

subject. Nevertheless, they all come within the scope of my present work and are, therefore, presented to the reader as weird fragments of the legendary lore of Purgatory.

Taken altogether, I think this work will help to increase devotion to the Suffering Souls, and excite a more tender and more sensible feeling of sympathy for them, at least amongst Catholics, showing, as it does, the awful reality of those purgative pains awaiting all, with few or no exceptions, in the after life; the help they may and do receive from the good offices of the living, and the sacred and solemn duty it is for Christians in the present life to remember them and endeavor to relieve their sufferings by every means in their power. To answer this purpose I have made the dead ages unite their solemn and authoritative voice with that of the living, actual present in testimony of the truth of this great Catholic dogma. The Saints, the Fathers, the Doctors of the Church in the ages of antiquity, and the prelates and priests of our own day all speak the same language of undoubting faith, of solemn conviction regarding Purgatory,—make the same earnest and eloquent appeal to the faithful on behalf of the dear suffering souls. Even the heathen nations and tribes of both hemispheres are brought forward as witnesses to the existence of a middle state in the after life. Nor is Protestantism itself wanting in this great and overwhelming mass of evidence, as the reader will perceive that some of its most eminent divines and secular writers have joined, with no hesitating or faltering voice, in the grand *Credo* of the nations and the ages in regard to Purgatory.

What remains for me to add except the earnest hope that this book may have the effect it is intended to produce by bringing the faithful children of the Church to think more and oftener of their departed brethren who, having passed from the Militant to the Suffering Church, are forever crying out to the living from their darksome prison—"Have pity on us, have pity on us, at least you who were our friends, have pity on us, for the hand of the Lord is heavy upon us!"