# **Classic Poetry Series**

# John Henry Newman, Cardinal

- poems -

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## A Thanksgiving

Lord, in this dust Thy sovereign voice First quicken'd love divine; I am all Thine,—Thy care and choice, My very praise is Thine.

I praise Thee, while Thy providence In childhood frail I trace, For blessings given, ere dawning sense Could seek or scan Thy grace;

Blessings in boyhood's marvelling hour, Bright dreams, and fancyings strange; Blessings, when reason's awful power Gave thought a bolder range; {46}

Blessings of friends, which to my door Unask'd, unhoped, have come; And, choicer still, a countless store Of eager smiles at home.

Yet, Lord, in memory's fondest place I shrine those seasons sad, When, looking up, I saw Thy face In kind austereness clad.

I would not miss one sigh or tear, Heart-pang, or throbbing brow; Sweet was the chastisement severe, And sweet its memory now.

Yes! let the fragrant scars abide, Love-tokens in Thy stead, Faint shadows of the spear-pierced side And thorn-encompass'd head.

And such Thy tender force be still,
When self would swerve or stray,
Shaping to truth the froward will
Along Thy narrow way. {47}

Deny me wealth; far, far remove
The lure of power or name;
Hope thrives in straits, in weakness love,
And faith in this world's shame.

#### A Voice from afar

Weep not for me;—
Be blithe as wont, nor tinge with gloom
The stream of love that circles home,
Light hearts and free!
Joy in the gifts Heaven's bounty lends;
Nor miss my face, dear friends!

I still am near;—
Watching the smiles I prized on earth,
Your converse mild, your blameless mirth;
Now too I hear
Of whisper'd sounds the tale complete,
Low prayers, and musings sweet. {41}

A sea before
The Throne is spread;—its pure still glass
Pictures all earth-scenes as they pass.
We, on its shore,
Share, in the bosom of our rest,
God's knowledge, and are blest.

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#### **Behind the Veil**

BANISH'D the House of sacred rest, Amid a thoughtless throng, At length I heard its creed confess'd, And knelt the saints among.

Artless his strain and unadorn'd,
Who spoke Christ's message there;
But what at home I might have scorn'd,
Now charm'd my famish'd ear.

Lord, grant me this abiding grace, Thy Word and sons to know; To pierce the veil on Moses' face, Although his speech be slow.

#### **Christmas without Christ**

HOW can I keep my Christmas feast In its due festive show, Reft of the sight of the High Priest From whom its glories flow?

I hear the tuneful bells around, The blessèd towers I see; A stranger on a foreign ground, They peal a fast for me.

O Britons! now so brave and high, How will ye weep the day When Christ in judgment passes by, And calls the Bride away!

Your Christmas then will lose its mirth, Your Easter lose its bloom: Abroad, a scene of strife and dearth; Within, a cheerless home!

#### **Consolations in Bereavement**

DEATH was full urgent with thee, Sister dear,

And startling in his speed; —

Brief pain, then languor till thy end came near— Such was the path decreed,

The hurried road

To lead thy soul from earth to thine own God's abode.

Death wrought with thee, sweet maid, impatiently:—

Yet merciful the haste

That baffles sickness;—dearest, thou didst die, Thou wast not made to taste Death's bitterness,

Decline's slow-wasting charm, or fever's fierce distress.

Death came unheralded:—but it was well;

For so thy Saviour bore

Kind witness, thou wast meet at once to dwell

On His eternal shore;

All warning spared,

For none He gives where hearts are for prompt change prepared.

Death wrought in mystery; both complaint and cure To human skill unknown:—

God put aside all means, to make us sure

It was His deed alone;

Lest we should lay

Reproach on our poor selves, that thou wast caught away.

Death urged as scant of time:—lest, Sister dear,

We many a lingering day

Had sicken'd with alternate hope and fear,

The ague of delay;

Watching each spark

Of promise quench'd in turn, till all our sky was dark.

Death came and went:—that so thy image might

Our yearning hearts possess,

Associate with all pleasant thoughts and bright, With youth and loveliness;

Sorrow can claim,

Mary, nor lot nor part in thy soft soothing name.

Joy of sad hearts, and light of downcast eyes!

Dearest thou art enshrined

In all thy fragrance in our memories;

For we must ever find

Bare thought of thee

	Freshen this weary life, while weary life shall be.
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#### **Dreams**

OH! miserable power
To dreams allow'd, to raise the guilty past,
And back awhile the illumined spirit to cast
On its youth's twilight hour;
In mockery guiling it to act again
The revel or the scoff in Satan's frantic train!

Nay, hush thee, angry heart!
An Angel's grief ill fits a penitent;
Welcome the thorn—it is divinely sent,
And with its wholesome smart
Shall pierce thee in thy virtue's palmy home,
And warn thee what thou art, and whence thy
wealth has come.

## **England**

Type of the West, and glorying in the name More than in Faith's pure fame!
Oh. trust not crafty fort nor rock renowned Earned upon hostile ground;
Wielding Trade's master-keys, at thy proud will To lock or loose its waters, England! trust not still.

Dread thine own power! Since haughty Babel's prime, High towers have been man's crime. Since her hoar age, when the huge moat lay bare, Strongholds have been man's snare. Thy nest is in the crags; ah, refuge frail! Mad counsel in its hour, or traitors, will prevail.

He who scanned Sodom for His righteous men Still spares thee for thy ten; But, should vain tongues the Bride of Heaven defy, He will not pass thee by; For, as earth's kings welcome their spotless guest, So gives He them by turn, to suffer or be blest.

## **Hymn to Lauds Sunday**

FRAMER of the earth and sky, Ruler of the day and night, With a glad variety, Tempering all, and making light;

Gleams upon our dark path flinging, Cutting short each night begun, Hark! for chanticleer is singing, Hark! he chides the lingering sun.

And the morning star replies, And lets loose the imprison'd day; And the godless bandit flies From his haunt and from his prey.

Shrill it sounds, the storm relenting Soothes the weary seaman's ears; Once it wrought a great repenting, In that flood of Peter's tears.

Rouse we; let the blithesome cry Of that bird our hearts awaken; Chide the slumberers as they lie, And arrest the sin-o'ertaken.

Hope and health are in his strain, To the fearful and the ailing; Murder sheathes his blade profane, Faith revives when faith was failing.

Jesu, Master! when we sin, Turn on us Thy healing face; It will melt the offence within Into penitential grace:

Beam on our bewilder'd mind, Till its dreamy shadows flee; Stones cry out where Thou hast shined, Jesu! musical with Thee.

To the Father and the Son, And the Spirit, who in Heaven Ever witness, Three and One, Praise on Earth be ever given.

## Hymn to Matins—Sunday

TODAY the Blessed Three in One Began the earth and skies; Today a Conqueror, God the Son, Did from the grave arise; We too will wake, and, in despite Of sloth and languor, all unite, As Psalmists bid, through the dim night, Waiting with wistful eyes.

So may He hear, and heed each vow
And prayer to Him addrest;
And grant an instant cleansing now,
A future glorious rest.
So may He plentifully shower,
On all who hymn His love and power,
In this most still and sacred hour,
His sweetest gifts and best.

Father of purity and light!
Thy presence if we win,
'Twill shield us from the deeds of night,
The burning darts of sin;
Lest aught defiled or dissolute
Relax our bodies or imbrute,
And fires eternal be the fruit
Of fire now lit within.

Fix in our hearts, Redeemer dear,
The ever-gushing spring
Of grace to cleanse, of life to cheer
Souls sick and sorrowing.
Thee, bounteous Father, we entreat,
And Only Son, awful and sweet,
And life-creating Paraclete,
The everlasting King.

# The Elements (A Tragic Chorus.)

Man is permitted much
 To scan and learn
 In Nature's frame;
 Till he well-nigh can tame
 Brute mischiefs and can touch
 Invisible things, and turn
All warring ills to purposes of good.
 Thus, as a god below,
 He can control,
And harmonize, what seems amiss to flow
 As sever'd from the whole
 And dimly understood.

But o'er the elements
One Hand alone,
One Hand has sway.
What influence day by day
In straiter belt prevents
The impious Ocean, thrown
Alternate o'er the ever-sounding shore?
Or who has eye to trace
How the Plague came?
Forerun the doublings of the Tempest's race?
Or the Air's weight and flame
On a set scale explore?

Thus God has will'd
That man, when fully skill'd,
Still gropes in twilight dim;
Encompass'd all his hours
By fearfullest powers
Inflexible to him.
That so he may discern
His feebleness.
And e'en for earth's success
To him in wisdom turn,
Who holds for us the keys of either home,
Earth and the world to come.

#### The Gift of Perseverance

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ONCE, as I brooded o'er my guilty state,
 A fever seized me, duties to devise,
 To buy me interest in my Saviour's eyes;
Not that His love I would extenuate,
But scourge and penance, masterful self-hate,
 Or gift of cost, served by an artifice
 To quell my restless thoughts and envious sighs
And doubts, which fain heaven's peace would antedate.
Thus as I tossed, He said:—"E'en holiest deeds
Shroud not the soul from God, nor soothe its needs;
Deny thee thine own fears, and wait the end!"
Stern lesson! Let me con it day by day,
And learn to kneel before the Omniscient Ray,
Nor shrink, when Truth's avenging shafts descend!

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#### The Pillar of the Cloud

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on! The night is dark, and I am far from home --Lead Thou me on! Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see The distant scene, -- one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou Should'st lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path; but now Lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears, Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still Will lead me on, O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till The night is gone; And with the morn those angel faces smile Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

# The Pillar of the Cloud (Lead, Kindly Light)

1 2 3 4 5 6	Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on! The night is dark, and I am far from home Lead Thou me on! Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see The distant scene, one step enough for me.
7 8 9 10 11 12	I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou Should'st lead me on. I loved to choose and see my path; but now Lead Thou me on! I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears, Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.
13 14 15 16 17 18	So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still Will lead me on, O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till The night is gone; And with the morn those angel faces smile Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

## The Sign of the Cross

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WHENE'ER across this sinful flesh of mine
I draw the Holy Sign,
WHENE'ER across this sinful flesh of mine
I draw the Holy Sign,
All good thoughts stir within me, and renew
Their slumbering strength divine;
Till there springs up a courage high and true
To suffer and to do.

And who shall say, but hateful spirits around,
For their brief hour unbound,
Shudder to see, and wail their overthrow?
While on far heathen ground
Some lonely Saint hails the fresh odour, though
Its source he cannot know.

#### The Trance of Time

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"Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas, Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!"

IN childhood, when with eager eyes
The season-measured year I view'd,
All garb'd in fairy guise,
Pledged constancy of good.

Spring sang of heaven; the summer flowers Bade me gaze on, and did not fade; Even suns o'er autumn's bowers Heard my strong wish, and stay'd.

They came and went, the short-lived four; Yet, as their varying dance they wove, To my young heart each bore Its own sure claim of love.

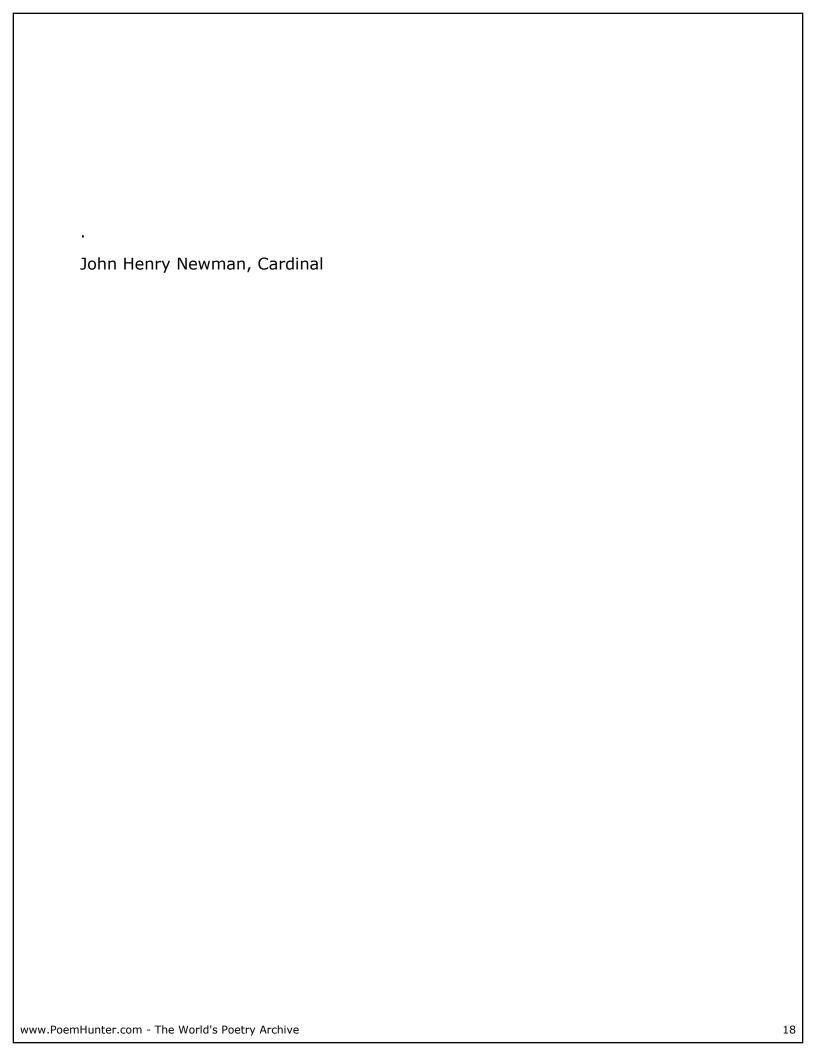
Far different now;—the whirling year Vainly my dizzy eyes pursue;
And its fair tints appear
All blent in one dusk hue.

Why dwell on rich autumnal lights, Spring-time, or winter's social ring? Long days are fire-side nights, Brown autumn is fresh spring.

Then what this world to thee, my heart?
Its gifts nor feed thee nor can bless.
Thou hast no owner's part
In all its fleetingness.

The flame, the storm, the quaking ground, Earth's joy, earth's terror, nought is thine, Thou must but hear the sound Of the still voice divine.

O priceless art! O princely state! E'en while by sense of change opprest, Within to antedate Heaven's Age of fearless rest.



# **Transfiguration**

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitiation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

# **Warnings**

When Heaven sends sorrow,
Warnings go first,
Lest it should burst
With stunning might
On souls too bright
To fear the morrow.

Can science bear us
To the hid springs
Of human things?
Why may not dream,
Or thought's day-gleam,
Startle, yet cheer us?

Are such thoughts fetters,
While Faith disowns
Dread of earth's tones,
Reeks but Heaven's call,
And on the wall
Reads but Heaven's letters?