

of the good graces of the Son just in proportion to their success in diminishing the respect paid to the woman who bore Him. They would make Jesus more ungrateful, less tender and less loving than any human child that was ever born. They are in open variance with the whole course of Christian history. All that is highest and noblest in art and sculpture, in music and architecture is instinct with and inspired by reverence for the prerogatives of Mary. They are in direct contradiction with sentiments of illustrious non-Catholics. The poet, Wordsworth, addresses Mary as "Woman above all women glorified ; our tainted nature's solitary boast." Hawthorne says of her : "I have always envied Catholics their faith in that sweet, Sacred Virgin Mother, who stands between them and the deity, intercepting somewhat of His awful splendor, yet permitting His love to stream upon the worshipper more intelligently to human comprehension through the medium of a woman's tenderness." Of her, Sir Walter Scott writes :

" Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banished, outcast and reviled—
Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer!
Mother, hear a suppliant child !
Ave Maria ! Undefined !"

The rationalist, Lecky, teaches a lesson to clerical detractors of the Blessed Virgin. "The world," he writes, "is governed by its ideals ; and seldom or never has there been one which has exercised a more profound and on the whole a more salutary influence than the doctrine concerning the Virgin Mary. All that was best in Europe clustered around it, and it is the origin of many of the purest elements of our civilization." Not less eloquent is the testimony of John Ruskin : "After the most careful examination, neither as adversary nor as friend, of the influence of Catholicism for good and evil, I am persuaded that the worship of the Madonna has been one of its noblest and most vital graces, and has never been otherwise than productive of true holiness of life and purity of character. There has probably not been an innocent cottage home throughout the length and breadth of Europe during the whole period of vital Christianity, in which the imaged presence of the Madonna has not given sanctity to the humblest duties and comfort to the sorest trials of the lives of women ; and every brightest and loftiest achievement of the arts and strength of manhood has been the fulfilment of the assured prophecy of the Israelite maiden : He that is mighty hath done great things to me and holy is His Name."

The power of the Blessed Virgin with her divine Son shines forth in the record of His first public miracle.