

PREFACE.

To this second volume of her series of Catholic biographies the author has chosen to give the title of "Women of Catholicity," as best conveying her idea of the work on which she has labored with much patient research. In contradistinction to Julia Kavanagh's "Women of Christianity," wherein professors of all forms of religious belief—from St. Teresa to Elizabeth Fry—from St. Catherine of Sienna to Hannah More—are made to figure on the same stage, placed, as it would almost seem, on the same plane of moral excellence—my daughter desired to confine her selection of subjects to the children of the Church, to those women of history whose lives were spent in the practice of her precepts and who thus made manifest to the outer world the marvellous efficacy of her teachings in the formation of character.

In these it is something more than mere natural goodness, than mere moral worth, how high and how great soever, that distinguishes their lives and actions from those of Christian women outside the Church; it is the supernatural element ennobling and purifying all they did and all they said, that raises them far above all men by human excellence. This is the golden thread interwoven with the noble life-work of an Isabella of Castile—a princess of great renown in her own and all succeeding times, on account of the masculine energy of character which impelled her to high heroic deeds for the glory of God and the