

MARTYRDOM

— OF —

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

(See frontispiece)

THE Gospel tells us : “ When Herod himself had sent and apprehended John, and bound him in prison, Herodias laid snares for him and desired to put him to death.

All her efforts were vain, for Herod feared John, knowing him to be a just and holy man and often consulted him and followed his advice.

And when a convenient day was come, Herod made a supper for his birth-day, for the Princes, and Tribunes, and chief men of Galilee.

And when the daughter of Herodias had come in, and had danced and pleased Herod, and them that were at table with him, the king said to the damsel : Ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

And he swore to her : Whatsoever thou shalt ask I will give it thee, though it be the half of my kingdom. Who when she was gone out, said to her mother : what shall I ask ? But she said : The head of John the Baptist.

And when she was come in immediately with haste to the king, she asked, saying : I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish the head of John the Baptist.

And the king was struck sad. Yet because of his oath, and because of them that were with him at table, he would not displease her.

But sending an executioner, he commanded that his head should be brought in a dish.

And he beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a dish ; and gave it the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother.

Which his disciples hearing, came and took his body ; and laid it in a tomb.” St Mark, Chap. VI.