

Then he desired Sir Francis Knollys and some other of nobility to hear him touching one Richardson, condemned about a book of his, and earnestly besought them to have consideration of that man, saying he was not that Richardson which brought his book, and this he affirmed with vehement protestation upon his death. 55

Then one Hearne, a schoolmaster, as I learned after, read the new advertisement openly with loud voice unto the people, published only to colour so manifest and express injury, Master Champion all the time of his reading devoutly praying. Notwithstanding which advertisement or defence of theirs, as well because they distrusted their own policy in publication thereof as that they did also desire some better colour or faster vizard for their proceedings, pressed him to declare his opinion of Pius Quintus' Bull concerning the excommunication of our sovereign and queen. To which demand he gave no answer. But being asked whether he renounced the pope, said he was a Catholic, whereupon one inferred, saying, 'In your Catholicism—I noted the word—all treason is contained.' In fine, preparing himself to drink his last draught of Christ his cup, was interrupted in his prayer by a minister, willing him to say, 'Christ have mercy upon me,' or such like prayer with him. Unto whom he, looking back with mild countenance, humbly said, 'You and I are not one in religion; wherefore, I pray you, content yourself. I bar none of prayer, only I desire them of the household of faith to pray with me and in mine agony to say one Creed.' 60 65 70

Some also called on him to pray in English, to whom he answered that he would pray in a language that he well understood. At the upshot of this conflict he was willed to ask the queen forgiveness and to pray for her. He meekly answered, 'Wherein have I offended her? In this I am innocent. This is my last speech; in this give me credit. I have and do pray for her.' Then did the Lord Charles Howard ask of him for which queen he prayed, whether for Elizabeth Queen. To whom he answered, 'Yea, for Elizabeth, your queen and my queen, unto whom I wish a long, quiet reign with all prosperity.' And so he meekly and sweetly yielded his soul unto his Saviour, protesting that he died a perfect Catholic. 75

MARGARET CLITHEROW

Still remembered today as 'the Pearl of York', Margaret Clitherow (1556?–86) converted to Catholicism in 1574 and led a life of joyful devotion and humble service. Wife of the Protestant butcher, John Clitherow, Margaret Clitherow, like so many Catholic women,

54. **Richardson** Laurence Richardson, a secular priest on the mission, executed 30 May 1582. 57. **advertisement** a proclamation asserting Champion's treachery. 61. **faster vizard** more secure mask. 62. **Pius Quintus' Bull** Pope Pius V's infamous bull, *Regnans in excelsis* (1570), excommunicated Elizabeth I and absolved Catholic subjects from obedience (see DOCUMENTS). 65. **inferred** broke in. 70. **I...faith** Catholics were not permitted to pray with Protestants. **Creed** either the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed. Champion prays the Creed 'For a signification that he died for the confession of the Catholic faith therein contained' (William Allen, *Briefe Historie*, sig. dii), and not for the alleged treason. 76–7. **Yea...prosperity** Prayers for Elizabeth at the gallows, perhaps sincere, publicly confuted the charge of treason. See also Clitherow below. 78. **protesting** showing.

acted on the conviction that she was in her 'necessary duty to God . . . no whit inferior' to her husband (ed. J. Morris, *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers*, 1877: iii. 382). She turned their home into a refuge for priests and a centre of Catholic liturgy and fellowship; she emerged as a religious leader in York, which had a vital recusant community. Indicted for harbouring priests, Margaret Clitherow refused trial and, despite her possible pregnancy, received the sentence of *peine forte et dure*, i.e. pressing to death by stones. She fasted, prayed, and, dressed in white linen, preparing for death as for a banquet and marriage. She sent her hat to her husband 'in sign of her loving duty to him' and her hose and shoes to her eldest daughter, Anne, 'signifying that she should serve God and follow her steps of virtue' (ed. Morris, 432).

A True Report of the Life and Martyrdom of Mrs. Margaret Clitherow circulated in manuscript in York from 1586 and in an abstracted printed version (1619), excerpted below. Clitherow's confessor, John Mush, presents here a Catholic saint's life to counter the Protestant canonization of Anne Askew. Another influential account of Margaret Clitherow as martyr appears in Richard Verstegan's *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum* (1587) (see Fig. 9).

John Mush, *A True Report of the Life and Martyrdom of Mrs. Margaret Clitherow*, 1619

The name of this virtuous and holy martyr was Mistress Margaret Clitherow, the wife of Master John Clitherow, citizen of York, the head city of the kingdom of England next unto London, enjoying privileges equally with it in having a Lord Mayor with the sword carried before him, sheriffs, and aldermen, as London hath. She was the daughter of one Master Middleton, a man of good wealth, and estimation, who had been sheriff in the same city, an office next in place and credit unto the Lord Mayor. She was about some 18 years of age when she was married, her breeding giving her knowledge of no other religion than of that was publicly taught within the kingdom. **But years ripening her judgement, and she, finding nothing but froth and dross in the Protestant faith, began to search after the truth, which she followed with such labour and care as that within two or three years after her marriage she became a true member of the Catholic Church. There were two motives amongst others that drew her to this consideration:**

1. **martyr** Some Catholics, notably Robert Persons, excluded Clitherow from the ranks of Catholic martyrs because she was unlearned. She here falls victim to Persons's argument with Foxe on many Protestant martyrs, who, he claimed, were simply ignorant and did not understand the religious doctrines for which they died (see Persons, HISTORIES). 3–4. **Lord Mayor . . . him** The mayor in certain large towns had the honorific title of 'Lord Mayor' and walked behind a drawn sword in civic processions. In 1586 the Lord Mayor was Henry May, Margaret's stepfather. 4. **aldermen** chief officers of wards. 5. **estimation** reputation.

Persecutiones aduersus Catholicos à Prote- stantibus Caluinistis excitæ in Anglia.



461f70
ebruary

*Et tua femineum commendat gloria sexum,
Dura nec in summis animo demissa virago
Supplicijs, teneramque tui non pondera molem
Corporis, iniecti non turbauere molares:
Quin, ait, his totos membris imponite montes,
Spiritus innocua transcendet ad astra ruina.*

K 3 PRES-

9. Richard Verstegan, 'The Martyrdom of Margaret Clitherow', *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum*, 1587, sig. K3. The A section presents Clitherow's execution; B, the torture of a priest; C and D, the prisons where Catholics died of disease.

the one was the regular lives of Catholics compared with the irregularity of the Protestants; the other, the persecution that priests and laymen patiently and constantly suffered for the Catholic and apostolic faith, with the loss of goods, liberty, and life.



15

There were not above twelve years between her conversion and her martyrdom, during which time she so perfected herself in virtue and strictness of life as that she was rather a spectacle for others than truly imitated. For she was truly humble, truly charitable to God and her neighbours, truly obedient unto her spiritual and temporal superiors, a diligent observer and follower of others' virtues, and a true condemner of the world. She had a mind full of peace and tranquillity, full of spiritual joy and comfort; her abstinence was great, her pilgrimages many, and her fervour and zeal unto Catholic religion such, and her desire so great to frequent the sacraments, as continually she maintained priests for the spiritual comfort of herself and others to the daily hazard of her life.

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All these virtues did perfectly shine in her. But as humility and charity are the fundamental virtues that do give life unto the rest, so these by God's especial favour were very truly inoculated in her, for she was so humble as she preferred all others before herself. Her most devout actions seemed base in her own sight, and she was so far from delighting in her own praises as that she desired (so far forth as charity would give her leave) to be ill thought of by others. She took it ever well to have her faults told her, were it done by her ghostly father, friend, or stranger. She was jealous of her actions, pensive when she heard her own praises, and at quiet when she heard herself dispraised.

30

If her good desires took not effect, she imputed the cause unto her own unworthiness, yielding all honour unto God and not regarding the judgement of men. Answer she would for herself to wipe out ill imputations laid on her, but rather for the good of others than in respect for herself. The basest works of her house were her task, ennobling them with this saying: 'God forbid I should command that unto others which myself will refuse.' They that grudge at these things do not go to the way of perfect humility.

35

Her ghostly father, writing of her life, says that the humility, contrition, and loathsomeness which he saw in her of herself did make a deep impression in him of his estate. What shall I say? She was so resigned up unto God as all fortunes were indifferent unto her, in herself ever preferring those things wherein God's honour might be most advanced. Insomuch as being many times calumniated for her virtue by Catholics and such of them as were by courtesies obliged unto her, she would rejoice concerning herself, but be very pensive to see others run themselves on so dangerous a shipwreck. No opportunity was let slip by her wherein she might help her neighbour, she, wishing God's favour and graces to shine as well that way as on herself, being never better pleased than in the well doing of others.

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All distressed Catholics in prison or at liberty she would relieve by all the means that lay in her power. She continually sought the conversion of souls. Beginners in the

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28. inoculated imbued. 32. ghostly spiritual, i.e. her confessor John Mush. jealous vigilant. 33. pensive sad, thoughtful.

Catholic faith she would encourage and with deep sighs bewail the sins of others. She was much delighted to hear the lives of holy saints related, bewailing that she was so far from their perfection. She had ever a strong resolution against sinning and an extraordinary contrition for those she had committed, accompanied with a vehement desire to suffer for them, insomuch as when she was afflicted, she exceedingly rejoiced, being never more pensive or more doubtful of God's favour unto her than when she enjoyed any relaxation. Such was her love unto God, which ruled all her actions as for him she abandoned all fear of persecution, and in the end she gave her life for him. 55

Humility and charity begat in her such obedience as all her actions were squared by the advice of her ghostly father, and they bred in her such a respect unto priests as that she revered all without respect of persons. 60

They begat in her such devotion as few in a religious cloister lived more strictly, for besides her prayers morning and evening at each time for the space of an hour or two, with certain meditations on the passion of our Saviour, the benefices of God, and such like, and besides the keeping of priests in her own house for her own spiritual comfort and abroad for the good of others, all her actions were directed to the honour of God. And if at any time she did anything without an actual intention that way, upon the first reflection she would much reprove herself. They begat also in her a life of so great abstinence as four times in the week she fasted and upon every Friday used discipline if she had leave, the other days feeding on the grossest meats, excusing herself from feasts all that she could for fear of excess, bestowing that time in prayer and meditation in which she could keep herself from them. 65 70

All these virtues, meeting within the centre of her soul, made indivisible from God and nothing unto herself by her resignation unto him, did prepare her way after many persecutions unto a most glorious martyrdom, as will appear. 75
[...]

After her examination she was put into a secret place under ground, and her husband into another, but about seven of the clock at night she was conveyed into the castle and there committed close prisoner, and her husband also about some hour after.

Four days she remained there before she came to her trial, during which time she never spake with her husband but once, and that in the presence of the jailer, after which time she could never be admitted to see him or speak with him, notwithstanding all the suit she and her friends could make, unless she would do something against her conscience and contrary to the rules of a good Roman Catholic. 80

During her imprisonment in the Castle she gave herself unto more strictness in abstinence and prayer. And it being reported to her that the boy had accused her for harbouring and maintaining divers priests, but of two officially by name, to wit, Master 85

60. squared by conformed to. 70. discipline beating or whipping of oneself. 78. castle York Castle, which was used for a prison. 79. close secluded. 86. the boy a student, aged 10–12, who had been receiving instruction in the house when the pursuivants broke in. Stripped naked and threatened with rods, he revealed the hidden priest chambers. The story is told in a manuscript account (ed. J. Morris, *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers*, 1877: iii. 410–11).

Francis Ingleby and Master John Mush, and that, according to a law newly in force, she was to suffer death for the same, she was much pleased with the news and, smiling, thanked the messenger, wishing she had some good thing to give him, but, wanting better means, having a fig in her hand, she gave him that for a reward. 90

[...]

The judge demanded how she would be tried. 'Having not offended,' quoth she, 'I need no trial.' Answer was made that she had offended the statute made against the maintenance of priests and therefore she must have her trial, urging her to say how she would be tried. 'If you say,' quoth she, 'that I have offended and that I must be tried, then I will be tried by none but by God and your own consciences.' 95

One of the judges told her that they would admit no such answer for that they sat there to see justice executed and to give judgement according unto the verdict delivered unto them and therefore she must be tried by the country. But still she appealed to God and their consciences. 100

Hereupon the judges commanded to be brought forth the two chalices, divers pictures, and some vestments with other ornaments of the altar in use in the Catholic Church. These sacred ornaments were by way of derision put on two fellows' backs, who with twenty antic faces made themselves apes to please the judges and the multitude, and, holding up some wafer breads, said to the martyr, 'Behold thy God, in whom thou believest.' They asked her how she liked the vestments. 'I like them well,' quoth she, 'if they were on their backs that know how to use them unto God's honour.' 105

The judge, Clinch, asked her in whom she believed. 'I believe,' quoth she, 'in God.' He demanded in what God. 'I believe,' quoth she, 'in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost, in three persons and one God, and that by the passion, death, and mercy of Christ Jesus I must be saved.' The judge told her she said well and he, having paused a while, demanded of her again if she were contented to be tried by God and the country, the which she refused. Hereupon the judge bid her to consider well what she did. 'For,' quoth he, 'if you refuse to be tried by the country, you make yourself guilty of your own death. For we cannot try you but by order of law, and you need not fear this kind of trial, for I do think the country cannot find you guilty upon the bare evidence of a child.' Yet this trial she still refused, and her reason was, as it hath been reported, for that she saw they intended to have her blood, whereof she would not have the child to be guilty, being brought to accuse her for fear of whipping, as is before declared. 110

[...]

'If then,' quoth the judge to the martyr, 'you will not put yourself on the country, hear your judgement. You shall return unto the place from whence you came, and there in the lower part of the prison be stripped stark naked, laid down on your back to the ground, and so much weight laid on you as you are able to bear, and thus you shall continue 120

88. Francis Ingleby (1551–86), priest and Yorkshire martyr. John Mush (1551–1612?), Yorkshire priest, author of the present narrative, and later an Appellant, one who protested the appointment of George Blackwell as archpriest of England. 104. apes mimicking clowns. 113. and the country i.e. and by a jury of peers.

for three days without any other food than a little barley bread and puddle water, and the third day you shall have a sharp stone put under your back, and your hands and feet shall be tied unto posts that, more weight being laid upon you, you may be pressed to death.' 125

The martyr, not dismayed with the sentence, told the judge that if this judgement were according to his conscience, she prayed God to send him a better judgement in the later day, and so gave humble thanks unto God for that which was done against her. [...]

From the time that this holy martyr was committed again to prison unto her death, which was some nine or ten days, she never wore any linen next unto her skin and her diet was water-pottage, rye bread, and small ale, the which she took once in the day but in a very little quantity. And from the time that she had certain notice that she should die she took no food at all. [...]

Thus was this innocent lamb delivered up into the butcher's hands. Some of the Council and divers ministers at several times repaired unto her, and pressed her going unto their church for the saving of her life, wherein she constantly resisted them. They also demanded of her many questions concerning religious priests resorting unto her house and of some particularly by name, but she, aiming at their ill intentions, by her discreet answers frustrated their hopes. Wherefore, hopeless to draw her unto their desires or to get anything from her to the prejudice of others, they resorteth no more unto her, but resolved she should die according to the judgement given against her. And the better to colour her death under the show of justice, they raised of her many false and slanderous reports. 135

And now the 25th of March being come, and no word sent from the judge to stay execution, she had word brought to her by the sheriff that she must prepare herself to die, telling the day and hour. The night before her death she spake unto the man's wife that had the custody of her to have some women watch with her that night. 'Not that I fear death,' quoth she, 'for that is comfort; but the flesh is frail.' The woman told her that the jailer had locked the door and was gone to bed and, therefore, none could be had. But the woman herself, being ready to go to bed, put on her clothes again and sat by her until towards midnight, the martyr spending her time in prayer. About midnight the woman went unto her rest, and within some hour after the martyr rose up from her prayers, put off her apparel, and put on a linen habit which she had made of purpose for her martyrdom. In this habit without any other garment she betook herself again unto her prayers on her knees until three of the clock, at which time she came unto the fireside and laid herself flat down upon the stones a quarter of an hour and so went to bed, where she lay until six in the morning. 140 145 150 155

126. **pressed to death** Upon hearing of Margaret's sentence, John Clitherow wept until blood came from his nose and exclaimed, 'Alas! Will they kill my wife?' (ed. Morris, iii. 418). 129. **later day** i.e. at the Last Judgement. 132. **water-pottage** thin soup. **small ale** weak beer. 136. **divers ministers** Edmund Bunney, who attempted to browbeat her with scriptural quotation and argument; Giles Wiggington, the Puritan who had objected to the use of the boy witness at court (ed. Morris, iii. 416, 420 ff.). 136–7. **pressed...unto** urged her to go to. 143. **false and slanderous reports** the standard accusation of harlotry with priests (ed. Morris, iii. 414).

Then, preparing for death, she entreated this Yoward's wife that had the custody of her to see her die, wishing she might be accompanied by some Catholics in that time of her agony to put her in mind of God.

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Yoward's wife denied to be present at so cruel a death, but proffered to procure some friend to lay on store of weight to put her quickly out of her pain, the which the martyr absolutely refused.

About eight of the clock the sheriff came, who found her ready, expecting this rich banquet prepared for her. With the linen habit on her arm and some inckle which she had provided to tie her feet and hands, she went barefoot and bare-legged, and her gown loose about her, but her headgear was decently put on, and so she went cheerfully unto her marriage, as she called it.

165

The place of execution was the toll-booth some twenty foot distant from the prison, and she must of necessity come into the street to go unto this place. The street was full of people, insomuch as she could hardly pass. Yet as she went, she dealt her alms. The sheriff hastened her to come away, to whom she answered merrily, 'Good Master Sheriff, let me deal my poor alms before I go. I have but a short time in this world.'

170

There were admitted into the room where she suffered no more but the two sheriffs, one gentleman, one minister, four women, three or four men, four sergeants, and those the sergeants had hired to do the execution.

175

The martyr, coming into the room, kneeled down and prayed unto herself. The officers and standers-by bid her pray with them and they would pray with her, which she denied, saying she would not so much as say 'Amen' unto their prayers, nor willingly should they do unto hers.

180

Then they willed her to pray for the queen, whereupon the martyr in the hearing of them all began as followeth:

'I do pray for the Catholic Church, for the Pope's Holiness and Cardinals, for all such as have care of souls, and for all Christian princes in the world.' At which words the officers interrupted her, and commanded her not to put the Queen's Majesty amongst that company. Yet the martyr proceeded. 'And for Elizabeth, Queen of England. And I humbly beseech God to turn her to the Catholic faith that after this mortal life she may enjoy the joys of heaven, unto whose soul I do wish as much joy as unto mine own.'

185

One of the sheriffs, called Gibson, moved with compassion towards her, withdrew himself unto the door, and stood weeping. The other, nameth Fawcett, commanded her to put off her apparel, saying she must die naked, according to the judgement given against her. She fell down on her knees, and the rest of the women with her, requesting him, for the honour of womankind, that she might not be seen naked, but be suffered to die in her smock, which he would not grant.

190

162. store abundant supply. 165. inckle tape or linen yarn. 167. headgear Since respectable women appeared in public with headcoverings of some kind, Margaret probably fashioned something with her linen or inckle. 169. toll-booth the custom house on the bridge over the river Ouse. 186–8. And . . . own Clitherow's prayer for Elizabeth confutes the charge of treason.

Then she requested that the women might unclothe her, and that they would turn their
faces from her during the time of her unclothing, which was granted. And the women put
upon her the long linen habit which she had brought with her, and so was quickly laid
down upon the ground, a sharp stone being laid upon her back. Her face was covered with
a handkercher, her secret parts with the linen habit, and all the rest of her body left naked. 195

When the boards that were joined together in the fashion of a broad door were laid on
her to bear the weight, she raised up her hands toward her face and joined them together,
which the sheriff seeing, commanded two of the sergeants to part them and to tie them
unto two posts set there for that purpose; which was done with the inckle she brought
with her, and so her arms extended and her body made a perfect cross. 200

Then they called on her again to ask the Queen's Majesty forgiveness and to pray for
her. And when the martyr replied she had prayed for her, they willed her to ask her
husband forgiveness. 'If ever I have offended him,' said the martyr, 'I do ask him
forgiveness from the bottom of my heart.' After this they laid weight on her, which
when she felt, she cried out, 'Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, have mercy upon me!', which were the last
words that were heard to come from her. She was dying about one quarter of an hour. 205
They laid on her about seven or eight hundred weight, which did not only break her ribs
but caused them to break through her skin. 210

And this was the end of this virtuous and glorious martyr, the proto-martyr of her sex
in the kingdom of England, since heresy infected it in these later times.

The day of her death was the 25th of March, on which day she ever was desirous to
offer up her soul, which is very remarkable, being a day that she did highly honour in
regard of the general opinion that the world was made on that day and that our Saviour
was then incarnate in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. 215

WILLIAM WESTON

'If I spoke with the tongue of Father Campion', declared a popular saying recorded in a
Valladolid archive, 'and wrote with the pen of Father Persons, and led the austere life of
Father Weston, and yet had not charity, it would avail me nothing' (P. Caraman, ed.,
Autobiography from the Jesuit Underground, 1955: p. xvi). Called to the English Mission
from Seville, the Jesuit William Weston (1550–1615) sold the horse he was given for
the journey, donated the money to the poor, and walked to Paris. In 1584 he began
his extraordinary activities of the next two decades, converting souls, ministering the
sacraments, and enduring long periods of imprisonment. Exiled to the Continent in 1603,

199. handkercher handkerchief. 213. proto-martyr first martyr. 215. 25th of March 'Lady Day', the feast of the Annun-
ciation.

virtuous behaviour in suffering their cruelty. For my part I will pass it over and come to this double martyrdom of the woman, who was the second martyr for receiving God's priests. In whose life I will not, by God's grace and assistance, make relation of anything more than that which I saw and well knew in her myself by some years of our conversation together, for which season I was privy to her whole heart as much as any. And as for those things which happened at her apprehension, imprisonment, arraignment, judgment, and death, I will report no more than that which I have received from the mouths of divers honest and credible persons, which were present witnesses and beholders of every action.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE VIRTUOUS EDUCATION OF MRS. MARGARET CLITHEROW.

THIS martyr's name was Margaret Clitherow, wife of Mr. John Clitherow, citizen of York. She was born in York, the daughter of Mr. Middleton, a man of good wealth, who had been sheriff in the same city. As touching her worldly state and condition, she was about thirty years of age, and to her beautiful and gracious soul God gave her a body with comely face and beauty correspondent. She was of sharp and ready wit, with rare discretion in all her actions, a plentiful mother in children, and her husband of competent wealth and ability. About twelve or thirteen years past, two or three years at the most after her marriage, when she heard first of the Catholic Faith and Church (for before she frequented the heretical service, not suspecting there had been any other true way to serve God), she became as desirous to learn the Christian duty in truth and sincerity, as she had learned before to serve only the world vainly; and, after a little

consideration, finding no substance, truth, nor Christian comfort in the ministers of the new gospel, nor in their doctrine itself, and hearing also many priests and lay people to suffer for the defence of the ancient Catholic Faith, (which is known to have been the Faith of all England, common with all the Christian world many hundred years since the world was first delivered from idolatry and paganism), she carefully employed herself to know plainly the same, and to become a lively member of the Church, wherein this faith had been taught and preached. Even, at the first, fully resolving rather to forsake husband, life, and all, than to return again to her damnable state, which gracious desire she then more speedily accomplished, not without contradiction of her worldly friends, than at any time after she could peaceably enjoy the same.

For that in those days neither heretical fury was so outrageous as it hath shamefully increased ever since, and more then were known Catholics in one town (Catholic times being fresh in memory of all, which the tempest of violent heretics hath destroyed and taken away) than are now to be found almost in a whole country.

In the passage of these twelve years, she hath been often tossed in the waves of tribulation; for her former zeal and constancy in the Catholic faith, divers times separated from her husband and children, cast into prison, sometimes by the space of two years together, and sometimes by more, that it might be plainly verified in her which the Apostle speaketh of God's elect, *Omnes qui piè volunt vivere in Christo persecutionem patiuntur*; that is "All that will live virtuous in our Lord Jesus suffer persecution;" for she had no sooner escaped the devil's throat, and resolved with herself to serve God sincerely, who had so mercifully delivered her from the danger of that damnation which had been the certain reward of her former erroneous faith, which, in her youth, she had