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REVIEW SECTION:

I.—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

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THE place of Cardinal Newman among recent masters in the eloquence of the pulpit is peculiar—is, in fact, unique. In him we encounter a man who, besides being a preacher of illustrious name, presumptively claims, that is, claims by wide consent of imposing opinion, the rank of a permanent classic—a permanent classic of the highest order—in English literature. This state of the case with the present subject will justify, if it does not demand, a correspondingly differed course of critical discussion.

John Henry Newman, during one prolonged stadium of his career, suffered under an undeserved adversity of public judgment as to his character and conduct. But this wrong against him was amply righted at length, perhaps more, even, than amply righted; and, in the total retrospect of his life, he must be pronounced a select and singular favorite of fame and of fortune. He died recently in an odor of sanctity that filled the English-speaking world.

For a quarter of a century before his death, it had been the habit and tradition of enlightened critical essayists and of the higher periodical press to praise his style as the final consummation of everything noble and beautiful in expression that contemporary English literature had to show; and, when at last his death made it seem necessary that appreciation should pass into eulogy, then there were not wanting those who would have it that John Henry Newman's prose was, upon the whole, the very best writing, of whatever time, in the English language.

In the conscious presence of such a universal fondness, grown a fashion, for eulogizing, to criticise calmly, disinterestedly, without prepossession on the one hand, and, on the other hand, equally without opposition unjustly exaggerated to make the balance just, will certainly be a little difficult; but it is that, precisely that, which must here be attempted. For it is of the very idea of really profitable criticism that it shall be, as far as possible, absolutely uninfluenced,

M18808

even those Thessalonians who had crept out of the mire of heathenism, and says, "I was homesick for you." He compares himself to a nurse or mother. What a change in his view of life! Saul is Paul.

How do you view the cross? What has been your experience? Dr. Ludlow, of Brooklyn, was once called to minister to a sick and dying sailor, who had led a coarse, vicious life. It was not until he had made several visits to the sufferer that he succeeded in fixing his thought on religion. The longshoreman had even refused to give his name. He said that none should know it. After such a life he would have his name perish with him. "But," said our friend to him, "did you never hear how sins are forgiven, how even the scarlet and crimson become as snow or wool?" He listened now with eagerness. Taking advantage of the nautical experience of the sailor, Dr. Ludlow asked him if he by sailing could get from the East to the West, and told him that as far as East is from West, so far God removes our transgressions from us. His eyes grew lustrous, and he said, "Is it possible? Can God bury our sins?" Then he was told of the new, pure life, how one's soul can become clean, as Naaman's leprous skin became fair and clean again; how one who believes in Jesus gets a new name. "Show it to me!" the dying man exclaimed. Then the cross was lifted up before him and Christ's love unfolded. He saw and believed. He passed away in joyful trust. Is this your hope? Has the glory of the cross been revealed to you, and are all things naught compared with its unequalled worth?

CHRIST AS THE RAIN.

(On a rainy Sunday.)

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He shall come to us as the rain.—Hos.
vi: 3.

THERE are many beautiful meta-

phors in Scripture, illustrative of the coming of Christ in spiritual power into the heart, and in revival power into the church. None of them is more suggestive than this one, and none certainly more appropriate for a day like this, when the Lord is "watering the hills from his chambers," and enriching all nature with "the river of God which is full of water."

I. Christ's coming to the heart, and the rain's coming to the flower are alike in this, that each is by the sovereign ordering of God. He "visits the earth, and waters it." He sends the rain as well as the wind out of His chambers. Modern science has attained wonderful knowledge of the laws that govern the movements of the clouds. It predicts with signal accuracy the approach of rainfall or drought. Far beyond all that was conceived of in Job's day can it "number the clouds in wisdom"; but it is as powerless now as then to "stay the bottles of heaven, when the dust groweth into hardness, and the clouds cleave fast together." We are as dependent upon God now as then for the early and the latter rain, for the showers that water and refresh the earth. Equally dependent are we for those influences of the Holy Spirit by which Christ in all His preciousness and graciousness is communicated to the soul.

II. The coming in each case affords scope for the agency and efficacy of prayer. Whilst God is sovereign in His gifts, He is not arbitrary in their bestowment either in nature or in grace. Materialists and positivists may cavil at the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer in the realm of physical nature. Metaphysicians may seek to entangle us with questions as to the possibility of change in the purposes of God. Physicists may discourse to us of the disorder which would spring from interruptions to the uniformity of

operation of nature's laws. We listen to them patiently and then turn to the indisputable facts in the case, the innumerable, and well-attested instances in which God has heard the prayers of His people for rain and has answered with refreshing showers. And so the coming of Christ with spiritual power into the heart and into the church may be secured by earnest and importunate prayer. In this case there is no limitation to the efficacy of prayer. It may not be best in every case to send rain even when earnest prayer for it ascends, but that the Spirit shall come in answer to prayer, filling the heart with peace and gladness, is always in accordance with the will of God. If there is spiritual drought, the remedy can always be found in prayer.

III. The coming of Christ in refreshing presence and power, like the coming of the rain in seasons of protracted drought, is often preceded by lightning and tempest. Dark clouds of adversity, fierce winds of temptation, heavy storms of spiritual trouble disturb and terrify the soul. Faith is sorely tried, hope is well-nigh extinguished in these preparatory stages in the world by which the Spirit is bringing Christ home to the soul. But when the premonitory thunders have expended their force, when the rough winds, with their clouds of blinding dust have blown by, how gently and tenderly does the hand of infinite love let down the crystal drops, each to its appropriate place, bringing freshness and verdure to every leaf and twig and flower. Even so, when the storms of spiritual trial have encompassed the soul, and the rough hot winds of temptation have beaten upon it, does Christ by His blessed spirit, with still, small voice and gentlest, most unobtrusive ministry, come to every parched leaf and drooping flower of the Christian graces, bringing refreshment, re-

vival and abundance of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

IV. The coming of Christ is like that of the rain in its benign and blessed results. What a difference in midsummer the whole face of nature wears after the coming of the refreshing shower! What a cleansing and purifying agency is this baptism from the cloud with which God washes away the dust and the grime from the leaves of the trees, the spears of the grass and the petals of the flowers! The landscape that was positively repulsive before because of the dust that with its grimy coating covered everything with impurity, is now resplendent with a chaste beauty that tells of its fresh baptism at the hand of God. It is like a new creation. We seem to have been transported into a new world, and the songs of the birds as they warble forth their unconscious homage, are like the praises of the morning stars, singing together over this fresh manifestation of creative power and love.

Blessed is the man whose soul has been brought under this gracious baptism of the Spirit, to whom Christ has thus come as the rain! The roots of his religious life are fed. The fountains of spiritual energy in his soul are replenished. The leaves of his Christian profession are cleansed and made verdant. The flowers of all saintly charity are made to blossom, and the fruits of all holy endeavor to ripen. The aroma of a life that is hid with Christ in God comes out to gladden and bless the world. Happy is the church visited with such "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord!" Its "pastures are clothed with flocks." Its "valleys are covered over with corn." Its converts "spring up as willows by the water-courses." Even the "parched ground" of such a church becomes "a pool," and its "thirsty land, springs of water," and "in the habi-

tation of dragons where each lay" comes up "grass with reeds and rushes." May He who holds the clouds in His hand and guides them at His will, make this rainy Sabbath day one of special privilege and power, that the preached word may "drop as the rain" and "distil as the dew," that every waiting heart may be revived, and every drooping spirit cheered, and that to all who have ventured through the storm to the sanctuary to-day, Christ in the plenitude of His power and His love may "come as the rain!"

THE RENEWAL OF ALL THINGS.

BY REV. JAMES C. FERNALD [BAPTIST], PLAINFIELD, N. J.

And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.

—Rev. xxi: 5.

1. THE need of a complete moral renewal. All visions of a political or economic millennium wreck themselves upon the obstinate fact of human depravity. With this, legislators, philosophers and moralists have been found powerless to deal. The Gospel alone builds its hope upon a complete moral renewal of humanity, making "all things new"—chief among them the heart of man.

2. An Adequate Power. "He that sitteth on the throne." At this point, too, the best human systems of morality fail. But He who created the human soul can renew it. The hardest heart can be broken, the worst disposition changed when Omnipotence rises up to work. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus, or of the three thousand in a day, come with infinite ease within the sweep of His power.

3. The Wonder of Regeneration. For this stupendous thing we ask whenever we pray for the conversion of a soul—that the omnipotent Jehovah will reach down from the heaven of heavens and mould all the powers and activities of that

soul to His own divine image—in that soul "make all things new."

4. The secret of "holding out." If conversion is not a varnish put on the outside, not a mere "good resolution" of man, but a renewal of "all things"—purposes, desires, ambitions, loves and hates, by divine power, that renewed soul will "walk in newness of life."

5. The great need of the church—a regenerate membership. No more proud, covetous, envious, hot-tempered, unscrupulous church members excusing these inconsistencies as "natural," but in the glory of the renewed nature, "growing up into Him in all things who is the head, even Christ." Such a church is the ideal of Christianity and the hope of the world.

6. The ultimate renewal of all outward things—nations, nature—"the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ"—"the creation also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God"—"new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP.

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Occupy till I come.—Luke 19: 13.

A GOOD motto for the New Year. "Occupy" means trade with." points to the laws of commerce. The parable is a parallel. Pursue the subject along the lines furnished by the laws of trade.

I. Some capital is needed.

1. We have our natural endowments of body and soul.

2. Added to the natural is the "pound" the Master gives. It is the spiritual endowment.

II. Only the authorized money can be used in commerce. Revealed Truth is the coin. All we use must bear image and superscription of the Great King. All else (tradi-