

**MARY OF MAGDALA: AN  
HISTORICAL  
AND ROMANTIC  
DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS**

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Mary of Magdala: An Historical and Romantic Drama in Five Acts by Paul Heyse & William Winter

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**PAUL HEYSE & WILLIAM WINTER**

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**MARY OF MAGDALA**

•The M Co.

# MARY OF MAGDALA

AN HISTORICAL AND  
ROMANTIC DRAMA

*IN FIVE ACTS*

THE ORIGINAL IN GERMAN PROSE  
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  
LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

1903

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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.*

