PURGATORY.

(Conclusion.)

If it is impossible to depict the pains endured by the Holy Souls, it is likewise beyond our power to describe their joys.   These joys are immense, deep and inexhaustible.   They spring from sources which are unceasingly renewed.   The first is the joy, the inebriation, resulting from the certainty of salvation.   They no longer have merely hope as formerly ; they have certainty.   " I am saved ! " I am saved ! Nothing can ever separate me from my " God.   What matter about time then, should I have to " wait even for centuries ? What matter about pain, should " it come even in oceans ? I shall see my God and enjoy " Him throughout eternity ! " On earth, how greatly they feared to lose Him ; how much they desired, how much they prayed ! Now, all is ended.   They are sure of possessing Him.

As their suffering is extreme, they are at times ready to succumb.   " How long ! O pitiless separation ! " They remain as it were annihilated.   But, suddenly, from their overloaded hearts bursts forth the cry, the paean : " I am saved ! I shall see my God in the land of the living ! " This is the first source of their happiness.

May I venture to assert that the second springs from their very suffering ? They comprehend it.   They understand its operations.   They see clearly that by means of this pain all impediment to their union with God will be destroyed.   Far then from repelling, they pine for it. They will never find it acute enough.   They plunge into it as into a regenerating bath ; and why not, since, even on this miserable earth, similar things are found.   Some souls exult amid their sufferings.   Others cry : " to suffer or to die ! " others again : " to suffer always, not to die ! " A carmelite being asked whether, in the fearful crisis of her malady, her pain was not very great, replied : " Yes; but unhappily it does not last."

If poor mortals still in the path of probation, linked to a perishable body, whose intellect is plunged in darkness, feel such joy amid the purifying sufferings sent them by God, what shall we say of the enlightened, loving,