

she bears them and the sympathy she feels for their sufferings, whilst her power to make these the sentiments of her compassionating Heart in their regard available unto their relief and deliverance is truly that of an Empress.

It is not, therefore, without just reason that Dante represents the souls in his *Purgatorio* singing that one, of all the hymns in honor of Mary, the very first sentence of which applies to her the titles of Queen and Mother:

"Salva Regina," on the grass and flowers,
Here chanting, I beheld those spirits sit,
Who not beyond the valley could be seen. (*)

But, from among all the Blessed Virgin's many titles not especially founded on her relations to Purgatory, that of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is undoubtedly one of those that lend themselves with most appropriateness to this consoling doctrine. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart—how every word overflows with meaning when we fancy it uttered by the souls in Purgatory or in their behalf! Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, that is, Mistress and Dispenser of that never-failing Treasure of whose fullness we have all received. Our Lady—that power, that credit, she exercises, not for her gratification, but for the welfare, temporal and spiritual, of her children, and for whom more than the helpless and the afflicted?

The closer the relation between Jesus and Mary which we honor by the different vocables invented for the purpose by Catholic piety, the sweeter to the ears of our beloved Mother is the celestial music of their every syllable. And what can we imagine more intimate and sacred than the union of heart to heart—above all, of a mother's heart to her son's? According to this principle, with what dearer name can we salute the Blessed Virgin than, "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," unless it be that of Mother of God? And even

(*) *Purgatorio*, VII, 82-85, Cary's translation.

the latter is contained, though not explicitly, in the former, inasmuch as it is owing to her sublime prerogative of Mother of God that she is the Lady of the Sacred Heart.

"Who is able to tell us," asks the Very Rev. J. Chevalier, M. S. H., "the feelings of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart towards those souls, who are her children? How ardently she wishes to introduce them into heaven, to give them to the Father who gives them to her, to cast them forever into His arms, and receive them into her own!"

"In truth, they must be engendered to glory through her. They can have but one mother. Conceived by her in time to the life of grace, of her they will be born to the life of glory in eternity.

"Since all graces pass through the hands of Mary, it is perfectly logical to hold that it is her function, her privilege as Mother of Jesus, to dispense to those souls the indulgences gained here below for their relief and even deliverance.

"To thee, O compassionate Mother, does it belong to attend thy children in their sufferings, to assist them in their distress, to solace them in their needs—to draw for them from the Heart of Jesus, source of all good, and of which thou hast the key, all the help they need."

Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

How We May Help the Souls to Final Happiness.

But the beauty of the lesson taught us by the commemoration of all the faithful departed does not end here. I have said that these souls can merit no longer in the state of purification in which they now are. We often speak of them as the poor souls in purgatory for this very reason that they are helpless even to merit a decrease of their own suffering. But they are still mem-