

**THE LIFE OF MOTHER
MARY BAPTIST RUSSELL,
SISTER OF MERCY**

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The Life of Mother Mary Baptist Russell, Sister of Mercy by Matthew Russell

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MATTHEW RUSSELL

**THE LIFE OF MOTHER
MARY BAPTIST RUSSELL,
SISTER OF MERCY**



MOTHER MARY BAPTIST RUSSELL, ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL,
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

THE LIFE
OF
Mother Mary Baptist Russell
SISTER OF MERCY

LC

BY HER BROTHER
THE REVEREND
Matthew Russell, S. J.

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PREFACE.

ONE of the witnesses cited in the following pages deposes to the fact that once, in speaking of the subject of this sketch to a lay sister at Newry, I said: "Perhaps I may write a book about her some day." And now after thirty years the prophecy is fulfilled.

I have described Mother Baptist's life in a very unconventional manner, piecing together all the testimonies I could gather as to her work and character and conduct. Those who knew her complain—for they have read this account as it appeared by instalments in the *American Messenger of the Sacred Heart*—they from their riper knowledge complain that what is here set down gives a very inadequate idea of a noble woman who did a noble work. Part of the blame may fall on the fact that, during most of the period covered by our narrative, the annalist of the San Francisco Sisters of Mercy was Mother Baptist herself, who took good care that her personal share of the work should be ignored in the official record. Even this imperfect sketch, however, will help its readers to realize the position she

occupied in the esteem of the outer world and in the hearts of her own little kingdom ; and they will probably conclude that she was indeed a " valiant woman " of exceptional natural and supernatural gifts, who performed with great perfection the task assigned to her by God, and who was manifestly equal to much greater toils and greater sacrifices if God had asked them from her.

I have drawn largely from the letters that were placed at my disposal ; but if I had been able to study them more carefully, I might have enlarged and yet condensed my sketch. For instance towards the beginning, here is a characteristic little glimpse of a child seven or eight years old. " Miss Cunningham and I were confirmed the same day, and I can distinctly remember, on the day we were examined by Dr. Blake of blessed memory, that she was crying with fright and I was quite at my ease and wondering at her tears."

The editor of the *Messenger* thought it better to omit in a Jesuit periodical several passages which expressed Mother Baptist's gratitude to certain Fathers of the Society for their goodness to her and her veneration for the Order. One of her Nuns mentions that, when she playfully told Mother Baptist that, if she had been a man, she would have been