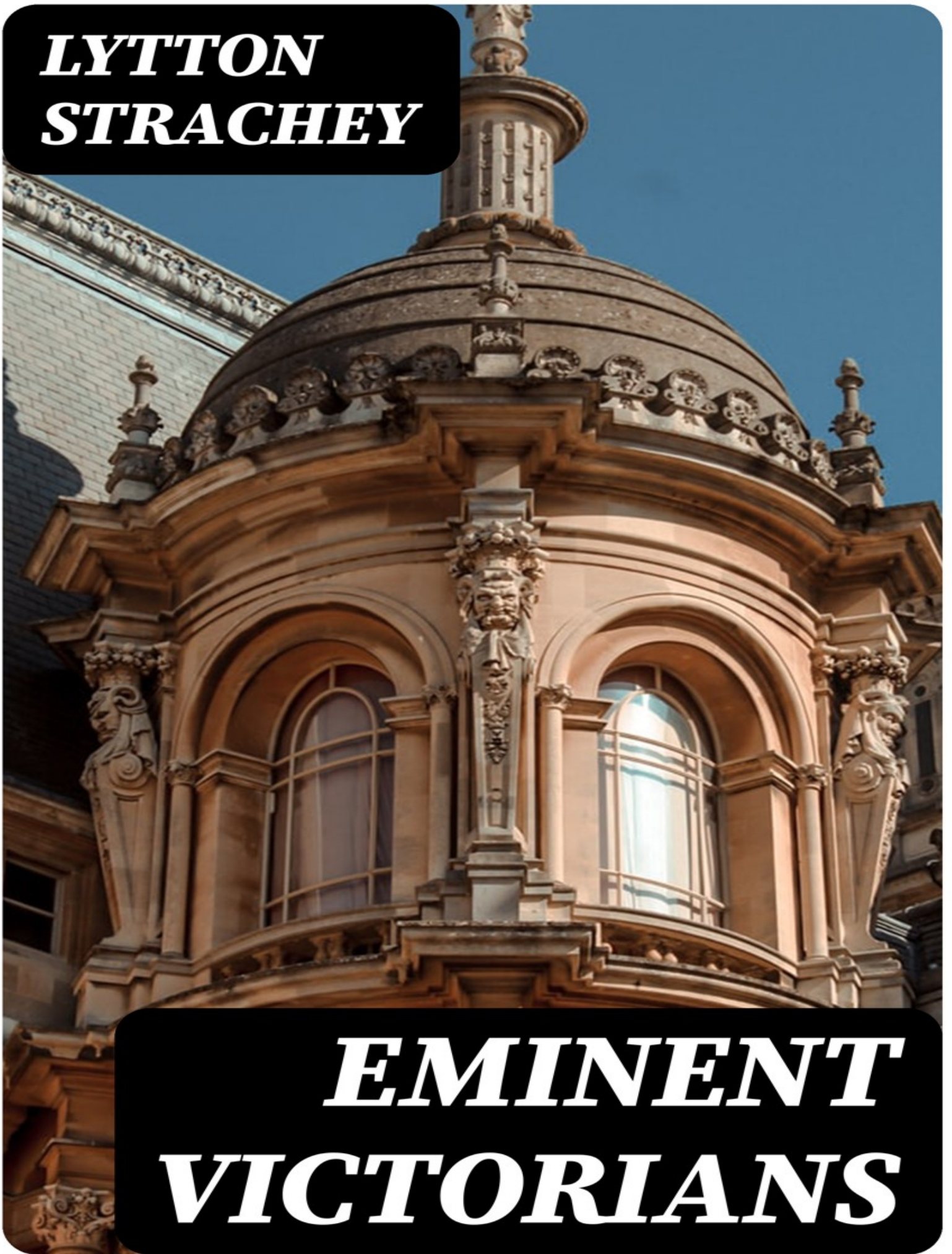


***LYTTON
STRACHEY***

***EMINENT
VICTORIANS***



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Eminent Victorians

EAN 8596547388388

DigiCat, 2022

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UNDOUBTEDLY, what is most obviously striking in the history of Manning's career is the persistent strength of his innate characteristics. Through all the changes of his fortunes the powerful spirit of the man worked on undismayed. It was as if the Fates had laid a wager that they would daunt him; and in the end they lost their bet.

His father was a rich West Indian merchant, a governor of the Bank of England, a Member of Parliament, who drove into town every day from his country seat in a coach and four, and was content with nothing short of a bishop for the christening of his children. Little Henry, like the rest, had his bishop; but he was obliged to wait for him—for as long as eighteen months. In those days, and even a generation later, as Keble bears witness, there was great laxity in regard to the early baptism of children. The delay has been noted by Manning's biographer as the first stumbling-block in the spiritual life of the future Cardinal; but he surmounted it with success.

His father was more careful in other ways.

'His refinement and delicacy of mind were such,' wrote Manning long afterwards, 'that I never heard out of his mouth a word which might not have been spoken in the presence of the most pure and sensitive—except,' he adds, 'on one occasion. He was then forced by others to repeat a negro story which, though free from all evil de sexu, was indelicate. He did it with great resistance. His example gave me a hatred of all such talk.'

The family lived in an atmosphere of Evangelical piety. One day the little boy came in from the farmyard, and his mother asked him whether he had seen the peacock. 'I said yes, and the nurse said no, and my mother made me kneel down and beg God to forgive me for not speaking the truth.' At the age of four the child was told by a cousin of the age of six that 'God had a book in which He wrote down everything we did wrong. This so terrified me for days that I remember being found by my mother sitting under a kind of writing-table in great fear. I never forgot this at any time in my life,' the Cardinal tells us, 'and it has been a great grace to me.' When he was nine years old he 'devoured the Apocalypse; and I never all through my life forgot the "lake that burneth with fire and brimstone". That verse has kept me like an audible voice through all my life, and through worlds of danger in my youth.'

At Harrow the worlds of danger were already around him; but yet he listened to the audible voice. 'At school and college I never failed to say my prayers, so far as memory serves me, even for a day.' And he underwent another religious experience: he read Paley's Evidences. 'I took in the whole argument,' wrote Manning, when he was over seventy, 'and I thank God that nothing has ever shaken it.' Yet on the whole he led the unspiritual life of an ordinary schoolboy. We have glimpses of him as a handsome lad, playing cricket, or strutting about in tasselled Hessian top-boots. And on one occasion at least he gave proof of a certain dexterity of conduct which deserved to be remembered. He went out of bounds, and a master, riding by and seeing him on the other side of a field, tied his horse to a gate, and ran after him. The astute youth outran the master, fetched a circle, reached the gate, jumped on to the horse's back and rode off. For this he was very properly chastised; but, of what use was chastisement? No whipping, however severe, could have eradicated from little Henry's

mind a quality at least as firmly planted in it as his fear of Hell and his belief in the arguments of Paley.

It had been his father's wish that Manning should go into the Church; but the thought disgusted him; and when he reached Oxford, his tastes, his ambitions, his successes at the Union, all seemed to mark him out for a political career. He was a year junior to Samuel Wilberforce, and a year senior to Gladstone. In those days the Union was the recruiting-ground for young politicians; Ministers came down from London to listen to the debates; and a few years later the Duke of Newcastle gave Gladstone a pocket borough on the strength of his speech at the Union against the Reform Bill. To those three young men, indeed, the whole world lay open. Were they not rich, well-connected, and endowed with an infinite capacity for making speeches? The event justified the highest expectations of their friends; for the least distinguished of the three died a bishop. The only danger lay in another direction.

'Watch, my dear Samuel,' wrote the elder Wilberforce to his son, 'watch with jealousy whether you find yourself unduly solicitous about acquitting yourself; whether you are too much chagrined when you fail, or are puffed up by your success. Undue solicitude about popular estimation is a weakness against which all real Christians must guard with the utmost jealous watchfulness. The more you can retain the impression of your being surrounded by a cloud of witnesses of the invisible world, to use the scripture phrase, the more you will be armed against this besetting sin.'

But suddenly it seemed as if such a warning could, after all, have very little relevance to Manning; for, on his leaving Oxford, the brimming cup was dashed from his lips. He was already beginning to dream of himself in the House of Commons, the solitary advocate of some great cause whose

triumph was to be eventually brought about by his extraordinary efforts, when his father was declared a bankrupt, and all his hopes of a political career came to an end forever.

It was at this time that Manning became intimate with a pious lady, the sister of one of his College friends, whom he used to describe as his Spiritual Mother. He made her his confidante; and one day, as they walked together in the shrubbery, he revealed the bitterness of the disappointment into which his father's failure had plunged him. She tried to cheer him, and then she added that there were higher aims open to him which he had not considered. 'What do you mean?' he asked. 'The kingdom of Heaven,' she answered; 'heavenly ambitions are not closed against you.' The young man listened, was silent, and said at last that he did not know but she was right. She suggested reading the Bible together; and they accordingly did so during the whole of that Vacation, every morning after breakfast. Yet, in spite of these devotional exercises, and in spite of a voluminous correspondence on religious subjects with his Spiritual Mother, Manning still continued to indulge in secular hopes. He entered the Colonial Office as a supernumerary clerk, and it was only when the offer of a Merton Fellowship seemed to depend upon his taking orders that his heavenly ambitions began to assume a definite shape. Just then he fell in love with Miss Deffell, whose father would have nothing to say to a young man without prospects, and forbade him the house. It was only too true; what WERE the prospects of a supernumerary clerk in the Colonial Office? Manning went to Oxford and took orders. He was elected to the Merton Fellowship, and obtained through the influence of the Wilberforces a curacy in Sussex. At the last moment he almost drew back. 'I think the whole step has been too precipitate,' he wrote to his brother-in-law. 'I have rather allowed the instance of my friends, and the allurements of

an agreeable curacy in many respects, to get the better of my sober judgment.' His vast ambitions, his dreams of public service, of honours, and of power, was all this to end in a little country curacy 'agreeable in many respects'? But there was nothing for it; the deed was done; and the Fates had apparently succeeded very effectively in getting rid of Manning. All he could do was to make the best of a bad business.

Accordingly, in the first place, he decided that he had received a call from God 'ad veritatem et ad seipsum'; and, in the second, forgetting Miss Deffell, he married his rector's daughter. Within a few months the rector died, and Manning stepped into his shoes; and at least it could be said that the shoes were not uncomfortable. For the next seven years he fulfilled the functions of a country clergyman. He was energetic and devout; he was polite and handsome; his fame grew in the diocese. At last he began to be spoken of as the probable successor to the old Archdeacon of Chichester. When Mrs. Manning prematurely died, he was at first inconsolable, but he found relief in the distraction of redoubled work. How could he have guessed that one day he would come to number that loss among 'God's special mercies? Yet so it was to be. In after years, the memory of his wife seemed to be blotted from his mind; he never spoke of her; every letter, every record, of his married life he destroyed; and when word was sent to him that her grave was falling into ruin: 'It is best so,' the Cardinal answered, 'let it be. Time effaces all things.' But, when the grave was yet fresh, the young Rector would sit beside it, day after day, writing his sermons.

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IN the meantime, a series of events was taking place in another part of England, which was to have a no less profound effect upon Manning's history than the merciful removal of his wife. In the same year in which he took up his Sussex curacy, the Tracts for the Times had begun to appear at Oxford. The 'Oxford Movement', in fact, had started on its course. The phrase is still familiar; but its meaning has become somewhat obscured both by the lapse of time and the intrinsic ambiguity of the subjects connected with it. Let us borrow for a moment the wings of Historic Imagination, and, hovering lightly over the Oxford of the thirties, take a rapid bird's-eye view.

For many generations the Church of England had slept the sleep of the... comfortable. The sullen murmurings of dissent, the loud battle-cry of Revolution, had hardly disturbed her slumbers. Portly divines subscribed with a sigh or a smile to the Thirty-nine Articles, sank quietly into easy living, rode gaily to hounds of a morning as gentlemen should, and, as gentlemen should, carried their two bottles of an evening. To be in the Church was in fact simply to pursue one of those professions which Nature and Society had decided were proper to gentlemen and gentlemen alone. The fervours of piety, the zeal of Apostolic charity, the enthusiasm of self-renunciation—these things were all very well in their way and in their place; but their place was certainly not the Church of England. Gentlemen were neither fervid nor zealous, and above all they were not enthusiastic. There were, it was true, occasionally to be found within the Church some strait-laced parsons of the high Tory school who looked back with regret to the days of Laud or talked of the Apostolical Succession; and there were groups of square-toed Evangelicals who were earnest over the Atonement, confessed to a personal love of Jesus Christ,

and seemed to have arranged the whole of their lives, down to the minutest details of act and speech, with reference to Eternity. But such extremes were the rare exceptions. The great bulk of the clergy walked calmly along the smooth road of ordinary duty. They kept an eye on the poor of the parish, and they conducted the Sunday Services in a becoming manner; for the rest, they differed neither outwardly nor inwardly from the great bulk of the laity, to whom the Church was a useful organisation for the maintenance of Religion, as by law established.

The awakening came at last, however, and it was a rude one. The liberal principles of the French Revolution, checked at first in the terrors of reaction, began to make their way into England. Rationalists lifted up their heads; Bentham and the Mills propounded Utilitarianism; the Reform Bill was passed; and there were rumours abroad of disestablishment. Even Churchmen seemed to have caught the infection. Dr. Whately was so bold as to assert that, in the interpretation of Scripture, different opinions might be permitted upon matters of doubt; and, Dr. Arnold drew up a disquieting scheme for allowing Dissenters into the Church, though it is true that he did not go quite so far as to contemplate the admission of Unitarians.

At this time, there was living in a country parish, a young clergyman of the name of John Keble. He had gone to Oxford at the age of fifteen, where, after a successful academic career, he had been made a Fellow of Oriel. He had then returned to his father's parish and taken up the duties of a curate. He had a thorough knowledge of the contents of the Prayer-book, the ways of a Common Room, the conjugations of the Greek Irregular Verbs, and the small jests of a country parsonage; and the defects of his experience in other directions were replaced by a zeal and a piety which were soon to prove themselves equal, and more

than equal, to whatever calls might be made upon them. The superabundance of his piety overflowed into verse; and the holy simplicity of the Christian Year carried his name into the remotest lodging-houses of England.

As for his zeal, however, it needed another outlet. Looking forth upon the doings of his fellow-men through his rectory windows in Gloucestershire, Keble felt his whole soul shaken with loathing, anger, and dread. Infidelity was stalking through the land; authority was laughed at; the hideous doctrines of Democracy were being openly preached. Worse still, if possible, the Church herself was ignorant and lukewarm; she had forgotten the mysteries of the sacraments, she had lost faith in the Apostolical Succession; she was no longer interested in the Early Fathers; and she submitted herself to the control of a secular legislature, the members of which were not even bound to profess belief in the Atonement. In the face of such enormities what could Keble do? He was ready to do anything, but he was a simple and an unambitious man, and his wrath would in all probability have consumed itself unappeased within him had he not chanced to come into contact, at the critical moment, with a spirit more excitable and daring than his own.

Hurrell Froude, one of Keble's pupils, was a clever young man to whom had fallen a rather larger share of self-assurance and intolerance than even clever young men usually possess. What was singular about him, however, was not so much his temper as his tastes. The sort of ardour which impels more normal youths to haunt Music Halls and fall in love with actresses took the form, in Froude's case, of a romantic devotion to the Deity and an intense interest in the state of his own soul. He was obsessed by the ideals of saintliness, and convinced of the supreme importance of not eating too much. He kept a diary in which he recorded his

delinquencies, and they were many. 'I cannot say much for myself today,' he writes on September 29th, 1826 (he was twenty-three years old). 'I did not read the Psalms and Second Lesson after breakfast, which I had neglected to do before, though I had plenty of time on my hands. Would have liked to be thought adventurous for a scramble I had at the Devil's Bridge. Looked with greediness to see if there was a goose on the table for dinner; and though what I ate was of the plainest sort, and I took no variety, yet even this was partly the effect of accident, and I certainly rather exceeded in quantity, as I was fuzzy and sleepy after dinner.' 'I allowed myself to be disgusted, with—'s pomposity,' he writes a little later, 'also smiled at an allusion in the Lessons to abstemiousness in eating. I hope not from pride or vanity, but mistrust; it certainly was unintentional.' And again, 'As to my meals, I can say that I was always careful to see that no one else would take a thing before I served myself; and I believe as to the kind of my food, a bit of cold endings of a dab at breakfast, and a scrap of mackerel at dinner, are the only things that diverged from the strict rule of simplicity.' 'I am obliged to confess,' he notes, 'that in my intercourse with the Supreme Being, I am become more and more sluggish.' And then he exclaims: 'Thine eye trieth my inward parts, and knoweth my thoughts... Oh that my ways were made so direct that I might keep Thy statutes. I will walk in Thy Commandments when Thou hast set my heart at liberty.'

Such were the preoccupations of this young man. Perhaps they would have been different, if he had had a little less of what Newman describes as his 'high severe idea of the intrinsic excellence of Virginité'; but it is useless to speculate.

Naturally enough the fierce and burning zeal of Keble had a profound effect upon his mind. The two became intimate

friends, and Froude, eagerly seizing upon the doctrines of the elder man, saw to it that they had as full a measure of controversial notoriety as an Oxford common room could afford. He plunged the metaphysical mysteries of the Holy Catholic Church into the atmosphere of party politics. Surprised Doctors of Divinity found themselves suddenly faced with strange questions which had never entered their heads before. Was the Church of England, or was it not, a part of the Church Catholic? If it was, were not the Reformers of the sixteenth century renegades? Was not the participation of the Body and Blood of Christ essential to the maintenance of Christian life and hope in each individual? Were Timothy and Titus Bishops? Or were they not? If they were, did it not follow that the power of administering the Holy Eucharist was the attribute of a sacred order founded by Christ Himself? Did not the Fathers refer to the tradition of the Church as to something independent of the written word, and sufficient to refute heresy, even alone? Was it not, therefore, God's unwritten word? And did it not demand the same reverence from us as the Scriptures, and for exactly the same reason—BECAUSE IT WAS HIS WORD? The Doctors of Divinity were aghast at such questions, which seemed to lead they hardly knew whither; and they found it difficult to think of very apposite answers. But Hurrell Froude supplied the answers himself readily enough. All Oxford, all England, should know the truth. The time was out of joint, and he was only too delighted to have been born to set it right.

But, after all, something more was needed than even the excitement of Froude combined with the conviction of Keble to ruffle seriously the vast calm waters of Christian thought; and it so happened that that thing was not wanting: it was the genius of John Henry Newman. If Newman had never lived, or if his father, when the gig came round on the fatal morning, still undecided between the two Universities, had chanced to turn the horse's head in the direction of

Cambridge, who can doubt that the Oxford Movement would have flickered out its little flame unobserved in the Common Room of Oriel? And how different, too, would have been the fate of Newman himself! He was a child of the Romantic Revival, a creature of emotion and of memory, a dreamer whose secret spirit dwelt apart in delectable mountains, an artist whose subtle senses caught, like a shower in the sunshine, the impalpable rainbow of the immaterial world. In other times, under other skies, his days would have been more fortunate. He might have helped to weave the garland of Meleager, or to mix the lapis lazuli of Fra Angelico, or to chase the delicate truth in the shade of an Athenian palaestra, or his hands might have fashioned those ethereal faces that smile in the niches of Chartres. Even in his own age he might, at Cambridge, whose cloisters have ever been consecrated to poetry and common sense, have followed quietly in Gray's footsteps and brought into flower those seeds of inspiration which now lie embedded amid the faded devotion of the *Lyra Apostolica*.

At Oxford, he was doomed. He could not withstand the last enchantment of the Middle Age. It was in vain that he plunged into the pages of Gibbon or communed for long hours with Beethoven over his beloved violin. The air was thick with clerical sanctity, heavy with the odours of tradition and the soft warmth of spiritual authority; his friendship with Hurrell Froude did the rest. All that was weakest in him hurried him onward, and all that was strongest in him too. His curious and vaulting imagination began to construct vast philosophical fabrics out of the writings of ancient monks, and to dally with visions of angelic visitations and the efficacy of the oil of St. Walburga; his emotional nature became absorbed in the partisan passions of a University clique; and his subtle intellect concerned itself more and more exclusively with the dialectical splitting of dogmatical hairs. His future course

was marked out for him all too clearly; and yet by a singular chance the true nature of the man was to emerge triumphant in the end. If Newman had died at the age of sixty, today he would have been already forgotten, save by a few ecclesiastical historians; but he lived to write his *Apologia*, and to reach immortality, neither as a thinker nor as a theologian, but as an artist who has embalmed the poignant history of an intensely human spirit in the magical spices of words.

When Froude succeeded in impregnating Newman with the ideas of Keble, the Oxford Movement began. The original and remarkable characteristic of these three men was that they took the Christian Religion *au pied de la lettre*. This had not been done in England for centuries. When they declared every Sunday that they believed in the Holy Catholic Church, they meant it. When they repeated the Athanasian Creed, they meant it. Even, when they subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles, they meant it—or at least they thought they did. Now such a state of mind was dangerous—more dangerous indeed—than they at first realised. They had started with the innocent assumption that the Christian Religion was contained in the doctrines of the Church of England; but, the more they examined this matter, the more difficult and dubious it became. The Church of England bore everywhere upon it the signs of human imperfection; it was the outcome of revolution and of compromise, of the exigencies of politicians and the caprices of princes, of the prejudices of theologians and the necessities of the State. How had it happened that this piece of patchwork had become the receptacle for the august and infinite mysteries of the Christian Faith? This was the problem with which Newman and his friends found themselves confronted. Other men might, and apparently did, see nothing very strange in such a situation; but other men saw in Christianity itself scarcely more than a convenient and

respectable appendage to existence, by which a sound system of morals was inculcated, and through which one might hope to attain to everlasting bliss.

To Newman and Keble it was otherwise. They saw a transcendent manifestation of Divine power flowing down elaborate and immense through the ages; a consecrated priesthood, stretching back, through the mystic symbol of the laying on of hands, to the very Godhead; a whole universe of spiritual beings brought into communion with the Eternal by means of wafers; a great mass of metaphysical doctrines, at once incomprehensible and of incalculable import, laid down with infinite certitude; they saw the supernatural everywhere and at all times, a living force, floating invisible in angels, inspiring saints, and investing with miraculous properties the commonest material things. No wonder that they found such a spectacle hard to bring into line with the institution which had been evolved from the divorce of Henry VIII, the intrigues of Elizabethan parliaments, and the Revolution of 1688. They did, no doubt, soon satisfy themselves that they had succeeded in this apparently hopeless task; but, the conclusions which they came to in order to do so were decidedly startling.

The Church of England, they declared, was indeed the one true Church, but she had been under an eclipse since the Reformation; in fact, since she had begun to exist. She had, it is true, escaped the corruptions of Rome; but she had become enslaved by the secular power, and degraded by the false doctrines of Protestantism. The Christian Religion was still preserved intact by the English priesthood, but it was preserved, as it were, unconsciously—a priceless deposit, handed down blindly from generation to generation, and subsisting less by the will of man than through the ordinance of God as expressed in the

mysterious virtue of the Sacraments. Christianity, in short, had become entangled in a series of unfortunate circumstances from which it was the plain duty of Newman and his friends to rescue it forthwith. What was curious was that this task had been reserved, in so marked a manner, for them. Some of the divines of the seventeenth century had, perhaps, been vouchsafed glimpses of the truth; but they were glimpses and nothing more. No, the waters of the true Faith had dived underground at the Reformation, and they were waiting for the wand of Newman to strike the rock before they should burst forth once more into the light of day. The whole matter, no doubt, was Providential—what other explanation could there be?

The first step, it was clear, was to purge the Church of her shames and her errors. The Reformers must be exposed; the yoke of the secular power must be thrown off; dogma must be reinstated in its old pre-eminence; and Christians must be reminded of what they had apparently forgotten—the presence of the supernatural in daily life. 'It would be a gain to this country,' Keble observed, 'were it vastly more superstitious, more bigoted, more gloomy, more fierce in its religion, than at present it shows itself to be.' 'The only good I know of Cranmer,' said Hurrell Froude, 'was that he burned well.' Newman preached, and soon the new views began to spread. Among the earliest of the converts was Dr. Pusey, a man of wealth and learning, a professor, a canon of Christ Church, who had, it was rumoured, been to Germany. Then the Tracts for the Times were started under Newman's editorship, and the Movement was launched upon the world.

The Tracts were written 'with the hope of rousing members of our Church to comprehend her alarming position... as a man might give notice of a fire or inundation, to startle all who heard him'. They may be said to have succeeded in their objective, for the sensation which they caused among

clergymen throughout the country was extreme. They dealt with a great variety of questions, but the underlying intention of all of them was to attack the accepted doctrines and practices of the Church of England. Dr. Pusey wrote learnedly on Baptismal Regeneration; he also wrote on Fasting. His treatment of the latter subject met with considerable disapproval, which surprised the Doctor. 'I was not prepared,' he said, 'for people questioning, even in the abstract, the duty of fasting; I thought serious-minded persons at least supposed they practised fasting in some way or other. I assumed the duty to be acknowledged and thought it only undervalued.' We live and learn, even though we have been to Germany.

Other tracts discussed the Holy Catholic Church, the Clergy, and the Liturgy. One treated of the question 'whether a clergyman of the Church of England be now bound to have morning and evening prayers daily in his parish church?' Another pointed out the 'Indications of a superintending Providence in the preservation of the Prayer-book and in the changes which it has undergone'. Another consisted of a collection of 'Advent Sermons on Antichrist'. Keble wrote a long and elaborate tract 'On the Mysticism attributed to the Early Fathers of the Church', in which he expressed his opinions upon a large number of curious matters.

'According to men's usual way of talking,' he wrote, 'it would be called an accidental circumstance that there were five loaves, not more nor less, in the store of Our Lord and His disciples wherewith to provide the miraculous feast. But the ancient interpreters treat it as designed and providential, in this surely not erring: and their conjecture is that it represents the sacrifice of the whole world of sense, and especially of the Old Dispensation, which, being outward and visible, might be called the dispensation of the senses, to the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to be a pledge

and means of communion with Him according to the terms of the new or evangelical law.

They arrived at this idea by considering the number five, the number of the senses, as the mystical opponent of the visible and sensible universe—*ta aistheta*, as distinguished from *ta noita*. Origen lays down the rule in express terms. "The number five," he says, "frequently, nay almost always, is taken for the five senses." In another passage, Keble deals with an even more recondite question. He quotes the teaching of St. Barnabas that 'Abraham, who first gave men circumcision, did thereby perform a spiritual and typical action, looking forward to the Son'. St. Barnabas's argument is as follows: Abraham circumcised of his house men to the number of 318. Why 318? Observe first the 18, then the 300. Of the two letters which stand for 18, 10 is represented by I, 8 by H. 'Thou hast here,' says St. Barnabas, 'the word of Jesus.' As for the 300, 'the Cross is represented by Tau, and the letter Tau represents that number'.

Unfortunately, however, St. Barnabas's premise was of doubtful validity, as the Rev. Mr. Maitland pointed out, in a pamphlet impugning the conclusions of the Tract. 'The simple fact is,' he wrote, 'that when Abraham pursued Chedorlaomer "he armed his trained servants, BORN IN HIS OWN HOUSE, three hundred and eighteen". When, more than thirteen (according to the common chronology, fifteen) years after, he circumcised "all the men of his house, BORN IN THE HOUSE, AND BOUGHT WITH MONEY OF THE STRANGER", and, in fact, every male who was as much as eight days old, we are not told what the number amounted to. Shall we suppose (just for the sake of the interpretation) that Abraham's family had so dwindled in the interval as that now all the males of his household, trained men,

slaves, and children, equalled only and exactly the number of his warriors fifteen years before?'

The question seems difficult to answer, but Keble had, as a matter of fact, forestalled the argument in the following passage, which had apparently escaped the notice of the Rev. Mr. Maitland:

'Now whether the facts were really so or not (if it were, it was surely by special providence), that Abraham's household at the time of the circumcision was exactly the same number as before; still the argument of St. Barnabas will stand. As thus: circumcision had from the beginning, a reference to our SAVIOUR, as in other respects, so in this; that the mystical number, which is the cipher of Jesus crucified, was the number of the first circumcised household in the strength of which Abraham prevailed against the powers of the world. So St. Clement of Alexandria, as cited by Fell.'

And Keble supports his contention through ten pages of close print, with references to Aristeas, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and Dr. Whitby.

Writings of this kind could not fail in their effect. Pious youths in Oxford were carried away by them, and began to flock around the standard of Newman. Newman himself became a party chief—encouraging, organising, persuading. His long black figure, swiftly passing through the streets, was pointed at with awe; crowds flocked to his sermons; his words were repeated from mouth to mouth; 'Credo in Newmannum' became a common catchword. Jokes were made about the Church of England, and practices, unknown for centuries, began to be revived. Young men fasted and did penance, recited the hours of the Roman Breviary, and confessed their sins to Dr. Pusey. Nor was the movement

confined to Oxford; it spread in widening circles through the parishes of England; the dormant devotion of the country was suddenly aroused. The new strange notion of taking Christianity literally was delightful to earnest minds; but it was also alarming. Really to mean every word you said, when you repeated the Athanasian Creed! How wonderful! And what enticing and mysterious vistas burst upon the view! But then, those vistas, where were they leading? Supposing—oh heavens!—supposing after all they were to lead to—!

III

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IN due course, the Tracts made their appearance at the remote rectory in Sussex. Manning was some years younger than Newman, and the two men had only met occasionally at the University; but now, through common friends, a closer relationship began to grow up between them. It was only to be expected that Newman should be anxious to enroll the rising young Rector among his followers; and, on Manning's side, there were many causes which impelled him to accept the overtures from Oxford.

He was a man of a serious and vigorous temperament, to whom it was inevitable that the bold high principles of the Movement should strongly appeal. There was also an element in his mind that element which had terrified him in his childhood with Apocalyptic visions, and urged him in his youth to Bible readings after breakfast—which now brought him under the spell of the Oxford theories of sacramental mysticism. And besides, the Movement offered another attraction: it imputed an extraordinary, transcendent merit

to the profession which Manning himself pursued. The cleric was not as his lay brethren; he was a creature apart, chosen by Divine will and sanctified by Divine mysteries. It was a relief to find, when one had supposed that one was nothing but a clergyman, that one might, after all, be something else—one might be a priest.

Accordingly, Manning shook off his early Evangelical convictions, started an active correspondence with Newman, and was soon working for the new cause. He collected quotations, and began to translate the works of Optatus for Dr. Pusey. He wrote an article on Justin for the British Critic, "Newman's Magazine". He published a sermon on Faith, with notes and appendices, which was condemned by an evangelical bishop, and fiercely attacked by no less a person than the celebrated Mr. Bowdler. 'The sermon,' said Mr. Bowdler, in a book which he devoted to the subject, 'was bad enough, but the appendix was abominable.' At the same time he was busy asserting the independence of the Church of England, opposing secular education, and bringing out pamphlets against the Ecclesiastical Commission, which had been appointed by Parliament to report on Church Property. Then we find him in the role of a spiritual director of souls. Ladies met him by stealth in his church, and made their confessions. Over one case—that of a lady, who found herself drifting towards Rome—he consulted Newman. Newman advised him to 'enlarge upon the doctrine of I Cor. vii';

'also, I think you must press on her the prospect of benefiting the poor Church, through which she has her baptism, by stopping in it. Does she not care for the souls of all around her, steeped and stifled in Protestantism? How will she best care for them by indulging her own feelings in the communion of Rome, or in denying herself, and staying in sackcloth and ashes to do them good?'

Whether these arguments were successful does not appear.

For several years after his wife's death, Manning was occupied with these new activities, while his relations with Newman developed into what was apparently a warm friendship. 'And now vive valeque, my dear Manning', we find Newman writing in a letter dated 'in festo S. Car. 1838', 'as wishes and prays yours affectionately, John H. Newman'. But, as time went on, the situation became more complicated. Tractarianism began to arouse the hostility, not only of the evangelical, but of the moderate churchmen, who could not help perceiving in the ever-deepening, 'catholicism' of the Oxford party, the dread approaches of Rome. The "Record" newspaper an influential Evangelical journal—took up the matter and sniffed Popery in every direction; it spoke of certain clergymen as 'tainted'; and after that, preferment seemed to pass those clergymen by. The fact that Manning found it wise to conduct his confessional ministrations in secret was in itself highly significant. It was necessary to be careful, and Manning was very careful indeed. The neighbouring Archdeacon, Mr. Hare, was a low churchman; Manning made friends with him, as warmly, it seemed, as he had made friends with Newman. He corresponded with him, asked his advice about the books he should read, and discussed questions of Theology—'As to Gal. vi 15, we cannot differ... With a man who reads and reasons I can have no controversy; and you do both.' Archdeacon Hare was pleased, but soon a rumour reached him, which was, to say the least of it, upsetting. Manning had been removing the high pews from a church in Brighton, and putting in open benches in their place. Everyone knew what that meant; everyone knew that a high pew was one of the bulwarks of Protestantism, and that an open bench had upon it the taint of Rome. But Manning hastened to explain:

'My dear friend,' he wrote, 'I did not exchange pews for open benches, but got the pews (the same in number) moved from the nave of the church to the walls of the side aisles, so that the whole church has a regular arrangement of open benches, which (irregularly) existed before... I am not today quite well, so farewell, with much regard—Yours ever, H. E. M.'

Archdeacon Hare was reassured.

It was important that he should be, for the Archdeacon of Chichester was growing very old, and Hare's influence might be exceedingly useful when a vacancy occurred. So, indeed, it fell out. A new bishop, Dr. Shuttleworth, was appointed to the See, and the old Archdeacon took the opportunity of retiring. Manning was obviously marked out as his successor, but the new bishop happened to be a low churchman, an aggressive low churchman, who went so far as to parody the Tractarian fashion of using Saints' days for the dating of letters by writing 'The Palace, washing-day', at the beginning of his. And—what was equally serious—his views were shared by Mrs. Shuttleworth, who had already decided that the pushing young Rector was 'tainted'. But at the critical moment Archdeacon Hare came to the rescue; he persuaded the Bishop that Manning was safe; and the appointment was accordingly made—behind Mrs. Shuttleworth's back. She was furious, but it was too late; Manning was an Archdeacon. All the lady could do, to indicate her disapprobation, was to put a copy of Mr. Bowdler's book in a conspicuous position on the drawing-room table, when he came to pay his respects at the Palace.

Among the letters of congratulation which Manning received, was one from Mr. Gladstone, with whom he had

remained on terms of close friendship since their days together at Oxford.

'I rejoice,' Mr. Gladstone wrote, 'on your account personally; but more for the sake of the Church. All my brothers-in-law are here and scarcely less delighted than I am. With great glee am I about to write your new address; but, the occasion really calls for higher sentiments; and sure am I that you are one of the men to whom it is specially given to develop the solution of that great problem—how all our minor distractions are to be either abandoned, absorbed, or harmonised through the might of the great principle of communion in the body of Christ.'

Manning was an Archdeacon; but he was not yet out of the woods. His relations with the Tractarians had leaked out, and the Record was beginning to be suspicious. If Mrs. Shuttleworth's opinion of him were to become general, it would certainly be a grave matter. Nobody could wish to live and die a mere Archdeacon. And then, at that very moment, an event occurred which made it imperative to take a definite step, one way or the other. That event was the publication of Tract No. 90.

For some time it had been obvious to every impartial onlooker that Newman was slipping down an inclined plane at the bottom of which lay one thing, and one thing only—the Roman Catholic Church. What was surprising was the length of time which he was taking to reach the inevitable destination. Years passed before he came to realise that his grandiose edifice of a Church Universal would crumble to pieces if one of its foundation stones was to be an amatory intrigue of Henry VIII. But, at last he began to see that terrible monarch glowering at him wherever he turned his eyes. First he tried to exorcise the spectre with the rolling periods of the Caroline divines; but it only strutted the more

truculently. Then in despair he plunged into the writings of the early Fathers, and sought to discover some way out of his difficulties in the complicated labyrinth of ecclesiastical history. After months spent in the study of the Monophysite heresy, the alarming conclusion began to force itself upon him that the Church of England was perhaps in schism. Eventually he read an article by a Roman Catholic on St. Augustine and the Donatists, which seemed to put the matter beyond doubt. St. Augustine, in the fifth century, had pointed out that the Donatists were heretics because the Bishop of Rome had said so. The argument was crushing; it rang in Newman's ears for days and nights; and, though he continued to linger on in agony for six years more, he never could discover any reply to it. All he could hope to do was to persuade himself and anyone else who liked to listen to him that the holding of Anglican orders was not inconsistent with a belief in the whole cycle of Roman doctrine as laid down at the Council of Trent. In this way he supposed that he could at once avoid the deadly sin of heresy and conscientiously remain a clergyman in the Church of England; and with this end in view, he composed Tract No. 90.

The object of the Tract was to prove that there was nothing in the Thirty-nine Articles incompatible with the creed of the Roman Church. Newman pointed out, for instance, that it was generally supposed that the Articles condemned the doctrine of Purgatory; but they did not; they merely condemned the Romish doctrine of Purgatory—and Romish, clearly, was not the same thing as Roman. Hence it followed that believers in the Roman doctrine of Purgatory might subscribe the Articles with a good conscience. Similarly, the Articles condemned 'the sacrifices of masses', but they did not condemn 'the sacrifice of the Mass'. Thus, the Mass might be lawfully celebrated in English Churches. Newman took the trouble to examine the Articles in detail from this

point of view, and the conclusion he came to in every case supported his contention in a singular manner.

The Tract produced an immense sensation, for it seemed to be a deadly and treacherous blow aimed at the very heart of the Church of England. Deadly it certainly was, but it was not so treacherous as it appeared at first sight. The members of the English Church had ingenuously imagined up to that moment that it was possible to contain, in a frame of words, the subtle essence of their complicated doctrinal system, involving the mysteries of the Eternal and the Infinite on the one hand, and the elaborate adjustments of temporal government on the other. They did not understand that verbal definitions in such a case will only perform their functions so long as there is no dispute about the matters which they are intended to define: that is to say, so long as there is no need for them. For generations this had been the case with the Thirty-nine Articles. Their drift was clear enough; and nobody bothered over their exact meaning. But directly someone found it important to give them a new and untraditional interpretation, it appeared that they were a mass of ambiguity, and might be twisted into meaning very nearly anything that anybody liked. Steady-going churchmen were appalled and outraged when they saw Newman, in Tract No. 90, performing this operation. But, after all, he was only taking the Church of England at its word. And indeed, since Newman showed the way, the operation has become so exceedingly common that the most steady-going churchman hardly raises an eyebrow at it now.

At the time, however, Newman's treatment of the Articles seemed to display not only a perverted supersubtlety of intellect, but a temper of mind that was fundamentally dishonest. It was then that he first began to be assailed by those charges of untruthfulness which reached their

culmination more than twenty years later in the celebrated controversy with Charles Kingsley, which led to the writing of the Apologia. The controversy was not a very fruitful one, chiefly because Kingsley could no more understand the nature of Newman's intelligence than a subaltern in a line regiment can understand a Brahmin of Benares. Kingsley was a stout Protestant, whose hatred of Popery was, at bottom, simply ethical—an honest, instinctive horror of the practices of priestcraft and the habits of superstition; and it was only natural that he should see in those innumerable delicate distinctions which Newman was perpetually drawing, and which he himself had not only never thought of, but could not even grasp, simply another manifestation of the inherent falsehood of Rome. But, in reality, no one, in one sense of the word, was more truthful than Newman. The idea of deceit would have been abhorrent to him; and indeed it was owing to his very desire to explain what he had in his mind exactly and completely, with all the refinements of which his subtle brain was capable, that persons such as Kingsley were puzzled into thinking him dishonest. Unfortunately, however, the possibilities of truth and falsehood depend upon other things besides sincerity. A man may be of a scrupulous and impeccable honesty, and yet his respect for the truth—it cannot be denied—may be insufficient. He may be, like the lunatic, the lover, and the poet, 'of imagination all compact'; he may be blessed, or cursed, with one of those 'seething brains', one of those 'shaping fanatasies' that 'apprehend more than cool reason ever comprehends'; he may be by nature incapable of sifting evidence, or by predilection simply indisposed to do so. 'When we were there,' wrote Newman in a letter to a friend after his conversion, describing a visit to Naples, and the miraculous circumstances connected with the liquefaction of St. Januarius's blood,

'the feast of St. Gennaro was coming on, and the Jesuits were eager for us to stop—they have the utmost confidence in the miracle—and were the more eager because many Catholics, till they have seen it, doubt it. Our father director here tells us that before he went to Naples he did not believe it. That is, they have vague ideas of natural means, exaggeration, etc., not of course imputing fraud. They say conversions often take place in consequence. It is exposed for the Octave, and the miracle continues—it is not simple liquefaction, but sometimes it swells, sometimes boils, sometimes melts—no one can tell what is going to take place. They say it is quite overcoming—and people cannot help crying to see it. I understand that Sir H. Davy attended everyday, and it was this extreme variety of the phenomenon which convinced him that nothing physical would account for it. Yet there is this remarkable fact that liquefactions of blood are common at Naples—and, unless it is irreverent to the Great Author of Miracles to be obstinate in the inquiry, the question certainly rises whether there is something in the air. (Mind, I don't believe there is—and, speaking humbly, and without having seen it, think it a true miracle—but I am arguing.) We saw the blood of St. Patrizia, half liquid; i.e. liquefying, on her feast day. St. John Baptist's blood sometimes liquefies on the 29th of August, and did when we were at Naples, but we had not time to go to the church. We saw the liquid blood of an Oratorian Father; a good man, but not a saint, who died two centuries ago, I think; and we saw the liquid blood of Da Ponte, the great and holy Jesuit, who, I suppose, was almost a saint. But these instances do not account for liquefaction on certain days, if this is the case. But the most strange phenomenon is what happens at Ravello, a village or town above Amalfi. There is the blood of St. Pantaleon. It is in a vessel amid the stonework of the Altar—it is not touched but on his feast in June it liquefies. And more, there is an excommunication against those who bring portions of the True Cross into the

Church. Why? Because the blood liquefies, whenever it is brought. A person I know, not knowing the prohibition, brought in a portion, and the Priest suddenly said, who showed the blood, "Who has got the Holy Cross about him?" I tell you what was told me by a grave and religious man. It is a curious coincidence that in telling this to our Father Director here, he said, "Why, we have a portion of St. Pantaleon's blood at the Chiesa Nuova, and it is always liquid."

After leaving Naples, Newman visited Loreto, and inspected the house of the Holy Family, which, as is known to the faithful, was transported thither, in three hops, from Palestine.

'I went to Loreto,' he wrote, 'with a simple faith, believing what I still more believed when I saw it. I have no doubt now. If you ask me why I believe it, it is because everyone believes it at Rome; cautious as they are and sceptical about some other things. I have no antecedent difficulty in the matter. He who floated the Ark on the surges of a world-wide sea, and enclosed in it all living things, who has hidden the terrestrial paradise, who said that faith might move mountains, who sustained thousands for forty years in a sterile wilderness, who transported Elias and keeps him hidden till the end, could do this wonder also.'

Here, whatever else there may be, there is certainly no trace of a desire to deceive. Could a state of mind, in fact, be revealed with more absolute transparency?

When Newman was a child he 'wished that he could believe the Arabian Nights were true'. When he came to be a man, his wish seems to have been granted.