

MARY MAGDALENE ;

OR, THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR.

In Joseph's garden, and at Joseph's sepulchre, a woman is crouching in grief. She came to weep, but she did not expect to find an empty tomb. Her heart is heaving, big with sorrow, as her tear-bedimmed eyes are attempting to gaze into the vacant vault. But as she stoops to look through the grey morning light, the sight startles her, for there in the rock-hewn tomb she sees two angels sitting in solemn contemplation. Her sobs arrest their attention, for a woman's tears melt even the hearts of angels. "Woman, why weepest thou?" is their sympathizing enquiry. "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him," is her heart's reply. How few Marys are there in the world! How few there are who weep for a lost Saviour! Would that there were more, for he ever draws nigh to such sorrowing ones with sweet words of comfort. And here he comes to Mary, for the sound of the approaching footstep which turns her attention round, is that of Jesus, who has come to surprise her, and to give her beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" are his soothing words. She, taking him to be the gardener, pleads with beseeching tenderness. "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus listens in silence, and stands for a moment beholding, for he loves to look upon such tears as those which trickled down her cheeks. It was to him a better sight than that of hosts of angels, with golden harps ranked up to do him honour. He gazes with delight, because in her he sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied. Then in his gentle,

well known and heavenly accents, he says "*Mary*." It is enough. There was more than magic in his voice. That one word brightens up her eyes with joy. She neither asks for a sight of the nail-pierced hands, nor of the spear-thrust side. "*Rabboni!*" "*Master!*" she exclaims, while she casts herself a worshipper at his feet. That familiar voice had, before now, sent sunbeams of gladness into her dark, despairing soul. Jesus, however, tells her to reserve her adoration until he had entered on his celestial glory. Her duty now is, not to lie a worshipper at his feet, but to go and tell his brethren that he was soon to ascend to His Father and their Father, and to His God and their God. Mary, elated with gladness, quickly bears the tidings to his disconsolate followers—the tidings that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, and that she had seen and talked with Him. She had gone to the grave weeping; now she returns rejoicing, for that Saviour who had dethroned the idols of her heart is alive again, and is still the same loving one he had ever been! "O! what am I," she would reason with herself, "that my Lord hath appeared thus unto me?" But it was so like Jesus to do as he did then, and he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Any who will come weeping to contemplate a crucified Saviour in the tomb, even though viler than Mary Magdalene ever was, shall soon know of a truth that Christ is risen indeed, that they are risen with Him, and that soon, where he now is there shall they also be."

X. Y. Z.

SATAN.—If Satan doth fetter us, 'tis indifferent to him whether it be by a cable, or a hair; nay, perhaps the smallest sins are his greatest stratagems.—*Fuller*.

SELF.—Do you want to know the man against whom you have most reason to guard yourself? Your looking-glass will give you a fair likeness of his face.—*Whately*.