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## ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

(From a Sermon of Bossuet, delivered in a Convent.)

The illustrious orator explains in this discourse, how the Mother of God was prepared for the mystery of this day by the three virtues of charity, chastity, and humility. Her ardent love for God caused her momentary death, and thus took away her mortality. Virginity was the cause of her incorruption, and the source of her glory. Humility was the cause of her elevation, and led her to the throne destined for her. We translate only the second part:

"The sacred body of Mary, the throne of chastity, the temple of incarnate wisdom, the organ of the Holy Ghost, and the seat of the virtue of the Most High, could not remain in the grave. The triumph of Mary would be imperfect, if it took place without her sanctified body which is as the source of her glory. Come, therefore, virgins of Jesus Christ, chaste spouses of the Saviour of souls, come and admire the beauty of this virginal body. Contemplate three wonders which holy virginity produces in Mary. Virginity preserves her flesh from corruption, and thus prevents the dissolution of her being. Virginity draws upon her a heavenly influence which makes her rise from the grave before the time, and thus gives her life again. Virginity spreads around her a divine light, and thus endows her with glory.

"I say first, that holy virginity is as a divine balm, which preserves from corruption the body of Mary. Of this you shall be convinced, if you consider attentively how great is the perfection of her virginal purity. To form some idea of it, we must bear in mind this principle: Our Saviour was most intimately united to the Blessed Virgin, according to the flesh: now this close union was necessarily accompanied by an entire conformity between them. Jesus sought one similar to him. The spouse of virgins wished to have a virgin mother to make this resemblance the ground of their union. This being supposed, you must perceive that we ought to entertain no ordinary opinion of the purity of Mary. No, never shall we be able to form a just idea of it. Never shall we understand its perfection, until we comprehend that it has wrought in this virgin mother a perfect integrity of body and soul. This made the great St. Thomas say that an extraordinary grace was bestowed on Mary, a grace which as a heavenly dew, not only moderated, as in the other elect, but extinguished the fire of concupiscence; so that there were in her not only no evil works, which are as a conflagration kindled by concupiscence; not only no evil desires, which are as the flame it emits: not only no evil inclinations, which are as its burning coals; but the very furnace was entirely closed. After this, Christians, how could the flesh of the Blessed Virgin undergo corruption, since every germ of corruption was neutralised by her virginity of mind and body, and by her perfect conformity with Jesus Christ.

"For, do not believe that corruption is to be considered after the manner of physicians, as a natural consequence of composition and mixture. We shall raise our thoughts higher, and believe, in accordance with the principles of Christianity, that the necessity of undergoing corruption to which our flesh is subject, originates in the fact that this flesh is an allurement to evil, is a source of evil desires, is 'a sinful flesh,' as St. Paul expressly says (Rom. 8.) Such a flesh ought to be destroyed even in the elect; because in this state of sinful flesh, it does not deserve to be reunited to a beautified soul, nor to enter into the kingdom of God. It must then change its first form, in order to be renewed, to lose its first nature, and to receive another one from the hand of God. As an old and irregular building is suffered to crumble to pieces by degrees, that it may be erected anew, after a more beautiful order of architecture, so it is with our flesh which has become disordered by concupiscence. God let it fall in ruins to remodel it after his own fashion, and according to the first plan of his creation. Thus should we reason concerning the corruption of the human body, conformably to the principles of the Gospel. There we learn that our flesh is to be reduced into dust, because it has served sin; and thence we may conclude that the body of Mary being all holy, must be incorruptible.

"For the same reason, she must have received immortality by an anticipated resurrection. For, though God has appointed a common term for the resurrection of all the dead, there are particular reasons which may oblige him to advance the time in favor of the Blessed Virgin. The sun matures fruits only in their season. But we see lands so well cultivated that they draw its action more effectually and more promptly. There are also precious plants in the garden of our spouse. The holy body of Mary was a soil too well prepared to expect the ordinary time to produce fruits of immortality. Her virginal purity draws on her a particular influence. Her conformity with Christ, disposes her to receive a more prompt effect of his vivifying virtue. And assuredly, Chris-

tians, she may well draw His virtue on herself, since she attracted Himself. He came to her, charmed by her purity. He loved her so as to remain within her nine months; so as to incorporate Himself with her; so as to take root in her, to use the expression of Tertullian. He will not, therefore, leave in the grave the body of Mary which He loved so much, but He will transport it to heaven, adorned with immortal glory.

"Holy virginity will contribute again to give to Mary this glory for the following reason, Jesus Christ represents in His Gospel the glory of risen bodies in these beautiful words: 'They shall be,' He says of the elect, 'like the angels of God.' Hence Tertullian speaking of risen bodies, calls them, 'angelificato caro,' angelised flesh. Now, among all the Christian virtues, that which is best able to produce so extraordinary an effect, is holy virginity. It forms angels upon earth. Of it St. Austin has said, 'it has in the flesh, something not of the flesh' and which belongs to angels rather than to men. Virginity, therefore, which makes angels of men already in this life, can well make them angels in the next. Consequently, I was right to tell you that virginity has a specific virtue to enhance the glory of risen bodies on the last day. Judge from this, Christians, what brilliant light shall surround the body of Mary, which is more pure than the seraphs themselves. For this reason Holy Scriptures uses extraordinary expressions to describe this brightness. It scarcely finds light enough in the universe; it collects together every luminous body in nature. It places the moon under her feet, the stars around her head, and the sun penetrates her being and surrounds her person with its rays: She is described as 'a woman clothed with the sun.' (Apoc. 12.) So great was the glory and splendor required for adorning this virginal body!

"Virgins of Jesus Christ! rejoice at the beautiful spectacle set before your eyes. Think what honors are reserved to bodies consecrated by holy virginity. Perfect chastity purifies our flesh, moderates concupiscence, mortifies evil desires, and fits our bodies for incorruptibility. Learn then, dear sisters, to value highly this sacred treasure which you carry in vessels of clay. Renew every day in yourselves the love of purity. Suffer it not to be sullied by the least attachment to the body. And if you are jealous of the purity of the body, be still much more jealous of the purity of the mind. By this means, you shall be worthy companions of the blessed Mary, and wearing her glorious livery, you shall be nearer the triumphal car, in which she now ascends to her throne. Come forward to follow her. She is ready to mount up to heaven where she is expected. Every preparation is over. Divine love has done its office by taking away her mortal garment. Holy virginity has clothed her with the royal robes, and humility will place her on the throne.

"O holy, O blessed Mary! since thou art with Jesus, enjoying in the meridian light of eternity, his divine familiarity, speak to His heart in our behalf. We ask not for human grandeur. Obtain only for us that humility for which Thou wert crowned. Obtain it for these holy women, for all this auditory. Pray, O Sacred Virgin! that all who celebrate thy glorious Assumption, may retain this reflection deeply engraved on their minds, that there is no true greatness not founded on humility; that through this merit alone, we can merit a lasting triumph and unfading crown."

## DR. NEWMAN'S FOURTH LECTURE.

(From the Birmingham Correspondent of the Tablet.)

Birmingham, July 22.

Dr. Newman delivered his fourth lecture last evening, at the Corn-Exchange, to a highly respectable audience. The Lord Bishop of Birmingham, and a great number of the Clergy of the town and neighborhood, were present. Amongst the principal features of the lecture was the exposure of that most infamous of all lying productions, "Maria Monk's Awful Disclosures." Some idea of the learned Doctor's withering sarcasm may be formed from the following extract from the address, which was listened to for nearly two hours with the most intense interest:—

"Look at that poor degraded creature, strolling about from village to village, from settlement to farmhouse, among a primitive and simple population. She has received an injury in her head, when young, and this has taken away, in part, her responsibility, while it has filled her brain with wild ideas, and given it a morbid creative power. Ere she is grown up she leaves her home, and flits here and there, the prey of any one who meets with her. Catholics are all round about her; as a child she has been in a Catholic school, and perhaps she has from time to time wandered into Catholic churches. She enters, she peers about still and demure, yet with wild curious eyes, and her own wanton thoughts. She sees, at first glance, the sanctity and gravity of the ceremonial;

she is struck with the appearance of modesty, whether in the sacred Ministers, or in the Sisters, but her evil heart instantly suggests that what shows so well is nothing but a show, and that close under the surface lies corruption. She contemplates the whole scene—she cannot forget it; but she asks herself, what if it be but a solemn mockery, cloaking bad deeds? The words, the actions, so calm, so gentle; the words of peace, the sacramental actions, she carries them off with an accurate memory. Those verses and responses, those sweet voices, those blessings and crossings, and sprinklings, and genuflections. But what if they all be a cloak? And when the Priest went out, or when he spoke to any one, what is it all about? And when he was in his confessional, and first one, and then another came to him, what could they be saying? Ah, what, indeed!—what if all be but a cloak for sin? There is the point. What if it be but a jest? Oh, the pleasant mischief!—the stirring, merry fancy!—to think that the men can look so grave, yet love sin; that women, too, who pretend so much, need not be better than she is herself; that that meek face of those holy hands belong to a hypocrite, who acts the angel and lives the devil. She looks closer and closer, measuring the limbs, scanning the gestures, and drinking in the words of those who consciously go about their duties in her presence, and imputing meanings to the most harmless and indifferent actions. It really is as she suspected, and the truth breaks upon her more. Her impure imagination acts upon her bodily vision, and she begins to see the image of her own suspicions in the objects she is gazing on. A sort of mirage spreads through the sacred building or religious house, and horrors of all kinds float across her brain. She goes away, but they pursue her; what may not have taken place amid those holy rites, or within those consecrated walls? The germ of romance is already fermenting in her brain, and day after day it becomes more developed in its parts, and more consistent in its form. Poor sinful being! She finds herself in a penitentiary; no, sure, it is a religious house; so she will consider it. Everything she sees there speaks to her of her feverish dream; the penitents become Nuns; the very rooms, windows, passages, and stairs, she recognises them as conventual, the very convent which her fancy has been framing. Things utterly separate from each other are confused together in her bewildered mind; and when she comes into the world again, she thinks herself a Nun escaped from confinement, and she now begins to recollect scenes of indescribable horror, which gradually become clearer and clearer. Now, Protestant public, the hour is come; you have craved after lies, and you shall have your fill; you have demanded and here is the supply. She opens her mouth; she lifts her voice; your oracle, your prophet, your idol, Oh, Protestant public, is about to speak! She begins her "Awful Disclosures;" who is this hapless creature, very wicked, very mischievous, yet much to be pitied? It is Maria Monk. My brothers, in what I have been saying, I have but given substance in my own way to the facts recorded of her; but those facts are simply as I have stated them. The history of the wretched imposture was traced out and given to the world immediately on the publication of her romance. It was deposed by divers witnesses that she was born of parents who had lived at Montreal in Canada, about the year 1816. When about seven years old, she broke a slate pencil in her head, and had been strange ever since; at the age of eight she frequented a convent school; when about fourteen or fifteen she left her mother's roof, and is found successively, in the service of various persons, an hotel keeper, a farmer, a tradesman, and others, and then for a time dependent on charity. From one of her mistresses she absconded with a quantity of wearing linen; she was discharged by two others for her bad conduct, and was generally looked upon as a person of at least doubtful character. Then she made her appearance at Montreal itself, declaring she was daughter to Dr. Robertson, a magistrate of the city, who had kept her chained in a cellar for four years. This attempt failing, she next went off to the United States, appeared at New York, and then began a second and more successful tale against one of the convents of the city she had left, from which she said she had escaped. She was taken up by a party of New York Protestants, who thoroughly believed her, and reduced her story to writing. Who was the author is not quite certain; two names have been mentioned, one of them a person connected with this very place. In this book, whoever wrote it, she gives a minute description of her imaginary convent in Montreal, and some of the Nuns and others she professed to have known there. On the slander making its way to Montreal, Protestants carefully went over the calumniated convent; and they reported after minute inspection, that it in no respect answered to her account of it; indeed it was certain she had never been within it. It was proved on the other hand, that her description did distinctly answer to a penitentiary of

which she had lately been an inmate, and whence she was dismissed for bad conduct; and further, that the account she gave of her Nuns in the convent answered to some of her fellow penitents. Moreover, there is something about the book more remarkable still, not indeed as it concerns her, but as it concerns the argument I have in several lectures been pursuing. I have insisted much on the traditional character of the fable of which Catholics are the victims. It is the old lie brought up again and again. Now this is most singularly exemplified in the infamous work I am speaking of. On its appearance, the newspapers of the day asserted, without contradiction, that it was in a great measure a mere republication of a work printed in the year 1731, under the title of "The Gates of Hell Opened, or a Development of the Secrets of Nunneries." "Maria Monk's pamphlet," says a Liverpool paper, "is a verbatim copy of that work, the only difference being a change of names." The editor of a Boston paper "pledged himself that this was the fact;" and the editor of another "was ready to make affidavit that the original work was in his possession a few months previously, when it had been lent to the publishers of 'Maria Monk's Disclosures.'" To show this he copied passages from both works, which were the same, word for word. Here then you have a witness who is prepared to go any lengths in the support of the Protestant tradition, however truth or principle may lie in her way; and offensive as it will be to you to listen, and painful to me to read, you must, for the sake of the contrast between her and Mr. Blanco White, submit to one or two of those passages from her romance, which I am able, without impropriety, to quote. The learned Doctor then proceeded to analyse some of the most atrocious blasphemies in the publication, and created a deep impression upon all present.

## THE ANGLICAN CRISIS.

(From the Mercersburg Review.)

The genius of Protestantism, we are told, is not *lucifugous* like that of Rome; it seeks the light, has large trust in common sense and an open Bible, and asks only a clear field and fair play to get the better of Romanism, in a short time even in France or Italy itself. Romanism indeed is so absurd as well as wicked, such a dark mass of fallacies and fooleries and vile abominations, that it might seem to have no chance of standing a moment in any such unequal contest, unless under cover of some such Egyptian darkness as brooded formerly over the Middle Ages. But now in the case before us the conditions of this trial are all against it, and in favor of the antagonistic cause. The Protestantism of England is not in its infancy, but of full age and growth, with its roots reaching out in every direction into the soil of the national life. It has learning, and wealth, and vast moral respectability, on its side. The government is in its hands, with boundless patronage and power. What can such a cause fear, thus inwardly and outwardly strong, from an interest so poor and weak and vile as the thing called Popery? One might suppose the English nation would only laugh at any show of serious competition, on British ground and in the middle of the nineteenth century, proceeding from such a quarter. And yet, strange to say, the simple erection of a Roman hierarchy, which can never be of more force than the mind and will of the people allow, has been sufficient to throw the nation into a sort of wild panic. There is a solemn self-contradiction in this, and what might seem to be an involuntary confession of weakness, which to the mind of an earnest Protestant, on either side of the Atlantic, can hardly fail to carry with it a somewhat portentous look. And it only makes the matter worse, when piety here turns into patriotism, and affects to be concerned—not just for any peril into which religion may be brought by so contemptible and barefaced an enemy—but for a future and distant peril of the State. This supposed political danger all depends of course, at the same time, on the growth of Romanism far beyond its present bounds; and such growth in England can come only by the activity of the British mind itself, exercised on the problem of the two opposing systems under the full meridian blaze of modern knowledge, with an open Bible and all sorts of outward force besides to stem the movement; in which case it would seem as if it must have some right to prevail, if a people have any right ever to think for themselves or to follow their own mind. But the conservative humor of which we now speak, with all its faith in Protestantism, its huge contempt for Romanism, and its high opinion of Anglo-Saxon intelligence and common sense, is by no means willing after all to trust things in this way to their natural course. England must not have the opportunity even of making a fool of itself by turning Catholic, though this should take place with never so much intelligence and freedom. If a man is likely to