

MARY MAGDALEN.

She Renounces the World to Follow Christ.

Of all the women, save one, who figure in the Old or New Testament perhaps Mary Magdalen has the most thrilling and eventful history. It is told in ecclesiastical history that she was of a noble and wealthy Jewish family, and therefore, the child of respectable parents. As she grew up she was of such surpassing beauty as to excite the admiration of every beholder. Her large and full deep blue eyes sparkled with a rare brilliancy. Her forehead was uncrinkled with care, and as enameled in the fineness of its texture. Her skin was fair and white as the spotless snow. Her cheeks rivalled the peach glow in the freshness and rare coloring of their beauty. Her lips were as the ruby and the rose. Her breath was as the salubrious aromatic freshness of a morning in June. Her teeth were white and even as pearls. Her nose, clear cut and well set, and surpassing in beauty and regularity of its lines the Roman or Grecian conception of that organ. Her magnificent hair—woman's glory—was the theme of the admiration of every beholder or acquaintance, and hung in long and graceful ringlets to the ground. The whole contour of her face and figure, person and expression, was rarely, if ever, excelled, as, most probably, she was Jewish albino, that rarest type of female beauty. When dressed in the latest and best style known, she walked abroad, somewhat above the medium height, no wonder that the admiring eyes of men followed her, and that she fell a prey to their wiles and adulation. Arrayed in Syrian purple and all the finery known to Jews, when with head erect and chest thrown forward she stalked abroad with the staidness and elasticity of the gazelle, she attracted the universal gaze and admiration of the city. "Her adorning was the outward plaiting of the hair, the wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel." (Pet. 1, 3, 3.) Just what Saint Peter prohibited to the female of his time. But she lacked the modesty so essential to the perseverance in goodness of every woman, and especially of beautiful women. Through an innate vanity and frivolity—the weak points in her character—she was allured by designing and unprincipled men to her destruction, and fell far lower than her beauty was transcendent. She lacked the equilibrium of prudence, went from one excess to another, and became hardened in iniquity—so much so that she was known as "a woman that was in the city a sinner." (Incipit late peccatrix.) (St. Luke 7, 37.) She became as so many of her sisters in the cities and towns of the world—a woman of the streets. She caused her friends to weep bitter tears, shocked the moral sense of her acquaintances, but ever in the most infamous depths of her life retained traces of that grace and loveliness of person which were so prominently hers. She became, to the great dishonor of her sex, a prey to the cravings of lust, and receded far from being "a holy and shame faced woman, who is grace upon grace." (Ecc. 36, 19.) Reverting still further to her physical beauty, which has been often described, and is still spoken of, possibly in this she had to yield to St. Ann, the lines of whose great beauty were transferred to her Immaculate daughter, because, speaking generally, it is hereditary, and descends from parent to child.

There can be no doubt whatever but that she had to yield the palm to the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose lily-fair features and ravishing loveliness it would be rash and hazardous to describe. In this as in all things else the Blessed Virgin Mary was peerless, for God looked well to it that in the matter of personal loveliness, as in holiness, no woman should approach the most Blessed Mother of His Son. Indeed, I dare not institute a comparison, and the reader will understand why without further description I pass from this theme as beyond the capacity of any ordinary man. Holy Writ has it (Proverbs 31, 30) that "favor is deceitful and beauty is vain: the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Through the favor that is deceitful and the beauty that is vain, Mary Magdalen was a creature of temptation to others, and these qualities accelerated her fall, which proves that they are dangerous possessions. She lost every grace, "sat down by every hedge, and opened her quiver against every arrow" (Ecc. 36, 15), and grew callous in wickedness. Her degradation was complete, and in the eyes of God, who is the All-holy, she was a lost soul, worthy of the eternal pains of hell. What a change effected by sin in her body, soul and spirit! What heart-burnings must be hers! What remorse of soul must have blasted her happiness, and left her in her own eyes and in the eyes of men in that worst of all condition of a human being, and that that is to be apparently without hope. But, contrary to her own thoughts, there was hope, for she had the rare good fortune of living in an opportune time. The God-Man could not be in the world without making a noise—that was heard then and down through the ages. The healing of Jarius' daughter and of the son of the Centurion and of the man born blind and who received his sight, "such as had not been known from the beginning of the world," could not be hidden. These and the thousands and one other marvels—the healing of the sick, the giving sight to the blind, the changing of waters into wine at the marriage feast in Cana in Galilee, the giving hearing to the deaf, and, above all, the expulsion of devils from the bodies and spirits of the possessed—were

noised abroad through all Judea, and attracted the attention of the world. This was Mary Magdalen's opportunity. She, too, heard and inwardly digested the wonders that were being done by Jesus, the Man-God. "Jesus of Nazareth was passing by"—would she draw nigh him?—would she acknowledge His divinity, which was very hotly disputed then, and denied by many of the Jews?—would He receive or repel her? His graciousness encouraged and His benign countenance attracted her, and she was not aware of the fact that He repelled none from His presence save the money changers in the temple. The more terrible and desperate was each case, the more ready was He to act, and to act favorably. Thus a great conflict went on in her soul. She knew she was a very laboratory of devils, but she had gone the length of her tether. She summoned all the courage possible, and dared approach the true thaumaturgus of the world. He saw her, heard her story, recognized in her one of the most beautiful of His creatures, and, true to His mission of mercy, had pity on her, and by omnipotence cast out from her seven devils. Almost breathless at the interview, she wept copiously. Beautiful herself, though hitherto deprived of grace, she was drawn near Him, who was in Himself a summary of all beauty; she recognized His divinity, acknowledged her sins, received the precious graces of Faith, Hope and Charity, and heard those most comforting words (St. Luke 7, 47): "Wherefore I say to thee: Thy sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much." After her unhappy and blighted life, the capacity of loving God remained, and, touched by grace and pierced through and cleansed by the penetrating glance of the Man-God, Mary Magdalen was no longer the same person. If hitherto vain, now she is modest; if hitherto in the vile haunts of sin, now she is to be found in the Temple of God; if in the past she was lewd, now she is chaste; if formerly she was frivolous and easily led into mischief, now she is grave and would suffer herself to be torn into bits rather than offend God mortally; if hitherto a stranger to God's love, now she is in it, and will for her life daily grow more and more in charity; if formerly she did not do penance, now 'twas to be as her daily food; in a word, if in the past she was bad, now she is good. Once she saw Jesus, and was blessed and pardoned by Him, His love became the passion of her life. What an encouragement to abandoned men and women is the story of her conversion! Her contrition was sincere, permanent and real. Was she favored in any way (as things go in the world) to merit and receive such a complete and entire pardon? Was she a friend or relative of any of the chosen Twelve. Possibly she was, but 'twas enough for her to have determined on a radical change of life. When Jesus saw this His graces were showered on her. She was admitted to His love, "and He said to the woman, thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace." Thenceforward modesty, retirement, daily mortification, the flight of the occasions of sin, the resisting of temptations, prayer, and charity which in God and man were the weft and woof of her life. Sinners that want a thorough reconciliation with God must adopt the same methods. Would she persevere, might have been asked by both herself and her friends? This was to be the true test if her conversion were real. She did persevere. As a penitent she was rarely if ever excelled. She knew enough of the hollowness, villainy and baseness of men never to return to her former course of life. The graces she received were preventive, effectual and solid: her resolutions to abandon sin were taken once for all, even if it cost her martyrdom. Surely this is and was and could not but be the change of the right hand of the Most High. She that was known as *in civitate peccatrix*, that is, in the city a sinner, fell at the feet of Jesus, and rose up a justified soul. As sanctifying grace entered her soul her self-respect returned, her physical beauty was enhanced, and withal, a keen yearning to be where Jesus was took possession of her. Thus we see that in the home of the Pharisee, where Jesus was invited to eat, she with a pious daring drew near the Lord and adored Him. (St. Luke 7, 37.) "And behold a woman that was in the city a sinner, when she heard that He sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment (v. 38), and standing behind at His feet, she began to wash His feet with tears and wipe them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment." (St. John 12, 3.) She merited the privilege of following the Saviour through His passion, and was present at the crucifixion with Mary of Clopas and the Blessed Virgin Mary, His mother, and, therefore, in their company and in that of the Apostles, was in the best society of the world. At that awful tragic scene she comforted the Virgin Mother who to this day is represented as leaning on her for support and encouragement. She merited also to be among the first to behold the Lord after His glorious resurrection, after having watched all

night at His tomb. She was privileged to have a special apparition of the Lord before His ascension. And there is a pious tradition that when she and Lazarus and her sister Martha and others were in days of persecution wanted on the shores of the modern Marseilles, she retired to a cave, near the site of that city, and that she did penance before a Cross, by the orders of her Saviour. She did so all the rest of her days, penitential to the last. For thirty years away from all the society of men, she daily heard celestial praises, and was finally carried on high by the angels.

UGLY TRUTHS FOR SOME ONTARIO PEOPLE.

The following truthful and candid statement in reference to the French people of Canada appeared in the New York Tribune of November 4, 1891: To the Editor of the Tribune: Sir—The fact that the large majority of the population of the Province of Quebec are French Roman Catholics has been offered by some over-anxious protestants as a serious objection to the annexation of Canada to the United States. I belong to the extreme Left Church party of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and therefore cannot be charged with having any leanings toward Roman Catholicism; while, on the other hand, I am not, I hope, a Protestant bigot. I have observed and studied the Canadian French Roman Catholics of Western New Brunswick, Quebec and Eastern Ontario with interest for thirty years. I began my investigations with a prejudice against them. There is not a more domestic, home-loving, family-loving, quiet, peaceful, law-abiding, temperate, and moral, kindly race on this continent than the Roman Catholic Frenchmen of Canada. There is not any race more faithful to their marriage vows. In this respect they are infinitely our superiors. Life and property are just as sacred in Quebec as in Ontario or New England. They are extremely polite and respectful to those in authority. The population of the Province of Quebec is at least 80 per cent. French, but they never have been charged by the Protestant minority of Quebec with injustice in the administration of the law, nor have they been charged by the minority in that province with forcing unjust legislation upon them. I would far rather trust my life and property with a French-Canadian Roman Catholic majority than with an Ontario Orange Protestant majority.

The cry against the Roman Catholics of Quebec has been chiefly raised by the Orange Society of Ontario. When Mr. Mercer, as Premier of Quebec, settled a few years ago the long standing claim of the Jesuits of Montreal by paying them \$400,000 to be distributed among Catholic schools, he gave the Protestant minority of the province their per capita share for Protestant schools. In the event of annexation, Quebec will take her place as a State in the American Union, and will have entire control over her own local affairs; a majority of her population will be French Roman Catholics. They have not been unjust to the minority in the past, and what reason is there to suppose they will be unjust in the future? The Protestant minority of the province has never appealed to the Dominion Government since Confederation against the action of the Catholic majority. The Orangemen in Ontario, led by Dalton McCarthy, Member of Parliament, attempted to make trouble over the settlement of the Jesuit claim made by Mr. Mercer, but failed. While a large majority of the electors of Montreal are French Catholics, the Mayor of the city has been more frequently an English-speaking Protestant than a French Romanist.

I would far rather annex 500,000 French Romanists than 100,000 Ontario Orangemen. The criminal statistics of Quebec are quite as favorable to the Protestants. The French are naturally republicans and will adjust themselves to our institutions very rapidly after annexation. The French population of Quebec has contributed its full quota of upright and patriotic legislators to the Parliament of Canada. They may not be as ambitious commercially as the Scotch, English and Irish citizens of Canada, but they are as loyal to Canada, as moral, as peaceful and as faithful to the State as their Protestant brethren. We shall Americanize them without difficulty. We have Americanized every race we have come in contact with, and every institution, not excepting the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches. I have no sympathy with Protestants who are disposed to make war upon the Catholic Church in this country. It is being steadily Americanized, while we are not being Romanized. Our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens have never been disloyal to the Republic. We must not forget that in the darkest days of the Rebellion we sent three great men to Europe to educate public opinion in our favor, viz., Archbishop Hughes, Thurlow Wood and Henry Ward Beecher. The great Roman Catholic prelate was no less sincere, earnest and effective in our behalf than his two great Protestant associates. The French race gave us substantial aid in establishing the Republic and maintaining our independence. We never have had occasion to charge them with unfraternity since 1776. Why should we have any reason to distrust their descendants who have been for a century our peaceful neighbors?

During the Civil War the English-What is more annoying than going about constantly howling and spitting? This is the result of enmity, and Nuxal Balm will cure any case when faithfully used.

speaking aristocracy of Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, London and St. Catharines, welcomed and harbored the Southern Rebels, and gave them aid, sympathy and comfort. Not so with the French aristocracy of Montreal and Quebec. Even the most rabid French Tories have no sympathy with the attacks made upon us by the English speaking Tory leaders and their press. There is not any valid reason why we should hesitate to embrace the Canadian-French Roman Catholics of Quebec and welcome them as citizens of the great Republic.

FRANCIS WAYLAND GLEN, Brookline, Oct. 27, 1891.

Truth About the Inquisition.

You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. It seems that non-Catholics will misunderstand the true nature of the Inquisition. A correspondent very justly remarks that the Inquisition was so generally under the direction of men of high character that we cannot help mistrusting the nursery tales which seek to make our hair stand on end. The simple question is: Is a state of society conceivable in which the State would be justified in regarding heresy as a capital crime? This is the real point. The nature of the punishment would be determined by the nature of the punishments inflicted at the same period for other capital crimes, and when we recollect that not many years ago the state of Great Britain regarded sheep stealing as a capital crime, and inflicted on those guilty of it the same punishment as was inflicted on the murderer, it would seem hypocritical for Protestant England to sit in judgment on Catholic Spain.

Let us, then, suppose a state of things in which all the people, from the highest to the lowest, were Catholics, and all regarded the Catholic Church as the source under God of all their happiness, temporal and eternal, of their comfort and their mutual charity; might not the general consent of the whole people, justifiably declared in concert with the ruling body, that the man who denied the Divinity of Christ and, by so doing, introduced an element destructive of all the happiness of the country, should be treated as a criminal guilty of a capital crime and therefore be liable to the punishment due to a capital crime? And if the Church of God sanctioned this right of the State, could she be accused of sanctioning cruelty any more than if she sanctioned the State's proceeding in the case of any other heinous crimes against morality? Of course there is no danger in these days of a people being found Catholic from the highest to the lowest, and Protestants need not be under no apprehension of our wishing to revive the Inquisition.

Music. To my mind music is an important part of education, where boys have a turn for it. It is a great resource when they are thrown on the world; it is a social amusement, perfectly innocent, and, what is so great a point, employs their thoughts.—Cardinal Newman.

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