

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE written many books and translated many more on a great variety of subjects, nearly all of which, I thank God now with all my heart, were more or less religious, at least in their tendency; but the circle of these my life-long labors seems to me incomplete. One link is wanting to the chain, and that is a work specially devoted to the souls in Purgatory. This omission I am anxious to supply while the working days of my life are still with me, for, a few more years, at most, and for me "the night cometh when no man can work."

As we advance into the vale of years and journey on the downward slope, we are happily drawn more and more towards the eternal truths of the great untried world beyond the grave. Foremost amongst these stands out more and still more clearly, in all its awful reality, the dread but consoling doctrine of Purgatory. When we have seen many of our best beloved relatives, many of our dearest and most devoted friends—those who started with us in "the freshness of morning" on the road of life, which then lay so deceitfully fair and bright before them and us—they who shared our early hopes and aspirations, and whose words and smiles were the best encouragement of our feeble efforts—when we have seen them sink, one by one, into the darkness of the grave, leaving the earth more bleak and dreary year by year for those who remain—then do we naturally follow them in spirit to those gloomy regions where one or all may be undergoing that blessed purification which prepares them for the eternal repose of Heaven.

Of all the divine truths which the Catholic Church proposes to her children, assuredly none is more acceptable to the pilgrim race of Adam than that of Purgatory. It is, beyond conception, dear and precious as one of the links that connect the living with the vanished dead, and which keeps them fresh in the memory of those