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English Religious Poetry of the Nineteenth Century as Influenced by the Catholic Spirit

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ENGLISH RELIGIOUS POETRY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
AS INFLUENCED BY THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT.

A D I S S E R T A T I O N

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T I T L E: ENGLISH RELIGIOUS POETRY OF THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY AS INFLUENCED BY THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT.

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Since we are now entering upon the second quarter of the twentieth century, it follows that the perspective thus offered gives ample scope for an authoritative report on the literary output of the preceding century, in the special field chosen - English Religious Poetry.

The older English poets wrote from an established point of view, that is, their human creed and their idea of man coincided, while the modern English poets voice the protest or the defense of those who have little in common save the genius of the Bard. This has led to a certain recklessness in the matter of judging standards. But a thorough study of the nineteenth century poetry shows that its master minds, Catholic and non-Catholic, all recognized the beauty, the truth, the valor and the permanent value of the Roman Catholic theme. Without depreciating in the least the importance of their excellent technique. I should say that their respective masterpieces would not have achieved the immortal in literature were it not for this same Roman Catholic theme.

Of all constructive forces on which literature may build, there are none so powerful, so productive of ideals truly great as the Roman Catholic spirit. Now it is a fact that an individual who does not acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, may still be

dominated by the Roman Catholic spirit and may indirectly foster this spirit not only in his generation, but in the hearts of generations yet unborn. For this reason I have included in my study not only the representative Catholic poets, Newman, Thompson and Patmore, but also the representative non-Catholic poets, Coleridge, Tennyson and Browning.

It will be the purpose of this thesis to show how Roman Catholic principles and Roman Catholic ideals working hand in hand, with perfection in technique helped to give back to the world that of which it had been deprived through the counter workings of the so-called Reformation which had gradually undermined the authority of the Church, brought about a skepticism in matters of faith, and which finally endeavored to substitute human reason for revelation and God. Religion and freedom had thus been brought to their lowest ebb.

Out of this din of social and political as well as religious chaos of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries - a forced inactivity of the Roman Catholic spirit for the space of three hundred years - came the faint rays of a slowly reviving mediaeval faith, hope and peace, in the works of the above mentioned poets.

The Roman Catholic Church, the embodiment of the Catholic spirit, is not narrow; it recognizes the

fundamental rights of the individual. Moreover, it gives a pronounced freedom to its followers. We find within its ranks the prohibitionist and the non-prohibitionist, the evolutionist and the non-evolutionist. In addition to this, we find its ardent disciples not only in every race and nation, but likewise in every avocation in life. She also provides alike for mystic and secular; this is borne out in the Calendar of the Saints.

On the other hand, the spirit of the Roman Catholic Church holds unswervingly for truth and right principles in art. And here it might be added that it is the real protector of art, for by reason of its faith and submission to a Power infinitely above nature, it keeps the mind and the heart of man centered on things eternal. This influence for good is exemplified in the fact that every movement that has tended to weaken or to destroy the Power of the Roman Catholic Church has resulted in a breaking down of morals.

With the opening of the nineteenth century an entirely new impetus was breathed into English literature. The social problems of the times were forced upon the minds of all poets. This social aspect became a problem for all Europe and it pressed heavily upon the minds and hearts of all

imaginative writers. But the bitterness, the agonizing intensity and the passionate daring that characterized much of the literature of this period is, singularly, missing from the masterpieces that will form the subject matter for this paper. The authors in question, initiated as it were, the new trend of thought in the field of poetry.

To obtain a clear understanding of what poetry is, and what qualities of literary art it contains, some definite idea must be gleaned from the printed page on poets and poetry in general.

Critics tell us that a poet is a man among men who has a broader knowledge of human nature, a deeper power of being affected by things absent, a greater facility in summing up passion and an added readiness in expressing these powers of mind and of heart.

Poetry in general is the artistic expression in rhythmical language of thought suffused with imagination, emotion and beauty.

Poetry is an exact science. We can acquire a knowledge of its inmost nature through study. The constituent elements of poetry are matter and form. Under the former we consider thought, imagination, emotion and beauty; under the latter, rhythm and diction.

Thought must be suffused with imagination.

otherwise we should have a heavy, incoherent verse. If abstract, poetry must be made concrete through imagery that is, the imaginative element must be considered always as more important than the appeal to reason. The poet without emotion is insincere no matter how vivid his ideas may be. Emotion is synonymous with feeling and passion the sensitive or spiritual faculties in man. Emotions act or react on other emotions as hatred on fear. Passion is good if normal or God-given. Depth of emotion gives intensity to poetry but the object that elicits the emotion decides its morality, therefore, morality takes precedence over art. "Art for Art's sake" is a false doctrine, often quoted. A vicious object may be used for contrast only if it serves to make virtue more alluring. Again, hatred is ennobled if it is directed against what is disorderly or corrupt.

Plato says "Beauty is the replecence of truth," but St. Thomas asserts "Beauty is unity in variety". Beauty may be sensitive or intellectual, that is, it may have material qualities coming through sense perceptions or it may be characterized by abstract qualities of which the mind forms judgments. Beauty is objective in that it must stimulate noble emotions in response to definite ideas in the mind. As a criterion of beauty we might say that a thing

is artistically beautiful if it awakens noble emotions such as awe, love, admiration, reverence.

With reference to form, poetry must have rhythm while metre and capitalization are merely accidental details. Rhythm is the periodic recurrence of sounds or groups of sounds. It is secured by the regular recurrence of long and short sounds. Tennyson, Browning and Newman are excellent in rhythm.

Diction in poetry should be dignified though not stilted. It should be rich in connoting phrases, that is, the ordinary word should be used in the extraordinary way. There should be an accuracy of arrangement in word values.

Finally, poetry should aim to give pleasure, that pleasure which is intellectual, not sensual, to stimulate a sense of beauty, pathos or love, and to awaken in the reader imagination and fancy.

Turning to a study of the lyric in particular, we find first of all that the word lyric is derived from the word "lyra" signifying "harp" because the lines were composed originally for the sole purpose of being set to music. But, at the present time, the lyric is understood to comprise all poetry outside the domain of the epic and the drama.

In the words of Tennyson, the lyric is "a short

assonance are most common among nineteenth century lyricists.

With reference to style, intellectual qualities are not so strongly marked, for the lyric is not predominantly intellectual. But the style of the lyric is largely determined by the emotion expressed, whether it be that of grief, devotion, love, patriotism, hope - these are the constant themes of the lyricist.

The lyric also abounds in examples of genuine but thoroughly humanized wit, humor, pathos, beauty and melody. Since brevity is the very soul of the lyric it follows that suggestiveness must be a primary characteristic because the author, restricted to such narrow limits, must, perforce, make the slightest hint serve the same purpose as the amplification of a paragraph would serve in prose. Hence, when reading a lyric we find that the intellect and imagination of the reader must be intensely active.

Again, lyrics are classified according to the emotion which they excite, so we have the hymn, the national anthem, the love-song, the elegy and the ballad founded on the themes of God, country, man, art and nature.

Since this paper is intended to deal with

religious lyrics, I have chosen from Newman his masterpiece "The Dream of Gerontius", and also his universally admired hymn, "Lead Kindly Light" which is considered by critics to be the nineteenth century's richest contribution to hymnology.

For study in the lyric I have taken six poets, Newman, Thompson, Patmore, Coleridge, Tennyson and Browning, all exponents of the lyric. Browning offers the one drama. The nineteenth century gave no religious epic.

Forming quite a decided contrast to the lyric we have the drama which in its original Greek signifies action. It is an action completed in that it has unity of theme and purpose and it pictures life in its most complex and subtle relations. The literary drama is a misnomer in the sense that the true drama is inseparable from the action and the stage.

As a first requisite a drama should have a beginning stating cause of action, a middle, presenting developments of action; an end, giving result of action. Secondly, the drama necessarily implies a unifying idea - a theme made concrete thru the be-setting sin of the dominant character. Thirdly, the theme must be probable, it must be real to those who see it. Fourthly, the action must

involve a series of incidents; these incidents must support the action by being organized into acts. Fifthly, the action involved must be of importance and magnitude, the better to accomplish this, the characters must be taken from the higher walks of life. Sixthly, the action must be such as to be capable of creating the strongest suspense and the most tragic in crisis and in climax. To this end, characters must be presented in their most intimate emotional relations with each other in order to carry over to the audience the corresponding emotion. Therefore, it follows that the elemental or universal passions such as love, hatred, jealousy, ambition, revenge are the best themes for the drama.

Since the action of the drama is carried on mainly through its characters it follows that characterization is a most important element. The chief personages should be of high rank in keeping with the external dignity demanded of a drama, but in the make-up of these characters we should find good and evil traits for such only is true to life. Moreover, they, thereby, prove more interesting as they then display emotions and passions which every one, at some time or other in life has experienced. The drama however, should always excite sympathy and pity for the virtuous in suffering. If the innocent

breathed the sincerest candor and his every look, word and deed bespoke the most sensitive refinement.

With an originality which made him a genius of the first rank, a spirituality which manifested itself in a saintly fervor and a tenderness which made him a magnet among men, it is not surprising that he, more than any other individual, drew England nearer to Catholicism.

This John Henry Newman, the son of a London banker was born in the second year of the nineteenth century. After a school life marked only by intense concentration and prolonged hours of study, Newman became a clergyman of the Anglican Church. His faith in that creed, however, gradually weakened, and the great strain of soul which he then experienced is mirrored for us in "Lead Kindly Light" which he wrote in 1832, while on a Mediterranean trip. Unconsciously, the great Newman was coming nearer and nearer to Rome.

About this time, his closest and most congenial companion, Keble died. Then, Newman, with a band of friends went into monastic seclusion. Finally in 1845 came light and peace - he was received into the Roman Catholic Church by a Passionist Father. However, Catholics were distrustful until the Cardinal hat was placed on him by Leo XIII. when he and his works met with the approval and seal of the Church.

In all of Newman's works, we find the exceptional and the beautiful - a necessary outcome of his marvelous faith and trust in his Divine Friend. But, these qualities reach their climax in "The Dream of Gerontius."

As a man grows in intensity of love, born of a lively faith, so, in like proportion does the foundation of his literary genius increase in strength, for religion and literature are of closest kinship. Hence, we find John Henry Newman, raised to the Cardinalate in his new-found Faith giving to the world his masterpiece, "The Dream of Gerontius - the most unique, the most original and the most soul-inspiring work of his century. In it are embodied the beliefs and the hopes which formed the main-stay of him who was an ideal son of Holy Mother Church.

Divine Revelation coupled with a knowledge of the outward manifestations of death forms the ground work of this imaginative poem:

"JESU, MARIA - I am near to death,
And Thou art calling me; I know it now
Not by the token of this faltering breath,
This chill at heart, this dampness on my
brow,
(Jesu, have mercy! Mary pray for me!)
'Tis this new feeling, never felt before.
(Be with me, Lord, in my extremity!)
That I am going, that I am no more.
'Tis this strange innermost abandonment.
(Lover of souls! great God! I look to Thee).

"And yet I cannot to my sense bring home
By very trial, that I have the power.
'Tis strange! I cannot stir a hand or foot,
By mutual pressure witness each to each
Nor by the eyelid's instantaneous stroke
Assure myself I have a body still.
Nor do I know my very attitude,
Nor if I stand, or lie, or sit, or kneel.

So much I know, not knowing how I know.
That the vast universe, where I have dwelt,
Is quitting me, or I am quitting it.
Or I or it is rushing on the wings
Of light or lightning on an onward course
And we e'en now are million miles apart.
Yet . . . is this peremptory severance
Wrought out in lengthening measurements
of space
Which grow and multiply by speed and time?
Or am I traversing infinity
By endless subdivision, hurrying back
From finite towards infinitesimal,
Thus dying out of the expanded world?

Another marvel: someone has me fast
Within his ample palm; 'tis not a grasp
Such as they use on earth, but all around
Over the surface of my subtle being,
As though I were a sphere, and capable
To be accosted thus, a uniform
And gentle pressure tells me I am not
Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.
And hark! I hear a singing; yet in sooth
I cannot of that music rightly say
Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones.
O what a heart-subduing melody!"

hears the Guardian Angel recounting its history -

"My work is done,
My task is o'er
And so I come,
Taking it home
For the crown is won,
Alleluia
For evermore.

My father gave
In charge to me
This child of earth
E'en from its birth,
To serve and save,
Alleluia.
And saved is he

This child of clay
To me was given,
To rear and train
By sorrow and pain
In the narrow way
Alleluia
From earth to heaven."

After this episode, questions and answers multiply
between the soul of Gerontius and its life-long companion-

Soul

"I will address him. Mighty one, my Lord,
My Guardian Spirit, all hail!"

Angel

"All hail, my child!
"My child and brother, hail! What wouldst
thou? "

Soul

"I would have nothing but to speak with thee
For speaking's sake. I wish to hold with thee,
Conscious communion; though I fain would know
A maze of things, were it but meet to ask,
And not a curiousness."

Angel

"You cannot now
Cherish a wish which ought not to be wished."

Soul

"The I will speak. I ever had believed
That on the moment when the struggling
sould
Quitted its mortal case, forthwith it fell
Under the awful Presence of its God
There to be judged and sent to its own place,
What lets me now from going to my Lord?"

Angel

"Thou are not let; but with extremest speed
Art hurrying to the Just and Holy Judge:
For scarcely art thou disembodied yet.
Divide a moment, as men measure time
Into its million-million-millionth part.

Yet even less than the interval
Since thou didst leave the body, and the
priest
Cried "Subvenite," and they fell to prayer;
Nay, scarcely yet have they began to pray,
For spirits and men by difference standards
mete
The less and greater in the flow of time,
By sun and moon, primeval ordinances -
By stars which rise and set harmoniously -
By the recurring seasons, that swing,
This way and that, of the suspended rod
Precise and punctual, men divide the hours,
Equal, continuous, for their common use.
Not so with us in the immaterial world;
But intervals in their succession
Are measured by the living thought alone,
And grow or wane with its intensity.
But what is long is short, and swift is slow,
And near is distance, as received and grasped
By this mind and by that, and every one
Is standard of his own chronology.
And memory lacks its natural resting-points
of years, and centuries and periods
It is thy very energy of thought
Which keeps thee from thy God."

Soul

It is because
Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not
fear
Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so
For thee the bitterness of death is past.
Also, because already in thy soul
The judgment is begun. That day of doom,
One and the same for the collected world, -
That solemn consummation for all flesh,
Is in the case of each, anticipate
Upon his death, and, as the last great day
In the particular judgment is rehearsed."

So no, too, ere thou comest to the Throne
A presage falls upon thee, as a ray
Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy
lot
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,
And heaven begun."

Now the cries of the infernal spirits are heard
demanding their latest wished-for victim:

" Demons

Low-born clods
Of brute earth
They aspire
To become gods,
By a new birth,
And an extra grace,
And a score of merits,
As if aught
Could stand in place
Of the high thought,
And the glance of fire
Of the great spirits,
The powers blest,
The lords by right,
The primal owners,
Of the proud dwelling
And realm of light, -
Dispossessed,
Aside thrust,
 Chuck'd down
By the sheer might
Of a despot's will,
 Of a tyrant's frown,
Who after expelling
Their hosts, gave,
Triumphant still,
And still unjust,
 Each forfeit crown
To psalm droners,
And canting groaners,
 To every slave,
And pious cheat,
 And crawling knave,
Who licked the dust
 Under his feet.

"Virtue and vicem
 A knave's pretence,
 'Tis all the same;
 Ha! Ha!
 Dread of hell-fire,
 Of the venomous flame,
 A coward's pla

Give him his price,
 Saint though he be,
 Ha! ha!
 From shrewd good sense
 He'll slave for hire
 Ha! ha!
 And does but aspire
 To the heaven above
 With sordid aim,
 And not from love,
 Ha! ha!"

Next the soul finds itself with its protector
 in the House of Judgment where the latter explains
 the approaching agony which the soul of Gerontius
 must experience -

" Angel

They sing of thy approaching agony,
 Which thou so eagerly dost question of:
 It is the face of the Incarnate God
 Shall smite thee with that keen and subtle
 pain;

And yet the memory which it leaves will be
 A sovereign febrifuge to heal the wound;
 And yet withal it will the wound provoke,
 And aggravate and widen it the more

When then - if such thy lot - thou seest
 thy Judge,

The sight of Him will kindle in thy heart
 All tender, gracious, reverential thoughts.
 Thou wilt be sick with love, and yearn for
 Him,

And feel as though thou couldst but pity
 Him,

That one so sweet should e'er have placed
 Himself

At disadvantage such, as to be used
 So vilely by a being so vile as thee.

"There is a pleading in His pensive eyes
 Will pierce thee to the quick, and trouble
 thee
 And thou wilt hate and loathe thyself; for,
 though
 Now sinless, thou wilt feel that thou hast
 sinned,
 As never thou didst feel; and wilt desire
 To slink away, and hide thee from His sight:
 And yet wilt have a longing eye to dwell
 Within the beauty of His countenance.
 And these two pains, so counter and so
 keen, -
 The longing for Him, when thou seest Him
 not;
 The shame of self at thought of seeing
 Him, -
 Will be they veriest, sharpest purgatory."

Having passed through the gate, the veiled presence
 of God looms before them -

"I go before my Judge. Ah! . . ."

An irresistible longing impels the soul to cast it-
 self into His Everlasting Embrace but it is stricken with
 a pain that is keen and subtle as Face to Face it meets
 its Incarnate God. -

"Take me away, and in the lowest deep
 There let me be,
 And there in hope the lone night-watches
 keep,
 Told out for me.
 There, motionless and happy in my pain,
 Lone, not forlorn, -
 There will I sing my sad perpetual strain,
 Until the morn.
 There will I sing, and soothe my stricken
 breast,
 Which ne'er can cease
 To throb, and pine, and languish, till possesset
 Of its Sole Peace,
 There will I sing my absent Lord and
 Love: -
 Take me away,
 That sooner I may rise, and go above,
 And see Him in the truth of everlasting day."

It recovers only to find itself being conducted through the "Golden Prison Gate" to the "Lake of Purgatory" into which the soul of Gerontius is dipped by his Guardian Angel and is given over to the care of the angel of that abode of expiatory suffering -

"Softly and gently, dearly ransomed soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold
thee,
And, o'er the penal waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold
thee.

And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage
take,
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim
distance.

Angels, to whom the willing task is given,
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as
thou liest;
And masses on the earth, and prayers in
heaven,
Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most
Highest.

Farewell, but not for ever! brother dear,
Be brave and patient on thy bed of
sorrow;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the
morrow."

The soul, through the experience it is undergoing, is giving to the reader the certainty that death serves to prove the thinness of the veil which separates the condition of perfect consciousness from the total deprivation of sense - if God but withdraw His all-sustaining power. The sense of that withdrawal as experienced in a feeling before unknown gives to the soul the convincing signal of its utter

helplessness and its entire dependence on mightier beings to whom it is indebted for a guardianship that ever proves as constant as it is untiring.

Sorrow and pain would now seek their only solace in Him Who alone can aid the soul struggling in vain against its dissolution.

"This emptying out of each constituent"

To the dismay of the soul the realization comes and grows that now it must relinquish that which it had believed to have been its very own - the higher self must leave the lower for the latter has incurred the condemnation of the justly angered God.

"Dust thou art"

The eloquence of a Demosthene could not have impressed this truth so forcibly, so indelibly on the human mind as Gerontius is made to do through the medium of a dream.

The horrors of the collapse over Gerontius makes his last confession of faith and offers his soul to his Creator proving to an unthinking world that happiness can be a sharer with pain in an agony that is tempered by Christian resignation and confidence in God's abiding love.

"Another marvel: Someone has me fast
Within his ample palm 'tis not a grasp
Such as they use on earth - "

Gerontius in his effort to realize the separation

of soul and body becomes aware of the presence of his Guardian Angel by whom he is being borne to Judgment and who narrates to him wonders without number of the immaterial world.

Among these miracles of Eternity, Gerontius learns that time there is not measured by "the swing this way and that of the suspended rod - " but only by the intensity of the living thought. Thought - that power the use or misuse of which gives rise to all the hopes, the confidence and the joys - or on the other hand, to all the anxieties, the doubts and the fears of life that must confront the departing soul. All these intensely realistic experiences must leave an indelible impression on the mind of the reader.

"Dear Angel, say
Why have I now no fear at meeting Him "

Comes the Angel's reply:

"It is because
Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost
not fear."

The soul of Gerontius in death is filled with a joy typified in the brightness and gladness of a beautiful noon-day because in life he had courted the loneliness that comes with the shadow of death to the entranced reader if his life be so regulated.

As the peals of far-off thunder, Gerontius becomes aware of the cries of demons who hunger

for their prey and who would if they could, renew the almost overwhelming temptation to rebellion against his Creator, Lord and Master.

Pain is still the portion of Gerontius but it is not now the pain of anguish and remorse that comes with and as a consequence of temptation and sin, but rather the purified despair of a love that finds itself unworthy of the vision of its God.

"His will be done!
I am not worthy e'er to see again
The face of day; far less His Countenance
Who is the every sun."

So convincing and so overpowering is the thought that the passionate but spiritual love of Newman is communicated to the reader and coming back to self he rejoices in the realization that with life still his, now his better self will spurn any pleasure that could land to hell a smile and to heaven a tear.

The songs of the Angels now hush the wild ravings of the infernal spirits and bring to the ears of Gerontius the sweet story of the world's redemption by Christ the Son of the Most High.

Now, he remembers how even at his mother's knee he had learned that lesson of a love that knew no bounds, a sacrifice that was beyond the power of man to conceive. Had he but sown more diligently

he should have reaped more abundantly. But faith and hope assure him that love has triumphed.

Thus, Purgatory, comes to mean to the soul, not so much physical/^{pain}but intense longing for God that cannot be satisfied and the shame of guilt that cannot be effaced.

Sin now assumes a new aspect in another Gerontius and who will doubt the heights, otherwise unknown, to which the soul will wing its flight because of the dream which made death so realistic, sin, so hideous, virtue so beautiful, God so lovable.

As in most first-class lyrics, we find in "The Dream of Gerontius" a wide divergence in metre - each measure obeying, as it were, the innermost thought, feeling and sentiment showing the author's masterliness in blending the phrasal and the metrical into a living harmony. The Iambic Pentameter is found in the lines of Gerontius and his Guardian Angel while the explanatory portions are couched in blank verse. To offset these, the Alexandrine lends further grace, beauty and harmony in variety to the whole.

This interchanging and blending of metre is admirably exemplified in the Church's solemn prayer for help in this hour of need. Subdued and quiet

as expressed in the two iambic lines it suddenly leaps into a quickened anapestic when the anthem would express with impetuous eagerness the prayer of salvation for the departing soul

"From thē sins | thāt āre pāst,
 Frōm Thy frōwn | and Thine ire,
 Frōm thē pēr | ils of d̄yīng,
 Frōm an̄y | cōmply īng
 With sīn or | dēnyīng
 His Gōd or | rēlyīng
 Ōn sēlf | at thē lāst. "

Here we find the regular anapestic dimeters in the first two lines but from the third line on a hurrying is produced by taking a short syllable from the following line thus producing what is termed an amphibrach blend. Then in rhymed couplets to express confident hope, a lighter and smoother movement follows -

"By Thy | bīrth ānd | by Thy Crōss
 Rēscūe | him frōm | endless lōss"

Although Newman's work in prose overshadowed his work as a poet, we might say that he produced a second masterpiece in poetry - "Lead Kindly Light" Its brevity but emphasizes the perfection of its outstanding features.

Turning from Newman we meet our second great Catholic poet of the century in the person of Coventry Kersey Patmore who was born at Woodford in Essex, July 23, 1823. He was destined to become one of the great lyricists of this time. At twenty, he published his first volume of verses which was favorably commented on by no less a critic than the great Browning. But Patmore was to be something more in that he was to be recognized by future critics as the exponent of religion and love in poetry. The former theme he found when in his youth he renounced Agnosticism, the latter, when in his young manhood he wooed and won Emily Augusta Andrews.

His marriage proved an ideally happy one. The woman of his choice was ever and always the one dominating influence of his life, her love, her gentleness and her companionship made up for the dull, uninteresting round of work and left nothing in life to be desired by the constant as well as ardent Patmore save God and his holy religion.

Of her to whom he sung his rapturous verses we might quote the unstinted praise of Browning as well as numerous admirers who formed the charming coterie of their circle of intimate friends. But it might all be summed up in "your absolutely faultless life and your amiably innocent

graces"¹ - words taken from a tribute ever paid to the dying wife by her faithful husband, companion and friend in life's journey.

Patmore believed that in the strongest of human affections he had found not only the type, but the means, whereby the soul might meet with God. In the relationship of wedded lovers he was sure he had found the truest analogy of the relationship between God and the soul. God, the masculine or positive force, the soul, the feminine or receptive force. This idea was confirmed in his mind when after his conversion he had made a study of the writings of St. Bernard and St. Teresa. -

"In these last days, the dregs of time,
Learn that to me, though how so late,
There does, beyond desert, befall
(May my great fortune make me great)
The first of themes sung last of all."

This theme he made the subject of his first note-worthy poem "The Angel in the House." Here, we have a pure and exalted type of womanhood calling for the reverential respect of man. Moreover a thorough insight into the feelings and sentiments of woman makes of his characters vital, living personages. The "Preludes" and the "Epilogues" give a study of the psychology of love and because of his characteristic simplicity

and sincerity we feel with him that the ecstatic bliss of which he sings and we see with his vision the type of that sublime love existing only between the soul and its God.

Too serious to employ so sacred a theme lightly and moreover, ever guided and inspired in ideals by the gracious, kindly guileless lady of his choice, Patmore proved worthy to become "the consecrated laureate of wedded love."¹ He endeavored to picture the ideal woman as mirrored in his wife - guileless as a child, responsive to affection as a creature of earth, ready with comfort and cheer as the sympathetic friend. Basil Champneys claims that his wonderful success in delineating the feminine soul, is due largely to his very close affection of heart and mind with a woman of exceptional power and feeling.

The iambic verse is used with care and precision, and chosen as he said with simplicity as well as for its flexibility in producing a gaiety that would be in keeping with the seriousness of the subject.

All critics grant universality to a theme which is dedicated to a happy nuptial love

¹Edmund Gosse - Coventry Patmore P.39

"Considering well what theme unsung
Learn that to me, though born so late
There does, beyond desert, befall
The first of themes sung last of all"

"She laughed. How proud she always was
To feel how proud he was of her"

To Patmore, love was the ever new and moreover, supernatural event which must come sooner or later into the life of every man -- a divine gift he would term this human love And his inspiration was not drawn from gods or goddess but from the woman he loved who represented for him the transcendent type of nuptial love. In this eulogy to human love we find nothing that could bring a blush to the purest. Throughout it, there is a purity characterized by simplicity and a spiritual charm not found in any of the earlier writers of this theme.

On the other hand, Patmore had no sympathy with the so-called modern woman. He would exalt woman beyond all desert, but she must remain subordinate to man.

"Lo, when the Lord made North and South
And sun and moon ordained, He
Did man from the crude clay express
By sequence, and, all else decreed
He form'd the woman, nor might less
Than Sabbath such a work succeed,
And still with favor single out,
Marr'd less than man by mortal fall
Her disposition is devout
Her countenance angelical
The best things that the best believe
Are in her face so kindly writ

The faithless, seeing her, conceive
Not only heaven, but hope of it."

Our poet felt that love for a noble woman was the nearest thing on earth to heavenly love for in it man extolled the personification of purity and tenderness in a gentle devotion -

"One of those lovely things she was
In whose least action there can be
Nothing so transient but it has
An air of immortality
Her ball-dress seem'd a heaving mist
From the fair form exhaled and shed."

In "Love Justified" we find a higher love taking hold of him:

"This little germ of nuptial love
Which springs so simply from the sod,
The root is, as my song shall prove
Of all our love to man and God."

And in "Faithful Forever" and "The Victories of Love" though we note a joyful picturing of noble ecstatic human love, still we also perceive a growing feeling of incompleteness in a love that is hindered by the natural limitations of nature and the perplexing problem of Eternity. Earthly love now serving as a foretaste of the Divine goads the soul on to a higher sense of duty in anticipation of a fuller realization and appreciation of that affection when time shall be no more and God will be the sure anchor and mainstay of that love.

Patmore was by nature a mystic, and he felt himself drawn more and more irresistibly towards the supernatural. Here and there we find intimations that, worthy of his best gifts as he considered his subject, a loftier Muse than that of the family circle was gaining power over him. In "Perfect Love Rare" he complains

"Most rare is stillmost noble found
Most noble still most incomplete
Sad law which leaves King Love uncrown'd
In this obscure terrestrial seat."

Here again, we hear the mystic in God seeking the soul with more ardor than she longs for Him:

"And for your beauty, not unscathed
I fought
With Hades, ere I own'd in you a thought"

With this might be contrasted the thought in the following lines to be found in "The Victories of Love" -

"For all delights of earthly love
Are shadows of the heavens and move
As other shadows do: they flee
From him that follows them: and he
who flies forever finds his feet
Embraced by their pursuings sweet."

The genius of Patmore reaches its highest point in the "Psyche" odes. In "Rod, Root and Flower" he tells us - "There comes a time in the life of every one who follows the Truth with full sincerity when God reveals to the sensitive soul

the fact that He alone can satisfy those longings
the satisfaction of which she has hitherto been
tempted to seek elsewhere.

In the following lines, Patmore pictures
the fear of the soul when she ponders upon the
possibility of too much human passion in the
joyous abandonment to the Master's love -

"Yet how 'scape quite
Nor pluck pure pleasure with profane delight
How know I that my Love is what he seems:
By deeds
"'Tis this:
I make the childless to keep joyful house."

Again, the soul who chooses God must
necessarily forget self. She must ever think on
how to show her love for Him - and that in this must
be the sole conformity with His designs for her end
and aim of her life.

"In search of my Love
I will traverse mountains and strands
I will gather no flowers
I will fear no wild beasts:
And I will overpass the mighty and
the frontiers"

Labors and sufferings, hitherto considered
beyond endurance are now embraced eagerly:

"'Tis easier grown
Thine arduous rule to don
Than for a Bride to put her bride-dress on,
Nay, rather, now
'Tis no more service to be borne serene
Whither thou wilt thy stormful wings between"

The soul fearing her weakness and the possible flaws in her love, exclaims:

"But, oh!
Can I endure
This flame, yet live for what thou lov'st me pure?"

And Jesus, in His intensely human love replies:

"Himself the God let blame,
If all about him bursts to quenchless flame,
My Darling, know
Your spotless fairness is not matched in snow,
But in the integrity of fire
Whate'er you are, Sweet, I require.

Moreover He will not be satisfied with service of mind and body but He must have the homage of the heart, first and best -

"What thing is this?
A God to make me nothing, needful
to His bliss,
And humbly, wait my favor for a kiss?"

As Patmore's genius grew in the more mature years he decided to dedicate the fruits of his heaven-born gift to Mary the Mother of God. Though he did not live to complete the work, the "Prologue" contains much that is divinely beautiful:

"Mother, thou lead'st me still by unknown ways,
Giving the gifts, I know not how to ask,
Bless thou the work
Which, done, redeems my many wasted days,
Makes white the murk
And crowns the few which thou wilt not
dispraise."

Patmore tells us in his Autobiography -

"Angels spoke to me from time to time, as they do to all, and I frequently saw as others do in youth

the things of earth lighted up with the light which was not of earth, and I was endowed with what, from my subsequent experience of men, I am obliged to conclude was an unusual faculty for implicitly believing my own eyes, without regard to the present defect of visible continuity between their reports and the facts of the material and external life. The things I saw in those rare moments, when the properly human eye was open remained with me as abiding marks and were the jewels of my life" ¹

In "Auras of Delight" we find lines that recall "Intimations of Immortality" -

"And Him I thank, who can make live again,
The dust, but not the joy we once profane,
That I, of ye,
Beautiful habitations, auras of delight
In childish years and since had
sometimes since and sight.

But did for me they altogether, die
Those trackless glories glimps'd in upper sky?
Were they of chance, or vain
Nor good at all again,
For curb of heart or fret?
May though, by grace,
Lest haply, I refuse God to His face
Their likeness wholly I forget
Ah, yet.
Often in straits which else for me were ill
I mind me still
I did respire the lonely auras sweet,
I did the blest abodes behold."

Patmore, moreover, gave most minutely the steps by which this idealized earthly love must fail if it does not end in the divine:

1 ~~Champney Autobiography~~-----

"Feasts satiate, stars distress with delight
Friendship means well but misses much
And wearies in its best delights.
Vex'd with the vanities of speech
Too long regarded roses even
Afflict the mind with fond unrest
And to converse direct with heaven
Is oft a labor in the breast
What'er the senses banquet be
Fatigues at last with vain desire,
Or sickens by satiety,
But truly my delight was more
In her to whom I bound for aye
Yesterday than the day before
And more today than yesterday.

In "Departure" Patmore reproaches his wife for going on her great journey without giving him one kiss or goodbye.

"It was not like your gracious ways
Upon your journey of so many days
Without a single kiss, or a goodbye."

But where will he now find some solace for this great and overwhelming grief? We find the answer in "The Child's Purchases"

"Oh, Lady elect,
Whom the Time's scorn has saved from its respect
Would I had art
For uttering this which sings within my heart?"

His affectionate loving heart has now found its solace in Mary, the one perfect woman and here in the keeping of our Virgin Mother we shall leave the bard of love.

"But lo!
Thee to admire is all the art I know
Give me thereby some praise of them to tell
In such a song
As may my Guide severe and glad not wrong,
The right, convincing word!
Thou speaker of all wisdom in a word
Thy Lord!
Speaker who thus couldst well afford
Thence to be silent - oh what silence that
Which had for prologue thy Magnificat!"

But the problem of the spiritual restoration of English literature in the nineteenth century was perhaps most ably championed by Francis Thompson whose fame was first brought about through the encouragement of the genial Meynell, editor of the Merry England magazine.

Francis Thompson was born in Lancaster, December 16, 1859, of parents who were fervent converts. As a boy Francis desired to enter the Holy Priesthood, but his parents succeeded in changing the natural bent of his enthusiastic and ardent nature and so we find Francis entering the medical field - the profession of his father. But, unfortunately, he became a drug addict and abandoned his profession to the keen disappointment of his family. Yet, with his characteristic tenacity of purpose - suddenly and mysteriously - just as he had wandered from the straight and narrow path, our poet became once more enthused for the higher, and better things in life and, later, we find him giving to the world his genius in song.

Thompson's poetry is noted for its mysticism, first and foremost. In addition to this, it excels in impassioned melody, vivid imagination and masterly artistic skill. This last

That the beauty of earth is, in some way, the reflection of the beauty of heaven is the underlying thought in all of Thompson's poetry. Birth and death, are prefigured in perishable earthly beauty, resurrection and hope in the cross and dissolution.

In "Sister Songs" Francis Thompson proves himself the master of mediaeval art and doctrines. The spirit of a healthy, robust catholicity permeates each and every line. Again, he explains in it his deep and tender love for children. -

"Suffered the trampling hoof of every hour
In night's slow-wheeled car;
Until the tardy dawn dragged me at length
From under those dread wheels and
bled of strength,
I waited the inevitable last:
Then there came past
A child, like thee, a spring-flower,
Fallen from the budded coronal of spring
And through the city-streets blown withering,
She passed, - O brave, sad, lovingest
tender thing,
And of her own scant pittance did she give,
That I might eat and live.
Then fled, a swift and trackless fugitive,
Therefore I kissed in thee
The heart of Childhood so divine."

With Francis Thompson, temperament combined with a thorough realization and appreciation of the omnipresence of God in a truly Catholic sense. Hence, it must necessarily follow that self-renunciation is a major consideration in the prayers of his life.

In other words, our poet believed and taught that only the control of the passions and the will can the highest degree in spiritual and intellectual life of man be reached. In the "Mistress of Vision," he lays down conditions -

"Pierce thy heart to find the key,
With thee take
Only what none else would keep
Learn to dream when thou dost wake,
Learn to wake when thou dost sleep."

But the most exalted and the most sublime aspect of the lyric is the one which addresses itself to God-man's Creator and Redeemer. We have a splendid study for this phase of the lyric in "The Hound of Heaven"

With Thompson words typify thought and the beauty is in the whole design. In a word he is "a Catholic writer, not a Catholic and a writer." This is exemplified best in "The Hound of Heaven" which deals with only the highest thought and symbols found in the Catholic Church.

The sinking sun reminds him of a Host. "The Mistress of Vision" which means "Pain" signifies the insistence of sanctifying grace within the soul.

"The Hound of Heaven" thought by many to be unintelligible is a history of a spiritual experience. It contains something of the idea of

confessions of St. Augustine.

Francis Thompson is ranked by some as the greatest Catholic poet and some critics give him second only to Shakespeare.

The main thought of the poem is that God pursues the soul with a deadly inevitableness - leaving it no happiness outside of Him. The theme proper is contained in the following line -

"Lest having Him, I should have
naught beside"

The story is developed by an enumeration of the selections which the soul makes in its effort to find that which the heart craves.

"I pleased, outlaw-wise
By many a hearted casement curtained red
Trellised with intertwining charities;

- - - - -

But if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to"

The poet went from heart to heart seeking love but in every instance where heart answered his heart, something forced him to withdraw.

"Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports O' the moon
I said to Dawn, Be sudden - to Eve: Be soon
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover -

- - - - -

"To all swift things for swiftness did I sue
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind"

He would strive to satisfy the cravings
for love in the beauty of the heavens. But he
could find no happiness there. His inward
yearnings could not be satisfied by the beauty
of moon or sky. He could note in them only
their constancy to their Creator.

"I sought no more that after which
I strayed
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies
They at least are for me, surely for me!

Now, he would try to forget God and his happi-
ness in children's love instead of the love of man or
maid. But as soon as children looked on him with
love, the Angel of Death would steal them away.

"Come then, ye other children Nature shares,
With me (said I) your delicate fellowship,
Let me greet you lip to lip
Let me twine with you caress,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace
Underneath her azured dais
Quaffing as your taintless way is
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the day spring,
So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies
I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies,
I knew how the coulds arise
Spurned of the wild sea-snortings,
All thats born or dies
Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine
With them joyed and was bereaven."

Nature he would not seek in the hope that she
would let him forget God. And, though he had an

intimate knowledge of this expression of God's love, it brought him no satisfaction. Nature might delight his senses and his intellect but he was thirsting for a boundless happiness, a happiness that would answer the demands of his soul. All his appeals have ended in vain. He is now ready to yield for each successive idol has proven but a phantom. And the soul of our Poet turns in happy anguish to its God - the only source of true and lasting happiness.

This deeply spiritual lyric is decidedly and strongly subjective and partly reflective. Moreover, it has concentration and unity to a marked degree. And though a very lengthy poem, it is perfectly sustained throughout. In addition to all this, it is permeated by a deep and concrete philosophy of Catholicism.

The poet's wonderful power in making concrete that which is abstract is shown to advantage in the phrases "changed bars," "Silvern chatter" and "pillaring hours."

In choice of words, Thompson is unique:

"vistaed hopes" - so charming in prospect.
"Titanic glooms" "Chasmed fears" -
"Tremendously oppresive" "outlaw-wise"
Tells us that the pursued must ever be
"glimmering tapers" - stars in truly
"Unhurrying chase" and "deliberate spee"
an apparent contradiction.

Powerful imagery is a character!

We find that Thompson had little in common with those who would defy Nature.

"Lo, here stand I and nature gaze to gaze
And I the greater. Crouch thou at my feet,
Barren of heart, and beautiful of ways,
Strong to weak purpose fair and brute-brained beast
I am not of they fools
Who goddess thee with impious flatterings sweet,
Stolen from the little schools
Which cheeped when that great mouth of Rydal ceased."

He will not be satisfied with the symbol of eternal beauty, but he must have the reality behind the symbol:

"O Heart of Nature! did man ever hear
Thy yearned for word supposed dear?
His pleading voice returns to him alone,
He hears none other tone.
No; No;
Take back O poets your praises little wise,
Nor fool weak hearts to their unshunned distress
Who deem, that even after your device
They shall lie down in Nature's holiness,
For it was never so;
She has no hands to bless:
Her pontiff thou; she looks to thee,
O man: she has no use, nor asks not, for thy knee."

Though Thompson did not attribute to Nature powers it did not possess yet he possessed a true poet's appreciation of beauty whether that beauty be found in human, flower or sky. And this deep appreciative realization had its source in God alone.

Thompson viewed physical beauty only in the light of the soul. His conception of material loveliness in Woman is given in the following lines:

1. Thompson, quoted in Meyneil, Life of Francis Thompson, P. 205.

"How should I gauge what beauty is his dole
Who cannot see her countenance for her soul
As birds see not the casement for the sky?
And, as 'tis cheek they prove its presence by,
I know not of her body till I find
My flight debarred the heaven of her mind."

Sense played little part here:

"How praise the woman who but knew the spirit?
How praise the color of her eyes uncaught
While they were colored with her varying thought?
How her mouth's shape, who only use to know
What tender shape her speech had fit it to? "

In "Sister Songs" Francis Thompson proves himself
the master of mediaeval art as well as doctrine:-

"So; it is builded, the high tenement,
--God grant! --to mine intent:
Most like a palace of the Occident,
Up thrusting, topplint maze on maze,
Its mounded blaze,
And washed by the sunset's rosy waves,
Whose sea drinks rarer hue from those rare walls it
laves.
Yet wail, my spirits, wail!
So few therein to enter shall prevail.
Scarce fewer could win way, if their desire
A dragon baulked, with involuted spire,
And writhen snout spattered with yeasty fire.
For at the elfin portal hangs a horn
Which none can wind aright
Save the appointed knight
Whose lids the fay-wings brushed when he was born.
All others stray forlorn,
Or glimpsing through the blazoned windows scrolled,
Receding labyrinths lessening tortuously
In half obscurity;
With mystic images, inhuman, cold,
That flameless torches hold."

As a veritable genius in imagery we find Thompson at
his best in "A Corymbus from Autumn" -

"The calm hour strikes on yon golden gong,
In tones of floating and mellow light
A spreading summons to even-song!
See how there
The cowled Night

works of Francis Thompson, P. 60.

Kneels on the Eastern sanctuary-stair.
 What is this feel of incense everywhere?
 Clings it round folds of the blanch-amiced clouds,
 Upwafted by the solemn thurifer,
 The might Sprit unknown,
 That swingeth the slow earth before the embannered
 Throne?
 Or is't the Season under all these shrouds
 Of light, and sense, and silence, makes her known,
 A presence everywhere,
 An inarticulate prayer,
 A hand on the soothed tresses of the air?
 But there is but one hour scant
 Of this Titanian, primal liturgy;
 As there is but one hour for me and thee,
 Autumn, for thee and thine hierophant,
 Of this grave-ending chant.
 Round the earth still and stark
 Heaven's death-lights kindle, yellow spark by spark,
 Beneath the dreadful catafalque of the dark." ¹

Here stern, stately, dignified diction assumes a
 tender sweet melody and rhythm to enhance the
 picturesqueness of imagery. This supreme exquisite
 power possessed by Thompson served him best when
 he uses it to raise and to magnify the humble things
 of earth as in "Daisy." -

"Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face.
 She gave me tokens three:-
 A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
 And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
 A still word, - strings of sand!
 And yet they made my wild, wild heart
 Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air,
 And candid as the skies,
 And took the berries with her hand,
 And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end,
 Their scent survives their close:
 But the rose's scent is bitterness
 To him that loved the rose.

1 -----
 Francis Thompson's works P. 143

She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way:-
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
She went and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul
Was sad that she was glad;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan;
For we are born in other's pain,
And perish in our own."

Francis Thompson was Catholicism in a vital living personality and "his work is the concrete refutation of the idea that thought and imagination in order to be free must be unfettered. His freedom is kept within the bonds of faith and reason, simply because the passion of the poet was so completely informed by reason and his reason so completely informed by faith. And it is precisely the bonds of faith and reason which have served to make the poet great. To him, all nature is but the reflection of God's mind of which finite man can see but the shadow. Yet, this intense love of nature savored nothing of the nature-worship of the Greek. In "Nature's

Immortality" he says "Absolute Nature lives not

Her hand but to His friends,
But to her Father's friends the hand
Which thou wouldst win;
The enter in
And here is that which shall for all
make amends."

In reference to his view of human beauty, his is quite the reverse of Rosetti who viewed spiritual beauty in the light of the soul, while Thompson viewed physical beauty in the light of the soul. Note his conception of physical Loveliness in woman, in the following lines:

"How should I gauge what beauty is her dole,
Who cannot see her countenance for her soul"

Perhaps, the best eulogy we can give to Thompson is found in the lines written of him by his friend, Coventry Patmore: "Of the glorification and supernatural invigoration of all the human passions by control and continence the many know nothing. They go on burning the powder of human force in distress instead of in gun-barrels and in their estimate of life they mistake wasteful blaze for effectual energy. Mr. Thompson's poetry is spiritual almost to a fault but since it is a real ardor and not the mere negation of life which passes with most people for spirituality, it seems somewhat ungracious to complain of its predominance."

However, he does not make religion the direct object of his poetry unless he presents it as typifying a human passion as in the marvelous ode in which God's long pursuit and ultimate conquest of the resisting soul is graphically told in an overwhelming verse as was ever dictated by the promptings of the strongest of human affections. "The Hound of Heaven" is sound theology enhanced by imagination. Vivid imagery, musical melody and a strange weirdness combine to picture the quest of the soul for happiness and the seven more relentless quest of the Creator for the creature.

"Fear wist not to evade as Love
wist to pursue"

- - - - -

"Naught shelters thee who will not
shelter Me"

In fine, the beauty sought by Thompson was not the fleeting beauty of Nature, nor was it the perishable beauty of creature worship but it was the constant imperishable Beauty which his faith told him was the only enduring good.

"O world invisible, we view thee
O world intangible, we touch thee
O world unknowable, we know thee."

With regard to rhythm, we might say that Thompson's poetry is more subtle and more varied than that of the other poets of the century.

Thompson "In No Strange Land."

It is rich in the trochaic anapestic and dactylic measures, vibrating in harmony with the emotions portrayed so strongly and so beautifully in a verse all his own. And regardless of the obscurity of his language the reader always responds to the perfect rhythm of the emotions portrayed.

Though always enticed and held by the "Tremendous Lover" Francis Thompson believed it never wrong to love the creatures of this "Lover's" hand.

It might be said that there is a tinge of the mystical in all the greatest poetry of the nineteenth century. But, in most cases apart from the masterpieces already studied, this mysticism is an atmosphere, a temper of mind, rather than a definite system of philosophy. To come to a realization of this fact, we must ponder it in the light of the age. We find in the world of thought every recurring periods of atheism, materialism and intellectualism against periods of pantheism, idealism and pietism. The former found its fullest expression in the eighteenth century; the latter, in the nineteenth century. It is to religion that man must turn to develop the mystic instinct of his nature. But since there is but one true Church there is likewise, but one true cult of mysticism. Though all mysticism contains an element of the supernatural, still it has not always been developed

along the correct lines and in harmony with reason and revelation. Hence, it must be evident that mysticism, in its purest form can be found only within the fold of the Roman Catholic Church. But on the other hand, we do find striking examples of true mysticism in the representative non-catholic poets who were dominated by the Catholic spirit.

The transitional poet who ushered in this mysticism of the nineteenth century was Coleridge. His religious interpretations though borrowed largely from a study of Kant have in the Ancient Mariner much that is in common with true mysticism.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the son of a preacher and pedagogue, was born in Devonshire, England in the late eighteenth century. His father was the author of several books and of him his son Samuel wrote "my father was not a first-rate genius, he was however, a first-rate Christian, which is much better In learning good-heartedness absentness of mind and excessive ignorance of the world, he was a perfect Parson Adams" From him the poet inherited many of the eccentricities of his strange personality. Of his mother we know little except that she was uneducated, unemotional and unimaginative.

Petted and spoiled by his parents, the little poet incurred the enmity of his playmates

and this drove him to take refuge in reading. He wrote concerning himself: "I read through all gilt-cover little books that could be had at that time and likewise all the uncovered tales of Tom, Hickathright, Jack the Giant-Killer and the like. And I used to lie by the wall and my spirits used to come upon me suddenly and in a flood; and then I was accustomed to run up and down the churchyard and act over again all I had been reading in the docks, the nettles and the rank grass. At six years of age I remember to have read Belisarius Robinson Crusoe, and Philip Quarles and then I found the Arabian Nights! Entertainments, one tale of which made so deep an impression on me that I was haunted by spectres whenever I was in the dark, and I distinctly recollect the anxious and fearful eagerness with which I used to watch the window where the book lay and when the sun came upon it I would seize it carry it by the wall and bask, and read. My father found out the effect which these books had produced, and burned them. So I became a dreamer and acquired an indisposition to all bodily activity. I was fretful, and inordinately passionate and before I was eight years old I was a character."

This gives the author's own interpretation of his childhood days with their peculiarities in training and environment.

Shortly after Coleridge took up his studies at Cambridge his genius became evident to all and his work there gave promise of winning for him a reputation for academic scholarship. But his interest in the work of the hour waned. Whatever caused the sad change in the aspirations of this genius of song, we do not know but he left Cambridge some months before the time for winning his laurels.

During his stay at the university he formed a close friendship with Southey whose influence on him was marked. Later they fell in love with and married two sisters. But, perhaps, the strongest influence for good in Coleridge's life came through his friendship with Wordsworth. It was he who inspired and encouraged the genius of song to give to the public his masterpiece - "The Ancient Mariner." Turley Francis Huntington says concerning this friendship - "It would be difficult to imagine two men having so much in common living outward and inward lives so dissimilar. But if the lofty mind of Wordsworth be set over against the profound intellect of Coleridge, if his long years filled with hopeful activity present a striking contrast to Coleridge's shorter struggle saddened by many disheartening failures, if Wordsworth's

singleness of purpose in the pursuit of poetry be more admired than Coleridge's vacillating waywardness in attempting scores of plans without pursuing them to their perfect fulfillment, there were yet many points at which the genius of these men met. They were the most powerful and original of all the spirits that sprang from the ashes of eighteenth century conventionalism, and it may be truthfully said that the best of what was thought and said in the beginning of the present century in England had its inspiration in them and was spiritualized by them. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that we measure the worth of their contemporaries by the extent to which they were influenced by the principles promulgated by Coleridge and Wordsworth."

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Coleridge began a life very much akin to that of his old seafarer, the "Ancient Mariner". He visited all places of note in Europe. On his return, he and his wife agreed to separate. This was the beginning of a hopeless despondency in the poet - a depression aggravated by the use of opium. Notwithstanding this unfortunate weakness which eventually must have subtracted greatly from the output of this "myriad-minded" poet, still as a journalist, critics have ranked him next to Burke; as a religious poet, we know

he inaugurated the movement against materialism; as a master of criticism, we know that England owes to his judgment and genius some of its soundest principles and much of its terminology; as a lyricist, it is claimed that he had few equals and no superior.

The "Ancient Mariner" is a romantic lyric and a powerful allegory, ^{it} is characterized by a bold originality, a weird, grotesque imagery, a fascinating rhythm, and a fairly hypnotic diction. Through the ghost-like atmosphere we see "the skeleton ship, the polar spirit and the inspiriting of the dead."

Wordsworth suggested the Albatross story found in Shelrocke's Voyage and Navigation of the Sea by Dead Men. A dream of Cruickshank's who was a friend of Coleridge's, is responsible for "the phantom ship" And the reviving by a host of angelic spirits is taken from a tale of shipwreck by Paulinus a Bishop of Nola, who lived in the fourth century.

The poem is permeated with a strong dramatic weirdness and a simple directness coupled with a religious theme and a thoroughly Catholic spirit not found in the older romantic ballads. Pater claims that the modern psychological speculations of the writer add to the extraordinary supernatural weirdness and make of it a thing distinctly new in English literature.

Added to this a marked unified wholeness characterizes the story in its entirety. This unity is secured largely through the skill with which the story within the story is made to offset at intervals the calmer seriousness of the main tale until the ghostly recital is brought to an end - where it began in the beautiful waters of the bay.

The imaginative predominates in this as in all of Coleridge's poems but unlike most of his other poems it is a species of the imagination which emphasizes the appeal to the spiritual life. This however, is not out of sympathy with the author's strangely sad and deeply subjective type of genius.

Passion does not dominate in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," any more than it does in any of the works of this first-class lyricist. For this reason it has been contended that the poem will never become popular ^{in the} field of literature.

Its author was, however, tenderly affectionate by nature but his affections were those of the purely platonic type. He was never guilty of the emotional fervor found in Burns a quality we naturally expect in all lyrical poetry.

Words in this poem, Coleridge's masterpiece fairly burn with intensity of color and meaning.

Lowell says: "There is not a description in it.
It is all picture."

The alluring musical flow of the verse, saturated as it is with new and thrilling ideas lends an ~~aid~~ of the unique to the writer's poetic genius. Possessing what has been aptly termed "the divine Breath" or the on-rushing inward force of a poet mind, Coleridge was at first somewhat awkward in the use of these wonderfully exalted gifts, but in this poem he is master of the almost overpowering force that was ever and anon, clamoring for a legitimate outlet.

These extraordinary gifts would seem to promise that the work of Coleridge's pen should continue to grow in intensity as he advanced in years. But unfortunately our poet became addicted to opium the excessive use of which in time dulled his mental faculties. When first taken it seemed to act as a spur to the poetic genius within but with the declining years it checked the flood of inspiration and Coleridge became a poet of mediocre ability. Had the output been sustained in quantity and quality Coleridge would no doubt rank with the greatest poet of all times - Shakespeare.

The theme of "The Ancient Mariner" is the story of the triumphant working of divine love bringing contrition and peace to a soul that had been ravaged by the horrors of remorse over sin committed.

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

The unified internal sense of the poem as it were contains the moral - the efficacy of Divine Love - which is manifested through objects of nature -

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest;
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast."

The Mariner repents of his fouldeed, is pardoned and thereby his soul is emancipated from error and passion -

"He prayeth best, who loveth best,
All things both great and small,
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

Through it all, however, is a vitalized system of life rather than a humanized mode of life. Shelley terms Coleridge in this poem the "subtle-souled psychologist".

From an external standpoint the completeness is brought about and sustained through the perfect technique of the double setting.

"The Ancient Mariner" is written in the usual ballad measure of four verses rhyming a,b,c,b with four accents in the first and third verses and three accents each in the second and fourth verses. The metrical line is known as septenarius or seven feet. The second and fourth lines rhyme while the first

and third do not. They may however, contain an internal rhyme as is found in the following line:

"The guests are met, the feast is set."

This regular order is disturbed occasionally by the introduction of additional lines - in which the stanza is lengthened to five, six or even nine lines. The general movement is iambic with an occasional anapest or trochic.

The abrupt opening of the poem serves to arrest the attention. It is the usual form of the ballad:

"It is an Ancient Mariner
And he stoppeth one of three
By thy long grey beard and glittering eye
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

The holding of the Wedding Guest at the will of the Mariner may be taken as an external indication of the vividness of the tale or it may be taken as a means to bring out by contrast, the traits of the Mariner.

"He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he,
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

"He holds him with his glittering eye"-
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner."

Through vivid description we are given a contrast of the worldly as opposed to the spiritual

In "By thy long grey beard and glittering eye" we have a Turkish expression. "Eftsoons" is an archaic word meaning "soon after".

In the following stanza we find a striking rhyme in second and fourth line

"He holds him with his skinny hand
"There was ship," quoth he,
"Hold off!" unhand me, grey-beard loon!
Eftsoons his hand dropt he."

Now, in the following we find that the hand of the Mariner is no longer needed to constrain the Wedding Guest for the spell is complete -

"And now there came both mist and
snow
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald."

Longfellow contributed the following lines:

"And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will."

Loose rhyme for which there is a license in ballad style is found in -

"The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner."

An exceptionally rich poetic style abounds in -

"The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he;
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea."

"Merrily did we drop". Here "drop" means to put out to sea.

"The merry minstrelsy" is a reference to the Middle Ages.

The isolation by ice in the Antarctic is told in marvelously terse energy of phrase:

"And now there came both mist and
snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts,
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken-
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and
howled
Like noises in a swound!"

In "And now the storm blast came and he
Was tyrannous and strong"

is found a striking example of personification.

And in:

"With sloping mast and dipping prow"
we have a most picturesque description.

A strongly suggestive onomatopoeia effect is produced in the line:

"It cracked and growled and roared
and howled
Like noises in a swound."

"The ice did split with a thunder-fit"
connotes most strongly the meaning implied.

The minor climax - the climax of thought occurs when the Wedding Guest who has been attentively listening to the weird recital suddenly interrupts:

with

"God save thee, ancient Mariner,
From the fiends, that plague thee thus! -
Why look'st thou so?" - "With my cross-
bow
I shot the Albatross."

A look of horror overspreads the face of the
Mariner, and he exclaims:

"With my cross-bow
I shot the albatross"

Moreover the dramatic force that characterizes
the interruption of the Mariner by the Wedding Guest
adds tellingly to the confession.

With the opening of "Part Two" the scene is
shifted to "coming North"

"The sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he
Still in the midst and on the left
Went down into the sea"

The attitude of the sailors toward the Mariner is
voiced in the following lines:

"And I had done a hellish thing
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow,
Ah, wretch! said they, the bird to slay
That made the breeze to blow!"

Nor dim, nor red, like God's own head,
The glorius Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right said they, such birds to slay.
That bring the fog and mist."

"That made the breeze to blow gives a suggestion
of the echo-effect in "Lenore" by Poe.

The unscrupulous sailors proceed to justify the

deed of the Mariner for a selfish reason.

"'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay
That bring the fog and mist."

And they so make themselves accomplices in the
crime of the Mariner.

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea."

contain strong examples of alliteration.

It would be scarcely possible to find more
vivid description than the simile -

"As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean"

Coleridge's power in intensiveness of word
coloring growing out of the depth of feeling is
strongly emphasized in passages like the follow-
ing:

"All in a hot and copper sky, -
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon."

A strong metonymy marks the close of
this part.

"The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea."

The coming of the Phantom ship and the
decision of the Mariner's fate is reserved for the
opening of "Part Three" -

In

"With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,
We could not laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!"

we have a weird and powerful picture of drought
and thirst. Again, we find a good example of
alliteration -

"With throats ^{unsalted} unslaked, with black lips
baked,"

and in (line 161)

"And cried, a sail! a sail!"

we have an example of synecdoche.

Another simile of powerful imagery
occurs in -

"As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face"

The repetition of "nears" in

" How fast she nears and nears!"

gives conscious feeling of ^{the} fast approaching phantom
ship.

A good example of personification is
found in -

"And straight the Sun was flecked with
bars
(Heaven's mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face."

Another forceful simile we find in the
following lines

"Her skin was as white as leprosy,"

And, a beautiful description is furnished
in the following stanza:

"The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one strike comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea
Off shot the spectre-bark."

In a thoroughly quaint way the astronomical
truth that there is no twilight in the Tropics
is brought out:

"The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;

Presumably to indicate an evil omen, super-
stition holds fort.

"We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white;
From the sails the dew did drip -
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright
star
Within the nether tip."

In -

"One after one, by the star-dogged Moon
Too quick for groan or sigh"

is an example of ellipsis - "They fell" is omitted.

Another example of internal rhyme follows:

"With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,"

Metonymy occurs again to add to the beauty
of the lines -

"The souls did from their bodies fly,-
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

Another strong example of Metonymy greets us

in -

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown." -
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down."

pathetically weird is the following stanza:

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

In -

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I."

we find the Mariner regretting that death has claimed the more innocent . This shows an awakening of his soul to truth.

A sad pathetic picture is given when the Mariner's hardened heart in a vain attempt to pray, he complains:

"I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust."

The following is what is termed the pivotal stanza. It pictures a distinct change in the Mariner's moral nature, a change which must have been brought about through personal sorrow and persevering prayer -

"O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware."

"part Five" opens with an appealing apostrophe

"Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing."

"Fire-flags" is a picturesque term to connote lightning.

Vivid description is here given added zest in constraisting imagery -

"Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!"

He calls to his aid a strong contrast with former life in death -

"But ere my living life returned."

Remarkably like to Poe's Leonore is the echo effect expressed in -

"The like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head
And I fell down in a swound."

Part "Six" opens with two voices "Justice" and "Mercy".

Memories of home are conveyed -

"Like a meadow-gale of spring."

Former experiences of wind are breathed:

"It mingled strangely with my fears."

In -

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed"

the tale is brought to a peaceful end.

In contrast to the former state of unrest, an entire change of scene is pictured in:

"The rock, shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock"

Antithesis adds to the beauty of song in:

"that shadows were
In crimson colors came."

In "Part Seven" the Mariner, thoroughly repentant, seeks absolution.

Beauty of diction is enhanced by a strong periodic sentence when the poet sings -

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!"
The hermit crossed his brow,
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say-
What manner of man art thou?'

In the moral we find the justification for the spiritual aspect of the poem in its entirety. It implies that love for God is so strong that in time love for man and nature must become a necessary outgrowth of this first and greatest affection. It teaches, also, that man must create his own atmosphere of love and good-will. This lesson is couched in subtle thought, vivid imagery, soul-stirring melody and exquisite diction - all of which qualities are supreme in the perfection of their execution.

"Unless perchance it were"
a run-on-line, offers variety to the melody.

Throughout the entire story, the supernatural thrills, the rhythm charms and the poetic diction fascinates. But the Catholic spirit makes it a thing of beauty forever.

In Tennyson's poetry we see reflected the sentiment and the aspirations of the nineteenth century together with the poets own personally cherished ideals. The age of immense material progress, wild feverish speculation and revived mediaeval philosophy found a worthy exponent in Tennyson. The questions arising out of religious problems occupy a larger place in his writings than in those of any other Non-Catholic English poet except, possibly, Browning.

He holds it the duty of man to give allegiance to the moral law promulgated by Moses and tested by the experience of Christianity through generations. Chivalry towards the weak and helpless, a high standard of personal honor, active combat with evil, the love for one woman only, the assertion of the sanctity of marriage, the desire for fame in noble deeds, forgiveness of injuries, love and charity with all men: these form the elements which make up Tennyson's ideal man, and all are distinctive, many are characteristic of the Christian teaching.

Tennyson however, shows a reluctance to develop the sterner truths of Christianity. But there are necessarily deeper and more serious ends in life than immediate

happiness. Moreover evil cannot be resolved into an unreality nor can sin fail to arouse the anger of an all just as well as an all merciful God. Yet we do find in "St. Simeon Stylites" one instance of Tennyson's making the direct consciousness of sin an overpowering incentive for an increase of suffering in this land of exile.

"Pain ~~had~~ ten hundredfold to this were still
Less burden, by ten hundredfold, to bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin that crush'd
My spirit flat before thee."

This power of Tennyson to delineate the spiritual is perhaps best show in "Two Voices" and "In Memoriam". The former deals with the philosophical voice of time, and the lesson of immortality. It is distinctly an intellectual poem of the melancholy type. In it are scanned all problems of life and death. The speaker is not Alfred Tennyson, but the man who argued the problem of immortality with the tempter or "Despair"

"Cheer" is the third voice, bringing solace, faith and hope to man.

From the tempter comes the opening suggestion to suicide:

"A still small voice spake unto me,
"Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?"

To this, man reasons with himself not to destroy God's most wonderful handiwork:

"Then to the still, small voice I said;
"Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made."

Then the tempter would show more wonderful things
than man:

"Today I saw the dragon-fly,
Come from the wells where he did lie

An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk; from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew."

Now, the poet appeals to Scripture and cites the
fact that man alone is gifted with intellect and the power
to love -

"She gave him mind, the lordliest,
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast."

Then follows an argument that should be all-
sufficient to silence pride in man. The tempter says:

"Tho' thou wert scattered to the wind,
Yet, is there plenty of the kind."

To which the speaker replies:

"No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all."

Now, the tempter or the voice of pessimism shows
how man, in comparison with the vast universes that are
as yet unknown except through powerful telescopes, is but
an atom of dust in the Sahara. But man would win by
claiming that no two humans are just alike. Hence, each
man has something not possessed by another - his own
individual personality.

The tempter wins in the first round by the closing statement:

"Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancelled in the world of sense."

The tempter returns to renew the struggle for a soul -

"Thou art so steeped in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be

"Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep:
Thou canst not think but thou wilt weep."

And at the end of the second round, the tempter scores a second victory. But in the third section man gets the upper hand. His first close approach to truth is reached in the argument:

"I cannot hide that some have striven
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven;

"Who rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream;

"But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead
The murmur of the fountain-head--

"Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen an unquenched fire.

"He heeded not reviling tones
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with stones:

"But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face."

Man knows there is a yearning in his heart
for something beyond the grave.

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower.

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, iteself is love."

This poem like all of Tennyson's work is extremely musical, idealistic but rather melancholy. He drew his inspiration from classical and mediaeval traditions. And, fittingly, we might say, was he made the poet laureate of the Victorian Age.

"In Memoriam" is a truly great poem in that it is a world poem like "The Iliad and the Odyssey" and "The Eneid". It discusses life, not the life of the race nor the life of the individual but it voices the universal experience of mankind in the deepest aspects of life.

It carries with it the theme that in Eternity we shall know and love those whom we knew and loved on earth. The test of this love is given in the words of the poet -

"And unto me no second friend."

The poem is an elegy on the death of the poet's best-loved friend, Arthur Hallam. It contains not only beautiful gems of verse but it, moreover, helps in creating and developing a taste and a love for poetry among readers who have no natural liking for poetry. This is due to the fact that the thoughts are built on the living themes of life and love, of joys and hopes and

sorrows - themes that find an echo in the heart of every man and child.

Arthur Hallam died in Vienna in September but his body did not reach England until January. The poet addresses the ship and prays for fair weather and prosperous winds to bring it safe to port -

"Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailed the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved re-
mains,
Spread thy fullwings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle they mirror'd mast, and
lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,
bright
As our pure love, and thro' early
light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above:
Sleep gentle heavens before the
prow;
Sleep, gentle winds as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my window'd race he run
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me."

In the following stanza we have an artistic comparison between a calm Indian Summer and the pathetic calm of an intense grief followed up by the utter calm of the dead corpse of Arthur -

"Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground

"Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench
the furze
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on you great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn
bowers
And crowded farms and lessening
towers
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the
fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves
in rest
And dead calm in that noble
breast

Which heaves but with the heaving deep."

He then compares in parable or analogy his loss to that of a man suddenly bereft of a much-loved wife and companion in life. Then he notes a likeness to the feeling commonly experienced after the sudden death of a loved one:

"A late-lost form that sleep reveals
And moves his doubtful arms and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed;
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too."

We here note a strong periodic sentence -

"If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land today,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see they passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank
And beckoning unto those they know.

"And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain
And how my life had droop'd of late,
And he should sorrow O'er my state
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange."

In the last stanza, canto XV - imagery rises to the sublime -

"That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a laboring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire."

Then come lines, sensitive and deeply felt:

" 'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head,
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be.
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again."

In the above, meditating upon the approaching funeral, Tennyson borrows from Shakespeare's

"Hamlet" the words of Laertes, "And from her fair and un-
polluted flesh". He then makes a reference to the
Fourth Book of Kings in the story of glisius who falling
on the dead body breathed a soul into it. So he
wished passionately he might do to Arthur. As a friend
he cherishes as sacred every remembered word and manner-
ism.

In "Part Three" he becomes reminiscent, describes
his companionship of four years with Arthur on a four-
year trip and then pictures the supreme satisfaction of
possessing an intimate, congenial friend, who though
he does not always see things from the same point of
view, will upon explanation exclaim, "I see" or "I
understand" - a phenomena true but difficult to describe.

After an ecstatic description of his ideal
friendship, together with an analysis and explanation
he decides that it brought such great happiness be-
cause they had shared mutually each other's joys and
each other's sorrows. The one had grown as it
were necessary to the other. He follows this up with
a prayer for constancy:

"Still onward winds the dreary day;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers falnn's as soon as built.

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more,
And Love the indifference to be,

"Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn."

Had I never met Arthur, he muses, I should have been
spared this overwhelming grief, But:

"I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods.

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what my count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Then never to have loved at all.

Christmas joys are blighted but Arthur
is here in spirit, says the poet. A strong apostrophe
to Christmas, a telling reference to our Lord in the
beautiful phrase "Incarnate Hope", follows:

"With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambol'd, making vain pretence
of Gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle hand in hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

"Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year; impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet:
"They rest," we said, "Their
sleep is sweet,"
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: "They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy
Nor change to us, although they change;

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame,
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn
Draw forth the cheerful day
from night:
O Father, touch the east, and light,
The light that shone when Hope was born."

Next, we have a philosophical dissertation on death. The poet declares he believes in the resurrection of the dead though from a philosophical standpoint the proofs are not compelling. His one consolation is that he will be reunited with his best friend after the resurrection. But Lazarus the only one outside of Christ to come back to earth told no experience of the spiritual world. Was Lazarus not allowed to tell, or was it that the Evangelist was not so inspired? At any rate, no record exists to this effect. Tennyson believed that sense knowledge is important in dealing with what is beyond sense and reason. He, likewise, insisted on the reality of the unseen and the immortality of the soul. The following

lines contain the formula of perfection:

"Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure."

In -

"O thou that after toil and storm
May'st seem to have reach'd purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form.

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven her happy views;
Nor thou with shadow'd him confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good;
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood,
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fall not in a world of sin,
And e'en for want of such a type."

the poet tells the rationalist that reason may not
guide the intellect when the moral order is in
question -

"And led him thro' the blissful climes
And show'd him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times,"

And a strongly suggestive apostrophe to his friend-
ship is given -

"O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!"

Yet, though a loss be untelling, great, "A friendship as had
mastered time," still a God-given free will can master fate.

"Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act **of** human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die."

The poet in the vivid beauty characteristic of his verse goes on to say that though he should get a message seemingly direct from God that man must die as the falling leaf even then he would still keep faith with his God - would still hope to be reunited with Arthur in that heavenly land.

In Canto XXXVI. there is an argument for confidence in that faith - the story of Christ's love for us as shown in His life on earth:

"Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For wisdom dealt with mortal powers
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought,
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And whose wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef."

In Canto XLII. Tennyson gives what he considers the supreme test of a deep and sincere love. He and Arthur had nothing in common save the sharing of their spiritual experiences for Arthur he claimed was by far his superior in mental ability and social accomplishments. But in this mutual sharing consisted their deep, abiding friendship:

In -

"We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the tomb
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;
The fruitful hour of still increase
Days order'd in a wealthy peace
And those five years its richest field,

O Love, they province were not large,
A boundéd field, not stretching far,
Look also, Love, a throbbing star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall,
Remerging in the general Soul.

Is faith as vague as all unsweet,
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside,
And I shall know him when we meet.

And we shall sit at endless feast
Enjoying each the other's good.
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seekst least.

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing place, to clasp and say,
"Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

Tennyson expresses the thought that earthly joys and sorrows grow fainter with the passage of time and happily so, otherwise, we should not prove equal to life's test of physical endurance; as seen in the above last four stanzas.

Tennyson closes the sequence with the declaration that love must be based on the assumption of meeting in

eternity.

In the ensuing sequence we find another argumentative hope for immortality as expressed in the language of fancy:

"From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shiver'd lance,
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreaths
The slightest air of song shall breathe,
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look and go thy way,
But blame not thou the whole that make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencil'd shadow play

Beneath all fancied hopes and rears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down
Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

Tennyson reconsiders the wish to have Arthur see and know all concerning his life. But we judge by human standard the poet muses, while the dead see the deeds of humans in the light of God's mercy. Again, no human, he says, has found it possible to live up to his own ideal. But God takes the "pearl" of our "good deeds" and throws away the "shell" or the imperfections that have marred that ideal.

"Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessen'd in his love?
- - - -

"What keeps a spirit woolly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin,
Abide: they wealth is gather'd in
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl."

Another problem to prove immortality. Why does God permit sin, suffering, death? God has a purpose if I will but see why does God make the heart unhappy in that it is always longing for life in terms that the world cannot give? God could not wish our unhappiness nor our destruction; therefore, He must will the satisfaction of that desire in an eternal life -

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

- - - - -

"I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope."

Canto XVI contains the climax in which the poet says the whole history of man is based on immortality. If, on the other hand, the world be materialistic then man is abnormal for he seems to have a soul: But if the immortality of the soul be not proven through science, nature and philosophy then shall it find a certain solution in Revelation.-

In Canto LXXXII. the poet will not grieve because Arthur's body is decaying in the grave but will think of Arthur's soul. His body is like the discarded chrysalis of the butterfly -

"Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth;
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere."

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak."

Again, the poet would wish that he and
Arthur might die together and together meet
their Judge as a single soul -

"What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and fate,
And hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break,
The low beginnings of content."

Tennyson ranks next to Keats in graphic power
and vividness of drawing. And though he does not
equal Keats in faculty of color, still, he far excels
in heart appeal and in the ability to depict with ease,
all things in nature, from the highest to the lowest.

The first real strong affection can never
be duplicated so the poet tells, but he will give
another and less perfect love to the would-be
friend -

"I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours,
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart

Still mine, that cannot but deplore
That beats within a lonely place
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more

- - - - -

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year
As not unlike to that of Spring."

Passionate ardor and vivid imagery coupled
with dignity of thought combine to produce a concen-
tration of passion that ascribes to the wakeful charm of the
nightingale all emotions in one grand transport of song.

"Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
O tell me where the senses mix,
Tell me where the passions meet.

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief,
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I - my harp would prelude woe -
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go."

Arthur Hallam, the ideal christian gentleman,
never allowed himself to be swayed by rash judgments and

as such had no equal, in the estimation of his friend -

"The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all
To him who grasps a golden ball
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale;

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be.

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
Each office of the social hour,
To noble manners, as the flower,
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use."

The following lines make a complete poem - in
thought profound and in beauty unsurpassed -

"O, friend who camest to the goal
So early, leaving me behind

- - - - -
I would the great world grew like thee
Who grievest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

Faith and hope and charity being now firmly fixed,
the theme becomes-"Less yearning for the friendship fled,
Than some strong bond which is to be."

Robert Browning, not only a master lyricist, but also a master dramatist, was born in more affluent circumstance than Tennyson; but, on the other hand, he had a far greater struggle for fame and his was because he lacked applausive friends, which, in turn, was due to a life of more or less seclusion.

His father, a banker, encouraged his son's ambition to be a poet, financing his first adventure into the literary field. After many disappointments and heart-aches due to an unappreciative British public, he came into his own through his Dramatic Lyrics. Here, he not only excels in dramatic "situations" from the simplest to the weirdest and unrivalled in all and resourcefulness but he fits them to lyric measure, which though startling and forbidding at times, come in the estimation of the reader to be the only true and possible metre for its own peculiar theme. For who but Browning could have presented to the imaginative mind of the lover of poetry a mode so appropriate as that found in his brief masterpiece "Saul"? We see it all as David saw it and we feel an awe-inspiring sympathy akin to that experienced by thoughtful David:

"And I paused, held my breath in dumb silence,
and listened apart;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered,
and sparkles began dart
From the jewels that woke in his chariot, at
once with a start,
All its lordly male-sapphires, all rubies
courageous at heart,
So the head: but the body still moved not, still
-----hung there erect."-----

Browning's Complete Poetical Works, P. O. Cambridge Edit.

Listen to the home running of David through
the woods and wild brakes in the day break by the
whispering waters:

"I know not too well how I found my way home
in the night.
There were witnesses, choros about me, to left
and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the
alive, the aware:
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as
struggling there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished
for news-
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened,
Hell loosed with her crews;
And the stars of night beat with emotion, and
tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge:
but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and
Supported, suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet,
and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the
earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered
from earth -
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's
tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray
of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the
sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each
with eye sidling still
Though averted with wonder and dread; in the
birds stiff and chill
That rose heavily, as I approached them, made
stupid with awe;
E'en the serpent that slid away silent,- he felt
the new law,
The same stared in the white humid faces up-
turned by the flowers;
The same worked in the heart of the cedar and
moved the vine-bowers;
And the little brooks witnessing murmured,
persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices-
"E'en so, it is so!"

With the deep and unerring instinct of a poet, James Thomson, one of Browning's most appreciative critics, tells us that "The Ring and the Book" is one of the masterpieces of the world whether it be studied from the standpoint of literature, art or philosophy.

In the light of artistic plan, Browning makes all the independent parts of the poem tend to ultimate unity of design. The intensely human personalities though individually working out their own character, are, on the whole, mutually dependent on one another and every one is made to contribute to the grand finale of the poem.

The ever growing interest in the poem is due largely to Browning's ability to re-create, as it were, the characters that he has drawn from the original story. To each individual he gives a touch of his originality. This might be in the shape of some general weakness or some particular greatness that we would be apt to find in one whom we have chanced to meet in life. But whatever his interpretations of character or theme may be, he never loses sight of man's final destiny - GOD.

The first book presents to the reader a prologue that is both unique and charming in its conception. It is not a general survey of the poet's purpose nor is it symbolic of motive and theme but contrary to all former recognized principles of art, it is the story

itself in plot development. And, strange to say, this means of procedure detracts nothing from the interest of the poem itself.

"Well now, there's nothing in or out o' the world

Good except truth" -

contains the strong central theme. Through the beautiful symbolism of the ring, this thought is expressed in the opening lines.

The poet, obedient to inspiration, now chooses for the development of this theme the story found in the "old yellow book". Browning also makes use of a manuscript giving an account of the murder, a pen and ink drawing of Count Guido Franceschini and a water color sketch of the arms of the Franceschini family.

After telling of the discovery of the book itself, a recital is given of the facts of the story. Then, under the poet's inspiration the characters seem to grow into living human beings. With this change, the reader, by degrees transfers his interest from the essential facts of the story to the intensely human characters involved.

The scene of the story is laid in Rome in the Seventeenth Century. The story itself is told from several points of view but there are two well-marked sides or camps - one favors Count Guido and the other favors Pompilia and Caponsacchi. In statement and in interpretation these two are often antagonistic.

Here, Browning, tries to tell the story impersonally:

"Count Guido Franceschini the Aretine,
Descended of an ancient house, thou poor,
A beak-nosed bushy-bearded black-haired lord,
Lean, pallid, low of stature yet robust,
Fifty years old, - having four years ago
Married Pompilia Comparini, young,
Good, beautiful, at Rome, where she was born,
And brought her to Arezzo, where they lived
Unhappy lives, whatever curse the cause, -
This husband, taking four accomplices,
Followed this wife to Rome, where she was fled
From their Arezzo, to find peace again,
In convoy, eight months earlier, of a priest,
Aretine also, of still nobler birth,
Giuseppe Caponsacchi - caught her there
Quiet in a villa on a Christmas night,
With only Pietro and Violante by,
Both her putative parents; killed the three,
Aged, they, seventy each, and she, seventeen,
And, two weeks since, the mother of his babe
First-born and heir to what the style was worth
O' the Guido who determined, dared and did
This deed just as he purposed point by point.
Then, bent upon escape, but hotly pressed,
And captured with his co-mates that same night,
He, brought to trial, stood on this defence -
Injury to his honor caused the act;
And since his wife was false, (as manifest
By flight from home in such companionship,)
Death, punishment deserved of the false wife
And faithless parents who abetted her
I' the flight aforesaid, wronged nor God nor man,
"Nor false she, nor yet faithless they," replied
The accuser; "cloaked and masked this murder gloom;
True was Pompilia, loyal too the pair;
Out of the man's own hear a monster curled
Which - crime coiled with connivancy at crime -
His victim's breast, he tells you, hatched and reared;
Uncoil we and stretch stark the work of hell!"
A month the trial swayed this way and that
Ere judgment settled down on Guido's guilt;
Then was the Pope, that good Twelfth Innocent,
Appealed to: who well weighed what went before,
Affirmed the guilt and gave the guilty doom."

The environment of the first three books is true
to life in its presentation of the influence of the three
Romans, the picturing of the impression of the deed on

the average Roman of the day and the corresponding effect upon the story itself.

In this second group the three principal characters are presented: Count Guido Franceschini, the prime actor; Guiseppe Caponsacchi, the protagonist; and Pompilia who possesses in common with Guiseppe Caponsacchi a moral rectitude born of Faith which does not fail to make its impression on those with whom they come in contact, even to Guido himself. The limitations of the finite make the story mean one thing to you and another thing to me:-

"Let this old woe step on the stage again!
Act itself o'er anew for men to judge,
Not by the very sense and sight indeed-
(Which take at best imperfect cognizance,
Since how heart moves brain, and how both move hand,
What mortal ever in entirety saw?)
-No dose of purer truth than man digests,
But truth with falsehood, milk that feeds him now,
Not strong meat he may get to bear some day-
Tow-wit, by voices we call evidence,
Uproar in the echo, live fact deadened down,
Talked over, bruited abroad, whispered away,
Yet helping us to all we seem to hear:
For how else know we save by worth of word?"

From this throbbing atmosphere of Seventeenth Century Rome, the reader passes on to the third group of three books. In the third group of three books we have learned technicalities of two lawyers and the ethical investigations of the Pope. On the one side, a lawyer pleads for the husband, on the other side, the wife's counsellor upholds the moral law. Then the Church through the wise and venerable, Antonio Fignatelli, passes judgment on each

act and claim.

Guido is now an outcast of society - in the eleventh book. He attacks religion and society and prepares the way for the climax.

The Epilogue concludes the tale. Through the Venetian travellers we are made familiar with the town gossip and through the same source we are informed of the execution. The two lawyers appear for the final social settlement and the suit for Pompilia's estate. The Augustinian Friar, proxy for the Pope, sums up the case from the moral standpoint.

In the evolutionary phase of the poem we find an element of the historic. The climax was reached with the close of the eleventh book, nevertheless, Browning continues his story and justifies his method of procedure on the ground that nothing has an end.

The fire and intense feeling directed against Guido's deed has died away but the effect of that deed lives on through the central event of the poem which is but a trifling incident when considered in the long movement of civilization. Though historic, in the true sense of the word, it does not pin its truth or falsity on definite items considered as material evidence but on a character development that is the direct result of a correspondence or a non-correspondence with noble aspirations plus the promptings of that inborn voice of duty which is called conscience. The wonderful beauty and

artistic finish of this character growth does not consist in the development of each individual as such, but in the strong inter-relation and therefore inter-twining of the characters involved.

Notwithstanding the fact that the characters of the three Roman citizens are more typical than personal it does not seem to detract from their distinctly human characteristics. We are interested in the particular version of each character's interpretation of the story. We gain from each not only the estimate of each individual character but also an estimate of the speaker's character and from both, we unconsciously decide for ourselves as to the truth or falsity of the evidence. And so in each instance, the interest first given, by the reader to the plot is quickly transferred to the character study and to character as it is understood and interpreted by the speaker. Each successive Roman citizen promises with an ever-increasing degree of assurance his word for the veracity of his tale.

Browning obtained his material from the "old yellow book" and the plot he evolved. I shall attempt to sum up from the point of view that favors Pompilia and Caponsacchi.

A young priest named Giuseppe Caponsacchi of noble birth was made the victim of Guido's infernal schemes. The object was to bring Guido's wife into disrepute so as to make it possible for him to secure

a legal separation from her on the ground of infidelity. A waiting-maid by the name of Margherita was bribed to become messenger for the forged letters. Guido, the author of the love letters sent to Caponsacchi, intercepted the unfavorable replies from the rectory and substituted for them burning love letters.

Finally, perhaps through curiosity, Caponsacchi went to Pompilia's window. She told him about her sufferings and anxieties and begged him to save her from the persecution she was made to undergo, day and night. After considerable deliberation Caponsacchi decided that from a motive of duty not feeling, he must acquiesce in Pompilia's request. The flight was set for the following day at dawn and at the end of the second day, after having ridden for thirty-six hours, Pompilia collapsed.

Caponsacchi took Pompilia to an inn for medical care but here they were overtaken by Guido. Taken into custody by officers of the law they were in due time summoned to court. At the close of an exciting trial Pompilia was sentenced to be held as a prisoner in her own home, while Caponsacchi was to remain within the limits of the town of Civita Vecchia while Guido returned to his own home at Arezzo.

Eight months after the flight, Pompilia gave birth to a son. Shortly after the christening, the baby, Gaetano and his nurse were sent to a distant village where they would be beyond the reach of possible harm from Guido.

Within a month, Guido with four men from his country estate appeared at the door of Pompilia. In response to the question "Who is there?" Guido answered, "Caponsacchi." When the door was opened the five men forced their way into the home. They killed Pietro and Violante and wounded Pompilia. The young wife and mother died four days later.

Count Guido and his accomplices were captured, tried for murder and convicted. On the grounds of having received Minor Orders, Guido appealed to the Pope for protection but the latter confirmed the sentence of the court. Because of his rank, however, Guido was beheaded while his accomplices were hanged.

It was in the City of Florence in the year 1860 while Browning was out on one of his customary strolls that he found the "old yellow book" containing the above plot for his poem. Before he had reached his apartments he had mastered the details though it was part in print and part in manuscript, part in Latin and part in Italian. It is now in the library of Balliol College, Oxford, of which college Browning was made an Honorary Fellow. The book contains the legal documents relating to the trial of Guido and his four partners in crime, who suffered the death penalty on February 22, 1698, in Rome.

From the pamphlet source, Browning obtained the information regarding the details of the murder; namely,

that Pompilia received twenty-two dagger wounds and also a description of the death and burial of her parents. In it he also obtained the story of the pursuit, capture and execution of the murderers.

With the pen and ink drawing of Guido in which he was sketched as clothed when captured and executed, Browning was enabled to give a vivid description of the criminal.

In the poem, as a whole, Browning shows a marked desire to hold to the essential facts contained in the "old yellow book", and, to make sure of this he read and re-read until he became fully saturated with the plot of the story. In this particular point, that is, of responsibility to plot, we may say that Browning is more conscientious than Shakespeare. To give an example of this fidelity to detail it might be cited in

"There's new moon this eve"

Browning had an astronomer figure back to ascertain whether there was a new moon or not at that particular time. On the other hand, Browning did make one pointed exception to this rule when he made the flight begin on Tuesday instead of Monday. This however, was done with a distinctly artistic point of view in mind for he wished the flight to begin on St. George's day to commemorate the symbolism - St. George slaying the dragon.

Browning's originality has in the main elevated and transformed the entire story through the monologue and

character growth. In the case of Guido, Browning used the given characteristics of cunning, greed and brutality, but to these he added his profound knowledge of human nature even to its darkest aspects. And into the resolutely strong priestly character of Caponsacchi, he infused all that is delicately beautiful and noble in feeling ideals and character. Again, Pompilia is Elizabeth Barrett Browning idealized. To her real virtues, he has added others that make Pompilia the ideal woman and the ideal Mother. Moreover, a thoroughly human touch is given to the love of Caponsacchi and Pompilia for each other, a love which, though overwhelming in its intensity is, notwithstanding, held in such perfect control that each receives from the other naught save what is for the other's good.

Aside from the trivial lawsuits there are two important trials. In one the decision against Pompilia Caponsacchi imposed only slight punishments while in the other Guido and his helpers received the death penalty. The latter trial furnishes the monologues.

About a month after Pompilia's death a lawsuit for her property was defeated and thereby her innocence was established and her good name and reputation were restored.

The Pope, Innocent XII is pictured by Browning as the ideal ruler - from the temporal standpoint as well as from the spiritual. We must bear in mind that at that

time Rome was a part of the papal territory - owned and ruled by the Pope. The Court judges were Church Ecclesiastics and therefore we find such terms as "Reverend Court"

It was seven years after the death of Elizabeth B. Browning, the poet's much-loved wife, that "The Ring and the Book" was published and was dedicated to her in the following exquisite lines:

"O lyric Love half angel and half bird
And all a wonder and a wild desire
Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help"

We might say that this - Browning's best work - teems with examples of his breadth and depth of knowledge on one side while on the other it affords abundant instance of his characteristic obscurity.

We must acknowledge that the dedication lyric of eleven lines is too long to savor of clearness. And the following passage is an example of Browning's obscurity due in this case, to the omission of the relative pronoun -

"Checking the song of praise in me, and else
Swelled to the full for God's will done on
earth"

(which is omitted).

Could any thought be more forcibly expressed, in seven brief words than the following which describes Pompilia's graceful gliding into her carriage -

"So a cloud
Gathers the moon up"

In spite of repetition of plot and story "The Ring and the Book" holds the attention from beginning to end. First, we have gossip; then half Rome on the side of Count Guido, next other half Rome defending Pompilia and Caponsacchi; then Tertium Quid who is neutral. Later we hear Guido's defense of self, then, Caponsacchi at court; next Pompilia from her sick bed; then, the lawyers striving for personal fame while aiding their respective clients; later, the Pope in meditation and argument, proving himself the embodiment of justice and truth; finally, Guido, after his condemnation, calling on every power human and divine to save him from his doom. The climax of his petitions is reached when he passionately cries out, -

"God, -

Pompilia will you let them murder me?" and with this note of agonizing despair Browning sums up the combined intensity of plot, character and theme.

Browning, as an interpreter of human nature is unsurpassed. This is brought out very forcibly in the case of Pompilia and Caponsacchi, for though he mirrors for the reader the intense love that these two individuals hold for each other, yet in keeping with the nobility and virtue with which he clothes their characters he makes their whole demeanor bespeak the reverence for each other that is compatible with their state and which is made possible

through the exercise of a God-given free will: -

" - - - - -
Against my heart, beneath my head, bowed low
As we priests carry the paten: that is why
- To get leave and go see her of your grace
I have told you this whole story over again."

But previous to this, Caponsacchi had debated with himself as to whether duty or feeling prompted the deed -

"I am a priest
Duty to God is duty to her. I think
God, who created her, will save her too
Some new way, by one miracle the more
Without me. Then, prayer may avail perhaps."

In the following lines we find a beautiful picture of domestic happiness:-

"Crawled all-fours with his baby peck-a-back.
Sat at serene cats'-cradle with his child
Or took the measured tallness, top to toe."

Browning is very partial to Bible allusions which adds but one more phase to this myriad sided poet's knowledge and which never fails to reflect the spiritual - always predominant in his contribution to literature.

"He hoped now to walk softly all his days
In soberness of spirit, etc."

After the first meeting with Pompilia, Caponsacchi compares her to the Madonna of Raphael:-

"As stands i' the dusk, on altar that I know,
Left alone with one moonbeam in her cell,
Our Lady of all the sorrows."

When Caponsacchi feeling for Pompilia in her exhaustion would have her rest at Foligno - Browning uses a figure that is a marvel in accuracy of description:-

"But her whole face changed
The misery grew again about her mouth."

Again Browning makes Caponsacchi fairly blazon the depravity of Guido while bespeaking the enraged -

"Creation purged o' the miscreate, man redeemed
A spittle wiped off from the face of God."

In a soliloquy of the Pope we get his estimate of the beautiful character of Pompilia in the following lines -

"The marvel of a soul like thine, earth's flower
She holds up to the softened gaze of God."

Browning makes the Pope mirror to the reader his own wonderful moral courage when in the face of family prestige and high position in the Church he signs the death penalty for Guido claiming that having used conscience and intellect to his best judgment he would not fear to meet Guido in the next world even though he should later find the criminal of today to have been an innocent victim of circumstantial evidence.

"Therefore there is not any doubt to clar
When I shall write the brier' word presently
And chink the hand-bell, which I pause to co

- - - - -
Some surmise,
Perchance, that since man's wit is fallible
Mine may fail here? Suppose it so, - what then?

- - - - -
"If some acute wit, fresh probing, sound
This multifarious mass of words and deeds
Deeper and reach through guilt to innocence
I shall face Guido's ghost nor blench a jot."

Browning was the giant of the age which strength is most vividly illustrated in his power and passion for

self-analysis, his refusal to see any break between science and religion and his conviction that love of God is the fundamental law of life. I truthfully agree in sentiment with Browning's coterie of admiring friends - that here is a poet whose wealth of knowledge, originality of thought, charm of style, breadth of sympathy, integrity of life and appreciation of Roman Catholic ideals make him and his work unequal and supreme in the field of poetry. And, of all his works, "The Ring and the Book" might be said to show forth most vividly all these points of the man and the poet and so compel the student's appreciation to grow and to deepen with years of study.

So through all the varying changes of a truly great century, the mind of man was gradually withdrawing more and more from the darkness of error and coming nearer and nearer into the light of reason and revelation.

"That rose midst dust of a down-tumbled world"
ever onward and toward an inspired truth, a happy
immortality, and - GOD.

Fortunately, this movement in Nineteenth Century mysticism was perfected in the strictly Catholic works of our first group of poets, Cardinal Newman, Coventry Patmore and Francis Thompson.

This paper, or thesis, as aforesaid, has endeavored to prove that English Religious poetry of the nineteenth century is decidedly Catholic in spirit, that is, it is permeated with Catholic ideals, Catholic principles and Catholic doctrine. And, we have seen that this has come about through a revival of the ancient teachings of Christendom, a sincere study of them and a willingness to acknowledge the truth and beauty of the culture of that then universal Christendom with its characteristic unity and picturesqueness, both religious and social.

It was impossible to give within the limits of this paper an adequate treatment of the development and the spread of the Catholic spirit in all the poetry of this period. But the authors taken, together with each one's respective masterpiece, serve to show conclusively, the point I have endeavored to make: namely, that the Catholic spirit pervades the English religious poetry of the nineteenth century. For the betterment of Christianity in particular, and the good of mankind in general, it is hoped that this Catholic spirit will continue to increase and spread its genial uplifting influence until all England will be one fold under One Shepherd.

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