



Madame Margot: A Grotesque Legend of Old Charleston

John Bennett

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St. Margaret of Cortona, the mediaeval Magdalen, was not precisely a wanton, or an "abandoned woman," but a girl who fell through excessive gayety, and over-great affection. She lived nine years with her lover "in defiance of law and convention," the only mitigation of her sin being her constant hope of lawful marriage with the man who had deluded her. He was murdered, his promise remaining unfulfilled. But his death was the occasion of the conversion of Margaret. Her reversion to virtue and to God was characteristically whole-hearted. She fought her way through many temptations, gave her life to the poor, outdoing them in voluntary poverty; merited admission to the third order of St. Francis, and died a saint. Her "legend" by her confessor, Fra Giunta, is given with the delicious simplicity and naïveté of the early Franciscan chroniclers. The introduction to it, in seventy-five pages, by Father Cuthbert, is an admirable little treatise on her religious psychology, with not a little unobtrusive moralizing. The contrast between the modern touch of Father Cuthbert and the mediaeval artlessness of Fra Giunta, is most striking, but each in his own way is extremely enjoyable.

—*Catholic World*, Volume 8

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