

Religious Bulletin.
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Chapter XIV -- Newman's Triumph.

Newman became a Catholic through the Oxford Movement in 1845, and immediately dropped into the abyss so far as the literary world was concerned. Had he had ambition, he could not have chosen a worse moment for his conversion. All Europe was in a state of turmoil against the Church, and in America the Native American and Know-Nothing Movements were in full sway.

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There is an old saying that you can't keep a good man down, but the critics managed to keep him down. The great pride and joy of the so-called critics is their own ignorance. They kept Newman down just as they did poor Keats. There was one man in England who saved his class from disaster -- James L. Hutton, who, throughout the whole of Newman's career, stoutly maintained that he was the greatest English writer alive.

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Carlyle and Emerson shouted the praises of each other until they totally obscured their contemporaries -- (and it was an old trick ever new: see Fanny Butcher's column on Van Vechten and Firbank last Saturday). Their babble reminded one of the profound controversies of the uneducated. Newman was at that time a living power, and his services to the rejuvenated Catholics were next to O'Connell's. He bravely took up the burden of the Irish University, but was forced to abandon it. He had his days of gloom until he issued th Apologia pro Vita Sua.

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Charles Kingsley had charged Newman with the use of the lie of evasion. The reply brought out all the genius of Newman -- marvelous power, sweetness, delicacy, irony, gentleness, singular humor. It was the same power that was hid under the delicacy of Longfellow. It was not the voice from the tempest, but the still, small voice of conscience.

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The Apologia not only made him, but it set the critics to reading his unread pages. The people thrust his books upon the critics, and they were forced to revise their opinions. The Duke of Norfolk had the Pope make Newman a Cardinal, and all England, which had been prepared by the plays of Richelieu, Woolsey, and A Becket, realized that the greatest honour which the world could bestow, had been conferred upon them. Oxford, which had recently abolished the religious tests, welcomed Newman back as her most distinguished son.

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Newman summarized the position of the agnostics as follows: 1) It is uncertain that truth exists; 2) it cannot be found; 3) it is folly to claim its possession. In answer he laid down two rules: 1) It is man's duty to seek truth; 2) man's happiness consists in the pursuit of truth.

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