

**ST. MARY'S CONVENT;  
OR, CHAPTERS IN THE  
LIFE OF A NUN**

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St. Mary's Convent; Or, Chapters in the Life of a Nun by Jeanie Selina Dammast (Reeves)

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**JEANIE SELINA DAMMAST (REEVES)**

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LIFE OF A NUN**





THE CONVERSATION IN THE GARDEN — (pp. 65—68.)

ST. MARY'S CONVENT;

OR,

Chapters in the Life of a Nun.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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It was, I believe, the celebrated Cardinal Richelieu, who, in his sarcastic view of human nature, gave utterance to the apothegm that language was given us for the purpose of concealing our thoughts. Whether, in expressing this sentiment, he concealed or revealed his real opinion, it is impossible to say ; but let us hope, for the sake of the ingenuous on the earth, that his speech was not a truism as applied to the mass, but rather a descriptive idea of the few who delight in deceit and mystery, of which arts the Cardinal was certainly a master.

In the narrative to which these observations are prefixed, I have adhered strictly to the truth in the events recorded ; some of which were witnessed by myself, and others made known to me by friends (on whose veracity I could with all confidence rely), as facts of which they were eye-witnesses.

In these details I have softened the colouring in many instances, and in others smoothed away points that, if stated in their naked truthfulness, would have been too gross and shocking for insertion in a narrative meant for general reading in the family circle.

It is a frightful evil in a civilized, not to say a Christian land, that whether through mistaken zeal, or the persuasion or coercion of friends, multitudes of women are imprisoned for life as hopelessly as the lunatics in a madhouse. Nay, more so, for if a lunatic recovers his reason, he is set at liberty; but, if a poor nun comes to her senses, and reflects with sorrow on the step she has taken, in consigning herself to a life of confinement within the walls of a convent, there is no help for her,—there she is, and there she must remain under all circumstances, until death releases her from her prison-house.

What tongue can tell—what pen can write—what imagination, were it ever so vivid, can picture the tortures endured by thousands of mistaken women thus immured, and pining for that liberty of which they are so cruelly deprived?