

AWFUL DISCLOSURES

OF

MARIA MONK,

THE

THRILLING

MYSTERIES

OF A

CONVENT REVEALED!

AND

SIX MONTHS IN A CONVENT.

PHILADELPHIA:

T. B. PETERSON, 101, CHESTNUT STREET.



TAKING THE VOW.



PREFACE.

It is to be hoped that the reader of the ensuing narrative will not suppose that it is a fiction, or that the scenes and persons that I have delineated, had not a real existence. It is also desired, that the author of this volume may be regarded not as a voluntary participator in the very guilty transactions which are described; but receive sympathy for the trials which she has endured, and the peculiar situation in which her past experience, and escape from the power of the Superior of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery, at Montreal, and the snares of the Roman Priests in Canada, have left her.

My feelings are frequently distressed and agitated by the recollection of what I have passed through; and by night and by day I have little peace of mind, and few periods of calm and pleasing reflection. Futurity also appears uncertain. I know not what reception this little work may meet with, and what will be the effect of its publication here or in Canada, among strangers, friends, or enemies. I have given the world the truth, so far as I have gone, on subjects of which I am told they are generally ignorant; and I feel perfect confidence, that any facts which may yet be discovered, will confirm my words whenever they can be obtained. Whoever shall explore the Hotel Dieu Nunnery at Montreal, will find unquestionable evidence that the descriptions of the interior of that edifice, given in this book, were furnished by one familiar with them; for whatever alterations may be attempted, there are changes which no mason or carpenter can make and effectually conceal; and therefore there must be plentiful evidence in that Institution, of the truth of my description.

There are living witnesses, also, who ought to be made to speak, without fear of penances, tortures, and death, and possibly their testimony at some future time, may be added, to confirm my statements. There are witnesses I should greatly rejoice to see at liberty; or rather there *were*. Are they living now? or will they be permitted to live after the Priests and Superiors have seen this book? Perhaps the wretched nuns in the cells have already suffered for my sake—perhaps Jane Ray has been silenced for ever, or will be murdered, before she has time to add her most important testimony to mine.

But speedy death in relation only to this world, can be no great calamity to those who lead the life of a nun. The mere recollection of it always makes me miserable. It would distress the reader, should I repeat the

dreams with which I am often terrified at night; for I sometimes fancy myself pursued by the worst enemies; frequently I seem as if again shut up in the Convent; often I imagine myself present at the repetition of the worst scenes that I have hinted at or described. Sometimes I stand by the secret place of interment in the cellar; sometimes I think I can hear the shrieks of the helpless females in the hands of atrocious men; and sometimes almost seem actually to look again upon the calm and placid features of St. Frances, as she appeared when surrounded by her murderers.

I cannot banish the scenes and character of this book from my memory. To me it can never appear like an amusing fable, or lose its interest and importance. The story is one which is continually before me, and must return fresh to my mind, with painful emotions, as long as I live. With time, and Christian instruction, and the sympathy and examples of the wise and good, I hope to learn submissively to bear whatever trials are appointed me, and to improve under them all.

Impressed as I continually am with the frightful reality of the painful communications that I have made in this volume, I can only offer to all persons who may doubt or disbelieve my statements, these two things:—

Permit me to go through the Hotel Dieu Nunnery at Montreal, with some impartial ladies and gentlemen, that they may compare my account with the interior parts of the building, into which no persons but the Roman Bishop and Priests are ever admitted; and if they do not find my description true, then discard me as an impostor. Bring me before a court of justice—there I am willing to meet *Latargue, Dufreme, Phelan, Bonin, and Richards*, and their wicked companions, with the Superior, and any of the nuns, before a thousand men.

MARIA MONK.

New York, January 11, 1836.



I was required to devote myself for about a year to the study of the prayers and practice of the ceremonies necessary on the reception of a nun. This I found a very tedious duty; but as I was released in a great degree from the daily labours usually demanded of novices, I felt little disposition to complain.

CHAPTER VI.

Taking the veil—Interview afterwards with the Superior—Surprise and horror at the disclosures—Resolution to submit.

I WAS introduced into the Superior's room on the evening preceding the day on which I was to take the veil, to have an interview with the bishop. The Superior was present, and the interview lasted about half an hour. The bishop on this as on other occasions appeared to be habitually rough in his manners. His address was by no means prepossessing.

Before I took the veil, I was ornamented for the ceremony, and was clothed in a dress belonging to the Convent, which was used on such occasions; and placed not far from the altar in the chapel, in the view of a number of spectators, who had assembled, in number, perhaps about forty. Taking the veil is an affair which occurs so frequently in Montreal, that it has long ceased to be regarded as a novelty; and, although notice had been given in the French parish church as usual, only a small audience assembled as I have mentioned.

Being well prepared with a long training, and frequent rehearsals, for what I was to perform, I stood waiting in my large flowing dress for the appearance of the bishop. He soon presented himself, entering by a door behind the altar; I then threw myself at his feet, and asked him to confer upon me the veil. He expressed his consent; and then turning to the Superior, I threw myself prostrate at her feet, according to my instructions, repeating what I have before done at rehearsals, and made a movement as if to kiss her feet. This she prevented, or appeared to prevent, catching me by a sudden motion of her hand, and granted my request. I then kneeled before the Holy Sacrament, that is a large round wafer held by the Bishop between his fore-finger and thumb, and made my vows.

This wafer I had been taught to regard with the utmost veneration as the real body of Jesus Christ, the presence of which made the vows that were uttered before it binding in the most solemn manner.

After taking the vows, I proceeded to a small apartment behind the altar, accompanied by four nuns, where there was a coffin prepared with my nun's name engraved upon it:

“SAINT EUSTACE.”

My companions lifted it by four handles attached to it, while I threw off my dress, and put on that of a nun of *Sœur Bourgeoise*; and then we all returned to the chapel. I proceeded first, and was followed by four nuns, the Bishop naming a number of worldly pleasures in rapid succession, in reply to which I as rapidly repeated, “Je renounce, je renounce, je renounce,”—I renounce, I renounce, I renounce.

The coffin was then placed in front of the altar, and I advanced to place myself in it. This coffin was to be deposited, after the ceremony, in an out-house, to be preserved until my death, when it was to receive my corpse. There were reflections which

I naturally made at that time, but I stepped in, extended myself, and lay still. A pillow had been placed at the head of the coffin, to support my head in a comfortable position. A large thick black cloth was then spread over me, and the chanting of Latin hymns immediately commenced. My thoughts were not the most pleasing during the time I lay in that situation. The pall, or Drap Mortel, as the cloth is called, had a strong smell of incense, which was always disagreeable to me, and then proved almost suffocating. I recollected the story of the novice, who, in taking the veil, lay down in her coffin like me, and was covered in the same manner, but on the removal of the covering was found dead.

When I was uncovered, I rose, stepped out of my coffin, and kneeled. Other ceremonies then followed, of no particular interest; after which the music commenced, and here the whole was finished. I then proceeded from the chapel, and returned to the Superior's room, followed by the other nuns, who walked two by two, in their customary manner, with their hands folded on their breasts, and their eyes cast down upon the floor. The nun who was to be my companion in future, then walked at the end of the procession. On reaching the Superior's door they all left me, and I entered alone, and found her with the Bishop and two Priests.

The Superior now informed me that having taken the black veil, it only remained that I should swear the three oaths customary on becoming a nun; and that some explanation would be necessary from her. I was now, she told me, to have access to every part of the edifice, even to the cellar, where two of the sisters were imprisoned for causes which she did not mention. I must be informed that one of my great duties was to obey the priests in all things; and this I soon learnt, to my utter astonishment and horror, was to live in the practice of criminal intercourse with them. I expressed some of the feelings which this announcement excited in me, which came upon me like a flash of lightning; but the only effect was to set her arguing with me, in favour of the crime, representing it as a virtue acceptable to God, and honourable to me. The priests, she said, were not situated like other men, being forbidden to marry; while they lived secluded, laborious, and self-denying lives for our salvation. They might, indeed, be considered our saviours, as without their service we could not obtain pardon of sin, and must go to hell. Now it was our solemn duty, on withdrawing from the world, to consecrate our lives to religion, to practice every species of self-denial. We could not be too humble, nor mortify our feelings too far; this was to be done by opposing them, and acting contrary to them; and what she proposed was, therefore, pleasing in the sight of God. I now felt how foolish I had been to place myself in the power of such persons as were around me.

From what she said, I could draw no other conclusions but that I was required to act like the most abandoned of beings, and that all my future associations were habitually guilty of the most heinous and detestable crimes. When I repeated my expressions of surprise and horror, she told me that such feelings were very common at first, and that many other nuns had expressed themselves as I did, who had long since changed their minds. She even said, that on her entrance into the nunnery, she had felt like me.

Doubts, she declared, were among our greatest enemies. They

would lead us to question every point of duty, and induce us to waver at every step. They arose only from remaining imperfections, and were always evidences of sin. Our only way was to dismiss them immediately, repent and confess them. Priests, she insisted, could not sin. It was a thing impossible. Everything that they did, and wished, was of course right. She hoped I would see the reasonableness and duty of the oaths I was then to take, and be faithful to them.

She gave me another piece of information, which excited other feelings in me, scarcely less dreadful. Infants were sometimes born in the Convent, but they were always baptized, and immediately strangled. This secured their everlasting happiness; for the baptism purifies them from all sinfulness, and being sent out of the world before they had time to do anything wrong, they were at once admitted into heaven. How happy, she exclaimed, are those who secure immortal happiness to such little beings! Their souls would thank those who kill their bodies, if they had it in their power.

Into what a place, and among what society, had I been admitted. How different did a convent now appear from what I supposed it to be. The holy women I had always fancied the nuns to be, the venerable Lady Superior, what are they? And the priests of the Seminary adjoining, (some of whom, indeed, I had reason to think were base and profligate men,) what were they all? I now learned that they were often admitted into the nunnery, and allowed to indulge in the greatest crimes, which they and others call virtues.

And having listened for some time to the Superior alone, a number of the nuns were admitted, and took a free part in the conversation. They concurred in everything which she told me, and repeated, without any signs of shame or compunction, things which criminated themselves. I must acknowledge the truth, and declare that all this had an effect upon my mind. I questioned whether I might not be in the wrong, and felt as if their reasoning might have some just foundation. I had been several years under the tuition of Catholics, and was ignorant of the Scriptures, and unaccustomed to the society, example, and conversation of Protestants; had not heard any appeal to the Bible as authority, but had been taught, both by precept and example, to receive as truth everything said by the priests. I had not heard their authority questioned, nor anything said of any other standard of faith but their declarations. I had long been familiar with the corrupt and licentious expressions which some of them use at confessions, and believed that other women were also. I had no standard of duty to refer to, and no judgment of my own which I knew how to use, or thought of using.

All around me insisted that my doubts proved only my own ignorance and sinfulness; that they knew by experience that they would soon give place to true knowledge, and an advance in religion; and I felt something like indecision.

Still there was so much that disgusted me in the discovery I had now made, of the debased characters around me, that I would most gladly have escaped from the nunnery, and never returned. But that was a thing not to be thought of. I was in their power, and this I deeply felt, while I thought there was not one among the whole number of nuns to whom I could look for kindness. There was one, however, who began to speak to me at length in

a tone that gained something of my confidence,—the nun whom I have mentioned before as distinguished by her oddity, Jane Ray, who made us so much amusement when I was a novice. Although, as I have remarked, there was nothing in her face, form, or manners, to give me any pleasure, she addressed me with apparent friendliness; and while she seemed to concur with some things spoken by them, took an opportunity to whisper a few words in my ear, unheard by them, intimating that I had better comply with everything the Superior desired, if I would save my life. I was somewhat alarmed before, but I now became much more so, and determined to make no further resistance. The Superior then made me repeat the three oaths; and, when I had sworn them, I was shown into one of the community-rooms, and remained some time with the nuns, who were released from their usual employments, and enjoying a recreation day, on account of the admission of a new sister. My feelings during the remainder of the day I shall not attempt to describe, but pass on to mention the ceremonies that took place at dinner. This description may give an idea of the manner in which we always took our meals, although there were some points in which the breakfast and supper were different.

At eleven o'clock the bell rang for dinner, and the nuns all took their places in a double row, in the same order as that in which they left the chapel in the morning, except that my companion and myself were stationed at the head of the line. Standing thus for a moment, with our hands placed one on the other over the breast, and hidden in our large cuffs, with our heads bent forward, and eyes fixed on the floor, an old nun, who stood at the door, clapped her hands as a signal for us to proceed; and the procession moved on, while we all commenced the repetition of litanies. We walked on in this order, repeating all the way until we reached the door of the dining-room, where we were divided into two lines; those on the right passing down the side of the long table, and those on the left the other, till all were in; and each stopped in her place. The plates were all arranged, each with a knife, fork, and spoon, rolled up in a napkin, and tied round with a linen band marked with the owner's name. My own plate, knife, &c., were prepared like the rest: and on the band around them I found my new name written—"Saint Eustace."

There we stood till all had concluded the litany, when the old nun, who had taken her place at the head of the table next the door, said the prayer before meat, beginning, "Benedicite," and we sat down. I do not remember of what our dinner consisted, but we usually had soup, and some plain dish of meat; the remains of which were occasionally served up at supper as a fricasee. One of the nuns, who had been appointed to read that day, rose, and began a lecture from a book put into her hands by the Superior, while the rest of us ate in perfect silence. The nun who reads during dinner, stays afterwards to dine. As fast as we finished our meals, each rolled up her knife, fork, and spoon, in her napkin, and bound them together with the band, and sat with hands folded. The old nun then said a short prayer, arose, stepped a little aside, clapped her hands, and we marched towards the door, bowing as we passed, before a little chapel, or glass box, containing a wax image of the infant Jesus.

Nothing important occurred till late in the afternoon, when, as I was sitting in the community-room, Father Dufresne called me

out, saying, he wished to speak with me. I feared what was his intention; but I dared not disobey. In a private apartment, he treated me in a brutal manner; and, from two other priests, I afterwards received similar usage that evening. Father Dufresne afterwards appeared again; and I was compelled to remain in company with him until morning.

I am assured that the conduct of priests in our Convent had never been exposed, and it is not imagined by the people of the United States. This induces me to say what I do, notwithstanding the strong reasons I have to let it remain unknown. Still I cannot force myself to speak on such subjects except in the most brief manner.

CHAPTER VII.

Daily ceremonies—Jane Ray among the nuns.

ON Thursday morning, the bell rang at half-past six to waken us. The old nun who was acting as night-watch immediately spoke aloud:

“Voici le Seigneur qui vient.” (Behold the Lord cometh.) The nuns all responded:

“Allons—y devant lui.” (Let us go and meet him.)

We then rose immediately, and dressed as expeditiously as possible, stepping into the passage-way, at the foot of our bed, as soon as we were ready, and taking place each beside her opposite companion. Thus we were soon drawn up in a double row the whole length of the room, with our hands folded across our breasts, and concealed in the broad cuffs of our sleeves. Not a word was uttered. When the signal was given, we all proceeded to the community-room, which is spacious, and took our places in rows facing the entrance, near which the Superior was seated in a *vergiere*.

We first repeated “Au nom du Père, du Fils, et du Saint Esprit—Ainsi soit il.” (In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—Amen.)

We then kneeled and kissed the floor; then, still on our knees, we said a very long prayer, beginning: “Divin Jesus, sauveur de mon ame,” (Divine Jesus, Saviour of my soul.) Then came the Lord’s prayers, three Hail Marys, four creeds, and five confessions, (*confesse à Dieu*.)

Next we repeated the ten commandments. Then we repeated the acts of faith, and a prayer to the Virgin, in Latin, which like everything else in Latin, I never understood a word of. Next we said litanies of the Holy Name of Jesus, in Latin, which were afterwards to be repeated several times in the course of the day. Then came the prayer for the beginning of the day; then bending down, we commenced the Orison Mental, (or Mental Orison,) which lasted about an hour and a half.

This exercise was considered peculiarly solemn. We were told in the nunnery that a certain saint was saved by the use of it, as she never omitted it. It consists of several parts: First, the Superior read to us a chapter from a book, which occupied five minutes. Then profound silence prevailed for fifteen minutes, during which we were meditating upon it. Then she read another chapter of equal length on a different subject, and we meditated upon that another quarter of an hour; and after a third reading and meditation, we finished the exercise with a prayer, called an

EXTRACTS FROM PUBLIC JOURNALS,
RELATIVE TO
THE TRUTH OF
MARIA MONK'S DISCLOSURES.

*The following certificate appeared in the Protestant Vindicator, in
March, 1836.*

WE, the subscribers, have an acquaintance with Miss Maria Monk, and having considered the evidence of different kinds which has been collected in relation to her case, have no hesitation in declaring our belief in the truth of the statements she makes in her book, recently published in New York, entitled 'Awful Disclosures,' &c.

"We at the same time declare that the assertion, originally made in the Roman Catholic Newspapers of Boston, that the book was copied from a work entitled 'The Gates of Hell Opened,' is wholly destitute of foundation; it being entirely new, and not copied from anything whatsoever.

"And we further declare, that no evidence has been produced which discredits the statements of Miss Monk; while, on the contrary, her story has yet received, and continues to receive, confirmation from various sources.

"During the last week, two important witnesses spontaneously appeared, and offered to give public testimony in her favour. From them the following delineations have been received. The first is an affidavit given by Mr. William Miller, now a resident of this city. The second is a statement received from a young married woman, who, with her husband, also resides here. In the clear and repeated statements made by these two witnesses, we place entire reliance; who are ready to furnish satisfaction to any persons making reasonable enquiries on the subject.

"W. C. BROWNREE,

"JOHN J. SLOCUM,

"ANDREW BRUCE,

"D. FANSHAW,

"AMOS BELDEN,

"DAVID WESSON,

"THOMAS HOGAN."

From the American Protestant Vindicator.

"It was expected that, after Maria Monk's disclosures, an artful attempt would be made to invalidate her testimony—which was done secretly after her escape from the Hotel Dieu Nunnery, by so altering the appearance of that institution by planking, and bricking, and stoning, as to deceive Col. Stone, who was *then* requested to examine it for himself and the world. The Col. misrepresented what he saw, he was deceived regarding those alterations by the inmates, who dragged him, as it were, by force through the building during his examination, which was performed in the amazing short space of a few hours. But time is the grand unraveller of mysteries. On the appearance of the book of Miss Monk, the hoodwinked people of Montreal were so surprised and stupefied at finding that the immaculate purity of the Hotel Dieu had been so disparaged, that they *forgot* to think seriously on the subject—but, understanding that the story had gained almost general belief abroad, they, at last, were led to conjecture that perhaps it was partiality that prevented them from believing it at home. General attention, therefore, in Montreal, was directed towards that edifice—and those residing in its immediate vicinity cast a retrospective glance over what they had seen transacted there, between the time at which the 'Disclosures' were published, and the visit of Col. Stone. The result of this investigation has been lately given on the spot to the Rev. Jas. P. Miller, of New York, who visited that city for the purpose of hearing that the truth was gradually coming to light. The neighbours informed Mr. Miller that about the time it was rumoured that she had exposed the institution, a mysterious pile of planks, twenty-five feet in height, had been placed mysteriously in the yard, which were wonderfully and gradually used in progressing some improvements in the building—for they were neither employed outside nor hauled away.

Whatever may be the fact with regard to Maria Monk's alleged disclosures, those of our people who have read your papers, are satisfied in one point: that Mr. Stone's credibility as a witness as been successfully impeached; that his examination of the Nunnery, was a mere sham; that he was either the dupe of Jesuitical imposture, or that he himself is a fond impostor; that he has been unwillingly or ignorantly befooled; and unless he has had a tangible reward, that he has 'got his labour for his pains.'

"My wife, who spent her childhood in Montreal, says, that she and her schoolmates, when walking the street near the Nunnery, often used to wonder if the famous subterranean passage was under the place where they then stood: and yet, forsooth, no person in Canada ever before heard of it! Whatever may be the facts in relation to those disclosures, we needed not your paper to satisfy us either that Jesuits must be as holy as the 'Blessed Virgin Mother' herself, or those conventicles of unprotected females are scenes of the most damning character.—A PROTESTANT."

From the Long Island Star, of Feb. 29th.

"Since the publication of our last paper, we have received a communication from Messrs. Howe and Bates, of New York, the publishers of Miss Monk's 'Awful Disclosures.' It appears that

some influence has been at work in that city, adverse to the free examination of the case between her and the priests of Canada ; for thus far the newspapers have been most entirely closed against everything in her defence, whilst most of them have published false charges against the book, some of a preposterous nature, the contradiction of which is plain and palpable.

“ Returning to New York, she then first resolved to publish her story, which she has recently done, after several intelligent disinterested persons had satisfied themselves by much examination that it is true.

When it became known in Canada that this was her intention, six affidavits were published in some of the newspapers, intended to destroy confidence in her character ; but these were found very contradictory in several important points, and in others to afford undesigned confirmation of statements before made by her.

“ On the publication of her book, the New York Catholic Dairy, the Truth-teller, the Green Banner, and other papers, made virulent attacks upon it, and one of them proposed that the publishers should be ‘ lynched.’ An anonymous handbill was also circulated in New York, declaring the work a malignant libel, got up by Protestant clergymen, and promising an ample refutation of it in a few days. This were re-published in the Catholic Dairy, &c., with the old Montreal affidavits, which latter were distributed through New York and Brooklyn ; and on the authority of these, several Protestant newspapers denounced the work as false and malicious.

“ Another charge, quite inconsistent with the rest, was also made, not only by the leading Roman Catholic papers, but by several others at second hand—viz., that it was a mere copy of an old European work. This had been promptly denied by the publishers, with the offer of 100 dollars reward for any book at all resembling it.

“ Yet such is the resolution of some, and the unbelief of others, that it is impossible for the publishers to obtain insertion for the replies in the New York papers generally, and they have been unsuccessful in an attempt at Philadelphia.

“ This is the ground on which the following article has been offered to us, for publication in the Star. It was offered to Mr. Schneller, a Roman Priest, and Editor of the Catholic Dairy, for insertion in his paper of Saturday before last, but refused, although written expressly as an answer to the affidavits and charges his previous number had contained. This article has also been refused insertion in a Philadelphia daily paper, after it been satisfactorily ascertained that there was no hope of gaining admission for it into any of the New York papers.

“ It should be stated, in addition, that the authoress of the book, Maria Monk, is in New York, and stands ready to answer any questions, and submit to any enquiries put in a proper manner, and desires nothing so strongly as an opportunity to prove before a court the truth of her story. She has already found several persons of respectability who have confirmed some of the facts, important and likely to be attested by concurrant evidence ; and much further testimony in her favour may be soon expected by the public.

“ With these facts before them, intelligent readers will judge for themselves. She asks for investigation, while her opponents deny her every opportunity to meet the charges made against her.

Mr. Schneller, after expressing a wish to see her, to the publishers, refused to meet her anywhere, unless in his own house; while Mr. Quarter, another Roman Catholic priest, called to see her, at ten o'clock one night, accompanied by another man, without giving their names, and under the false pretence of being bearers of a letter from her brother in Montreal.

THE NUN ;

OR,

SIX MONTHS' RESIDENCE

IN A

CONVENT.

BY

REBECCA THERESA REED,

LATE INMATE OF THE URSULINE CONVENT, MOUNT BENE-
DICT, CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS.

PHILADELPHIA :

T. B. PETERSON, 101, CHESTNUT STREET.

PREFACE.

Two or three facts, of importance to a clear understanding of the following narrative, should be kept in view by the reader, and are therefore stated briefly in a preface to this edition of the work. The chief subject of it, Miss Rebecca Reed, now of Boston in the United States, is not so responsible for the publication as would at first on the face of the narrative appear. The manuscript was prepared by her, from copious notes which she took as she had opportunity; of this there can be no doubt. But it may be doubted whether she would at her own instance ever have sent it to the press. It was first published by a number of her friends in that city, who united their persuasions to overcome her reluctance to its appearing in print; partly to shield her from the reproaches that her escape from the convent, and her subsequent conversations and correspondence about its discipline, were bringing upon her; but principally to counteract the prevailing passion among Protestants in favour of a convent education for their daughters, which, among other things, appeared to be giving an impulse to the advances of Popery in that quarter of the world.

In little more than two years after Miss Reed's escape, the convent was destroyed by fire. It had become so unpopular and so unsightly an object, that a mob at length assembled and burnt it to the ground. It was to be expected that its proprietors and advocates would charge this outrage on the efforts of Miss Reed and her friends to bring the institution into contempt. Hence the Superior, in her answer to Miss Reed's narrative, represents her as saying that her brother-in-law and another friend declared that *the convent should come down*. As no saying of this kind occurs in the narrative itself, and as Miss Reed protests against ever having uttered anything like it, the calumny has been imputed to the Superior's desire to confirm suspicion against her brother-in-law, who was then under indictment on a charge of abetting the incendiarism.

The fact is, whatever influence the narrative had upon the public judgment and feeling against the convent, no unbiassed person could ima-

gine anything like a conspiracy in the family, or among the friends of this young lady to destroy the property of the establishment and hazard the lives of its inmates. The outrage was owing to a more extended and less recent prejudice against such institutions generally, and that more particularly. Their reported and acknowledged abuses—their inconsistency with the spirit and letter of American laws—their tendency to foster political and moral corruption, and to shelter criminals while they produced crime—were sufficient to account for violence, which yet every friend to good order must deplore.



