

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS.

The following exquisite piece of poetry, describing the troubled life and sad death of Scotland's beautiful and ill-fated Queen, would be very suitable for recitation at Catholic entertainments. It was written by H. G. Bell, Esq.

THE CONVENT.

I look'd far back in other years, and lo! in bright array,
I saw, as in a dream, the forms of ages pass'd away.
It was a stately convent, with its old and lofty walls,
And gardens, with their broad green walks, where soft the footstep falls;
And o'er the antique dial-stones the creeping shadow pass'd,
And all around the noonday sun a drowsy radiance cast.
No sound of busy life was heard save from the cloister dim,
The tinkling of the silver bell, or the Sisters' holy hymn.
And there five noble maidens sat, beneath the orchard trees,
In that first budding spring of youth, when all its prospects please;
And little reck'd they when they sang, or knelt at Vesper prayers,
That Scotland knew no prouder names—held none more dear than theirs;—
And little even the loveliest thought, before the Virgin's shrine,
Of royal blood, and high descent from the ancient Stuart line;
Calmly her happy days flew on, uncounted in their flight,
And as they flew, they left behind a long-continuing light

THE COURT.

The scene was changed. It was the court—the gay court of Bourbon—
And 'neath a thousand silver lamps, a thousand courtiers throng;
And proudly kindles Henry's eye—well pleased, I ween, to see
The land assemble all its wealth of grace and chivalry:—
Gray Montmorency, o'er whose head has passed a storm of years
Strong in himself and children stand, the first among his peers;
And next the Guises, who so well fame's steepest heights assailed,
And walked ambition's diamond ridge, where bravest hearts have failed;
And higher yet their path shall be, stronger shall wax their might,
For before them Montmorency's star shall pale its waning light.
Here Louis, Prince of Conde, wears his all-conquering sword,
With great Coligni by his side—each name a household word!
And there walks she of Medicis—that proud Italian line,
The mother of a race of kings—the haughty Catharine!
The forms that follow in her train, a glorious sunshine make—
A milky way of stars that grace a comet's glittering wake;
But fairer than all the rest, who bask on fortune's tide,
Effulgent in the light of youth, is she the new-made bride!
The homage of a thousand hearts—the fond deep love of one—
The hopes that dance around a life whose charms are but begun—
They lighten up her chestnut eye, they mantle o'er her cheek,
They sparkle on her open brow, and high-soul'd joy bespeak.
Ah! who shall blame, if scarce that day, through all its brilliant hours,
She thought of that quiet convent's calm, its sunshine and its flowers?

THE VOYAGE.

The scene was changed. It was a bark that slowly held its way,
And o'er its lee the coast of France in the light of evening lay,
And on its deck a lady sat, who gazed with tearful eyes
Upon the fast receding hills, that dim and distant rise.
No marvel that the lady wept; there was no land on earth
She loved like that dear land, although she owed it not her birth;
It was her mother's land, the land of childhood and of friends—
It was the land where she had found for all her griefs amends—
The land where her dead husband slept, the land where she had known
The tranquil convent's hushed repose, and the splendors of a throne:
No marvel that the lady wept—it was the land of France,
The chosen home of chivalry, the garden of romance!
The past was bright, like those dear hills so far behind her bark;
The future, like the gathering night, was ominous and dark!
One gaze again—one long, last gaze—"Adieu, fair France, to thee!"
The breeze comes forth—she is alone on the unconscious sea.

THE TROUBLED THRONE.

The scene was changed. It was an eve of raw and surly mood,
And in a turret-chamber high of ancient Holy-rood
Sat Mary, listening to the rain, and sighing with the winds,