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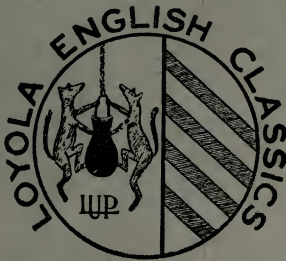
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THE  
DREAM OF GERONTIUS

BY CARDINAL NEWMAN

Edited for School Use

BY JOHN J. CLIFFORD, S. J.



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# THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

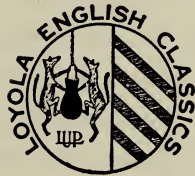
*By*

CARDINAL NEWMAN

EDITED FOR SCHOOL USE

WITH INTRODUCTION, QUESTIONS AND  
GLOSSARY

BY JOHN J. CLIFFORD, S. J.



LOYOLA UNIVERSITY PRESS

CHICAGO

THE DISEASE OF GONORRHOEA

BY

WILLIAM H. WELLS

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO

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## CHRONOLOGICAL LIFE

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- 1801 John Henry Newman was born in the city of London on the twenty-first day of February.
- 1820 Was graduated from Trinity College, Oxford.
- 1824 Took orders in the Anglican Church.
- 1833 Participated as one of the leaders in the Oxford Movement.
- 1845 Entered the Catholic Church, and a year later went to Rome to study for the priesthood.
- 1847 Returned to England as a Catholic priest to found the Community of the Oratory.
- 1854 Became Rector of the Irish University at Dublin.
- 1864 Published the *Apologia pro Vita Sua*.
- 1865 Published *The Dream of Gerontius*.
- 1879 Was elevated to the cardinalate.
- 1890 Died at the Oratory, Birmingham, England, on the eleventh day of May.

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## INTRODUCTION

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The mention of Newman naturally calls up the relation of literature to religion, for the simple reason that religion and literature are, in Newman, correlated. The question in its entirety is, of course, over-large for a foreword to *The Dream of Gerontius*; but in a sub-question under the larger one may very well serve the purpose of this introduction. Let us thus phrase it: Is a Catholic able to become a great literary man? But why—a thought that may come to anyone—put such a question at all? First, for the sake of the answer: The peer of English prose writers was a Catholic. Secondly, to contrast Newman's position in the matter with the superior attitude assumed by some at the expense of religion.

A superior attitude towards religion seems to mark the present vogue in literary style. For the times are so onward that they are said by not a few to have outrun religion. Hence the notion is abroad amongst certain classes of students that spirituality is a restraint on progress in literary ways, while morality arrests life's full realization. So we find but few of to-day's literary heroes who are not contravening conventions. From the taint of even this literary heresy we should forbend our Catholic student body, and one method of so doing may be the study of religion and literature in Newman and his *Dream of Gerontius*.

Religion and literature are not foes, but friends. A man's literary foundations are stronger as his piety is more intense. All critics voice this intense piety of Newman. "To my mind," said Richard H. Hutton, "*The Dream of Gerontius* is the poem of a man to whom the vision of the Christian revelation has at all times been more real, more potent to influence action, and more powerful to preoccupy the imagination than all worldly interests put together." And Professor Shairp says: "All through life it would seem that the sense of his own soul, of his spiritual nature, and of the existence of God, was more present to him than the material world which surrounded him. And it is a thought of his, always deeply felt, that the unseen

world is close to us and ever ready as it were to break through the shell and manifest itself." The "unseen world" is a world seen by the children of faith; a world of love; a world of beauty, sleeping dreamless years, waiting literary knights to vision its loveliness to a visionless humanity. Such a writer may the Catholic student become in whom the wells of faith are deep; such a writer has Newman been, in whom the vision of faith flashed on the inward eye—the deathless beauty of the world undying.

This vision was the very center of Newman's life; yet it made him no mere visionary. Visionaries are not the product of deep spirituality, nor are the children of piety impracticable. There is a school that thinks piety and literature have no common factor—and yet Newman seemed to find one; there is a school that thinks that literature is a plus, and piety a minus energy, and their sum is inertia—yet Newman's result differs from their answer book. Why? Because his was the piety of rugged conviction; not a dainty creation to glide into on the Lord's Day and let hang in moth-proof on the six days of other gods, but the armor of faith that saw service on days pagan as well as on days holy.

Hence the power that flowed out from him. "It is hardly too much to say," remarks Professor Shairp, "that they (*Parochial Sermons*) have elevated the thought and purified the style of every able Oxford man who has written since, even of those who had least sympathy with the sentiments they express." This religious power of his sprung from a concrete grasp of the abstract. How well this is exemplified, those who run may read in *The Dream of Gerontius*. Newman had said: "Revealed religion should be especially poetic, and it is so in fact. It presents us with those ideal forms of excellence in which a poetical mind delights, and with which all grace and harmony are associated. It brings us into a new world—a world of overpowering interest, of the sublimest views and the tenderest and purest feeling."

Here, in *The Dream of Gerontius*, Newman has taken the elements of Christian revelation—God, Christ, the Church, the soul, the angels, the demons—brooded over them lovingly, till

piety took fire and welded them into a masterpiece, a work as beautiful as it is sublime. The poem is full of the fire of passion; not the passion of mere flesh and blood, but the spiritual passion of the soul aflame for her God. True, the young student may fail to find *The Dream of Gerontius* a masterpiece; to him it may prove a disappointment, for its surface beauty is meager. But let him remember that "the full appreciation of the work of a master mind comes to no one without effort. The reward of a student of literature is great, but his labor also is great."

It is with this view in mind that question lists have been appended in the hope that some of the qualities that make *The Dream of Gerontius* the masterpiece it is may be brought home to our young students.



## THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

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### I

#### GERONTIUS

JESU, MARIA—I am near to death,  
And Thou art calling me; I know it now—  
Not by the token of this faltering breath,  
This chill at heart, this dampness on my brow, —  
(Jesu, have mercy! Mary, pray for me!)  
'Tis this new feeling, never felt before,  
(Be with me, Lord, in my extremity!)  
That I am going, that I am no more.  
'Tis this strange innermost abandonment,  
(Lover of souls! great God! I look to Thee,) 10  
This emptying out of each constituent  
And natural force, by which I come to be.  
Pray for me, O my friends; a visitant  
Is knocking his dire summons at my door,  
The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt,  
Has never, never come to me before;  
'Tis death,— O loving friends, your prayers! —'tis  
he! . . . .  
As though my very being had given way,

As though I was no more a substance now,  
 And could fall back on nought to be my stay, 20  
 (Help, loving Lord! Thou my sole Refuge, Thou,)  
 And turn no whither, but must needs decay  
 And drop from out the universal frame  
 Into that shapeless, scopeless, blank abyss,  
 That utter nothingness, of which I came;  
 This is it that has come to pass in me;  
 Oh, horror! this it is, my dearest, this;  
 So pray for me, my friends, who have not strength  
 to pray.

## ASSISTANTS

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.  
 Holy Mary, pray for him. 30  
 All holy Angels, pray for him.  
 Choirs of the righteous, pray for him.  
 Holy Abraham, pray for him.  
 St. John Baptist, St. Joseph, pray for him.  
 St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Andrew, St. John,  
 All Apostles, all Evangelists, pray for him.  
 All holy Disciples of the Lord, pray for him.  
 All holy Innocents, pray for him.  
 All holy Martyrs, all holy Confessors,  
 All holy Hermits, all holy Virgins, 40  
 All ye saints of God, pray for him.

## GERONTIUS

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man;  
 And through such waning span  
 Of life and thought as still has to be trod,  
 Prepare to meet thy God.

And while the storm of that bewilderment  
 Is for a season spent,  
 And ere afresh the ruin on me fall,  
 Use well the interval.

## ASSISTANTS

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord. 50  
 Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.

From the sins that are past;  
 From Thy frown and Thine ire;  
 From the perils of dying;  
 From any complying  
 With sin, or denying  
 His God, or relying

On self, at the last;  
 From the nethermost fire;  
 From all that is evil; 60  
 From the power of the devil;  
 Thy servant deliver,  
 For once and for ever.

By Thy birth, and by Thy Cross,  
 Rescue him from endless loss;  
 By Thy death and burial,  
 Save him from a final fall;  
 By Thy rising from the tomb,  
 By Thy mounting up above,  
 By the Spirit's gracious love, 70  
 Save him in the day of doom.



## GERONTIUS

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,  
     De profundis oro te,  
 Miserere, Judex meus,  
     Parce mihi, Domine.  
 Firmly I believe and truly  
     God is Three, and God is One;  
 And I next acknowledge duly  
     Manhood taken by the Son.  
 And I trust and hope most fully                   80  
     In that Manhood crucified;  
 And each thought and deed unruly  
     Do to death, as He has died.  
 Simply to His grace and wholly  
     Light and life and strength belong.  
 And I love, supremely, solely,  
     Him the holy, Him the strong.  
 Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,  
     De profundis oro te,  
 Miserere, Judex meus,                                 90  
     Parce mihi, Domine.  
 And I hold in veneration,  
     For the love of Him alone,  
 Holy Church, as His creation,  
     And her teachings, as His own.  
 And I take with joy whatever  
     Now besets me, pain or fear,  
 And with a strong will I sever  
     All the ties which bind me here.  
 Adoration aye be given,                                 100  
     With and through the angelic host,  
 To the God of earth and Heaven,  
     Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.



Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,  
 De profundis oro te,  
 Miserere, Judex meus,  
 Mortis in discrimine.

I can no more; for now it comes again,  
 That sense of ruin, which is worse than pain;  
 That masterful negation and collapse 110  
 Of all that makes me man; as though I bent  
 Over the dizzy brink  
 Of some sheer infinite descent;  
 Or worse, as though  
 Down, down for ever I was falling through  
 The solid framework of created things,  
 And needs must sink and sink  
 Into the vast abyss. And, crueller still,  
 A fierce and restless fright begins to fill  
 The mansion of my soul. And, worse and worse,  
 Some bodily form of ill 121  
 Floats on the wind, with many a loathsome curse  
 Tainting the hallowed air, and laughs, and flaps  
 Its hideous wings,  
 And makes me wild with horror and dismay.  
 O Jesu, help! Pray for me, Mary, pray!  
 Some angel, Jesu! such as came to Thee  
 In Thine own agony . . . . .  
 Mary, pray for me. Joseph, pray for me. Mary,  
 pray for me. 130

## ASSISTANTS

Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour,  
 As of old so many by Thy gracious power: —  
 (Amen.)

Enoch and Elias from the common doom; (Amen.)

Noe from the waters in a saving home; (Amen.)

Abraham from th' abounding guilt of Heathen-  
esse! (Amen.)

Job from all his multiform and fell distress;  
(Amen.)

Isaac, when his father's knife was raised to slay;  
(Amen.)

Lot from burning Sodom on its judgment-day;  
(Amen.)

Moses from the land of bondage and despair;  
(Amen.)

Daniel from the hungry lions in their lair; (Amen.)

And the Children Three amid the furnace-flame;  
(Amen.)

141

Chaste Susanna from the slander and the shame;  
(Amen.)

David from Golia and the wrath of Saul; (Amen.)

And the two Apostles from their prison-thrall;  
(Amen.)

Thecla from her torments; (Amen.)

—so, to show Thy Power,

Rescue this Thy servant in his evil hour.

### GERONTIUS

Novissima hora est; and I fain would sleep.

The pain has wearied me. . . . Into Thy hands,

O Lord, into Thy hands . . .

### THE PRIEST

Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo! 150

Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!

Go from this world! Go, in the name of God  
 The omnipotent Father, who created thee!  
 Go, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,  
 Son of the living God, who bled for thee!  
 Go, in the name of the Holy Spirit, who  
 Hath been poured out on thee! Go, in the name  
 Of Angels and Archangels; in the name  
 Of Thrones and Dominations; in the name  
 Of Princedoms and of Powers; and in the name  
 Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go forth! 161  
 Go, in the name of Patriarchs and Prophets  
 And of Apostles and Evangelists,  
 Of Martyrs and Confessors; in the name  
 Of holy Monks and Hermits; in the name  
 Of holy Virgins: and all Saints of God,  
 Both men and women, go! Go on thy course;  
 And may thy place to-day be found in peace,  
 And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount  
 Of Sion:—in the name of Christ our Lord. 170

## II

## SOUL OF GERONTIUS

I WENT to sleep; and now I am refreshed.  
 A strange refreshment: for I feel in me  
 An inexpressive lightness, and a sense  
 Of freedom, as I were at length myself,  
 And ne'er had been before. How still it is!  
 I hear no more the busy beat of time,  
 No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse;

Nor does one moment differ from the next.  
 I had a dream; yes:—some one softly said  
 “He’s gone”; and then a sigh went round the  
 room. 180

And then I surely heard a priestly voice  
 Cry “Subvenite”; and they knelt in prayer.  
 I seem to hear him still; but thin and low,  
 And fainter and more faint the accents come,  
 As at an ever-widening interval.  
 Ah! whence is this? What is this severance?  
 This silence pours a solitariness  
 Into the very essence of my soul;  
 And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,  
 Hath something too of sternness and of pain, 190  
 For it drives back my thoughts upon their spring  
 By a strange introversion, and perforce  
 I now begin to feed upon myself,  
 Because I have nought else to feed upon.

Am I alive or dead? I am not dead,  
 But in the body still; for I possess  
 A sort of confidence which clings to me  
 That each particular organ holds its place  
 As heretofore, combining with the rest  
 Into one symmetry, that wraps me round, 200  
 And makes me man; and surely I could move,  
 Did I but will it, every part of me.  
 And yet I cannot to my sense bring home,  
 By very trial, that I have the power.  
 ’Tis strange; I cannot stir a hand or foot,  
 I cannot make my fingers or my lips  
 By mutual pressure witness each to each,  
 Nor by the eyelid’s instantaneous stroke  
 Assure myself I have a body still.

Nor do I know my very attitude, 210  
Nor if I stand, or lie, or sit, or kneel.

So much I know, not knowing how I know,  
That the vast universe, where I have dwelt,  
Is quitting me, or I am quitting it.  
Or I or it is rushing on the wings  
Of light or lightning on an onward course,  
And we e'en now are million miles apart.  
Yet . . . is this peremptory severance  
Wrought out in lengthening measurements of  
space,  
Which grow and multiply by speed and time? 220  
Or am I traversing infinity  
By endless subdivision, hurrying back  
From finite towards infinitesimal,  
Thus dying out of the expansive world?

Another marvel: some one has me fast  
Within his ample palm; 'tis not a grasp  
Such as they use on earth, but all around  
Over the surface of my subtle being,  
As though I were a sphere, and capable  
To be accosted thus, a uniform 230  
And gentle pressure tells me I am not  
Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.  
And hark! I hear a singing; yet in sooth  
I cannot of that music rightly say  
Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones.  
Oh, what a heart-subduing melody!

## ANGEL

My work is done,  
 My task is o'er,  
 And so I come,  
 Taking it home, 240  
 For the crown is won,  
 Alleluia,  
 For evermore.

My Father gave  
 In charge to me  
 This child of earth  
 E'en from its birth,  
 To serve and save,  
 Alleluia,  
 And saved is he. 250

This child of clay  
 To me was given,  
 To rear and train  
 By sorrow and pain  
 In the narrow way,  
 Alleluia,  
 From earth to heaven.

## SOUL

It is a member of that family  
 Of wondrous beings who, ere the worlds were  
 made,  
 Millions of ages back, have stood around 260  
 The throne of God:—he never has known sin;  
 But through those cycles all but infinite



Has had a strong and pure celestial life,  
And bore to gaze on th' unveiled face of God,  
And drank from the eternal Fount of truth,  
And served Him with a keen ecstatic love.  
Hark! he begins again.

## ANGEL

O Lord, how wonderful in depth and height,  
But most in man, how wonderful Thou art!  
With what a love, what soft persuasive might 270  
Victorious o'er the stubborn fleshly heart,  
Thy tale complete of saints Thou dost provide,  
To fill the thrones which angels lost through  
pride!

He lay a grovelling babe upon the ground,  
Polluted in the blood of his first sire,  
With his whole essence shattered and unsound,  
And, coiled around his heart, a demon dire,  
Which was not of his nature, but had skill  
To bind and form his opening mind to ill.

Then was I sent from heaven to set right 280  
The balance in his soul of truth and sin,  
And I have waged a long relentless fight,  
Resolved that death-environed spirit to win,  
Which from its fallen state, when all was lost,  
Had been repurchased at so dread a cost.

Oh, what a shifting parti-coloured scene  
Of hope and fear, of triumph and dismay,  
Of recklessness and penitence, has been  
The history of that dreary, lifelong fray!

And oh, the grace to nerve him and to lead, 290  
How patient, prompt, and lavish at his need!

O man, strange composite of heaven and earth!  
Majesty dwarfed to baseness! fragrant flower  
Running to poisonous seed! and seeming worth  
Cloaking corruption! weakness mastering  
power!

Who never art so near to crime and shame,  
As when thou hast achieved some deed of  
name;—

How should ethereal natures comprehend  
A thing made up of spirit and of clay,  
Were we not tasked to nurse it and to tend, 300  
Linked one to one throughout its mortal day?  
More than the Seraph in his height of place,  
The Angel-guardian knows and loves the ran-  
somed race.

### SOUL

Now know I surely that I am at length  
Out of the body: had I part with earth,  
I never could have drunk those accents in,  
And not have worshipped as a god the voice  
That was so musical; but now I am  
So whole of heart, so calm, so self-possessed,  
With such a full content, and with a sense 310  
So apprehensive and discriminant,  
As no temptation can intoxicate.  
Nor have I even terror at the thought  
That I am clasped by such a saintliness.



## ANGEL

All praise to Him, at whose sublime decree  
 The last are first, the first become the last;  
 By whom the suppliant prisoner is set free,  
 By whom proud first-borns from their thrones  
 are cast,  
 Who raises Mary to be Queen of heaven,  
 While Lucifer is left, condemned and unforgiven.

## III

## SOUL

I will address him. Mighty one, my Lord, 321  
 My Guardian Spirit, all hail!

## ANGEL

All hail, my child!  
 My child and brother, hail! What wouldest thou?

## SOUL

I would have nothing but to speak with thee  
 For speaking's sake. I wish to hold with thee  
 Conscious communion; though I fain would know  
 A maze of things, were it but meet to ask,  
 And not a curiousness.

## ANGEL

You cannot now                    330  
Cherish a wish which ought not be wished.

## SOUL

Then I will speak. I ever had believed  
That on the moment when the struggling soul  
Quitted its mortal case, forthwith it fell  
Under the awful Presence of its God,  
There to be judged and sent to its own place.  
What lets me now from going to my Lord ?

## ANGEL

Thou art not let; but with extremest speed  
Art hurrying to the just and holy Judge:  
For scarcely art thou disembodied yet.                    340  
Divide a moment, as men measure time,  
Into its million-million-millionth part,  
Yet even less than that the interval  
Since thou didst leave the body; and the priest  
Cried "Subvenite", and they fell to prayer;  
Nay, scarcely yet have they begun to pray.

For spirits and men by different standards mete  
The less and greater in the flow of time.  
By sun and moon, primeval ordinances—  
By stars which rise and set harmoniously—                    350  
By the recurring seasons, and the swing,  
This way and that, of the suspended rod  
Precise and punctual, men divide the hours,  
Equal, continuous, for their common use.

Not so with us in th' immaterial world;  
 But intervals in their succession  
 Are measured by the living thought alone,  
 And grow or wane with its intensity.  
 And time is not a common property;  
 But what is long is short, and swift is slow,      360  
 And near is distant, as received and grasped  
 By this mind and by that, and every one  
 Is standard of his own chronology.  
 And memory lacks its natural resting-points  
 Of years, and centuries, and periods.  
 It is thy very energy of thought  
 Which keeps thee from thy God.

## SOUL

Dear Angel, say,

Why have I now no fear at meeting Him?  
 Along my earthly life, the thought of death      370  
 And judgment was to me most terrible.  
 I had it aye before me, and I saw  
 The Judge severe e'en in the crucifix.  
 Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled;  
 And at this balance of my destiny,  
 Now close upon me, I can forward look  
 With a serenest joy.

## ANGEL

It is because

Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not fear.  
 Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so      380  
 For thee the bitterness of death is past.

Also, because already in thy soul  
 The judgment is begun. That day of doom,  
 One and the same for the collected world—  
 That solemn consummation for all flesh,  
 Is, in the case of each, anticipate  
 Upon his death; and, as the last great day  
 In the particular judgment is rehearsed,  
 So now too, ere thou comest to the Throne,  
 A presage falls upon thee, as a ray 390  
 Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot.  
 That calm and joy uprising in thy soul  
 Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,  
 And heaven begun.

## IV

## SOUL

But hark! upon my sense  
 Comes a fierce hubbub, which would make me fear,  
 Could I be frightened.

## ANGEL

We are now arrived  
 Close on the judgment-court; that sullen howl  
 Is from the demons who assemble there. 400  
 It is the middle region, where of old  
 Satan appeared among the sons of God,  
 To cast his jibes and scoffs at holy Job.

So now his legions throng the vestibule,  
 Hungry and wild, to claim their property,  
 And gather souls for hell. Hist to their cry.

## SOUL

How sour and how uncouth a dissonance!

## DEMONS

Low-born clods  
     Of brute earth,  
         They aspire 410  
 To become gods,  
     By a new birth,  
 And an extra grace,  
     And a score of merits.  
         As if aught  
 Could stand in place  
         Of the high thought,  
     And the glance of fire  
     Of the great spirits,  
 The powers blest, 420  
     The lords by right,  
         The primal owners  
             Of the proud dwelling  
     And the realm of light,—  
 Dispossessed,  
     Aside thrust,  
         Chucked down,  
 By the sheer might  
     Of a despot's will,  
         Of a tyrant's frown. 430



Which fools adore,  
                                   Ha! ha!  
 When life is o'er, 460  
 Which rattle and stink,  
   E'en in the flesh.  
 We cry his pardon!  
           No flesh hath he;  
                                   Ha! ha!  
           For it hath died,  
           'Tis crucified  
   Day by day,  
 Afresh, afresh,  
                                   Ha! ha! 470  
           That holy clay,  
                                   Ha! ha!  
 This gains guerdon,  
   So priestlings prate,  
                                   Ha! ha!  
 Before the Judge,  
           And pleads and atones  
 For spite and grudge,  
           And bigot mood,  
   And envy and hate, 480  
           And greed of blood.

## SOUL

How impotent they are! and yet on earth  
 They have repute for wondrous power and skill;  
 And books describe, how that the very face  
 Of the Evil One, if seen, would have a force  
 Even to freeze the blood, and choke the life  
 Of him who saw it.



## ANGEL

In thy trial-state  
 Thou hadst a traitor nestling close at home,  
 Connatural, who with the powers of hell 490  
 Was leagued, and of thy senses kept the keys,  
 And to that deadliest foe unlocked thy heart.  
 And therefore is it, in respect of man,  
 Those fallen ones show so majestic.  
 But, when some child of grace, angel or saint,  
 Pure and upright in his integrity  
 Of nature, meets the demons on their raid,  
 They scud away as cowards from the fight.  
 Nay, oft hath holy hermit in his cell,  
 Not yet disburdened of mortality, 500  
 Mocked at their threats and warlike overtures;  
 Or, dying, when they swarmed, like flies, around,  
 Defied them, and departed to his Judge.

## DEMONS

Virtue and vice,  
 A knave's pretence  
     'Tis all the same;  
         Ha! ha!  
     Dread of hell-fire,  
 Of the venomous flame,  
         A coward's plea. 510  
 Give him his price,  
     Saint though he be,  
         Ha! ha!  
 From shrewd good sense  
     He'll slave for hire,  
         Ha! ha!



And does but aspire  
 To the heaven above  
     With sordid aim,  
 And not from love. 520  
     Ha! ha!

## SOUL

I see not those false spirits; shall I see  
 My dearest Master, when I reach His throne;  
 Or hear, at least, His awful judgment-word  
 With personal intonation, as I now  
 Hear thee, not see thee, Angel? Hitherto  
 All has been darkness since I left the earth;  
 Shall I remain thus sight-bereft all through  
 My penance time? If so, how comes it then  
 That I have hearing still, and taste, and touch,  
 Yet not a glimmer of that princely sense 531  
 Which binds ideas in one, and makes them live?

## ANGEL

Nor touch, nor taste, nor hearing hast thou now;  
 Thou livest in a world of signs and types,  
 The presentations of most holy truths,  
 Living and strong, which now encompass thee.  
 A disembodied soul, thou hast by right  
 No converse with aught else beside thyself:  
 But, lest so stern a solitude should load  
 And break thy being, in mercy are vouchsafed 540  
 Some lower measures of perception,  
 Which seem to thee as though through channels  
     brought,  
 Through ear, or nerves, or palate, which are gone.

And thou art wrapped and swathed around in  
 dreams,  
 Dreams that are true, yet enigmatical;  
 For the belongings of thy present state,  
 Save through such symbols, come not home to thee.  
 And thus thou tell'st of space, and time, and size,  
 Of fragrant, solid, bitter, musical,  
 Of fire, and of refreshment after fire; 550  
 As (let me use similitude of earth,  
 To aid thee in the knowledge thou dost ask)—  
 As ice which blisters may be said to burn.  
 Nor hast thou now extension, with its parts  
 Correlative,—long habit cozens thee,—  
 Nor power to move thyself, nor limbs to move.  
 Hast thou not heard of those, who after loss  
 Of hand or foot, still cried that they had pains  
 In hand or foot, as though they had it still?  
 So is it now with thee, who hast not lost 560  
 Thy hand or foot, but all which made up man;  
 So will it be, until the joyous day  
 Of resurrection, when thou wilt regain  
 All thou hast lost, new-made and glorified.  
 How, even now, the consummated Saints  
 See God in heaven, I may not explicate.  
 Meanwhile let it suffice thee to possess  
 Such means of converse as are granted thee,  
 Though till that Beatific Vision thou art blind;  
 For e'en thy purgatory, which comes like fire, 570  
 Is fire without its light.

## SOUL

His will be done!

I am not worthy e'er to see again

The face of day; far less His countenance  
Who is the very sun. Nathless, in life,  
When I looked forward to my purgatory,  
It ever was my solace to believe,  
That, ere I plunged amid th' avenging flame,  
I had one sight of Him to strengthen me.

## ANGEL

Nor rash nor vain is that presentiment;                   580  
Yes, — for one moment thou shalt see thy Lord.  
Thus will it be: what time thou art arraigned  
Before the dread tribunal, and thy lot  
Is cast for ever, should it be to sit  
On His right hand among His pure elect,  
Then sight, or that which to the soul is sight,  
As by a lightning-flash, will come to thee,  
And thou shalt see, amid the dark profound,  
Whom thy soul loveth, and would fain approach, —  
One moment; but thou knowest not, my child, 590  
What thou dost ask: that sight of the Most Fair  
Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too.

## SOUL

Thou speakest darkly, Angel! and an awe  
Falls on me, and a fear lest I be rash.

## ANGEL

There was a mortal, who is now above  
In the mid glory: he, when near to die,  
Was given communion with the Crucified, —

Such, that the Master's very wounds were stamped  
 Upon his flesh; and, from the agony  
 Which thrilled through body and soul in that  
     embrace 600  
 Learn that the flame of the Everlasting Love  
 Doth burn ere it transform. . . .

## V

. . . Hark to those sounds!  
 They come of tender beings angelical,  
 Least and most childlike of the sons of God.

## FIRST CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
 And in the depth be praise:  
 In all His words most wonderful;  
 Most sure in all His ways!

To us His elder race He gave 610  
 To battle and to win,  
 Without the chastisement of pain,  
 Without the soil of sin.

The younger son he willed to be  
 A marvel in his birth:  
 Spirit and flesh his parents were;  
 His home was heaven and earth.

The Eternal blessed His child, and armed,  
 And sent him hence afar,  
 To serve as champion in the field 620  
 Of elemental war.

To be his Viceroy in the world  
 Of matter, and of sense;  
 Upon the frontier, towards the foe,  
 A resolute defence.

## ANGEL

We now have passed the gate, and are within  
 The House of Judgment; and whereas on earth  
 Temples and palaces are formed of parts  
 Costly and rare, but all material,  
 So in the world of spirits nought is found, 630  
 To mould withal and form into a whole,  
 But what is immaterial; and thus  
 The smallest portions of this edifice,  
 Cornice, or frieze, or balustrade, or stair,  
 The very pavement is made up of life—  
 Of holy, blessed, and immortal beings,  
 Who hymn their Maker's praise continually.

## SECOND CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
 And in the depth be praise:  
 In all His words most wonderful; 640  
 Most sure in all His ways!

Woe to thee, man! for he was found  
 A recreant in the fight;

And lost his heritage of heaven,  
And fellowship with light.

Above him now the angry sky,  
Around the tempest's din;  
Who once had angels for his friends,  
Had but the brutes for kin.

O man! a savage kindred they; 650  
To flee that monster brood  
He scaled the seaside cave, and clomb  
The giants of the wood.

With now a fear, and now a hope,  
With aids which chance supplied,  
From youth to eld, from sire to son,  
He lived, and toiled, and died.

He dreed his penance age by age;  
And step by step began 660  
Slowly to doff his savage garb,  
And be again a man.

And quickened by the Almighty's breath,  
And chastened by His rod,  
And taught by Angel-visitings,  
At length he sought his God:

And learned to call upon His name,  
And in His faith create  
A household and a fatherland,  
A city and a state.



Glory to Him who from the mire, 670  
 In patient length of days,  
 Elaborated into life  
 A people to His praise!

## SOUL

The sound is like the rushing of the wind—  
 The summer wind among the lofty pines;  
 Swelling and dying, echoing round about,  
 Now here, now distant, wild and beautiful;  
 While, scattered from the branches it has stirred,  
 Descend ecstatic odours.

## THIRD CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height, 680  
 And in the depth be praise:  
 In all His words most wonderful;  
 Most sure in all his ways!

The Angels, as beseemingly  
 To spirit-kind was given,  
 At once were tried and perfected,  
 And took their seats in heaven.

For them no twilight or eclipse;  
 No growth and no decay:  
 'Twas hopeless, all-ingulfing night, 690  
 Or beatific day.

But to the younger race there rose  
 A hope upon its fall;

And slowly, surely, gracefully,  
The morning dawned on all.

And ages, opening out, divide  
The precious and the base,  
And from the hard and sullen mass,  
Mature the heirs of grace.

O man! albeit the quickening ray, 700  
Lit from his second birth,  
Makes him at length what once he was,  
And heaven grows out of earth;

Yet still between that earth and heaven—  
His journey and his goal—  
A double agony awaits  
His body and his soul.

A double debt he has to pay—  
The forfeit of his sins,  
The chill of death is past, and now 710  
The penance-fire begins.

Glory to Him, who evermore  
By truth and justice reigns;  
Who tears the soul from out its case,  
And burns away its stains!

#### ANGEL

They sing of thy approaching agony,  
Which thou so eagerly didst question of:  
It is the face of the Incarnate God  
Shall smite thee with that keen and subtle pain;



And yet the memory which it leaves will be 720  
 A sovereign febrifuge to heal the wound;  
 And yet withal it will the wound provoke,  
 And aggravate and widen it the more.

## SOUL

Thou speakest mysteries; still methinks I know  
 To disengage the tangle of thy words:  
 Yet rather would I hear thy angel voice,  
 Than for myself be thy interpreter.

## ANGEL

When then—if such thy lot—thou seest thy Judge,  
 The sight of Him will kindle in thy heart  
 All tender, gracious, reverential thoughts. 730  
 Thou wilt be sick with love, and yearn for Him,  
 And feel as though thou couldst but pity Him,  
 That one so sweet should e'er have placed Himself  
 At disadvantage such, as to be used  
 So vilely by a being so vile as thee.  
 There is a pleading in His pensive eyes  
 Will pierce thee to the quick, and trouble thee.  
 And thou wilt hate and loathe thyself; for, though  
 Now sinless, thou wilt feel that thou hast sinned,  
 As never thou didst feel; and wilt desire 740  
 To slink away, and hide thee from His sight  
 And yet wilt have a longing aye to dwell  
 Within the beauty of His countenance.  
 And these two pains, so counter and so keen,—  
 The longing for Him, when thou seest Him not;  
 The shame of self at thought of seeing Him,—  
 Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.

## SOUL

My soul is in my hand: I have no fear,—  
 In His dear might prepared for weal or woe.  
 But hark! a grand mysterious harmony: 750  
 It floods me, like the deep and solemn sound  
 Of many waters.

## ANGEL

We have gained the stairs  
 Which rise towards the Presence-chamber; there  
 A band of mighty Angels keep the way  
 On either side, and hymn the Incarnate God.

## ANGELS OF THE SACRED STAIR

Father, whose goodness none can know, but they  
     Who see Thee face to face,  
 By man hath come the infinite display  
     Of Thy victorious grace; 760  
 But fallen man — the creature of a day—  
     Skills not that love to trace.  
 It needs, to tell the triumph Thou has wrought,  
 An Angel's deathless fire, an Angel's reach of  
     thought.

It needs that very Angel, who with awe,  
     Amid the garden shade,  
 The great Creator in His sickness saw,  
     Soothed by a creature's aid,  
 And agonized, as victim of the Law  
 Which He Himself had made; 770  
 For who can praise Him in His depth and height,  
 But he who saw Him reel amid that solitary fight?

## SOUL

Hark! for the lintels of the presence-gate  
Are vibrating and echoing back the strain.

## FOURTH CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise:  
In all His words most wonderful;  
Most sure in all his ways!

The foe blasphemed the Holy Lord,  
As if he reckoned ill, 780  
In that he placed His puppet man  
The frontier place to fill.

For even in his best estate,  
With amplest gifts endued,  
A sorry sentinel was he,  
A being of flesh and blood.

As though a thing, who for his help  
Must needs possess a wife,  
Could cope with those proud rebel hosts,  
Who had angelic life. 790

And when, by blandishment of Eve,  
That earth-born Adam fell,  
He shrieked in triumph, and he cried,  
"A sorry sentinel;

The Maker by His word is bound,  
Escape or cure is none;  
He must abandon to his doom,  
And slay His darling Son."

## ANGEL

And now the threshold, as we traverse it,  
Utters aloud its glad responsive chant. 800

## FIFTH CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise:  
In all His words most wonderful;  
Most sure in all His ways!

O loving wisdom of our God!  
When all was sin and shame,  
A second Adam to the fight  
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love! that flesh and blood  
Which did in Adam fail, 810  
Should strive afresh against the foe,  
Should strive and should prevail;

And that a higher gift than grace  
Should flesh and blood refine,  
God's Presence and His very Self,  
And Essence all divine.

O generous love! that He who smote  
In man for man the foe,  
The double agony in man  
For man should undergo; 820

And in the garden secretly,  
And on the cross on high,  
Should teach his brethren and inspire  
To suffer and to die.

## VI

## ANGEL

Thy Judgment now is near, for we are come  
Into the veiled presence of our God.

## SOUL

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

## ANGEL

It is the voice of friends around thy bed,  
Who say the "Subvenite" with the priest.  
Hither the echoes come; before the Throne      830  
Stands the great Angel of the Agony,  
The same who strengthened Him, what time He  
    knelt  
Lone in the garden shade, bedewed with blood.  
That Angel best can plead with Him for all  
Tormented souls, the dying and the dead.

## ANGEL OF THE AGONY

Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell on  
    Thee;  
Jesu! by that cold dismay which sickened Thee;  
Jesu! by that pang of heart which thrilled in  
    Thee;  
Jesu! by that mount of sins which crippled Thee;

Jesu! by that sense of guilt which stifled Thee;  
 Jesu! by that innocence which girdled Thee; 841  
 Jesu! by that sanctity which reigned in Thee;  
 Jesu! by that Godhead which was one with Thee;  
 Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee,  
 Who in prison, calm and patient, wait for Thee;  
 Hasten, Lord, their hour, and bid them come to  
 Thee,  
 To that glorious Home, where they shall ever gaze  
 on Thee.

## SOUL

I go before my Judge. Ah! . . . .

## ANGEL

. . . . Praise to His Name!  
 The eager spirit has darted from my hold, 850  
 And, with the intemperate energy of love,  
 Flies to the dear feet of Emmanuel;  
 But, ere it reach them, the keen sanctity,  
 Which with its effluence, like a glory, clothes  
 And circles round the Crucified, has seized,  
 And scorched, and shrivelled it; and now it lies  
 Passive and still before the awful Throne.  
 O happy, suffering soul! for it is safe,  
 Consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God.

## SOUL

Take me away, and in the lowest deep 860  
 There let me be,



And there in hope the lone night-watches keep,  
     Told out for me.  
 There, motionless and happy in my pain,  
     Lone, not forlorn,—  
 There will I sing my sad perpetual strain,  
     Until the morn.  
 There will I sing, and soothe my stricken breast,  
     Which ne'er can cease  
 To throb, and pine, and languish, till possest   870  
     Of its Sole Peace.  
 There will I sing my absent Lord and Love:—  
     Take me away,  
 That sooner I may rise, and go above,  
 And see Him in the truth of everlasting day.

## VII

## ANGEL

Now let the golden prison ope its gates,  
 Making sweet music, as each fold revolves  
 Upon its ready hinge. And ye great powers,  
 Angels of Purgatory, receive from me  
 My charge, a precious soul, until the day,       880  
 When, from all bond and forfeiture released,  
 I shall reclaim it for the courts of light.

## SOULS IN PURGATORY

1. Lord, Thou hast been our refuge: in every generation;



2. Before the hills were born, and the world was:  
from age to age Thou art God.
  3. Bring us not, Lord, very low: for Thou hast  
said, Come back again, ye sons of Adam.
  4. A thousand years before Thine eyes are but as  
yesterday: and as a watch of the night  
which is come and gone.
  5. The grass springs up in the morning: at even-  
ingtide it shrivels up and dies.
  6. So we fail in Thine anger: and in Thy wrath  
we are troubled.
  7. Thou hast set our sins in Thy sight: and our  
round of days in the light of Thy counte-  
nance.
  8. Come back, O Lord! how long: and he entreat-  
ed for Thy servants. 890
  9. In Thy morning we shall be filled with Thy  
mercy: we shall rejoice and be in pleasure  
all our days.
  10. We shall be glad according to the days of our  
humiliation: and the years in which we have  
seen evil.
  11. Look, O Lord, upon Thy servants and on Thy  
work: and direct their children.
  12. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be  
upon us: and the work of our hands, estab-  
lish Thou it.
- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the  
Holy Ghost.
- As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall  
be: world without end. Amen.

## ANGEL

Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul,  
    In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,  
And, o'er the penal waters, as they roll,  
    I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.

And carefully I dip thee in the lake,                   901  
    And thou, without a sob or a resistance,  
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,  
    Sinking deep, deeper into the dim distance.

Angels, to whom the willing task is given,  
    Shall tend, and nurse and lull thee, as thou  
    liest,  
And Masses on the earth, and prayers in heaven,  
    Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most High-  
    est.

Farewell, but not for ever! brother dear,  
    Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow,  
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,           911  
    And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.



## THE TEXT

## PROLOGUE. Lines 1-170.

1. What is the natural tone of a death scene?
2. How does the prologue gain that tone?
3. Do the choruses of the Assistants intensify that effect?
4. Does the Latin add to or detract from the effect? Why?
5. Describe the "new feeling never felt before" by which Gerontius knows that he is dying. Lines 7-28.
6. In lines 7-28.
  - a. Which line best pictures to you the void into which Gerontius is falling?
  - b. What effect do his invocations produce on the narrative?
  - c. What lines indicate his fear of death?
  - d. Can you point out any indication of a death struggle?
7. Line 42 indicates a change of mood. There are four such soul states in Gerontius' dying. What is the mood in lines 1-30? In lines 42-107? In lines 107-130? In lines 147-150?
8. Are these moods influenced by the prayers of the Assistants? Explain.
9. Show by examples the responsiveness of the language to the mood; i. e., by change in rhythm, by change in diction.
10. What comparison brings out "that sense of ruin which is worse than pain"? Line 110.
11. Did you ever dream that you were falling? Does the comparison used in the poem correspond to your feelings?
12. Is there any indication of temptation? Line 120.
13. What would you say are the most beautiful lines of the prologue? Give reasons for your choice.
14. How would you characterize the movement or rhythm of the prologue?
15. What ideas or thoughts strike you as new in the prologue?

## FIRST EPISODE. Lines 171-320.

16. What lines indicate the movement of the first episode?
17. Is the movement a contrast to that of the prologue? Why?
18. What world does the soul now enter, and what problem now faces the poet?
19. In line 225 we read: "Another marvel: ....." What marvels make up this episode?
20. How can "sweet rest" have pain? Lines 190-195.
21. What two doubts possess the soul? Lines 196-210; 210-225.
22. Have you felt doubt as to whether you were moving when a train rushed past the one in which you were? Are your feelings verified in the poet's words?
23. How would you characterize
  - a. The Angels' first song? (A song of .....
  - b. The Angels' second song? (A song of .....
24. What is the effect of these melodies on the narrative?
25. How does Gerontius recognize the Angel? Line 258.
26. Do you consider line 307 exaggerated? Can you recall anything similar in Saint John's *Apocalypse*?
27. Why is the soul of Gerontius temptation-free? Line 312.
28. What lines impress you as the most musical in this episode?
29. Scan them for their musical reason.

## SECOND EPISODE. Lines 321-394.

30. What two questions of Gerontius, together with the Angel's answer, make up the content of this episode?
31. Do the answers satisfy your thoughts on the matter in question? Why?
32. Are the questions such as you would ask? Why?
33. What line in the Angel's first answer shows the time occupied by the first and second episodes?

34. How is "time" measured in eternity? Line 355.
35. Is this standard natural? Would or could you propose another standard?
36. What keeps the soul of Gerontius from his God? Line 365.
37. "I saw the Judge severe e'en in the crucifix." Is this the common view of men? Should it be otherwise? Why?
38. What is the relation of the Particular to the General Judgment as given in the text? Lines 380-390. Is this relation consonant with the Catechism?
39. In these lines is there any indication that Gerontius is saved?

THIRD EPISODE. Lines 395-602.

40. What lines strike the key-note of this episode?
41. Are the Demons' choruses in harmony with this note? Why?
42. What is the attitude of the Demons towards God? Towards man?
43. Is this attitude natural? Why?
44. Describe the character of the Demons as drawn by Newman.
45. Milton's archdemon is heroic. Are Newman's?
46. Which view is truer to faith? Which is the more artistic and literary?
47. How does the Angel account for this difference of views? Lines 490-500.
48. Does the introduction of demons add an element of plot? State reasons.
49. What lines in 540-550 indicate the medium of Gerontius' perception?
50. Why does the poet employ this medium? Has it any bearing on the title?
51. What lines in 570-580 show the craving of the soul for God?

52. "That sight of the Most Fair will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too." What example does the Angel use to explain this paradox? Lines 590-599.

FOURTH EPISODE. Lines 603-824.

53. A motif—a word much used in art and literature—is the recurrence of a theme. Thus in a symphony a fundamental melody appears and reappears in the different movements. What might be termed the motif of the songs of the five choirs of Angelicals?

54. The content of the Angelicals' songs is: The story of man's .....?

55. Does Gerontius' appreciation of the Angelicals' song recall Tennyson's *Bugle Song*? Why? Line 674.

56. Note the progress:—through the Gate, up the Sacred Stairs, to the Threshold. How does Newman turn this poetic fancy to artistic use?

57. "There is a pleading in His pensive eyes will ..... trouble thee." Line 736. What incident of the Passion does this line suggest?

FIFTH EPISODE. Line 825-875.

58. What is the tone of this episode? Why is such a tone employed?

59. "I hear the voices that I left on earth." Line 827. This line and the Angel's answer bring back what scene?

60. Lines 827-835 show "the fears of anxious hearts." Is this note of anxiety in place? Why?

61. The words of the Angel of the Agony are full of .....? Why is this feeling proper here? Lines 836-847.

62. The most solemn moment of the poem is left to our imagination. Why? Line 848.

63. What is the effect of God's sanctity on the soul of Gerontius? Line 853.



64. Does this effect give us a picture of what sin must be in the sight of God? Why?

65. After judgment, what is the sole thought of Gerontius? What were his thoughts before? Why this difference? Line 860.

66. Note the simple beauty of the Soul's song of resignation.

EPILOGUE. Lines 876-912.

67. Mark the sweet peace of the epilogue. What are its elements?

68. Would you prefer another ending? For instance, that Gerontius should wake from his dream and live? State reasons for your preference.

69. Select any one of the *Poems for Comparative Reading* and compare it with *The Dream of Gerontius*, stressing these three points:

- a. Is the view-point Christian or pagan?
- b. Are the treatment and attitude submissive or defiant?
- c. Is the effect hopeful or depressing?

### SHORT POEMS FOR COMPARATIVE READING

Arnold: *Rugby Chapel; Thyrsis.*

Browning: *Prospice.*

Bryant: *Thanatopsis.*

Gray: *Elegy in a Country Churchyard.*

Hemans: *The Hour of Death.*

Holmes: *Under the Violets.*

Hood: *The Death Bed.*

Hunt: *Death.*

Keats: *The Terrors of Death.*

Knox: *Oh! Why Should the Spirit of Mortal be Proud?*

Longfellow: *The Two Angels; Resignation.*

- Lowel: *After the Burial.*  
 Lyte: *Abide with Me.*  
 Milton: *Lycidas.*  
 Moore: *Oft in the Stilly Night; Those Evening Bells.*  
 Poe: *Annabel Lee; The Raven.*  
 Procter: *History of a Life.*  
 Rosetti: *Song.*  
 Scott: *Soldier, Rest.*  
 Shelley: *Adonais.*  
 Stoddard: *We Sat by the Cheerless Fireside.*  
 Tennyson: *Crossing the Bar; Break, Break, Break.*  
 Whitman: *O Captain! My Captain!*  
 Wordsworth: *Three Years She Grew.*

Almost all these poems can be found in *The Cambridge Book of Poetry and Song.* (The Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York.)

## DRAMATIC OUTLINE

Drama is a picture of human life for representation on the stage. The essential lines of difference between ancient, or classical, and modern, or romantic drama may be illustrated in the following table:

### CLASSICAL

1. Religious subject.
2. Action carried through prologue, five acts, and epilogue.
3. Chorus.
4. Three unities.
5. Two or three actors.
6. Soliloquy and dialogue.

### MODERN

1. Subject matter unrestricted.
2. Prologue and epilogue rarely employed, while number of acts varies.
3. No chorus.
4. One unity.
5. No set number of actors.
6. Soliloquy and dialogue are shortened.

The subject, religious in character, is taken from the mythical tradition or folk lore of the nation. A serious, sombre atmosphere envelops the theme, and thus adds to it depth and grandeur. The spirit of Greek drama is the spirit of a religious sacrifice. But the pagan idea of fate, blind and inexorable, ruling men and gods in such wise that both are powerless in its grip, throws over the theme an air of tragic woe, and renders the actors helpless in the working-out of their destinies.

In modern drama no restriction is placed on the subject matter. Its range is world-wide, embracing in its sphere all human interests. The actors are free agents in the working-out of their destinies, and Divine Providence, while a guiding, is not thereby a compelling force.

In the classical form a prologue, five acts, and an epilogue are wont to be employed in carrying on the action of the plot. The prologue contains a narrative of facts introductory to the main action. The first act marks the situation and introduces the characters. The second, third, and fourth entangle the plot and heighten the action. The fifth act brings us face to face with the catastrophe, or climax, or crisis of the action. The epilogue points the moral of the drama. As the epilogue and the fifth act, once the crisis is past, carry what is technically called the falling action; so the second, third, and fourth acts, and, up to the crisis, the fifth act, carry what is termed the rising action. To relieve the strained feeling naturally aroused by the intensity of the action during these acts, and to give the lighter note of lyric beauty to the solemnity of the whole, the chorus was brought into the play.

The office of the chorus was "to utter the voice of wisdom, counsel, and religion, and from time to time to sing an ode suggested by the play, thus relieving the attention of the spectators." The modern drama here offers a sharp contrast to the classical drama. The prologue and epilogue are set aside. The number of acts is not fixed. The chorus is not employed. But the entangling of the plot, together with the rise and fall of the action, is a property common to ancient and modern drama. In point of fact, action is the soul of drama, as the very derivation of the word suggests. And from its inception the drama

has embodied this action in the form of a struggle or clash of mighty forces. Thus, in the Greek prototype, the conflict was between humanity and fate; in the modern development, this clash is wont to express itself in the wrestling of the powers of evil and good. As all nature marks the law of a gradual growth to full fruition and then a placid decline, so drama, as the natural expression of man's activity, gradually leads up the action to a climax, and then lets it fall gently to a conclusion. In this rise and fall of the action we have life's strong passions—love, hatred, anger, fear, and pathos—brought into full play. And hence the sharper the contrast of these passions, the greater the dramatic power.

Unity of time limits the drama to events that might occur within the compass of twenty-four hours. Unity of place limits the scene to one spot, usually the palace or temple front. Unity of action excludes all matter not pertinent to the plot. Classical drama observes all three of these unities; while the modern play neglects all but the last.

In *dramatic dialogue* in place of acts episodes are used. *The Dream of Gerontius* may be classified as dramatic dialogue, classical in form.

#### Dramatic Analysis of *The Dream of Gerontius*.

- Prologue .....The death-bed of Gerontius. Lines 1-170.  
 First Episode ....Soliloquy of the Liberated Soul. Lines 171-320.  
 Second Episode ..Recognition of the Angel. Lines 321-394.  
 Third Episode....Vestibule of the Judgment Court. Lines 395-602.  
 Fourth Episode...Presence Chamber of the Judge. Lines 395-602.  
 Fifth Episode ....Judgment. Lines 825-875.  
 Epilogue .....“Farewell, but not forever.” Lines 876-912.

For a fuller discussion of dramatic principles consult:

Coppens: *A Practical Introduction to English Rhetoric.*

Matthews: *Study of the Drama.*

Moulton: *Ancient Classical Drama.*

Woodbridge: *The Technique of the Drama.*

Freytag: *Technique of the Drama.*

### THE DRAMATIC FORM

1. State the elements characteristic of classical dramatic form. Point out these elements in *The Dream of Gerontius.*

2. In any dramatic form there must be a rise and fall in action. Why?

3. Trace this rise and fall in *The Dream of Gerontius.*

4. Do you think that the action drags? If so, why?

5. What is the climax in the poem?

6. Show that the preceding episodes have a direct bearing on the climax.

7. Point out that this relation grows closer as the episode comes nearer to the climax.

8. How would you word a law of dramatic composition embodying the ideas contained in Nos. 6 and 7?

9. Can you find any such principle in your Rhetoric?

10. Do you think there is a gain in dramatic effect by the abruptness in the climax itself? Why?

11. In the classical form the climax has place in the fifth act. Does the fifth episode correspond to the fifth act in this respect?

12. The *dramatis personae* are: the Assistants; the Angels; the Demons; the Soul; God. Which of these is made the central figure and why?

13. Dramatic action requires a clash of persons or of forces. Have we such a clash here?

14. With what object does this clash concern itself?

15. What characters represent what would be the hero and the villain in modern drama?

16. Is the plotting of the Demons suggested rather than acted before our eyes? Why?

17. *The Dream of Gerontius* may be the drama of (a) a soul's salvation; or, (b) the defeat and success of God's creation. Which of these views is yours, and why?

18. The characters of the *dramatis personae* should be portrayed in their actions and their conversation. Is this principle worked out in the poem? If so, give a brief character sketch of Gerontius, the Guardian Angel, and the Demons.

19. Do the soliloquies of the Soul strike you as natural or forced; long drawn out or of proper length? Why?

20. Why should the dialogue be in the form of question and answer?

21. Do you think the subjects of the dialogues are too deep to be interesting? State your reasons.

22. Do you think people not of the Faith would appreciate the dialogues? Justify your answer.

23. Is there any direct answer to the boasts and complaints of the Demons? Why?

24. Can you consider the choruses of the Angelicals an indirect answer to the Demons?

25. Does the indirect dialogue of the Angelicals and the Demons represent counsels for and against the soul at judgment? Why?

26. Would this representation be in accord with our idea of angels and demons?

27. Would such a representation of angels and demons be dramatic? Why?

28. What five great passions mentioned in the Dramatic Outline are brought into play in a drama? Can you point out the expression of these passions in the poem?

29. In the classic drama the chorus "consisted of a band of persons who were supposed to have been present at the occurrences represented. They were actors, or rather spoke and sang like one actor in the drama." Show that the chorus of Assistants, Angelicals, and Demons fulfills these two conditions.

30. In the classic drama the personnel of the chorus remains unchanged. Why does the action of *The Dream of Gerontius* call for a change in the personnel of the chorus?



31. The office of the chorus was "to utter the voice of wisdom, counsel, and religion," and "from time to time sing an ode suggested by the play, thus relieving the attention of the spectators." Show that these duties are fulfilled by the Assistants, Demons, and Angelicals.

32. The choruses usually marked the division of the acts. Do they as a rule mark the division of the episodes in *The Dream of Gerontius*?

33. What is meant by the three unities?

34. Have they a place in *The Dream of Gerontius*?

35. Why are they not all employed in modern drama?



STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

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1. Let each student write an *honest* appreciation of the poem. Is it a masterpiece to him or not? State why.
2. Let the class construct a similar drama. The theme:
  - a. The soul of Judas; or,
  - b. The soul of Joan of Arc.

Follow the dramatic analysis (prologue, five episodes, epilogue). A single episode may be assigned to one student or to a group of students as the number in the class varies. Have the assignments read in class, criticized, combined, and published in the school paper as a class poem. (If the class has not studied metrical composition, the exercise might profitably be written in prose.)

3. Hold a class symposium:
  - a. Paper on the history of the poem.
  - b. Paper on appreciation of the poem by literary critics.
  - c. Paper on the verse structure.
  - d. Paper on Elgar's *Oratorio*.
  - e. Intersperse with select readings from the poem.
4. Let the students select three or four passages to be memorized and state the reason of the choice.
5. Assign word studies:
  - a. Let the student determine in any episode the ratio of Anglo-Saxon words to those of classical origin and state reason for the proportion used.
  - b. Let the student note in any episode the picture words, figures, and comparisons; and then determine whether ornamental or plain diction predominates in the chosen episode. Show the connection between the diction and the thought.
6. A short paper on the laws of narration and their exemplification in *The Dream of Gerontius*.
7. A paper on Greek drama, stressing the Hellenistic idea of blind fate, which of course could have no place in Christian literature.

## GLOSSARY

- Abraham, *n.* The divinely appointed founder of the Jewish nation.
- Aggravate, *vt.* To add weight, to increase. (Colloquial) To provoke, to anger.
- Albeit, *conj.* Even though, although, notwithstanding.
- Arraign, *vt.* To cite, to summon, to indict.
- Ascendant, *a.* Ascending, rising, superior, dominant.
- Beatific Vision (Theological). The sight of God face to face.
- Bigot, *a.* Narrow-minded.
- Blandishment, *n.* Soothing or flattering speech or action.
- Cant, *v.* To speak with affected or hypocritical unctiousness.
- Celestial, *a.* Heavenly, divine.
- Chastisement, *n.* The infliction of punishment.
- Chronology, *n.* The science which treats of time; the order of events.
- Chuck, *vt.* To toss, to pitch.
- Clod, *n.* A lump of clay.
- Clomb, *pp.* or *imp.* of *climb*.
- Coil, *vt.* To wind in rings.
- Communion, *n.* Sympathetic intercourse.
- Comply, *vi.* To consent, obey.
- Composite, *a.* Compound.
- Connatural, *a.* Innate, congenital, cognate, allied.
- Constituent, *a.* Component.
- Consummate, *vt.* To complete, to finish.
- Converse, *vi.* To commune, to talk with.
- Cope, *vi.* To contend, to fight.
- Cornice, *n.* The horizontal molded projection at the top of a building, usually under the eaves.
- Correlative, *a.* Mutually involving or implying one another.
- Cozen, *vt.* To cheat, to swindle.
- Cycle, *n.* Eon, a vast period.
- Dreed, *pp.* of *dree*, *v.* To suffer, to bear.
- Effluence, *n.* A flowing out.
- Eld, *n.* Former times, antiquity, old age.
- Emmanuel, *n.* God with us; one of the names of the Savior.

- Febrifuge, *n.* A medicine that is efficacious against fever.  
 Guerdon, *n.* A reward given as an honor, recompense, requital.  
 Heritage, *n.* An estate that passes by descent; a share, a portion.  
 Hist, *interj.* Be silent, hush, hark.  
 Hubbub, *n.* Uproar, tumult.  
 Incarnate, *vt.* To embody in flesh.  
 Impotent, *a.* Weak, destitute of power.  
 Integrity, *n.* Uprightness of character, the state of being entire.  
 Intemperate, *a.* Characterized by lack of moderation, violent.  
 Intonation, *n.* Modulation of voice in speaking.  
 Introversion, *a.* The act of turning within.  
 Isaac, *n.* A Hebrew patriarch, the son of Abraham.  
 Job, *n.* A Hebrew patriarch, a type of patience.  
 Kyrie eleison, *Christe eleison* (Greek). Lord have mercy on us,  
 Christ have mercy on us.  
 Lintel, *n.* The horizontal top-piece of a doorway.  
 Loathe, *vt.* To regard with hatred and disgust.  
 Loathsome, *a.* Exciting extreme aversion or disgust.  
 Lot, *n.* A Hebrew patriarch.  
 Lucifer, *n.* Satan.  
 Marvel, *n.* That which excites wonder, a prodigy.  
 Maze, *n.* A labyrinth, a network.  
 Mete, *vt.* To allot, to apportion.  
 Mortis in discrimine (Latin). In the critical moment of death.  
 Moses, *n.* A Hebrew legislator and prophet.  
 Mutual, *a.* Common, reciprocal.  
 Nathless, *adv.* Nevertheless.  
 Nethermost, *a.* Lowest.  
 Novissima hora est (Latin). The final hour is here.  
 Penal, *a.* Of or pertaining to punishment.  
 Peremptory, *a.* Not admitting of debate or expostulation, decisive, absolute.  
 Presage, *n.* An indication of something to come, omen, portent.  
 Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo (Latin). Go forth, O Christian soul, from this world.

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus, de profundis oro te, Miserere  
Judex meus, parce mihi, Domine (Latin). Holy Strong one,  
Holy God, from the depths I pray Thee, pity me, my Judge,  
spare me, O my Lord!

Scopeless, *a.* Without end or limit.

Scud, *vi.* To move, run, or fly swiftly.

Thecla, *n.* A saint of Isauria.

Token, *n.* Any object indicative of another object, a sign, an  
indication.

Transform, *vt.* To change.

Uncouth, *a.* Ungainly, odd, outlandish.

Unruly, *a.* Ungovernable.

Vestibule, *n.* A small antechamber.

Visitant, *n.* A visitor or guest.

Wane, *vi.* To diminish in size or brilliancy, to decrease.





