

one evening when he heard it read for the first time by George Wyndham, and it was praise indeed from such a critic to say that he had heard the finest poem in English read by the best reader. The marvellous lines that tell of the pursuit of the soul by Divine Love are certainly on the very highest level of imaginative creation, and at the same time so saturated with Catholic thought that they might well have been done by St. John of the Cross or by Dante. To the article to which we have referred we therefore recommend all lovers of this grand poem.

A Poet's Poet

Of more than one English poet has it been said that he was a poet's poet. It is said of Spenser, of Shelley, and of Keats. Among the moderns Thompson has most claims to be considered such. He belongs in time to the latter Victorians. His inspiration is medieval, but he is the heir of Shelley, Keats and Coleridge, to whom he owes most, and from whom he differs most in that he draws copiously from the inexhaustible treasures of Catholicism, and in that the faith unspeakably increases the worth of his work through which it shines pure and splendid as in other years it shone through the pictures of Raphael and Fra Angelico. To all he brought full-handed the gifts of beauty and spiritual ideals, but to poets he brought inspiration and impulse. As he says of Spenser, we may say of himself that he was "an initial influence, a generative influence . . . a poet's poet in the rarer sense—the sense of fecundating other poets. It is that he has incited the very sprouting in them of the laurel-bough, has been to them a fostering sun of song." In 1897 the *Bookman* said of him: "After the publication of his second volume, when it became clear that *The Hound of Heaven* and *Sister Songs* should be read together as a strict lyrical sequence, there was no longer any comparison possible except the highest, the inevitable comparison even with Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. The *Sonnets* are the greatest soliloquy in literature. *The Hound of Heaven* and *Sister Songs* together are the second greatest; and there is no third." A French critic wrote: "From these poems there arises neither the anguished, What do I know? longing for the absolute, as with Pascal, nor even the What do I know? of the romanticist, oppressed by modern unrest and tormented by the eternal silence of God—but a fiery, energetic, vehement, positive: I know!" One poet found in Francis Thompson:—

A tapestry . . .

Woven of all the dreams dead or to be,
Hills, hills of song, Springs of eternal bloom,
Autumns of golden pomp and purple gloom
Were hung upon his loom.
Winters of pain, roses with awful thorns,
Yet wondrous faith in God's dew-drenched morn—
These, all I saw,
With that ecstatic awe
Wherewith one looks into eternity.

His Life

Everard Meynell, the son of Wilfrid and Alice Meynell, who were the poet's greatest friends, has written the life of Francis Thompson for all time. Readers who want to understand the heart of the poet cannot neglect Mr. Meynell's biography, in which the tale of his privations, his miseries, his wanderings in darkest London, and of his finding and elevation is told by one who knew the poet to the depths of his being. There were squalor and sordidness before the Meynells found him and brought him like a dying bird into the warmth and light of their Catholic home. And the marvel is that all the while he was in quest of ideal beauty and truth behind the veil of the flesh, and that in all the hunger and cold the vision never left him. Reading Mr. Meynell's *Life of Francis Thompson* one thinks of De Quincey who sank like the poet into the depths and who has given us prose as splendid and

rich in its own sphere as Thompson's verse. But for the Meynells Thompson would have been lost, and the literature of the world would have been much poorer to-day. We refer our readers to the biography for a fascinating account of this gifted, child-like genius whom all Catholics ought to love. Before we end we cannot refrain from quoting one poem on the Catholic Church which will sing itself into the hearts of all who read it:—

LILIUM REGIS.

O Lily of the King! Low lies thy silver wing,
And long has been the hour of thine unqueening;
And thy scent of Paradise on the night-wind spills
its sighs,
Nor any take the secrets of its meaning.
O Lily of the King! I speak a heavy thing,
O patience, most sorrowful of daughters!
Lo, the hour is at hand for the troubling of the land,
And red shall be the breaking of the waters.
So fast upon thy stalk, when the blast shall with thee
talk,
With the mercies of the King for thine awning;
And the just understand that thine hour is at hand,
Thine hour at hand with power in the-dawning.
When the nations lie in blood, and their kings a broken
brood,
Look up, O most sorrowful of daughters!
Lift up thy head and hark what sounds are in the
dark,
For his feet are coming to thee on the waters!
O Lily of the King! I shall not see, that sing,
I shall not see the hour of thy queening!
But my song shall see, and wake like a flower that
dawn-winds shake,
And sigh with joy the odors of its meaning.
O Lily of the King, remember then the thing,
That this dead mouth sang: and thy daughters,
As they dance before His way, sing there on the Day
What I sang when night was on the waters!

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

There was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from the eleven o'clock Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday. After Compline in the evening the Very Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., preached an instructive and impressive sermon on the priesthood and the great central act of Catholic worship—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The annual collection in aid of the diocesan Seminary Fund was taken up at all the Masses and at the evening devotions, also at the suburban churches of the parish, and will be continued at the Cathedral on next Sunday.

The monthly meeting of St. Joseph's Cathedral parish committee of the Catholic Federation was held at St. Joseph's Hall on last Sunday evening. Very Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., presided, and there was a good attendance, including representatives of the various suburban congregations. The enrolment of members for the present year was reported to be satisfactory, but to expedite this very necessary work it was decided to adopt the envelope system, and to hand out on next Sunday envelopes with enclosures giving the necessary directions, to be returnable on the Sunday following. It was decided to hold the next meeting on Sunday, August 22.

The St. Patrick's Harriers ran as the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Meade, Waverley, on Saturday. About 20 members took part in the run. The trail led over to the Highcliff road, thence over some more paddocks till the top end of the Tomahawk Lagoon was reached. A very interesting run took place along the edge of the lagoon, and was kept up till the road was reached. Afterwards a good run home ensued. The members were afterwards entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Meade.

In last Saturday's Association football matches Christian Brothers' senior team defeated Northern by

Jack Metcalfe

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