

pure, grace-consummated souls in Purgatory ? " These souls " in the words of Saint Catherine of Genoa, " submit to their pain so joyfully that they would not, on any account, have it lessened in the slightest degree. They realize perfectly that it is wisely ordained by God, so that far from lamenting, they accept it as joyfully as if they were already in Heaven. The fire of love is in them so active and vehement that they would willingly precipitate themselves into purgatorial fires far more terrible than those they now endure, if they could thereby sooner remove the obstacles hindering their flight towards God and their union with Him."

However, neither the joy resulting from the assurance of salvation, nor the happiness of seeing the diminution, through suffering, of the obstacles to union with God, can compare with the ineffable peace born in them through submission to God's will. They are where God wills them to be. They would not make a motion to enter Heaven before the awaited signal. Their absolute sanctity would no more admit of a desire than a regret. Where they are, they are contented, since God placed them there; they will remain contented as long as God leaves them there. There is more joy in Heaven, but not more peace.

What characterises Purgatory therefore is a singular combination of suffering and joy, sorrow and felicity. This joy does not exclude suffering; this sorrow does not nullify felicity. These two, united in an ineffable manner in the same soul, constitute a condition without analogy either in Heaven or on earth. But the end of these two states of joy and suffering is totally different; the former increasing steadily while the latter diminishes unceasingly.

" A crystal covered with a thick veil " says Saint Catherine of Genoa, " although exposed to the sun, cannot receive its rays, not by reason of any fault in the sun, for it does not fail to shine, but on account of the veil which intercepts the light. But, let the covering be gradually removed and these parts successively uncovered will receive more and more light, until the entire obstacle having been removed, the crystal will be completely penetrated. So with the souls in Purgatory. Suffering gradually consumes the rust. To complete the destruction of this obstacle, to melt this ice, add the unceasing pray-