

**MARY OF MAGDALA; AN HISTORICAL
AND ROMANTIC DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS.
THE ORIGINAL IN
GERMAN PROSE. THE TRANSLATION
FREELY ADAPTED AND WRITTEN IN
ENGLISH VERSE BY WILLIAM WINTER**

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Mary of Magdala; An Historical and Romantic Drama in Five Acts. The Original in German Prose. The Translation Freely Adapted and Written in English Verse by William Winter by Paul Heyse & William Winter

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PAUL HEYSE & WILLIAM WINTER

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MARY OF MAGDALA

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IN FIVE ACTS

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By PAUL HEYSE

THE TRANSLATION FREELY ADAPTED
AND WRITTEN IN ENGLISH VERSE

By WILLIAM WINTER

*"Whereto serves mercy,
But to confront the image of offence?
And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force,
To be forestall'd ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up:
My fault is past."*

—SHAKESPEARE.

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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1903

K. B. T.

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PREFACE

It is suggested to the readers and spectators of the drama of "Mary of Magdala" that it aims to depict a fanciful state of facts and circumstances, such as might have existed anterior to the establishment of Christianity, at a time when Jesus of Nazareth—around whom, although he is not introduced, the action circulates—was viewed exclusively as a man, and had not yet, in the eyes of any considerable number of persons, been invested with a sacred character. The picture of his personality that has been made in these imaginary scenes might seem sacrilegious, if this point of view were ignored. The allusions to him, under the various designations of Preacher, Prophet, Nazarene, etc., by Caiaphas, the High Priest of Jerusalem, by Flavius, the young Roman soldier, and by Judas,—here presented as a Hebrew patriot,—are such as might naturally be made, by different orders of men, with reference to a being human like themselves, and not, to their minds, in any sense divine; and, accordingly, these allusions should not be misconstrued as intending to disparage a Christian ideal. The defection of Judas from his leader is ascribed to loss of faith in that leader's ability and purpose forcibly to free the Jews from bondage to Rome, while his subsequent betrayal of that leader is attributed to frenzied rage,—Judas and Mary of Magdala having been lovers, and Mary, in her contrition and in her practical regeneration, having broken that alliance, repudiated him, and given her heart to Heaven. The tendency of the drama, in the English form, as here printed, while telling a romantic story of action and depict-

ing aspects of Hebrew life in ancient Jerusalem, is to diffuse an influence of charity and to suggest the celestial victory of a human soul, triumphant over sin and sorrow, through belief in Divine goodness. The German original—upon a rough, literal translation of which the present play has been built—is human and compassionate in spirit; but it is neither poetical nor spiritual, and, in some particulars, it lacks refinement. Its exposition of the heroine's shame is somewhat needlessly specific and ample; its portrayal of Flavius, the young Roman lover, is carnal and coarse; and it makes the motive of Judas not only the fanatical resentment of a disappointed patriot, but the sensual jealousy of a discarded paramour. In its original form it would have proved offensive; in fact, it could not have been presented. The present adaptation, which was first written in prose and then rewritten in verse, presents the component parts of the original; but, in its treatment of them, it follows a free course, making essential modifications, alike in the structure, the character, and the tone, and resulting in a paraphrase. Upon a first reading of the German drama it seemed impracticable for the English stage; but a later study of it prompted the thought that, since the subject represented by the Magdalen has, whether for good or evil, become a stock theme in theatrical composition and almost continually recurrent on the stage, a salutary influence might, perhaps, be diffused by utilizing this fabric in a modified form; showing this representative type of degraded womanhood as a repentant sinner, and indicating—without either a specious embellishment of vicious life or a sentimental appeal to maudlin sympathy—the only refuge, comfort, and hope that the penitent can ever find.

The introduction of this play to the English-speaking stage is due to the confident judgment and resolute purpose of Mr. Har-

rison Grey Fiske—who early perceived its dramatic as well as ethical value, and never doubted its practical worth—and to the intrepid spirit and fine interpretative instinct and faculty of Mrs. Fiske—who brought to the impersonation of its principal character a profound sympathy with human suffering, an acute sensibility, and authentic emotional force. The play, in its English form, was first acted on October 23, 1902, at Milwaukee; it reached Chicago on October 27; and on November 19 it was presented in New York, at the Manhattan Theatre, where it held its course, in ample public favor, till February 28, 1903, when Mrs. Fiske took it on a tour, which is still in progress.

W. W.

*New Brighton, Staten Island, New York.
June 18, 1903.*

"The Jews, . . . animated with a fiercer zeal and a more jealous faith, perceived the gradual separation of their Nazarene brethren from the doctrine of the synagogue, and they would gladly have extinguished the dangerous heresy in the blood of its adherents."

"We may learn from Josephus ("Antiquitat," xviii. 3), that the procuratorship of Pilate corresponded with the last ten years of Tiberius, A.D. 27-37. As to the particular time of the death of Christ, a very early tradition fixed it to the 25th of March, under the consulship of the two Gemini."

"From the reign of Nero to that of Antoninus Pius the Jews discovered a fierce impatience of the dominion of Rome, which repeatedly broke out in the most furious massacres and insurrections. . . . The enthusiasm of the Jews was supported by the opinion that it was unlawful for them to pay taxes to an idolatrous master, and by the flattering promise, which they derived from their ancient oracles, that a conquering Messiah would soon arise, destined to break their fetters and to invest the favorites of heaven with the empire of the earth."

"The Jews were a nation; the Christians were a sect. . . . By embracing the faith of the Gospel the Christians incurred the supposed guilt of an unnatural and unpardonable offence."

— GIBBON.

*"One fatal remembrance, one shadow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes;
To which life nothing darker nor brighter can bring,
For which joy hath no balm, and affliction no sting."*

— MOORE.

*"Man-like is it to fall into sin,
Fiend-like is it to dwell therein,
Christ-like is it for sin to grieve,
God-like is it all sin to leave."*

— From the "Sinngedichte" of FRIEDRICH VON LOGAU,
Translated by LONGFELLOW.

*"What shall I do to live aright?
My life is wrong; I feel it so:
I bear about a muffled woe,
I perish with a nameless blight . . .
This is my sorrow day and night . . .
My life is wrong! My life is wrong!
What shall I do to make it right?"*

— RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

*"Pilgrim, burdened with thy sin,
Come the way to Zion's gate!
There, till Mercy let thee in,
Knock, and weep, and watch, and wait!
Knock—he hears the sinner's cry!
Weep—he heeds the mourner's tear!
Watch—for saving grace is nigh!
Wait—till Heavenly Love appear!"*

— "Sir Eustace Grey," CRABBE.

*"For, though seduc'd, and led astray,
Thou'st travell'd far and wander'd long,
Thy God hath seen thee, all the way,
And all the turns that led thee wrong."*

— "The Hall of Justice," CRABBE.

Mary of Magdala

ACT I