's deepest emotions. Who save Alice Meynell could have expressed feelings so deep yet in words showing more restraint than these:

"Ten years ago was born in pain  
A child not now forlorn;  
But, Oh, ten years ago, in vain,  
A mother, a mother was born."

But as Shuster says: "it is thus the ideal woman of the ages—Mary of the Stabat Mater, has spoken to the hearts of men".

Her works are small in volume due to the fact that she loved perfection. She was never satisfied with second best, and no work left her hands until it was perfect. This love of per-

fection is undoubtedly the result of the influence of her father who, from her earliest days taught her to be satisfied with nothing short of perfection.

Although all the poems of Alice Meynell are very beautiful, we find her at her best in "The Shepherdess".

"She walks- the lady of my delight-  
A shepherdess of sheep.  
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white,  
She guards them from the steep;  
She feeds them on the fragrant height,  
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,  
Dark valleys safe and deep,  
Into that tender breast at night  
The chastest stars may peep.  
She walks- the lady of my delight-  
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,  
Though gay they run and leap.  
She is so circumspect and right,  
She has her soul to keep.  
She walks- the lady of my delight-  
A shepherdess of sheep."

Then God stretched forth His Hand into Ireland and from His storehouse there brought forth a diamond in the person of Padriac Colum. His verse is rugged and at times uncouth, but because of its powerful imagery, it cannot be crude. Fundamentally his poetry is truly Catholic. It shows that elemental faith, that strength of soul which is so characteristic of the Irish. One cannot miss or overlook the Catholic influence in such words as these:

"Your purples are the purples that enfold in  
Passion week the shrine.  
Your scarlet is the scarlet wounds.  
You bring before our walls, before our doors,  
Lamps of the Sanctuary.

And in the stony place,  
The time the robin sings  
Through your bells rings the Angelus."

or again:

" And I am praying to God on high  
And I am praying to Him night and day.  
For a little house, a house of my own,  
Out of the winds' and the rain's way."

"A Cradle Song" and "The Bird of Jesus" also show the Catholic spirit in his works.

Colum is also a writer of dramatic legends, fantasies, and stories for children. He is one of the founders of THE IRISH REVIEW and in 1912-1913 he was its sole editor.

As a contemporary poet he is classed by many critics among the best, and surely as a Catholic poet his works show that they are founded on true philosophy.

Back in England once more we find an apostle in the person of Gilbert Keith Chesterton rising up without fear or shame to defend the banner of Christ. Although he is most widely known as the journalist and as the author of considerable works in other fields, he is fundamentally a poet. Even in his prose works he is consistently a poet.

The bulk of his verse is not large, but what he has given us is genuine. "The Ballad of the White Horse" is considered his best poem. It is story told in the ballad stanza of the contest between Christendom which came from Rome, and the heathens who have remained outside. It is thoroughly Catholic in spirit and characterized by " vigor of expression, supple rhythm, and iridescent diction ". "Lepanto" is also one of his best poems and

is considered by many as his most interesting. This lyric consists of battle music through which runs a prayer.

Chesterton also sings of love, and sees like all Catholic poets, the beauty and the love of God reflected in the humblest of creatures. He shows greatly the influence of Newman, and can be compared to him in many respects. First both are writers of poetic prose, both are ardent defenders of the faith, both were advocates of Catholic ideals long before their conversion and entrance into the Roman Catholic Church.

There is very much more that ought to be said about Chesterton but our chief concern here is with him as a poet. It suffices then to say that he is a journalist, an historian, a writer of stories, essays, and pamphlets, and as a poet among his contemporaries he stands as one of the best. Like Thompson he arose in an age when men were "letting go" as it were, of the basic principles of life, and like a voice in the wilderness his protests arose high above the bustle and roar of materialism and other false philosophies of life.

Chesterton entered the Catholic Church in 1922, but this step indicated no change in his religious views, for he was thoroughly Catholic in ideals long before his conversion to Catholicism.

Indelibly linked with the name of Chesterton is that of Hilaire Belloc who is one of the few who are successful at many different kinds of literature. He is at once an historian- and primarily so-, a journalist, a novelist, an essayist, an ec-

onomist, a writer on military affairs, and a writer of children's verses. Usually, quantity does not mean quality but in the case of Belloc, he has succeeded so well that all of his works are far above the mediocre. Like Chesterton, he is an ardent defender of the faith, and firmly believes that there can be no social stability unless there is a return to Catholic principles of life, the only sound foundation upon which society can build. So thoroughly Catholic is Belloc that he lays down his theories in a "take-it-or-leave-it" fashion which is encouraging for those who hold his views but disheartening and confusing to his opponents.

Added to his other literary gifts, Belloc is truly a poet. "His songs come naturally to his lips". Usually there is a note of satire in his poems " with a stanza or two of sheer wisdom, whimsical, tender and yet not romantic". Is there any one who can fail to see the beauty and feel the tenderness of lines such as these?

"When Jesus Christ was four years old,  
The angels brought Him toys of gold,  
Which no man ever had bought or sold.

And yet with these He would not play,  
He made Him small fowl out of clay,  
And blessed them till they flew away.  
TU CREAMI DOMINE.

Jesus Christ Thou Child so wise,  
Bless mine hands and fill mine eyes,  
And bring my soul to Paradise."

or fail to see the true Catholic spirit in these?

" Of courtesy it is much less  
Than courage of heart or Holiness,  
Yet in my walks it seems to me  
That the grace of God is in courtesy."



Belloc is a true child of Mary and pays especial homage to her in many of his poems. "In a Boat" is one of the very beautiful poems in which he pays homage to Mary.

" Lady! Lady!  
Upon Heaven's height  
Above the harsh morning  
In the mere light,  
  
My body is frozen,  
My soul is afraid:  
Stretch out your hand to me,  
Mother and Maid.

Mother of Christ,  
And mother of me,  
Save me alive  
From the howl of the sea.

If you will mother me  
Till I grow old,  
I will hang in your chapel  
A ship of pure gold."

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Belloc is not a convert to the faith but a son born under the sheltering wings of the Church and like a true son, he stands up in all the beauty and strength of Christianity singing the praises of the Master.

Once more the church extends her hands, and into her fold she leads another poet. Alfred Noyes, like Chesterton, Patmore and others, was a Catholic in ideals and views long before his entrance into the Catholic Church. Born at Wolverhampton in the county of Staffordshire he received his education at Oxford, and began his literary career in 1902 with the publication of his first volume of poetry, "The Loom of the Years". His popularity continued to grow, and in 1918, the value of his works was recognized by the honor of an appointment as commander

of the order of the British Empire.

His works are truly Catholic as can be seen from these lines from "The Old Sceptic":

" I will go back to the love of the cotter  
Who sings as he delves,  
To the childish, infinite love,  
And the God above fact and fate."

"The Strong City" also portrays his Catholicism. It is a poem telling of his journey from Anglicanism to Catholicism. His prose too is remarkable, but he stands out preeminently as a poet.

Thus, the Catholic spirit in poetry marches on, climbing ever upward. Like God's most holy church, it has come from the depths to the heights, from the catacombs to the stars, climbing steadily upward to the throne of God. Truly we can say it has come

"Up from chains and binding bars,  
Climbing ever to the stars."