

P R E F A C E .

It seems to me that there is little need of a Preface for BESSY CONWAY. The object of the book is plain enough ; so plain, indeed, that there is no possibility of any one's mistaking it for a better or a worse. It is simply an attempt to point out to *Irish Girls in America*—especially that numerous class whose lot it is to hire themselves out for work, the true and never-failing path to success in this world, and happiness in the next. Perhaps in the vast extent of the civilized world, there is no class more exposed to evil influences than the Irish Catholic girls who earn a precarious living at service in America. To those who are even superficially acquainted with the workings of that chaotic mass which forms the population of our cities, of the awful depth of corruption weltering below the surface, and the utter forgetfulness of things spiritual, it is a matter of surprise that so many of the simple-hearted peasant girls of Ireland retain their home-virtues and follow the teachings of religion in these great Babylons of the west.

The subject looms up before us in tremendous proportions as we come to consider it, and the mind shrinks appalled from the consequences and probabilities presenting themselves on every side. The vast number of these girls, their unprotected state, generally speaking ;