

**MARIE MAGDALEN'S
FUNERALL
TEARES FOR THE
DEATH OF OUR SAVIOUR**

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Marie Magdalen's funerall teares for the death of our Saviour by Robert Southwell

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ROBERT SOUTHWELL

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UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

THE LIFE OF
ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

From the "Retrospective Review,"

THE pious author of these volumes was one of the many victims sacrificed to the intolerant spirit which characterised the early stages of the Reformation.

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Robert Southwell was a Catholic, and, what was still more criminal in the eyes of the English Government in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, he was a Jesuit. He was born about the year 1592, of a respectable Catholic family, at St. Faith's, in Norfolk, and was, at an early age, sent to the English College at Douay, for education. From Douay he went to Rome, and, at the age of sixteen, was received into the order of the society of Jesus. Having finished his noviciate, and gone through his course of philosophy and divinity with great credit, he was made Prefect of the studies of the English College at Rome. In 1584, he was sent as a missionary Priest into his native country, having, as he says, travelled

far and brought home a freight of spiritual substance to enrich his friends, and medicinable receipts against their ghostly maladies. Father Southwell continued in England, labouring diligently in his function until the year 1529, when he was apprehended in a gentleman's house at Uxenden, in Middlesex, and committed to a dungeon in the tower, so noisome and filthy, that when he was brought out for examination, his clothes were covered with vermin. Upon this, his father presented a petition to Queen Elizabeth, begging, that if his son had committed any thing for which, by the laws, he had deserved death, he might suffer death; if not, as he was a gentleman, he hoped Her Majesty

would be pleased to order that he should be treated as a gentleman. The Queen was graciously pleased to listen to this prayer, and ordered that Southwell should have a better lodging, and that his father should have permission to supply him with clothes and other necessaries, together with the books he asked for, which were only the Bible, and the works of Saint Bernard. For three years was he kept in prison, and what was worse for himself and more disgraceful to the government, it is said, he was put to the rack ten several times.

Wearied out with torture and solitary imprisonment, he at length applied to the Lord Treasurer Cecil, that he might either be brought to

trial, to answer for himself, or, at least, that his friends might have leave to come and see him. To this application, if we are to believe the account of the Latin manuscript, which was formerly deposited in the archives of the English College at St. Omers, and of which a translation is given in *Challoner's Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, the Lord Treasurer answered, "that if he was in so much haste to be hanged, he should quickly have his desire." Shortly after this he was removed from the Tower to Newgate, where he was put down into the dungeon called limbo, and there kept for three days.

On the 20th of February, he was carried to Westminster to take his trial before Lord Chief

Justice Popham and others. A true bill being found against him, Father Southwell was ordered to the bar, and held up his hand according to custom. On being asked whether he was guilty or not guilty, he answered, "I confess that I was born in England, a subject to the Queen's Majesty; and that, by authority derived from God, I have been promoted to the sacred order of priesthood in the Roman Church," but he denied he had ever entertained any designs against the Queen or kingdom; alleging, that he had no other intention, in returning to his native country, than to administer the sacraments, according to the Catholic Church, to such as desired them. The jury were sworn without a single challenge,

the prisoner observing that they were all equally strangers to him, and, therefore, charity did not allow him to except against one more than another. He was found guilty on his own confession, and being asked if he had any thing more to say why sentence should not be pronounced against him, he replied, "nothing, but from my heart I forgive all who have been any way accessory to my death." The judge having pronounced sentence according to the usual form, Father Southwell made a low bow, returning him thanks as for an unspeakable favour.

The next morning he was drawn through the streets, on a sledge, to Tyburn, where a great concourse of people had assembled to witness his