

Cf Mary Ward's dev. to the Angels.

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1686 Bas Convent

Frances Bedingfield
received money from
Sir Thomas Gascoigne
(cousin of Mary Ward)
to make a foundation.

The Ballad of Micklegate Bar

In the old town of York, that in story and song
Is renowned both in peace and in war,
For centuries three, stands a cloister far famed,
The convent of Kicklegate Bar.

In its annals we read a story so strange
That it fills us with wonder and awe,
A story that tells of those harrowing days
When pursuivants stern mandates were law,

These tyrants sent broadcast a cruel decree:
"Every cloister and church, go, despoil!
Every monast'ry burn, every Catholic shrine;
Go forward, from nothing recoil!"

To the north and the south, to the east and the west,
Went these merciless men, near and far,
Till a galloping rabble approached within sight
Of the convent of Kicklegate Bar.

Within the calm cloister, assembled in prayer,
Were the good English Ladies, prepared,
For the fate that was threat'ning their home and their lives
But not for the suffering they cared.

Their interests, their longings, their thoughts and
their loves
Were centered in one precious spot.
Round the altar they knelt, and in zeal for God's house,
All their personal fears they forgot.

Unprotected by all human aid they remained
Full of confidence, waiting the storm;
Mother Bedingfield trusted the picture she hung
O'er the front door would keep them from harm.

'Twas St. Michael, and 'neath his protection she placed
The convent, while hopeful they called
On the mighty archangel and heavenly host
That the tyrants' attempt might be foiled.

How they prayed that no desecrate hand might come nigh
The loved place where reposed their dear Lord!
How they gathered, so brave, round the sanctuary rail
This valiant and strong body-guard!

But even as they prayed in their chapel so still
That only ~~there~~ heart beats were heard,
On a sudden, dread looks they exchanged, No need
To express their alarm in quick word.

In the distance a great cloud of dust rolled along,
And clamor and cries went the air,
Till nearer and nearer the uproar approached
To this refuge of silence and prayer.

With their eyes on the altar, their hearts
 raised to heaven
Their souls in an anguish of love; They poured forth
their pleadings, then waited in hope
They'd be heard by the Father above.

The tumult grew louder, 'Twas now drawing near-
In a moment, then all would be o'er-
But, what happened? In wildest confusion and speed,
The men galloped away from the door.

Not a hand had been raised, not a foot did pollute
The ground where the old convent stood,
All was quiet as the grave; e'en the dust cloud grew
 dim,
And peace reigned with the brave Sisters good.

When at length they endeavored the myst'ry to solve,
Such a tale did they hear! Cross the way
Was a group of affrighted spectators who told
How someone had saved them that day.

"When the wild mob, both they, "reached the convent,
 behold!
In a moment their courage gave o'er
For on a white horse, a tall personage sat
With a flashing sword o'er the door."

Like terrified cowards, the rabble withdrew,
In a moment they scattered afar
And this is the story three centuries old
How St. Michael saved Micklegate Bar.

The brave English Ladies prospered and sowed
The good seed in many a land,
And wherever they settled, this story is told
Mother Beddingfield gave the command.

In due course of time, to the Emerald Isle
Their successors with Mother Ball came
And then to America, eager to found
A convent in our Lady's name.

They called it Loretto, and still they preserve
The tradition they brought from afar,
So sacred they hold the command that was given
In the convent of Micklegate Bar.

Wherever you visit Loretto, you'll find,
Tho' you travel the world o'er and o'er,
You'll be met by St. Michael in conquering form
As soon as you enter the door.

And on Michaelmas Eve, a procession is formed,
While Gloria Patri's are- they sing,
And a child, all in white, the saint's picture bears
To the Chapel in glad triumphing!

Here the organ's full notes peal forth the refrain:
"Tibi Angeli omnes" is heard,
While the voices of all in rich chorus blend
And each heart with fond memories is stirred.

Between lighted candles the picture is placed
Thro' the octave of Michaelmas Eve-
The Champion Protector and angelic Host
Due homage in prayer receive.

Adown thro' the ages this practice has come,
And naught its fulfillment can mar
Loretto will ever St. Michael revere
For the saving of Micklegate Bar.

M. Dorothea Barry I.B.V.M.