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THE WIT AND WISDOM OF JOHN AYSCOUGH

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The Angelus Series

THE WIT AND WISDOM OF JOHN AYSCOUGH

CHOSEN AND EDITED
BY
SCANNELL O'NEILL
AUTHOR OF
"WATCHWORDS FROM DOCTOR BROWNSON,"
ETC.

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO
BENZIGER BROTHERS

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TO

M. I. M.

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FOREWORD

THE selections in this little book will, the compiler feels certain, show to the full the real greatness of John Ayscough's power—his originality, his thought, his insight, his range of experience, observation, and sympathy; above all, his never-failing elevation of spiritual feeling and judgment, speaking in language brilliant and forcible, rising often to splendour and magnificence.

The Right Reverend Monsignor Bickerstaffe-Drew was born in 1858, the son of the late

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Foreword

Rev. H. Lloyd Bickerstaffe and Elizabeth Mona Brougham (now Mrs. Brent), daughter of the Rev. Pierce William Drew, Rector of Youghal, County Cork, Ireland. He was educated at Lichfield Grammar School and Oxford University. In 1878 he was received into the Church, studied for the priesthood, and was ordained in 1884. He became an army chaplain, and has served as Senior Chaplain to the Forces successively at Plymouth, Malta, and Salisbury Plain. In 1903 he was raised to the dignities of Privy Chamberlain and Domestic Prelate to the Pope; and in 1912 received the higher title of Protonotary Apostolic. He received from Pope Leo XIII., in 1901, the cross "pro Ecclesia

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et Pontifice," and has a personal Jubilee Medal from Pius X. He is a Knight Commander of the Holy Sepulchre, and an original member of Camera Pontifice Maltese.

His chief works, written under the pen-name of "John Aysough," are—"A Roman Tragedy," "Marotz," "Dromina," "San Celestino," "Mezzogiorno," "Hurdcott," "Saints and Places," "Levia Pondera," "Faustula," "Outsiders—and In," "Prodigals and Sons," "Gracechurch," and "Monksbridge" (1914).

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, U.S.A.,
Feast of St. Philip Neri, 1914.

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THE WIT AND WISDOM OF JOHN AYSCOUGH

A PARTING year cannot go empty-handed; three score and ten are the golden coins life is apt to promise for our spending, and one of them (whether our stock be really seventy or no) he carries off in his fist. What has he left us for it? Nay, what did we buy with it? There is only One who can answer, and He will not—yet.

The Universe.

Time watching with dry smile how Eternity draws on.

Levia Pondera.

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We need not too tediously wander back over the dull, stubbled fields of the dead year to scan if there be, after all, some forgotten gleanings of good grain belonging to us : God will do that for us.

The Universe.

May the Child Jesus bring you all happiness and grace.

Hurdcott.

East and west, north and south, Thou art, Who art everywhere. Lodestar of the souls of men, draw my soul to Thine! Sun of our day, warm my heart with the rays of Thine!

Marotz.

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The Past rests somewhere ours :
the future seems
All, all our own in flattery of
dreams ;
But still the present mocks us
and escapes.
The bliss we said should be
"to-day" ne'er came.
Live to its birth : abortive and
still-born
It killed its mother, Hope, and
waits forlorn.
Our present hour is mock'd with
silly shapes
Of what we look'd for ; but the
promised flames
Die in dull smoulderings and
choking dark
Folds round to-day : and still
the mocking spark
Mocks on and cries, "To-morrow
comes thy bliss,

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Pursue, o'ertake, the future thine
own is."
But each to-morrow turns and
is to-day—
As cheap and common as was
yesterday.

The Magnificat.

I never could, and never can, understand why people dislike and shudder at a snowstorm; to me it was, as a child, and still remains, the loveliest, most exhilarating thing to look at of all the exquisite and mysterious loveliness that Nature has to show us. My nurse said the angels were making the beds in Heaven, and my only regret was that they made them at such negligently wide intervals.

Gracechurch.

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It all comes to this, that life is worship: service is a servile-sounding word, and service must really be servile when the master is not greater than the servant; so one is brought to look above man for his only worthy Master.

Mezzogiorno.

The past is a dead king who makes no peers, and rewards his living courtiers with no ribbons or stars: he has not a penny in his pocket.

Levia Pondera.

The lips of the Church are never silent, but from the four winds the breath of the Sacrifice goes up for ever from many lands in one eternal tongue.

Saints and Places.

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Of God's patience and compassion we all take account when it is question of great sinners. Has He no patience or compassion for those who try not to sin, and fail, and go on trying? When we are mad with impatience against ourselves, and our failures and sloth, is it out of humility? "He who believeth, let him not make haste." Was Isaias giving a counsel of imperfection, or remembering that we must go up step by step, and that the steps are steep, and our knees faltering, and only by the hand of Omnipotent Charity can we be helped and heartened up at all?

The Universe.

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of John Ayscough

Another hour gone—another trickle of time lapsed into the bitter ocean of eternity.

Mezzogiorno.

Where have we been all these truant years? what silly, ugly things have we been teaching ourselves were wise and fine, outside the school where the humble Master has been asking, asking that the three and thirty years of His alphabet might spell for us the only word we need—love? Birth and death, miracle and parable, the long, silent years after Bethlehem and before Calvary, pity and patience, healing and help, His daily toil for His daily bread, all the thirty and three letters that made that

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life on earth of the Carpenter whose Throne the angels were bowing down before in Heaven. He keeps His patient eyes on us, pushing them to us this way and that, and bids us group them into one word. What *can* they spell but love?

The Universe.

St. Francis has always been popular among a certain class of those who hate what he loved best, certainly not because he was a glorious servant of God and the Church, but because his gracious figure smiles down the ages embedded in a tangle of exquisite flowers.

Saints and Places.

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Ah, how mean we are; we stab and hurt those we should cherish, and then look to Heaven to undo our work. We twist the thread of life into hard knots and call on God and His saints to untie them for us.

The Magnificat.

"I am not very clever at analysis of rights and wrongs . . . but it seems to me that what one has to do is to take our luck, whatever it is: if it's bad, try and make it better; if it won't get better, to do the best one can with it as it stands. And bad or good, to remember that someone else is no doubt worse off, and do them a decent turn if one gets the chance."

Outsiders—and In.

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. . . Death is but a sharp corner near the beginning of life's procession down eternity. . . .

Outsiders—and In.

There are days in our lives which never fade into age, but keep, in our deepest memory, a perennial youth; and such days have mostly been marked, not by any great event of special importance to our earthly career, advancement, wealth, or what not, but simply by a peculiar beauty that hangs about them—like an aura. They were not worldly days; and so, as we olden with our passage through the world, they stay young, and we love them as pure youthful things are loved.

Saints and Places.

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of John Ayscough

To many this life is the porch of Heaven, full of its overheard harmonies, shining already in its sure dawn.

Dromina.

From many lands there come the silly noise of war, and sordid wranglings of race and dynasty, but still, year in, year out, the Fisherman keeps ward in his lonely watch-tower among the Seven Hills beside the yellow Tiber, and straining ever eager eyes athwart the waste of waters, tempest-borne and darkling, he watches for his Master, and if perchance he may, to catch the souls of men.

Saints and Places.

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Every broken resolution leaves the mark of its teeth on us.

The Universe.

God knows what He is giving better than we can guess what He is offering.

Hurdcott.

He who is learning the saints' alphabet knows that all penance is only a means to an end; and meanwhile he does not fix himself on the perilous confines of Commandments, subject to frequent inroads of the foe, but dwells far within them.

The Ave Maria.

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The reason why scruples are a mischief is that they are a forgetfulness of God's kindness.

Marotz.

I have stood in St. Peter's when, in a late autumn afternoon, fifty thousand pilgrims showed like a dark shadow on its floor, and only high up, hundreds of feet above our heads, long yellow shafts of light seemed caught in a mesh of gold; the crowd was of many nations and many tongues, of conflicting political aims and interests; the wise, maybe, and the unwise, lettered and unlearned, the tender and the rough, the refined and the coarse. Then, from the great chapel, where Sixtus and

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Julius lie before the Blessed Sacrament for ever, came forth a procession, not striking by force of numbers, but striking in all besides. A soldier-group, that seemed ending a march started in the Renaissance, tall, stalwart, manly, erect, strong in all the gracious strength of youth; a group of prelates, in princely purple; courtiers in grave Spanish dress, sedately black; more soldiers, and in their midst, a carrying-chair closely shut, whose occupant the people could not yet see. Slowly, to the bottom of the shadowy great church, the procession moved down, and there the chair gave up its burden, and the old, old man that had sat hidden within it crept forth

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and took his seat in another, like a throne, resting on a broad, flat stage, that now was raised on to men's shoulders, so that in the dim light the bent, white figure could at last be seen.

Then, in all the packed crowd, for a moment was a hush, like a gasp; and then a rustle, as when a gust of wind shakes the forest, and all the black mass was whitened with a flutter like snow, but that it was flung upward; and one great cry, in a hundred tongues, broke, like a moan or a sigh at first, and burst into such acclaim as gripped the heart and made the ears swim and tingle that heard only a single word: "The Pope!"

Levia Pondera.

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The Wit and Wisdom

Prayer is the intercourse of our souls with God, and, so long as His children are happy in His presence, He does not mind what we talk about.

Marotz.

Any square foot of territory occupied by a Catholic on good terms with his religion is a foot of ground lost to the occupation of the myriad forces arrayed against the Church in the Press and in literature.

The Ecclesiastical Review.

The world gives mean things to make us mean: God gives Himself; and when we try to give in turn we find the thing given is more our own than ever.

Prodigals and Sons.

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of John Ayscough

Your tongue is a bad sword in other people's hands.

Faustula.

This, then, was the new and true office of all Arts in the Church: they were to be her mouthpiece and her witness, bearing, under her impression a lovely testimony to Divine beauty. In all the ugly and mean jostle of common life they were to remind man of the eternal and ineffable serenity of God's perfection. Man's worship they should no longer seize halfway to Heaven: but, with fingers ever pointed upward, they were to bid him look above the world for the supreme and sole object of adoration.

Levia Pondera.

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The Catholic Church has been the best guardian of liberty, because she has been the best guardian of law.

Mezzogiorno.

The world can, I think, be bought, if you are ready to pay its price, which is your own self.

Monksbridge.

Make little of a trouble, which, dark as it seems, must come from God, in Whose every purpose there is pity and most fatherly remembrance.

Dromina.

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The ripe fruit of the old ways was in literature such poets as Dante, in sculpture and painting such masters as Michaelangelo and Rafael; the latest, but forever unripe and unwholesome fruit of the new revolt, is in Art—God save the mark!—the Post-Impressionists and Futurists; in literature the *Massa Damnata* of current fiction—if that can be called current which loves to crawl and sniff its inspiration from the dung and slime of a civilization turned rotten. Pointing no longer upward beyond man, they seek to reflect man only, and him they reflect, littled and more mean, more bestial and more base.

Levia Pondera.

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"The best way to convert an English drunkard is to convince him, if you can, how much better off he'd be if he'd keep the money he spends on drink for clothes, and food, and for itself—for the glory and goodness of having a pound or two in the cupboard. You'd never convert an Irish drunkard that way. What may move *him* is the fear of God's hating him."

Mezzogiorno.

It is only God Who has patience with the good as well as with sinners. . . . Infinite mercy is a gentler name for infinite knowledge.

Marotz.

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of John Ayscough

"When we are young," said Ethelbert presently, "we think of ourselves and talk of each other. When we are old we talk of God."

"And what do we think of?" asked the girl.

"We still think of ourselves, perhaps, only our thoughts are not quite so selfish. We no longer dare to think of self alone, so we talk of God, and try to comfort ourselves by the memory of His kindness."

Outsiders—and In.

Strict Catholics may hear themselves accused of bigotry, intolerance, or stiff-neckedness, but lax Catholics are not deeply venerated by Protestants or unbelievers.

Levia Pondera.

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Every Saint is a little looking-glass of God: a facet of the jewel which constitutes the Catholic Church.

From an Address to the Catholic Women's League, May 21, 1914.

He did not talk all at once, though He was the Word Eternal. He did not walk about, though He made all our feet, and taught them how to stand. He did not make tables and things better than St. Joseph the minute He began, but just learned of him, as if He knew nothing about it—to encourage us. Could anyone but God have thought of that?

San Celestino.

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of John Ayscough

Charity is always called feminine, but it is in reality bi-sexual, and one single charity is always very liable to breed another. Once you have allowed the charity microbe to get into your system, it propagates alarmingly.

Outsiders—and In.

We must, I know, live in the present and act in it, but by realizing that other ages were as much alive once as we are now, we are made to realize that matters which absorb us to-day may not, after all, be of such final significance as we suppose; that our fuss and fume, our rancours and our jealousies, are not of eternal importance? It

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seems to me that from the pages of high romance we may draw a more serene patience, and a more practical remembrance that it is by God, and not by us, that the world is ruled; that somehow, after all our boggling and our crossness, His providence unties our knots, and may correct our blunders. We see our own follies and our own violence reflected in the calm mirror of the past, and yet see that the world was there then, as it is now, and that God was over the world all the time; as the world is here now, and God is over us all still.

Levia Pondera.

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The dawn is loveliest on a February morning, when the sun, unrisen yet, turns all its frosty pearl to opal, than in staring August, when day comes hustling back before the earth has had time to rest her dazzled eyes.

Levia Pondera.

Let every man use on the good side whatever weapon God may have given him the use of, and let him remember, and others remember, too, that a man may be able to do this and not able to do that. Let him be patient, and not ask of himself what God does not insist on — that he should be able to do two things at once.

From a Paper read at the Plymouth Congress, July, 1913.

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Outside Christianity there is nothing nobler than justice.

Faustula.

One must be generous to receive favours generously.

Hurdcott.

Does the twentieth century need a St. Benedict less than the fifth? The cave at Subiaco was an odd-seeming cure for the huge Roman world; but it cured it, not by a new gospel, but by the old. Its silence was a reminder of the silence of Christ during thirty out of the three-and-thirty years.

Levia Pondera.

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The libellers of the Church's moral rectitude are not the learned, and the sincere, nor the clear-minded, but the shallow and ignorant, the malignant, and they who invert the quality of charity that thinketh no evil and rejoiceth not in iniquity.

Irish Ecclesiastical Review.

The White Disguise God wears among us, littling Himself to us, that the soul may not lack that which the body needs—food: that no one may be alone, in life, or in the narrow pass between life-partial and life-complete.

Mezzogiorno.

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His knowledge of the people was like a gallery of rough but sympathetic portraits, wanting neither in character nor originality. He neither puffed their virtues nor glossed over their faults, and some of the latter he knew to be, plainly, vices. But even these he took for granted, without surprise or much discomfort. That God had made people as they were, he assumed with a scandalous disregard of theology, but a most practical result of tolerance.

Marotz.

The loss of faith does not tend to cheerfulness in individuals, and never will tend that way in nations.

Levia Pondera.

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of John Ayscough

Though in His Name you moved mountains; though you called to yonder far-off sea in His Name and bade it come hither, and it obeyed; though you sold every little thing you have . . . and gave the money to the poor; though you let them who deny His Name take your bodies and burn them, He would not be content if you held back one thing—one coin in all this great price; just the one thing every man wants to keep —himself: his heart, his own dear secret will.

The Catholic World.

The Pope is barely Catholic enough for some converts.

Mezzogiorno.

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"Some folks enjoys turble bad health; but I've lived out-a-doors all my days, and I reckon it keeps me sweet. I don't ketch cold; times it rains for weeks, times it snows a lot; but I'm friends wi' all the sorts o' weather, and don't quarrel wi' 'em, nor they wi' me."

Gracechurch.

Life is not all tears, though tears are often needed as long as sin and sorrow last; but neither is life all lamentation. God sends His kindly breath to dry our tears, and smiles out of Heaven to see us doing our best.

The Magnificat.

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When one has been out-of-doors in early morning on such a day as this, when the pearl and silver and opal of the dawn have yielded to a grayness like wool, a kind of wistful regretfulness is apt to come against the spirits: the morning seems far away, as if it belonged to a former part of life: its trivial events and features hang in the memory like a picture.

Hurdcott.

Really good manners are a delicate bloom on the ripest fruit of Christianity: a last refinement of the civilization Christianity brought into the world. That is why they are grown old-fashioned.

Levia Pondera.

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There are a few to whom nothing is meaningless, to whom life itself is so noble that everyone brought into their sphere of it is ennobled.

Hurdcott.

The true artist attempts no more than a corner, a group, a single trivial-seeming, character-teaching episode. We know better what Holland was like, in his day, from a tiny panel by Teniers, than we could learn from a contemporary map of the Low Countries as big as a dining-table.

American Catholic Quarterly.

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of John Ayscough

I hate new things. Old, old things, nearly worn out as they look, are those that make you comfortable.

Ave Maria.

Some men and women are born with a tendency to the supernatural, to intimacy with God. Such people are not always "good"; they may commit sin on sin, until sin becomes a habit, but an acquired habit, and it may need a huge, almost miraculous, interposition of grace to save them. But often the supernatural habit is stronger with such people than the sins into which they slip, and through all their faults one perceives plainly a religious cast of heart or mind.

Mezzogiorno.

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One of the Sisters, a dear little Austrian countess, showed me over it (Nazareth House, London). I found her scrubbing a passage, with her habit tidily "kilted up," as they say in Scotland—the merriest creature, who seemed to make homely little jokes for the sake of laughing rather than as if she thought them very witty. But she was as tender and reverent with the broken-down old men and women as if they were ex-kings and ex-queens in exile. And to see her with the orphan children was quite enough to prove the silliness of calling nuns "old maids, dressed alike, in a big house." It seemed ridiculous to call those children orphans with such mothers as God had found for

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them. And yet if those ladies had really been old maids, living alone with their cats and their crotchets, contributing to the universe a little whist and a little vinegar, no one on earth would find fault with them, or want Government inspectors to go and see whether they beat or starved or bullied their maid-servants.

"*Letters from Home*," *in*
"*The Ave Maria.*"

. Beauty is accounted meritorious because no one by any degree of merit can achieve it.

Levia Pondera.

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Each sand that helps to make the yellow girdle round the sea, or unseen to pave her deepest floor, each worm that weaves her silken arras ere she dies, each leaf that whispers to the night, each gale that trumpets "God"—each has succeeded. Only man, made in God's image—only he has twisted the Divine purpose and ruined the Divine likeness.

Marotz.

I have always felt rich enough. No one with unnumbered friends can feel poor.

The Ave Maria.

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of John Ayscough

Heresy and schism produce no saints. Protestantism, beginning most disreputably, has never attained a height greater than respectability: sanctity remains one of the Four Prerogatives of the Church.

Saints and Places.

Thou that givest me to-day, make it Thine own. When Life's day sets may my day dawn to Thee.

Marotz.

"No healthy man ever was meek yet. 'As meek as Moses!' Why, if ever a man had a temper!"

Mezzogiorno.

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The hurrying minutes sped, the night grew cold, but there was a happy light already shining on the face of the dying woman—some first flushing of that light that fills the City where is need of neither sun nor moon, for the Lamb is the Light thereof. The warmth of His Divine pity and compassion was in her willing soul, and the long night was almost past. High above the sobbing of the wintry winds the heavenly harmonies were breaking, the Voice of the Beloved was clear within her ears. And so, out into the great radiance that ends this night of ours, she passed. A valley of tears had this brief journey been, and now all tears were wiped away.

Prodigals and Sons.

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We mostly weep for happiness here below, as if remembering how sorrow jostles all our joy, and how swiftly one melts into the shadow of the other.

The Catholic World.

The first Adam had no childhood, but stood up near the tree of ruin a complete man. The second Adam came step by step to His tree of reconciliation by all the slow humility of dumb babyhood, childhood, boyhood, and youth. Even redemption was not enough. God and man must be identified in every phase of human life, so that man could never say: "God was never this. *This* cross I bear alone."

Faustula.

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"Even good people," said Poor Sister, "sometimes seem unable to mount higher on the ladder of perfection than a chronic abhorrence of sin. They are always thinking of it. On the ladder that Jacob saw there were only angels."

Marotz.

He had guessed long ago the answer to life's great riddle of happiness, knowing that it is to be secured most surely by him who is determined to seek it in striving to add to the happiness of others for the love of God.

Prodigals and Sons.

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Give true and sincere friendship, and you are—I, for one, believe—like to get it; but don't give rubbish or cry out on man's ingratitude that you are not paid back in the richest of all gold.

The Universe.

Just, then, as the beauty of nature does teach many simple souls, out of an easy book, what the beauty of God must be who made it, so the loveliness of these places, made by man, reminds them of the Divine Beauty to which even man is constrained, by fitness, to offer such lovely gifts. No palace ever made by man for himself has ever had half the beauty of the fanes even fallen man has

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raised to God. Is that an accident? The simple will not believe it one. They believe, not in accident, but in Providence and His inspiration.

So the stones preach: if they, being dedicated to a Divine service, can be so noble and so exquisite that men are fain to confess that they who built such places at all events believed in God, what service should not we render, who know what we are about, who need not wait for others to build us up into a Temple of the Holy Spirit of God, or let chance decide whether from the quarry we go to make a part of His Church or go to help build some new devil-temple on earth?

Levia Pondera.

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Winter was almost over, and the black spring was half ready to appear with blustering smiles that had not much warmth or cheer in them, and as frequent gusts of noisy tears.

Gracechurch.

What the scoffing world has never perceived is that he who strives to mortify himself, even in little things, picks up other virtues besides that of mortification.

The Ave Maria.

God only has cognizance for minorities that are not noisy.

Levia Pondera.

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To the bulk of mankind the absence of law appears freedom; it is only a minority that has ever willingly recognized that in the most perfect law is the most perfect liberty.

The Universe.

God Himself has no history, being eternal; but man's history is the complete record of his relations with God, in which the patience of His love is the connecting thread on which it is strung.

Mezzogiorno.

I hate the man who wrote footnotes; they are a plague and a nuisance.

Levia Pondera.

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of John Ayscough

Honestly, I confess that the first attraction of the Catholic Church itself lay, for me, in the glamour that lay around it as a great, wonderful thing, belonging to the old, noble past, when all the world was gilded with a light since faded from sea and land. I only mention this because I think it has been so with many others: that at first they drew near with reverent step to do homage to an incomparable relic . . . and presently found that the relic was more, that the Campo Santo for which they had brought only wistful sighs and tears was alive; that it spoke still, and with a living voice.

Gracechurch.

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The Wit and Wisdom

Is it pretended that our emotions were all given us by Satan? He certainly aims at getting hold of them: why should we not pre-occupy them for God? Only let the emotion be honest and genuine. . . .

Irish Ecclesiastical Review.

God made the world, and all men in it; all they have is His, and all their good comes from Him. All their ill is of their own making; and yet they cannot mend it by themselves. Only He Who created can re-create. Men can make themselves sick, but perfect health can come back only at the word of the Divine Physician.

Levia Pondera.

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of John Ayscough

Mankind insists on being happy; if it can't believe in the happiness God's Church promises, it will run to the devil for whatever he has to give instead.

Mezzogiorno.

He does not ask us to do what we cannot do. When we know He asks us to do something, then we know that we can do it, though we have thought it a moral impossibility or a physical: it is a physical impossibility for a man with a withered hand to stretch it out: but He bade the man stretch it out, and he did. . . .

Irish Ecclesiastical Review.

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Man was made in God's Image that we, who cannot see the God, may divine Him beyond the man—by condescension of the absolutely spiritual to the half-spiritual, half-material, that can rise beyond the material only by steps. And by a more stupendous condescension God, knowing man's proneness to adore man, to rest in the image, instead of hastening upward to the Divine Original, became Man Himself, that we might adore man and be blameless.

Mezzogiorno.

Those two meek gates of God's life on earth, Bethlehem and Calvary.

Faustula.

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To her no less a breath than God's moved every leaf that fluttered; every flower was a hint of greater loveliness, every fruitful vine an instalment of infinite bestowal.

Marotz.

The alliance between vanity and shame is of so long standing that they appear to be almost naturally related. And there is a sort of shame that is merely vanity: such is the shame of not being in the fashion.

Levia Pondera.

God has use for tools of all sorts: all fit the Divine Workman's Hand, and will not break in it, or wound it, if they are of true temper.

Hurdcott.

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One really good Catholic does more, I honestly believe, to convert his non-Catholic neighbours than a whole course of sermons.

The Universe.

A nun in domestic life is very trying to her family. . . . The life of the cloister is only convenient in the cloister. Some good girls try and lead it at home, and it is very tiresome for their mothers and sisters to be treated as lay-sisters.

Marotz.

The greatest thing about every Catholic is that he is one.

Levia Pondera.

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of John Ayscough

Ritualism always did seem to me as poor a substitute for Catholicity as marmalade proved to the Eton boy for butter. Don't you remember, in a "Day of My Life," the big Etonian finding his fag trying to fry his morning rasher in marmalade, because it said on the pot it formed an excellent substitute for butter?

"Letters from Home," in "The Ave Maria."

One only finishes up arguments with dull persons.

Faustula.

I am always happy among trees.

Dromina.

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The Church's claim lies in what she is, not in what the most eloquent tongue can say of her; it is a finer work to help in making true the best that could be said of her effect upon her children than to run about declaring what that effect is.

American Catholic Quarterly.

Not always does God allow men to be His almoners, or even an angel bring His message; sometimes He comes Himself.

Mezzogiorno.

In love is no vexing; that belongs to the petty: the thorns we set ourselves upon the stalk of the Divine perfect flower.

Faustula.

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of John Ayscough

"Garden of God" they call that
place,
And all its flow'rs, they say,
Spring from good deeds, and
words, and grace,
Forgotten in their day.
For ev'ry word we say that's
sweet,
And ev'ry kindly thought
Of helping on the weary feet—
The good we meant or
wrought—
Are planted by the angels there,
To bloom while Time shall
be,
Fragrant, unfading, passing fair,
Treasured, kind God, by Thee!

The Magnificat.

The first person you must forgive is yourself.

Faustula.

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It is odd to see ladies who would not read a "suggestive" novel, parade themselves in costumes that are simply not modest, with no better excuse than that such dress is the fashion, which means that it was recently novel.

Levia Pondera.

Happiness was inalienable, his birthright; but to attain it he must fling away the desire for it. At all events, every effort to catch it in a human net must be given up as childish. Being infinite it must proceed from infinity, and there is nothing infinite but God.

San Celestino.

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Nothing wears like pride.

Mezzogiorno.

It is a good thing to tell out one's notions. Then, if necessary, they are likely to dry up, like puddles when the sun gets at them.

Dromina.

One who knew books well said that he knew no spiritual reading better than Thackeray's "Vanity Fair." That I honour as a great saying. . . . Yet "Vanity Fair" is by no means all white light; it would never satisfy those critics who demand of the romanticist that he should paint only white figures in clear relief against a white background.

Levia Pondera.

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That the loss of her visible presence must be a deep sorrow to them she knew; but she could not think of it as an absence: being with God could not remove her from them, since He is everywhere. With God she could be nearer to them and more useful.

Faustula.

Friends who love each other, and keep together, grow like one another, because they love the same sort of things, and do the same sort of things, and talk of the same sort of things, and think of the same sort of things. Are you grown like Jesus Christ, or are you growing like the devil? You can judge by your habits.

The Catholic World.

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of John Ayscough

Living on the sounding, quiet shore of Eternity, the Time syllables have grown to him a jostle of silly noise. Riches and greed, struggle and pride, anger and theft, ambition and jealousy—all an uncouth, distorted jangle of letters that spell nothing, that make no word in his and his Master's book.

The Ave Maria.

The saints conquered heresies by being saints; but we think it easier to learn the wisdom of the unbeliever than to spell out the slow alphabet of sanctity. It will be by what we are, not by what we know, that we shall convert the Church's modern foes, if we ever do convert them.

Levia Pondera.

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The imperfect always take it for granted that death itself will change them into fitness for eternal life: that the language of heaven, whose very alphabet they eschew and dislike, will rise unlearned to their lips so soon as the world's talk has ceased to sound in their ears. They who are clambering up the thorny path of perfection know that that which we call preparation for death is really only preparation for a new, unearthly life, utterly different from this mean porch of it; and they deem it no folly or waste to spend these few swift days in training for eternity.

The Ave Maria.

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Each may choose his patron-saint for himself: there are of every sort, so that every sort of man and woman may see in all these mirrors of Christ's perfectness that which may most surely draw him or her to the love of Christ by cords of a man, Adam-strings of the manhood that is Christ's, and was the Saints' too.

Levia Pondera.

Sometimes we turn wantonly to Chance, and find a pitiful Providence standing in her place.

Prodigals and Sons.

The extreme penalty of self-seeking is not shame but success.

Hurdcott.

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The Weaker Brethren. They are decent people in general, and never give scandal: they take it about once a week. To do so they esteem a sign of delicacy of conscience. The Saints were singularly backward in taking scandal: it was their own faults that shocked them; but the Saints were never Weaker Brethren.

Levia Pondera.

'Tis those who have no tears for Time that must weep in Eternity.

The Ave Maria.

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of John Ayscough

What the Weaker Brethren would insist upon is that all Catholics should be, like themselves, Superior Persons, where-as the Church only wants to lead us all to perfection, and that by many mean streets; for all decent people cannot inhabit the best quarters of the town. The Church's purview includes noisy places, and vulgar, too; she has never proclaimed herself a monopoly of the genteel.

Ecclesiastical Review.

The plough must be the work God puts into our hands to do. But he who finds that he has set his plough to the wrong field and moves it away is only brave, and is worthy of Him.

Marotz.

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I'm sure you think you know what the Mass is. I'm sure I thought *I* knew long before I ever heard one. But you don't, and I didn't, and I'm only beginning to know now. Each Low Mass one hears teaches one more; but there is always more to learn. Unless I live to make Methuselah look like a raw boy beside me, I shall only have learned a bit of it all—this side of the Gate.

You go to Mass; you begin to direct your intention; and, before you have done thinking of *one* of the four great ends of sacrifice, the Mass is done. You begin again next day, and you haven't picked yourself up from yesterday (there's too much new discovery to let you) before it is *Ite Missa est*; and you can only

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say, "To-morrow!" You try to catch hold of the "four ends of sacrifice"; and the first thought of the first gets hold of you instead, and swallows you up as if it were a distraction. You say to yourself, "I want to hear Mass"; and it is the Consecration and the Elevation before you have got ready to adore Him when He shall come. It is hopeless, because it is fruition, and like heaven, where there is no hope. You cannot be in time to greet the King. His Majesty has been there, and has passed, before you have hung out your little scraps of loyalty at the windows to let Him see you know He will come.

"Letters from Home," in "The Ave Maria."

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The night had a sweet smell, and its silence was like God's unheard, voiceless blessing: a dew of kindness.

Dromina.

My idea of happiness was to live always where every field and cottage was like a familiar face, to die at last among the kindly folk I knew.

Gracechurch.

To the aggrieved, the aggrieved draw by a natural magnetism, and your most dangerous rebel is a man who smarts himself. It gives him the sincerity without which he would be innocuous.

Faustula.

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Do we remember that after all we live in an atmosphere alien from our faith? That the common opinion about us is founded on the assumptions that we have always denied: that every newspaper breathes them, almost every public speech of orators and politicians? That the more we grow like our pleasant neighbours, the less we may be resembling Catholics?

Levia Pondera.

For three centuries and a half the pulpits of all the old Catholic cathedrals in England have been listening to an alien teaching, but the cathedrals have never turned Protestant.

Levia Pondera.

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To her there was no melancholy in this patient death of nature, moving onward to so sure and near a resurrection; in the sweet silence, so holy, so pathetic; in the darkening colour, the fading lightness of the wintry autumn afternoon.

Outsiders—and In.

"After all," said St. Theresa, dying, "I am a child of the Church." It was not that she chafed at "the petty done, the undone vast. . . ." But in the hour of death it is comfort we need; and she found it, as we all must at last, not in what she had done for Her, but in what He had done for her; in what He is, not in what she was.

Levia Pondera.

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of John Ayscough

It is hard to believe in any true emotion not being on the side of the angels.

Levia Pondera.

The spring is wild on the plain:
Larks scatter music out of the sky,
Throstles fling it up again.
Sun, and wind, and the rain, are at play,
And the blackthorn brake is a-foam with spray.
Winter is gone for one perfect day—
As the hour's joy conquers the life-long pain
We laugh together, the world and I.

The Magnificat.

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God knows what He is about, and gives us most of what is necessary, and only a little of what we could do without altogether.

Marotz.

Her great loneliness in the world gave her a Friend whom otherwise she might never have known so well, and her quiet and sweet trust in Him, when she might have felt friendless altogether, He rewarded by sending her many other friends.

Fernando.

We are always assuming that people who are good in little things are sure to be good in great.

Mezzogiorno.

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Against the Church hell's gates shall not prevail; but against you and me they may prevail, unless we take good heed. She shall be always one; let us mind ourselves, that in everything we are one with her. There is, then, the influence of environment to beware of.

Levia Pondera.

Youth must go; every golden day of it must be paid out, and cannot be taken back; but need its treasures be spent for nothing?

Prodigals and Sons.

No letters spell love, no words can express it. That's why there are so few good poets.

Dromina.

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Vanity, having made herself thoroughly at home, sought a mate and found one in the irritable spirit of Novelty: their union produced Fashion, now very old, but condemned to a chronic second-childhood.

Levia Pondera.

The whisper of breeze and tree must mean to her God's benediction, or it would be meaningless; the smile of summer was nothing to her except as translating the unseen smile of the Lord of earth and sun.

Gracechurch.

That sharp twist in Life's road which we call Death.

Faustula.

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of John Ayscough

This little house is a low porch of heaven to those whom God wills should wait here, till the golden gate opens, and we can pass out of this shadowy dawn into the full day.

Marotz.

There was nothing to moan about, no matter for tears; the heart within him was a hearth where God sat at home with him, warmly.

San Celestino.

What a thing love is! After all, it is God, for God is it. No wonder it makes the most unlikely almost Divine.

Dromina.

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The modern sinner has a spite against the authority that makes sins of things he resolves to do; he therefore flings the Old Man of the Woods off his back altogether; but not on that account will he condone your offences should they lie in directions whither his own desires do not tend. Your Agnostic is not hard to shock.

Levia Pondera.

The unbelievers have no Aquinas, agnosticism can have no pope; though unnumbered antipopes of agnosticism bid the people take ship with them, on a stormy voyage, for the dull and bleak haven of indecision.

Levia Pondera.

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Pleasure is the cheating preface of pain, youth is the prologue to dull age, time is but a silly porch of inexorable eternity, like the blind infancy of death.

Marolz.

God does not give unfit goods as we do; so even the final gift of Heaven is not given till we are ready, till we can accept it without the burden of unfitness.

Mezzogiorno.

Charity does not blunt our moral sense, but sheathes it: cold steel needs a scabbard.

Marolz.

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Emotion must be intimate, and unless it be personal it can hardly be true emotion at all, but only that artistic flutter that is but its parody.

Prodigals and Sons.

The world is no pattern of perfection, but God save us from its judgment; only to the judgment of perfection can imperfection look with any hope. Who, if God would suffer it, would choose that the final judgment should be passed on himself, by himself?

The Universe.

Do not be anxious to have a vocation. Be ready to do what God wants.

Marotz.

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of John Ayscough

There are countless devout persons whose worship of God consists in nothing but asking favours of Him. But there are others who scarcely think of asking anything, because it seems to their ever-growing appreciation that everything has been done unasked, and everything given out of an imperial generosity that has never needed reminder.

Hurdcott.

It is hopeless trying to bandy generosities with God. We soon cease to be so stupid as to imagine He will be outdone.

Marotz.

Pleasure—base-born sister of happiness.

Prodigals and Sons.

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Against many books much may be urged, but the buying of books has led few to financial embarrassment.

Levia Pondera.

There was a warm smell from the cedars like incense, only cleaner and more subtle; the lights, netted with soft shadows, hung above the high branches; the pale mid-day twilight underneath had a colour of devout silence.

Dromina.

He obeyed Joseph in the Holy House where, of its three inmates, He was least, Who was God and Master.

Faustula.

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of John Ayscough

She loved the young and the hopeful, always praying that God would shelter their hopes, and bring them to fragrant blossom in the wide garden of His providence.

Dromina.

Pope-folk are Peter-folk, and Catholics are Peter's folk, holding unspilt and unsullied the Peter-faith which Christ promised he should carry in his storm-vexed ship unwrecked, till this bitter sea of time is crossed at last, and Peter's passengers shall have been landed by him on the shores of that other sea, unvexed by cloud or storm, that smiles beneath the great White Throne of God.

Levia Pondera.

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Is the best home most sumptuous? Is it costly plenishing or love that makes the home?

San Celestino.

I often hear people declare that they *love* reading, but have no time for it, though they spend most of their waking hours in talking about nothing in particular.

Fernando.

Half the philanthropy of our time is founded on disbelief in God and the immortality of the soul of man. When "charity" becomes a department of the Modern State, it is mostly because the State has no faith in anything higher than man.

Levia Pondera.

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of John Ayscough

Memory doesn't mean old things dead, but things become immortal.

The Ave Maria.

The first step in genuine patriotism must consist in love of family and home, and its first efforts must tend to the true good of home and family; in this each individual of the family must start with himself, not as seeking for himself the *best goods*, but as aiming at his own *best good*.

Levia Pondera.

He could be insolent; that was one of the pleasures of being rich.

Faustula.

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Oh purblind race of men!
How bitter are the punishments we give ourselves, whereas God's are always tender and sweet, if we will take them with sweetness and tenderness.

Mezzogiorno.

What was the use of friendship if it were for fair weather wear only?

Hurdcott.

This marvellous sacredness of youth—how the Beloved of Love Himself felt it. He, who had leant near the Heart of the Son of Man, though he lived to so great age, could not grow old, nor wither with wintry carpings at youth.

Levia Pondera.

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The world hung for her one small lamp in the darkness of God's creation, lighting but a little path marked by the splendour of His footsteps.

Dromina.

All real goodness is from above, of course, but there is something *visibly* supernatural about the goodness of the Irish.

Mezzogiorno.

God Himself can lighten in a brief moment the darkness of a long life, as He can pardon in a moment a life's offence.

Faustula.

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Faith has not intricate problems, but she has hidden treasures; and to her children she lets the shine of them peep forth, the golden gleam of substance of things to be hoped for, evidence of things that appear not.

Levia Pondera.

The devil can damn no one; it is men who damn themselves.

Marotz.

It is a shame to speak as if only bad influences are contagious; unbelief has its microbes, and they attack souls made ready for them by spiritual apathy and evil living; but faith is infectious, too.

The Universe.

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of John Ayscough

He had always loved the world: not exactly that which proud people mean when they talk of it, but the visible world of mountains and plains and valleys, of sapphire sea and opal cloud, of secret-telling woods and sedgy meadows by flat streams, of flowers and winds, and sunrise and noon, sunset and sweet night. And in a way he had loved God for making all these things.

San Celestino.

Food and clothing and home-shelter never have won love yet.

Faustula.

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For my part I should be glad if all the comic papers (one need not read them) were written by Catholics, and all the funny plays, all the fairy-tales and nursery-books, all the novels that walk in hurried procession through the libraries and cannot walk too quick for me, and all the other stuff one sees people reading in trains . . . which is certainly not literature, but might be free of any graver fault.

Levia Pondera.

The dear old realm of fairy-land where nothing base is met, only the strange, the deliciously impossible, the lovely, and the gloriously happy. . . .

Ecclesiastical Review.

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of John Ayscough

We ought to be heroic, but we are not all heroes; and it calls for a singular degree of courage to face the strict criticism of our fellow-religionists who are, as I think, ever ready to demand of every Catholic that may appear that he should prove himself a Catholic Hercules—or get out.

Ecclesiastical Review.

A man's thoughts are often a truer picture of himself than anything he does: for no man ever yet rose above his highest thought, or fell beneath his lowest, and millions of men are lower than their external conduct, as many are really higher than sudden and isolated acts of theirs.

The Universe.

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To contemplation no leaf on any tree in all God's garden is meaningless: the Pantheist saw in everything a God; the Contemplative sees God through everything, and reads His Name ineffable in all the alphabet whose letters are this earth and the universe of stars.

Levia Pondera.

There is a piety barely skin-deep, exotic, and heat-forced, not much inured to sharp breeze or nipping frost, not of the outdoor, work-a-day sort, not over-masculine, nor vigorous, nor meant for rough usage. And it likes prettiness better than beauty, sentiment more than sense, rhetoric rather than resolve.

The Universe.

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He abhorred sentiment, and through its light-wreathed morning mist I regarded everything then. To this day it seems to me that people are too hard on it: it wears out quickly enough, and the "realities of life" are not always noble. Even a little illusion is only a tenderness of atmosphere that fills the horizon with hope, and adds some beauty to landscapes that are like to run out plain enough.

Gracechurch.

I have always been a Royalist, and had a great, loyal veneration for kings; but I never thought of any king with the extraordinary passion of veneration I had, as a young Protestant boy, for the Pope.

The Ave Maria.

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We confess our sins and God forgives them, so as, not pretending a nicety finer than God's, we come to forgive ourselves also. But the faults of others we do not assume to pardon—that is God's business, not ours; and so we are teased by them.

Mezzogiorno.

That the wild medley of unearned favours and undeserved blows he called fate is more than an eternally tangled knot—is, in fact, part of the Great Weaver's work, with a pattern austere but not legible, that he could not yet perceive.

Hurdcott.

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of John Ayscough

"In your sorrow we pray that God may comfort you, and that He, Whose only crown was of thorns, may teach you that the Way of Sorrows is the Royal Road of the Most Holy Cross, walking in which we are sure of Him for our Fellow-Traveller, Who never trod the path of flowers, Whose empty palace was a wind-swept Stable, Whose first Throne was the Manger, and Whose last was the outcast's Cross."

Dromina.

They talk at large about education, but their first principle in education is elimination of God.

Levia Pondera.

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There will always be, in every society, a certain number of people to whom it is a horrible pleasure to think evil, and they are seldom content to let their evil ideas rot away in silence within their own minds. What they think, out of the wicked treasure of their hearts, they cruelly speak. Perhaps at the Day of Judgment they will be surprised at the extent and gravity of the ruin their malice has occasioned.

Prodigals and Sons.

The golden bridge of absence on which we can go out to meet our unchanged friends, who are never any older.

Gracechurch.

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of John Ayscough

In one sense I would submit that there is no such a thing, aside from such specialized subjects as theology, as Catholic literature: in another that all literature, that is true literature at all, is Catholic: that is, that all true literature is a part of the common inheritance which belongs to us and to all men.

Levia Pondera.

The Church is a mother with every sort of child, and she will not shoulder out the imperfect, though the perfect reflect her inner mind and heart. Her patience has to last as long as the world.

The Universe.

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God sets one here and another there, and never asks one to do another's work, or demands that the adept with one tool or weapon should bungle with another.

American Catholic Quarterly.

To forget at will is beyond our powers, but we can ignore. The prerogative of memory cannot be abdicated; nevertheless we can, if our will be strong enough, refuse to indulge in its exercise: each individual act of remembrance may be smothered in its birth. Whether this would in the long run save pain is another question. To stifle an insufferable memory does not wear it out.

Mezzogiorno.

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The more inward a man's greatness, in proportion to the external show of it, the more substantial, and therefore lasting, his fame; the more he exhausts his actual stock of himself in visible production, the more his immediate notoriety will be perceived; but, as most of his acts and words are put out to meet a temporary occasion, so when the occasion has gone by, his reputation is liable to fall obsolete. In the matter of fame you cannot have your cake and eat it too.

Levia Pondera.

A pain shared equally by two, who seem one, is borne so tenderly that it cannot remain bitter.

Dromina.

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Everyone has a vocation.
Some have a vocation to be
shoemakers, and some haven't;
that's why some people's shoes
fit so badly perhaps.

Marotz.

Love sits more close than Hope,
than cold Belief,
Knit to ourself as Bridegroom
unto Bride
Yet not ourself. She doubles
each relief,
Divides each pain, and makes
our little wide.

The Magnificat.

"We were made like Him. . . .
As long as we go on loving that
much is left. When we give up
loving the last trace is lost."

Hurdcott.

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of John Ayscough

She could not fathom the springs of her happiness: nor would she try. She had that grace of sweetness that never picks God's gifts to pieces to see if the material is worth anything.

Hurdcott.

The great majority of those who profess to be unable to believe are taken too seriously. They are encouraged to regard themselves as terrible creatures, gloomy, tragic familiars of Satan, when they are only his Jack-in-the-boxes and tin whistles. Such figures as they are intellectually are best reformed by the laughter their oddity suggests.

Levia Pondera.

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That night he said the Rosary. . . It cannot be said that the chaplet he laid at the feet of God's great Mother was worthy of her: its roses were huddled together, crumpled and stale, with no sweet dew of tenderness and innocence to make them sweeter. Yet he laid them there, and she did not turn away her sinless face and refuse them. She stooped from Heaven and raised them, hiding them, perhaps, among fresher, more fragrant, flowers given her by better children, and fitter for angel eyes to see.

The Magnificat.

God help us all, that take to ourselves Christ's Name for a nickname.

Dromina.

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Lent, among many other things, . . . is a time of preparation for the great Easter duties; a time of unhurried recollection and consideration of the Passion; a time of candid reading of the Tragedy of sin and its consequences; a time of survey of one's travelled road and the road still to travel; a time of spiritual *stock-taking*. . . .

"Letters from Home," in
"The Ave Maria."

Men look on marriage as the goal and conclusion of courtship; women hope it is the beginning.

Marotz.

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The Voice that speaks from the Seven Hills beside the yellow river has sent its sound into all lands, insisting on the Apostolate of the Press, and every Catholic ear is listening. But the message cannot, in the nature of things, be to the Christian Press alone; it implies the correspondence of the Christian public. A duty is never like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, all on one side.

Levia Pondera.

People cannot safely yield themselves to much real devotion who do not intend to amend their ways: they find by experience it leads to much self-reproach and self-questioning.

The Magnificat.

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of John Ayscough

To stand still beautifully is given to as few as to walk beautifully.

Dromina.

There are some of us so timid of spirit that we abandon, almost at the first assault, anyone who is gravely attacked. We are nervous of misconstruction, afraid of being identified with anything of poor or tainted repute. . . . It may cost us something to give up our friend, but our acquaintance are more to us than any friend: our own repute more than anything. So we pay the cost, though it mean all our reality.

Hurdcott.

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Above all, one must fear the danger of thinking others beneath ourselves. We learn a little lesson, and are immediately in danger of condemning those who have not learned the same page, as if God put all His children at once into the same class. We, who know scarcely anything of ourselves, are so ready to decide about the other people, whose faces we have only seen in certain lights.

Marolz.

In some of our moods we are less lonely by ourselves.

Hurdcott.

Sorrow is no more than the shadow of a great joy.

Faustula.

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The most of us attain our full manhood only in eternity. And some of those who here are proudest of their adult manliness, lack the grace to know how sacred a toy may be to a child.

The Universe.

To serve God, mammon must be reduced to the condition of a useful domestic servant, not a despised slave.

San Celestino.

"When my husband went to God," she said, "I knew he had not gone away: for God is closer to us than our own flesh is close to ourselves. In this life we could not always be together: then I knew we should henceforth be together always."

Faustula.

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He had given himself to our Lord, as he saw Him, and the little gift had been accepted and kept: it was not flouted, as of mean and silly account, and flung back. He never got back exactly what he had given, only something greater in its place. God never gives us back our wretched selves, unless we grudge and snatch the gift back, and insist on that miserable restitution. He gives Himself instead.

Monksbridge.

No one can play Divine Providence for others. Good people sometimes try, and sometimes are obstinate, even when He Himself remonstrates.

Marotz.

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of John Ayscough

No one has ever reached a goal of merely personal ambition without loss to himself; no one can ever grasp a coveted distinction without becoming smaller, meaner, less noble.

Dromina.

God's gifts are all kinder than they look.

Hurdcott.

Show me an "atheist" or an "agnostic," and in nine hundred and ninety times out of a thousand I will show you a green goose, if you want such a vulgar, greasy, unfledged, indigestible bird.

Levia Pondera.

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St. Dominic's answer to a heresy that seemed to threaten Christendom was a string of beads; and yet in those chains the dead heresy was presently hanging in the wind, like the bones of a dead malefactor.

Levia Pondera.

O, Death!

. . . .

What thou dost take is never
spoiled nor lost,
Time-worn, or earth-worn, shab-
bily—as is most.
Thou holdest all young—fresh,
as doth a frost.

The Magnificat.

Against God there is only one really redoubtable enemy—self.

San Celestino.

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"One must think of one's sins," he suggested.

"So as to repent of them, yes. After that as little as possible. They are part of oneself: it is better once they are repented of, to think of God—they are no part of Him."

Hurdcott.

Do we remember that the Sacraments, and not Institutes for this and that, are our way of salvation ?

Levia Pondera.

With all their differences of natural character, tastes, and peculiar vocations, there is a family likeness among the saints that breaks out touchingly.

The Ave Maria.

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To the dull it (poetry) may seem the mere science of fine and fair words, but in reality it is a golden bridge that carries us, by high speech, arched far above the low swamps of petty ideals, into an enchanted, half-unearthly land of nobler, and so truer, thoughts, whose fruit must be nobler desires and less sordid deeds. For noble speech can be born only of noble thoughts, and be in turn their mother, and from nobler thinking noble doing is fain to spring.

Levia Pondera.

We make our own countenances, though God gives us our faces.

Prodigals and Sons.

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of John Ayscough

No decent human being can read any true poem without a lifting of his soul, and that at its best is prayer: at its worst it is better than lying among the pots. The poet's clear song lights a clearer fire among the thorns of our commonplace; we catch from him alpine glimpses that touch upon the heavens, his high thought begets a higher thought in us than our own, and each higher thought, by the Divine Compassion, tends upward to the highest.

Levia Pondera.

Even if an ambition, it need not be selfish or ignoble.

San Celestino.

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God greet thee! Mary, God greet thee! Thirty-three thousand times I greet thee! As He greeted thee that was born of thee, and thirty-three years shared His exile with thee, Mary, God greet thee! In the Name of the Father Whose Eldest Daughter thou art: in the Name of the Son Whose Mother thou art: in the Name of the Holy Ghost Whose Spouse thou art: in the Name of the Blessed Trinity Whose Mirror thou art. As He is in His Heart may I, in my heart, greet thee, Our Lady!

Marotz.

Honour can only be attained by one who is indifferent to it.

Dromina.

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of John Ayscough

As we are all sinners, and all need penance and forgiveness, Christ Himself chose St. Peter to be Patron Saint of all: the shadow of his gold and silver keys lies over all our lives, for without the golden love and silver sorrow of his sacrament of healing we are all dead men.

Levia Pondera.

It did not come into her mind that being glad was a treason to her dead. Between them and her was no black gulf of bitter separation: only the golden bridge of absence across which love flies with surest foot.

Hurdcott.

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I am quite sure that the love of books and the hatred of sitting still cannot exist together, and I suspect that my wise Cistercian friend would say that, in a people that has learned to read at all, the reading of books that are real books is a part of spiritual life. And I do not believe that he would count among good books only those that treat expressly of religion.

Levia Pondera.

Little as the human heart can be, shallow as it can make itself, nothing can fill it but Himself: it must be empty if filled with anything else.

Mezzogiorno.

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Our veneration of saints is a perpetual witness to our adoration of God. They are saints because He is God: if there were no God there would be no saints. Their light is perfect in its kind and degree, lovely, and of ineffable purity and serenity, but it is all reflection; in the wild night of sin and human imperfection it compels man to remember that there is a God. The world's bulk is between us and Him, but the sanctity of the saints insists on our keeping in mind the existence of God.

Levia Pondera.

The world is always well supplied with men ready to undertake great trusts.

The Ave Maria.

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Man could no more have invented the Eucharist than he could have invented the Incarnation. Only He Who thought of entering the world by the lowly gate of birth could have devised how to remain in it in the time-long silence of that White Disguise.

Levia Pondera.

The father who gives all must always love better than the child who takes everything. It is earth's little reflex of the eternal story of the love of God and man's shabby requital.

Hurdcott.

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Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

of John Ayscough

St. Thomas Aquinas . . . proved for all time that the greatest science is Christian Faith: let the superficial who imagine that Catholic doctrine is a tangled muddle of inconsistent blind beliefs, strung together in one rosary of impossibility, read the "Summa," and see how its inexorable logic builds up into one impregnable fortress the whole mass of revealed teaching.

Saints and Places.

I generally conclude when people bring me tales that they have some little affairs of their own to conceal.

Faustula.

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Every good man's life is a protest against the mean cry that goodness is beyond our mark.

Levia Pondera.

I never read prefaces till I've finished the books. When there's anything in them, they spoil the story.

Hurdcott.

The Bread that comes from Heaven, the small, round, White Thing, the Red Wine and the White that the soldier's lance let loose, upon whose double tide of Love and Sorrow we are carried out beyond these swamps of time into the deep, deep ocean that is God.

Levia Pondera.

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There seemed to cling to her a vague fragrance, as of one who had suffered and had not been soured, but made sweeter by it.

Gracechurch.

The mountains stand sentinel each in its appointed place: the river has no rest till it has reached the goal He set for it: the stars and every lamp He lit in Heaven, burn faithfully in His vast sanctuary: only man is a failure, following false purposes, and snatching at shadows.

Marotz.

There is no radical cure for selfishness except the sincere belief and recognition that there is something greater than self.

Levia Pondera.

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A man of genius is wanted once in every thousand years: a thousand years ago it was Charlemagne. For the next nine-hundred and ninety-nine years men of common sense will serve the world's turn.

Hurdcott.

Her service of God meant chiefly the fulfilment of duty—a noble service, but by itself not the noblest. We know Who said: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." But the mere performance of duties does not keep the first and greatest of them.

Mezzogiorno.

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Do let us understand this: the Church's call to obedience is no invitation to take our stand in the ranks of ignorance, but to resist the most destructive of all ignorance. God knows all things, and it is on His side that she asks us to be.

Levia Pondera.

God help those who can shuffle off the blame of their selfishness on the backs of those who have loved too much.

Hurdcott.

To lay aside every desire must be the only sure road to happiness here on earth, and, above all, the most hopeless desire of all—the desire of happiness itself.

San Celestino.

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To some people the word "antiquity" suggests age, whereas in truth it belongs to the infancy of time.

Faustula.

Faith and Gloom are never bedfellows.

Mezzogiorno.

Henceforth he must keep the Great Silence that is laid upon the lips of all who have been before us, the wise who taught it, and the fools who filled it with their babbling folly: the silence that soon or late comes to the kindly tongues who comfort, and the bitter, wounding tongues that make us smart.

The Catholic World.

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Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

of John Ayscough

If it strikes you that anyone is a fool, don't proclaim the discovery, for it's no great matter—a fool is easily discerned.

Faustula.

People were always at their best with him; and he had no objection to their being a number of quite different sorts of people in the world. He did not expect them all to be made of the best materials, after the best models: he did not mind their being less clever than himself, and, even when they were downright stupid, he good-naturedly allowed that perhaps they could not help it.

Marotz.

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The most fatal of all pessimisms is that which calls Evil, Good, and sees no menace in evil growing, but sits smiling on it, and declaring that it is all healthy progress and upward, onward movement.

Levia Pondera.

It is better not to shut one's sorrow down too close. Speaking of our losses does not enhance them, but softens them.

Mezzogiorno.

Can we not be patient, like our Holy Mother the Church? We can never force God's hand, nor teach Him to do things our way. May we not, we who are so clever, be content to be thought fools this little while?

Levia Pondera.

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of John Ayscough

The devil! When you were children you thought of him as a bogey and were frightened: now, perhaps, he seems a sort of joke. But in reality he is a friend. You never thought when you were a little child of such a horrible friend: but how is it now? It is our friends we like to please, and our friends who please us. Which do you like to please, Jesus Christ or the devil?

The Catholic World.

Perfect knowledge is not for this porch, but for the palace beyond it. Peace comes not by understanding but by belief.

Mezzogiorno.

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I cannot help thinking that in some there is an uneasy feeling that unless we copy every species of non-Catholic activity we are idle, and falling back in the race. With Protestants we can have no race: we start from a different point, and do not follow the same course.

Levia Pondera.

It was pleasant to be doing something hospitable—nothing chills a house like long disuse of hospitality. And Amelia liked the sense of putting herself a bit "out of the way" to do honour to her niece's arrival. A worse-tempered woman might have felt it a grievance: she found the small sacrifice a kind of oiling of the rusting wheels of life.

Hurdcott.

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of John Ayscough

The history of the Church is nearly two thousand years old, and no one denies that there have been scandals. That they would come we were warned by the Founder of the Church: they are not forgotten, and never will be, so long as there are people in the world whose idea of a nose is of a thing to be kept fixed at the leaks in a sewer.

Levia Pondera.

Do not confuse coarse character with wickedness; do not be too hard even on wickedness itself. If God can be patient with it, surely we can.

Marotz.

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Is it ignorance to hold fast the Church's serene, unearthly certitude, where one clear voice says always one sure thing, rather than run out, like wanton babes, to play at bursting bubbles of conjecture? The most brilliant conjecture may be false: if it turn out right, it has but caught a little truth upon the wing. Can we not bear to be called fools for the sake of being on the side of Omniscience?

Levia Pondera.

When shall God write *Finis* to the book of His long patience and of man's thankless insolence?

The Universe.

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Zia had often wondered why priests and missioners insisted so seldom from the pulpit on the economy of being good. When you come to think of it, almost all vices are expensive, and nearly all virtues cheap. Why pay money to be damned, when one can get to Heaven almost for nothing ?

Marotz.

Every man who spares his penny to buy a Catholic paper is helping the utterance of clean words : doing his share in the work of a great missionary enterprise : helping the Voice that teaches from the Seven Hills.

Levia Pondera.

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The Evolution of a Catholic.

It takes many years, slow and reverent, patient and listening, whereof every day and week is a lesson, or a group of lessons, wherein one is always learning, learning—ah! and unlearning many a mistake and hurried misapprehension—so shall we die neophytes at last, but simpler, humbler, than when we began.

Irish Ecclesiastical Review.

See how the night has set her jewels in her hair: millions upon millions of jewels fallen from the lap of God.

Marolz.

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"I never looked at life like other people. When I was a child even, it had begun then. I loved it all—the forest at home, the smell of it, and the silent sound of it, the flowers and the birds. But I saw it all through a golden veil. Even then it seemed less real than something lying behind it, that it only hinted."

Dromina.

"I don't much believe in optimism, for it generally consists in calling black white: but there's a decent lot of white in the world, for, after all, God made it, and it takes more than six thousand years to spoil His work out and out."

Mezzogiorno.

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Common Sense is held up as the monitress of Emotion; and the commoner it is, the more complacently it submits to the *rôle*. Wisdom is justified of her children, but Common Sense is only her putative daughter, and has flat and vulgar features that do not strongly bring to mind the Wisdom of which the Holy Ghost tells us all. Till Common Sense has learned to be less worldly, her pose as an authority in spiritual matters fits her ill.

The Universe.

Doubt and question are talkative, but knowledge needs not talk.

Marotz.

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of John Ayscough

Truth is only another name for Him; as love is, and light.

Marotz.

Experience had taught him why ambition, by the perfect, should be counted a sin. No one has ever reached a goal of merely personal ambition without loss to himself. No one can ever grasp a coveted distinction or "greatness" without becoming smaller, meaner, less noble. That must be why gratified ambition never satisfies. . . .

Dromina.

Perfect penitence has no excuses and no bitterness.

Mezzogiorno.

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Self-indulgence is the real root of what we may call Easy Catholicism, and it leads to the final loss of faith much more commonly and much more simply than the intellectual alertness and spirit of inquiry which are supposed to suggest "difficulties."

Levia Pondera.

The good in people is as genuine as the bad. Inconsistency or incompleteness is not hypocrisy.

Marotz.

Teach man he is an animal only, and he sees no point in being more than an animal.

Mezzogiorno.

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Catholicity is so delicately compact together that he who light-heartedly surrenders a bit of what he thinks mere fringe presently finds that the whole garment is gone, and he is left in the mere nakedness of non-belief.

Levia Pondera.

Absence is a bridge along which love passes to and fro.

Marotz.

I cannot help thinking that some readers might learn more morality from a course of the Waverley novels than from a course of mealy-mouthed tract-like tales on the seven capital offences and their opposed virtues.

Levia Pondera.

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"Look up . . . God is above you. Ye'll never find Him, looking down. 'Tis He must look down to watch and pity us."

Dromina.

God is never impatient like us: He doesn't watch us in a hurry, but attends to other things - and waits till we are ready for Him. Then He looks again.

San Celestino.

The Church stands as she has always stood, watchful, not aloof, but uncompromised, a finger on her lip, blessing where she can, expostulating when she must.

Levia Pondera.

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Pleasure and happiness are synonymous terms to the vulgar, though one need not be a mystic to know that they who secure the most pleasure are often the least happy. Nor is mere satisfaction happiness.

Marotz.

It is not true that the best way of fighting the devil is by borrowing his own weapons. God has His own armoury, and needs no borrowing.

Levia Pondera.

What right have we to expect Heaven to begin on earth? The Beatific Vision immediately is no part of Christ's promise to those who take up His cross and follow after Him.

Marotz.

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It was an odd fashion of arriving at the idea of God; but there are many ways, as various as men and the needs of men. The perfect may rise to the Divine Idea perfectly, but the imperfect by a crooked ladder, oddly fashioned of an incongruous tree.

Mezzogiorno.

It is odd that they who are most disposed to pretend there is no God, and that man needs none but himself, are the most inveterate in stripping man of all Divine resemblance or reminiscence. You would suppose they would depict man a demi-God, whereas it is precisely they who insist on writing him down a pig.

Levia Pondera.

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of John Ayscough

We are to hope, till this part of our life, that death ends, is over: when the part comes that death begins, then hope is no more needed.

Dromina.

My heart beats again, nearly fifty years after, with the memory, more than a memory, the repetition of that first elation, when the snow comes again and brings back the first snowstorm I remember. It came on Christmas Eve: and, at bed-time, all outside lay white and silent, as though the world was hiding its dark spots from the eyes of the Child that midnight brought: and holding her peace to let the angels' carol be heard unspoiled.

Gracechurch.

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We must fain think of the child that was once ourself, and fain regret him; but the cure of the wounds we have put upon him lies in the little hand of the other Child: the scars in it can take out all ours. Only the Baby in the Manger can give us back what we grown men have wasted.

The Universe.

When He came here, He did not swoop down like a know-all, but crept in in the middle of the night, just a little *bambino*, as each of us was: and He learned things, as if He needed to learn to encourage us to be patient, and not to be in a hurry about being wise.

San Celestino.

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of John Ayscough

It was a happy walk home. . . . The sun and the frost met in the winter fields and danced before the Christmas Child. . . . The winter weather seemed to be more manly and jocund than hot and tired summer: the keen bright air, to bid me have a more robust purpose. If my world outside looked cold, I must warm it, and my Fellow-Traveller would teach me.

The Ave Maria.

A few more Yules, and, if we will, we may keep our Christmas with the Master of it, and hear the same angels singing who welcomed Him to churlish Bethlehem.

The Universe.

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Behind the white veils of the tabernacle, within the closer veil of the ineffable White Sacrament, was the Child Himself: the coldly-welcomed Baby whom Bethlehem at first would not receive, whom Bethlehem—the House of Bread—houses for us till Time's trivial ignorance shall end, and the clear morning of Eternity shall be come: the Silent Child Who was the Word of God's unbeginning, unending utterance: He Who grew into a Boy Whom marvelling doctors heard, and grew into a Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief.

Mezzogiorno.

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of John Ayscough

The more Christian our Christmas is, the more will its sweetness survive all Time's assaults.

The Universe.

A Church which fussily attitudinized to the twentieth century could never be the Church of any other.

Levia Pondera.

God does not ask us to know all things like Himself: that we should be thus was the tempter's lying promise.

Faustula.

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. . . Where the King's Throne is: the golden city of final peace —*Urbs Beata Jerusalem*—entered by twelve gates, each a pearl, sorrow's symbol; beyond which no sorrow is.

Saints and Places.

The old year lay a-dying, and his shivering successor was within an hour of his arrival. It had been a bad year for many in all this great, round world of ours, a merry, prosperous year for others; but such as it was, good or bad, it was done with.

The Catholic World.

Rome — where Peter's body sleeps and Peter's spirit wakes.

Saints and Places.

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The *Dies Iræ* is almost terrible. There is no mincing of matters in it: it is simply an inexorable presentiment of the certainty and reality of judgment. There is no smug complacency in it, as in the Protestant funeral hymns, that seem to take it for granted that every dead person has lived in such a fashion that sleep and rest are all that remain for the tired soul. The facts may be very different, so the *Dies Iræ* does not blink them: it insists on the inevitable outcome of fact—not brutally, but with an honesty that dares not palter with mere sentiment. It is the most wonderful poem—a vision, almost a revelation, full of pictures that are as clear as a cloudless moon in a cold sky; not

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one, however, like the moon, but a whole sequence of pictures. There is no knock-kneed attempt to represent Omniscient Justice as blind; but, lest the picture itself should blind us who look, it turns our eyes to Omnipotent Mercy walking on earth up the steep hill from Bethlehem to Calvary.

"Letters from Home," in "The Ave Maria."

The more people learn to imagine that the road to laughter is vulgar, or half-cruel or half-brutal, the worse for laughter and for them. For folk must laugh, and it is an abdication of right teaching to let them stick in the belief that the ways to it are sordid and ugly.

American Catholic Quarterly.

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One of the greatest pleasures to those capable of it is the enjoyment of beauty out-of-doors—what the poverty of language makes us call the beauty of scenery, which, after all, is a rather theatric description of what we mean. It may present itself in a wide extent of plain and hill, woody height or river meadow, coast-line, or heathy moor: but it may be all gathered in a narrow space, and fill our eyes with the delight that comes from a mere turn in a road, a gabled cottage, a lichen-roofed farmstead, a group of windy pines on a jut of rock, or a sedgy pool too small for any boat.

Well, your rich man may own it all. . . . But its beauty is not

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paid to him, so that he can pocket it—if he would. He may have eyes as apt to see its loveliness as yours, or they may be blind to all that is in it except the fact of property. In the latter case you get more than he does, unless you are blind too. Scenery cannot really be owned by anyone, but belongs to every eye that can treasure it. Only acres and tenements can be owned, and there's no more beauty in an acre than a yard measure.

"The Pleasures of Non-Possession," in "The Universe."

It is the grace of God that is our Sanctuary from sin, not any point of life.

The Universe.

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This world-poet (King David) sang not only of himself, but of all things that, in their infinite variety, time cannot wither nor custom stale: of God and all men; of God alone; of the triple drama of Creation, Fall, and Redemption; of the Church, unborn yet, but to be born out of the wounded side of Christ; of all God's lovely world, Nature, as we call it, and the universe of stars, the ring upon His creating finger, the gems wherewith the fringe of His garment is jewelled.

In an ugly age we long for beauty, in a tired season we turn hither and thither for rest; and in the Psalms we find both as we can scarce find them elsewhere. Not that they are sad.

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The sorrowful may in them find a sympathy that is incomparably human because it is also divine ; but they are often exultant, often jubilant, a rhapsody of clear triumph and delight as poignant as the skylark's. They are more human than any other poems, and more spiritual. There is no instinct of man's more innate than the relic of paradise that assails him with the desire to rise above himself whither he came ; and nowhere is that instinct voiced with more wistful pathos than in the Psalms, nowhere more tenderly encouraged.

The Universe.

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of John Ayscough

The scope of the Catholic Press is to be not only domestic but missionary as well. We certainly cannot at present aspire to a strategic occupation of the world's press ; but we are bidden to set up our own citadels, redoubts and outposts, and not to be content unless we are continually multiplying them, occupying new posts, and making the old ones more and more effective.

American Catholic Quarterly.

We did not talk much on the way : we were too good friends to need such protest of politeness.

Saints and Places.

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In Rome the present writer met a lady who had been "mostly everywhere."

"Did you come by Perugia?" he inquired.

"Phillis, have I been to Perugia?" she asked of her daughter.

"Why, ma! What a memory you have! You left your umbrella there."

"So I did! The new one with the agate handle. Oh, yes; I've seen Perugia."

That lady travelled, it appeared on a closer acquaintance, with a definite object—to get it over.

The Universe.

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of John Ayscough

I have in England seen one small pony dragging a lumbering chaise in which were seated four or five stout ladies, all breathing out threatenings and slaughter against some wicked poor peasant, who had filled his cart over-full to take his goods to market; but none of the indignant party got out to ease their own pony as he pulled his load of virtue up the hill.

Marotz.

How soon would all the race of man be Satan's, if only the Church would be what her enemies pretend to think she is!

The Universe.

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The world was noisy, selfish, self-absorbed, weary, self-indulging, rich, pushful, just as now: with wandering, unsteady outward eyes, and ears that could only hear loud or sharp voices, proclaiming novelties or teaching profit and pleasure. Its need was inwardness, as it is today: the faculty of listening instead of talking, doing perhaps less, thinking much more—contemplation: that is attention to God, listening to Him, considering Him, waiting for His opinion. . . . And Benedict began with himself, like all the humble and all the wise. So he fled. . . .

Saints and Places.

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of John Ayscough

You don't like penance, you say. In one sense we aren't meant to. It's medicine, and it's not demanded of patients to smack their lips over pills. To swallow in obedience is enough.

"Letters from Home," in "The Ave Maria."

"Some people's vulgarity is the only real thing about them visible to the naked eye. I don't mind it then. It isn't out of place."

Marotz.

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