

that most of what they will read, belongs to a remote date. It was in the year 1827, that the author received a commission from the holy and zealous Pontiff, Leo. XII., to preach in Rome, on the Sundays from Advent to Easter, the season during which foreigners crowd the Eternal City. So honorable, but unexpected a commission, or rather command, could not be refused, even at the expense of much toil and confusion. Unskilled, and inexperienced, the author was obliged to feel his way, and measure his steps, slowly and painfully. For many successive years, he wrote every discourse; and having almost annually the same audience, could scarcely venture on repetitions. And so the mass of manuscripts accumulated, and has remained buried for almost a generation.

By degrees, greater confidence was gained, or greater facility was attained; while increased occupations, and higher duties, made encroachments on the time, which, though gradually diminishing, had been required for the labor of composing weekly discourses. When this practice had totally ceased, it was often thought well to have sermons, especially if preached for some local purpose, taken down in short-hand, and either printed, soon to disappear from before the public, or left in manuscript with the preacher.

While, therefore, the greater number of sermons, which it has been his duty to deliver, have passed away for ever into oblivion, with the breath that committed them to the hearing, and he will hope, sometimes, to the hearts of his audience; those which he now presumes to publish, belong to one or other of these two classes, of those originally put into writing by himself, and those which others have had the skill and goodness to preserve.