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LIFE OF PIUS X

Frontispiece

POPE PIUS X.

HEROES OF THE CHURCH

LIFE OF PIUS X

BY

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To

HIS EMINENCE

CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL

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Illustrations

Faith is necessary for the heroic life. It is the achievement of the man who believes in something higher for others and for himself than the best that this world gives."

"The Times," August 18th, 1917.

CHAPTER I: *Child and Student*

IN the little village of Riese in the Venetian plains was born on the 2nd of June, 1835, a child who was destined to leave his mark on the world's history.

Giuseppe[1] Melchior Sarto was the eldest of the eight surviving children of Giovanni Battista Sarto, the postmaster of Riese, and his wife Margherita. They were poor people, and it was difficult sometimes to make both ends meet. The daily fare was hard and scanty, and the future Pope was clothed, as an Italian biographer picturesquely puts it, "as God willed." But both Giovanni Battista and his wife Margherita came of a hard-working, God-fearing stock, who could endure manfully and suffer patiently, and who taught their children to do the same. There might have been a worse preparation for an apostolic life.

The little Bepi was remarkable both for his intelligence and for his restless activity. The village schoolmaster, who at once singled him out as a pupil worth cultivating, was, we are told, not infrequently obliged to use means more persuasive than agreeable to calm his vivacity. Indeed, the seraphic element in Bepi seems to have been considerably leavened by that of the healthy boy. "That little rascal!" cried an old inhabitant of Riese when he heard of

[1] Joseph. Beppo, Beppino, Bepi, and Beppe are all diminutives of the same name.

Cardinal Sarto's elevation to the Papacy. "Many a cherry of mine has found its way down his throat!"

It was not long before Bepi had mastered the rudiments of reading and writing, which were all that the village school could offer. He became an efficient server at Mass, and such was his influence over his little school companions that at the age of ten he was appointed leader of the somewhat unruly band of acolytes who served in the village church. The young master of ceremonies proved himself perfectly equal to the occasion. There was such a serene good temper and such a merry wit behind the somewhat drastic methods of Bepi that his authority was irresistible and unquestioned.

To most boys who serve daily at the altar, the thought of the priestly life will sooner or later suggest itself; to some it comes as an overwhelming call. Giuseppe's vocation seems to have grown up with him; to have been, from his earliest years, the very centre of his life. About half a mile beyond the village of Riese stands a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, containing a statue known as the Madonna delle Cendrole. Here the little Bepi loved to come and pray, pouring out the joys and sorrows of his young heart at the feet of the Mother of Christ, and perhaps she was the first confidant of his secret desire to consecrate his life to God. Certainly this sanctuary was especially dear to him in after-life, as one round which clung the happiest memories of his childhood.

At eleven years old the boy made his First Communion in the Church of Riese. Did he think the time was long in coming, and was it the memory of the desire of his own childish heart that moved him in after years to shorten the time of waiting for the children of the Catholic world?

Anything that tended to the knowledge of God seemed to have an irresistible fascination for Bepi. Never was he known to miss the classes where the parish priest, Don Tito Fusarini, and his curate, Don Luigi Orazio, taught Christian doctrine and Catechism to the children of the parish. So quick was his intelligence and so remarkable his aptitude that Don Luigi, who at the time was teaching Latin to his own younger brother, took Bepi also as pupil. The boy's progress soon convinced his tutor that he had the makings of a scholar, and the two priests determined to prepare him for the Grammar School at Castelfranco.

Distant about four miles from Riese, Castelfranco, with its medieval and romantic atmosphere, its ancient fortress and picturesquely crowded market-place, is not the least attractive of the old Venetian cities. Here, in 1447, was born Giorgione, prince of painters; and here, in the beautiful old Cathedral, is to be seen one of his most famous Madonnas. On either side of the Virgin Mother, who is seated on a lofty throne with the Divine Child in her arms, stand St. Francis of Assisi, clad in the rough habit of his Order, and St. Liberalis, the patron saint of Treviso, a strong young knight in armour. Many a time must the boy Giuseppe have slipped into the quiet Cathedral to pray before the Madonna. Did he ask for the strength of the warrior and the humility of the friar, to be loving like the Christ and pure like

His Mother? Those who knew him in after-life could bear witness that these gifts were his.

Day after day, in all weathers, the future Pope tramped the four miles into Castelfranco, his shoes slung over his shoulder, and a piece of bread or a lump of polenta in his pocket. In the fourth and last year of Giuseppe's school life he was joined by his brother Angelo, and as the financial affairs of the good postmaster had slightly improved, the two brothers were promoted to a rather ramshackle donkey-cart.

The day's work was far from over when the lads came home from school. There was plenty to be done in the house and outside it. Both the cow and the donkey must be attended to; there was work in the garden and work in the fields. It was Bepi's delight to help his mother in the care of the house, and to look after his baby brothers and sisters, that she might have a little sorely needed rest. His merry nature and thoughtful unselfishness made him a general favourite, while the younger members of the family looked up to him almost as much as to their parents.

From the beginning of his first year at Castelfranco Giuseppe Sarto had shown himself a hard-working and brilliant scholar, qualities which do not always go together. At the end of his fourth year, in the examinations held at the diocesan Seminary of Treviso, he came out first in every subject. The two priests of Riese were justly proud of their scholar, and dreamed of great things in the future. Education, however, costs money; and the Sarto family were not only poor, but had eight children to provide for. That Bepi had a vocation to the priesthood was evident to everyone who had had to do with him. The next step was obviously the seminary; but who was to pay the expenses? The stipend of an Italian parish priest leaves no margin for such undertakings. Don Tito Fusarini determined, therefore, to have recourse to Canon Casagrande, Vicar-capitular of Treviso and Prefect of Studies at the Seminary. In virtue of his duties as prefect it was he who had examined the boys of Castelfranco; he would surely interest himself in the brilliant young scholar who had passed with honour in every subject.

Now, it happened that the Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Jacopo Monico, was himself the son of a peasant, and a child of that very village of Riese, the name of which was to be for ever associated with Pius X. Distinguished no less for his love of letters than for his zeal for religion, it belonged to him to name the few students who were entitled to a free scholarship at the Seminary of Padua. That his heart would be touched at the thought of his young fellow-countryman, like himself a child of the people, and unable to continue his priestly education for lack of means, was a likely surmise. Don Tito applied to Canon Casagrande, begging him to plead Giuseppe's cause with the Patriarch, a request which met with a prompt and hearty assent.

At Riese all was suspense and hope. The post-master was a man of firm faith, whose trust in God had never failed him; Margherita prayed unceasingly. As to Bepi his whole future lay in the balance; the dearest hopes of his heart depended on the Patriarch's answer. At last the welcome letter arrived. Canon Casagrande announced to Don Tito Fusarini that Giuseppe Sarto had been proposed and accepted as a Church student at the Seminary of Padua, and that the Patriarch had himself written to the Bishop of the diocese recommending his young fellow-countryman to his care.

Giuseppe's joy was not unmixed with sorrow at the thought of leaving for the first time the humble village home with all its dear associations. In the dusk of an early November morning the fifteen-year-old boy packed his few belongings into the country cart, in those days the only means of conveyance for the poor, and, bravely choking back the tears that could hardly be repressed, bade farewell to his family.

If the medieval charm of Castelfranco had influenced the young student so profoundly, there was enough and to spare in the city of Padua to satisfy his love of beauty. Famous throughout the world is the basilica of Il Santo, built in the thirteenth century, and dedicated to the great St. Anthony. Sculptures by Donatello, bas-reliefs by Lombardi and pictures by Mantegna, Veronese and Giotto adorn its stately walls. The Cathedral, partly destroyed in the twelfth century, was rebuilt by Michael Angelo. The University, founded in the thirteenth century, and counting among its students such men as Vittorino da Feltre, the great educator, and Giovanni da Ravenna, the friend of Petrarch, was famous throughout the Middle Ages for its schools of medicine and of law.

The seminary, founded in 1577 and greatly enlarged a century later, boasts a handsome church and a noble library rich in precious manuscripts. It was probably the first library that Bepi had seen, certainly the first of which he had had the freedom, and one can imagine the delight of the young country student as he wandered through its lofty halls, and realised that its treasures were henceforward part of the endowment of the new life that was now his.

The intelligence and cheery good-humour of Giuseppe, joined to the charm of manner that seems to have been his from childhood, soon made him a general favourite both with boys and masters. "His mind is quick," wrote one of the latter to Don Pietro Jacuzzi, who had succeeded Don Luigi Orazio as curate of Riese and was a firm friend of Bepi's, "his will strong and mature, his industry remarkable." He was a loyal and staunch supporter of authority; the somewhat strict discipline of the seminary presented no difficulties to a boy who had all his life been accustomed to self-denial. A willing and intelligent submission to all legitimate authority was indeed a characteristic of Giuseppe Sarto throughout his life. "In order to command," he was to say hereafter as Pope, "it is necessary to have learned to obey."

At the end of his first year at Padua, Giuseppe was first in all his classes. The home-coming to Riese was an unclouded joy, both to the young seminarist and to his family. The holidays were spent in the company of the friends of his childhood in the country that he loved. To Don Pietro Jacuzzi and Don Tito Fusarini he was as a beloved son, and much of his time was spent either at the presbytery or in long rambles with the good curate. Neither could studies be altogether neglected, although it was holiday time; and the autumn days passed quickly enough.

Back again at Padua, Giuseppe set to work vigorously, without a presentiment of the sorrow that was so soon to overcloud his happiness. In the month of May his father died after a few days' illness, leaving his wife and large family in very straitened circumstances. The thought of the struggle which his mother was waging against poverty lay like a weight upon Giuseppe's heart. He was the eldest of the family and would have come to her assistance; but not for worlds would the good Margherita have allowed her son to give up the thought of his priestly career. She was full of courage, and the other boys were growing up; they would soon be able to help to support the family. A second grief followed upon the first. Don Tito Fusarini, who had been like a second father to Bepi, and whose failing health had caused him for some time past to rely more and more upon the devotedness of his curate, was at last obliged to give up his work at Riese.

Don Pietro Jacuzzi, who succeeded him as rector, had been, from the day of his arrival in the village, Giuseppe's firm friend and chief adviser in all his boyish difficulties. The lad looked up to him as the model of everything that a priest should be, and corresponded with him continually from Padua. To him he owed the love and the knowledge of music that was to prove so valuable in after years, for had he not assisted at the transformation that had taken place in the village choir under the able tuition of Don Pietro? He had been witness, too, of the rector's unselfish and untiring devotion to his priestly duties which had won him the love and reverence of his parishioners; but within a year Giuseppe was to lose this second friend also. Don Pietro was transferred to Vascon to the grief and sorrow of the people of Riese.

When Giuseppe came home for the autumn holidays in 1853 the fulness of his loss became clear to him; Riese was hardly Riese without Don Tito and Don Pietro. The new parish priest, whose somewhat morose character formed a striking contrast to the genial kindliness of his two predecessors, was not popular. He did not like sick calls in the night, and told his parishioners so plainly from the pulpit. But sickness and death have a knack of not considering the convenience of the parish priest, or indeed of anybody else; and of this the inhabitants of Riese were fully aware.

By his very position as a Church student Giuseppe was bound to be on friendly terms with the presbytery. On the other hand, mixing as he did with the people of the place, he could not avoid hearing some severe criticisms of their pastor. While forced to admit to himself that the methods of the new arrival were a little singular, the boy's loyal and upright nature forbade him to discuss matters with his friends. In this difficult and awkward position the lad of seventeen showed a tact and discernment which would have been admirable in a man of experience. "These holidays have been perfectly miserable," he wrote to Don Pietro Jacuzzi, who had learnt from other correspondents how things were going on; "I shut myself up in the house as much as I can, and try when visiting the members of my family to keep off dangerous subjects.

> "'No greater grief than to remember days
> Of joy when sorrow is at hand,'"

he quotes, for he knew his Dante well. "Even the singing has gone down. I long for my little room at the seminary and the quiet life of study."

In the year 1856 Giuseppe distinguished himself more than ever. He had now only two years more to spend at the seminary. His brilliant successes as a student left him modest and humble as before, whilst his cheery kindliness and sympathy made him a powerful influence for good amongst his young companions. Such was the trust reposed in him by his superiors that he had for long been prefect of order in the general study-room. "My masters call me '*Giubilato,*'" he wrote to Don Pietro. "I wish I could do more to show my gratitude for their kindness." Nevertheless he greatly appreciated the private room allotted to him during his last two years at Padua. "Here I read and work," he wrote to the same dear friend, "and prepare myself for the life of solitude and study that will be mine as a priest." His favourite studies were the Bible and the Fathers of the Church. The pastoral letters and Papal Encyclicals of later years bear witness to the fact that this predilection lasted throughout his life.

His knowledge and love of music had obtained for him the direction of the seminary choir. "I have worked so hard at the music for the Feast of St. Aloysius," he wrote in the June of 1857, "that I am fairly dried up."

On the 27th of February of the same year he was ordained subdeacon in the Cathedral of Treviso, and on the Feast of the Sacred Heart went to Riese to preach. "Last Sunday I went to Riese to give a little discourse on the Sacred Heart," he writes to Don Pietro. He does not mention that the little discourse was so striking and so eloquent that the enthusiasm of the congregation knew no bounds.

At the end of August, 1858, Giuseppe Sarto's seminary life was over. As he was only twenty-three, and the canonical age for ordination is twenty-four, the Bishop of Treviso wrote to Rome to obtain a dispensation. The young cleric had finished his last year as he had finished his first, with honours in every subject. The record of his triumphal progress is still to be seen in the books of the Seminary of Padua, the professors united in praising the qualities of his character no less than those of his intellect. In September the dispensation arrived, and with it the day so long desired, when Giuseppe Sarto was to be for ever consecrated to the service of God. The Bishop of Treviso, who was making his diocesan visitation, was then at Castelfranco, and it was here that the ordination was to take place.

An autumn mist lay like a veil over the familiar landscape as the young man drove along the road which led from Riese to Castelfranco. The horse trotted swiftly, yet the way had never seemed so long. How often had he tramped it in the old days through dust and mud and snow, barefoot to save the shoes that were such a heavy item of expense in the Sarto family. And it was the thought of the day which at last had dawned, a day that seemed then so far away and so impossible, which had been the inspiration and the strength of that life of hardships, making everything easy to bear. The supreme happiness that now possessed him blotted out all the past, for the prize of his efforts was now within his reach. The first glimpse of the ivied walls of Castelfranco made his heart beat almost to suffocation. "To-day I shall be a priest," was the one thought that possessed him; and when, a little later, he knelt at the altar of the Cathedral where he had so often prayed as a child, to receive the sacred unction, it seemed to him as if earth had nothing more to give.

On the following day, the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, the newly-made priest sang his first Mass in the parish church of Riese. Who shall describe the joy of his mother as that beloved voice, clear and resonant as it remained even to old age, yet tremulous with the joy and fear of the moment, pronounced the words of the great Mystery? No sooner was the Mass ended than the congregation flocked to kiss the hands of the young priest whom they had known and loved from childhood—hands that had touched to-day for the first time the Body of the Lord. To say that it was a feast day in Riese but feebly expresses the general jubilation.

A few days later Don Giuseppe received a letter announcing his destination. The Bishop of Treviso had appointed him curate to Don Antonio Costantini, the parish priest of Tombolo.

CHAPTER II: *Curate and Parish Priest*

THE village of Tombolo, which lies in the province of Padua and the Diocese of Treviso, is surrounded by hilly and well-wooded country, watered by the tributary streams of the Brenta. The parish church, dedicated to St. Andrew, stands in the centre of the little township. Tombolo boasts of no commercial industries; it is a pastoral country, and the greater part of the population is occupied in dairy farming and the rearing of cattle. The people have clearly marked characteristics; strong and robust in build, hardened to sun, rain, and wind, rough-voiced and somewhat ungentle in manner, they have, nevertheless, good hearts and are in their own way religious.

But the Tombolani have one vice—or had when Don Giuseppe became their curate. They swore systematically and profusely at everything, at each other, and at the world at large. "No offence is intended to Almighty God," they explained ingenuously to the horrified young priest. "He certainly understands. Just go to market, and try to sell your beasts and your grain with a 'please' and a 'thank you,' and you will see what you will get!"

There may have been some truth in this; and intention, no doubt, goes a long way; but the argument did not satisfy Don Giuseppe. For the moment he dropped the subject, but he had not done with it.

The rector of the parish, Don Antonio Costantini, was habitually ailing. Devoted to his people and wholly desirous to do them good, his ill-health was a constant impediment. He had many tastes in common with his curate, notably the love of music and of biblical and patristic studies. He soon learnt to look upon Don Giuseppe as a son, and highly appreciated his good qualities.

"They have sent me a young man as curate," he wrote to a friend, "with orders to form him to the duties of a parish priest. I assure you it is likely to be the other way about. He is so zealous, so full of common sense and other precious gifts that I could find much to learn from him. Some day he will wear the mitre—of that I am certain—and afterwards? Who knows?"

The good rector nevertheless did his best to fulfil his commission. "Don Bepi," he would say to his young curate, "I did not quite like this or that in your last sermon." When the church was empty he would make Don Bepi go into the pulpit and preach, criticising and commenting the while both on matter and method; comments well worth having, for Don Antonio was a man of wide learning and an excellent theologian. Meanwhile Don Bepi, whose sermons were already becoming famous throughout the countryside for their zeal and eloquence, would listen humbly and promise to try to do better.

The income of the young curate was next to nothing, for Tombolo was a very poor parish; but he had not been used to luxury. He had planned his priestly life before his ordination, and was busy carrying out the scheme. To study deeply in order to fit himself more fully for preaching; to do as much good as was possible in the confessional and in the pulpit; to help his people both materially and morally, to visit the sick, to succour the poor and to instruct the ignorant—such was the programme that he had traced out for himself, and with all the vigour of his soul he threw himself into the work.

The widowed niece of Don Antonio who kept house for her uncle used to see a light burning in the window of Don Giuseppe's poor lodging the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning.

"Do you never go to bed, Don Bepi?" she asked at breakfast one day, for the curate took his meals at the rectory.

Don Bepi laughed. "I study a good deal," he replied. He confessed later that he slept for four hours, and found it quite sufficient for his needs.

"He was as thin as a rake," said the good lady when pressed in after-life for reminiscences, "for he scarcely ate enough to keep body and soul together, and was never off his feet."

In the morning he would often ring the church bell for Mass, in order not to disturb the sacristan. Then he would go to fetch Don Antonio, having prepared for him all that was needed. Sometimes he would find his chief unwell and unable to rise.

"What is the matter?" he would ask in his cheery way—"another bad night?"

"I am afraid I cannot get up," would be the plaintive answer.

"Don't try to; stay quiet, and do not worry yourself. I will see to everything," the cheery voice would continue.

"But you have already one sermon to preach to-day, my Bepi."

"What of that? I will preach two." And so the conference would end.

During the days of sickness Don Giuseppe, as well as doing double duty, would constitute himself nurse to the poor invalid. How he managed it was known to himself alone.

He had not forgotten—there was no chance of forgetting—the deplorable language of his parishioners. The curate mixed with them as much as he could, making friends especially with the young men and the boys. He interested himself in their work and in their play, treating them with such a spirit of friendly comradeship that they would assemble in crowds to talk to him whenever he appeared. One day some of them lamented that they could neither read nor write.

"Let us start a night school," proposed Don Bepi, "and I will teach you."

"It would be too difficult," objected another; "some of us know a little, some less, and others nothing at all."

"What of that?" replied the priest. "We will have two classes—those who know something, and those who know nothing. We will get the schoolmaster to take the upper class, and I will teach the alphabet."

"Why shouldn't *he* teach the alphabet?" protested a loyal admirer of Don Giuseppe's.

Don Bepi laughed. "The alphabet is hard work," he answered, "I had rather keep it."

"But we can't take up your time like that for nothing," declared another. "What can we do for you in return?"

"Stop swearing," answered Don Bepi promptly, "and I shall then be more than repaid."

The school of singing made rapid progress in his hands. Don Antonio, who, like his curate, was an ardent lover of Gregorian music, warmly seconded all his efforts. The somewhat unmelodious, if extremely powerful, vocalisation of the village choir became soft and prayerful under his tuition. If one of the acolytes showed signs of a vocation to the priesthood, Don Giuseppe would teach him privately until he knew enough to go up for the examinations held at the diocesan seminary.

On one point Don Antonio and his curate could never agree. Everything that could be saved out of Don Giuseppe's miserable income went straight to the poor. They knew it; and when he went to preach in a neighbouring village, would lie in wait for him as he returned with his modest fee in his pocket. It sometimes happened that when he reached home not a penny would be left, and Don Antonio would think it his duty to remonstrate.

"It is not fair to your mother, Bepi," he would say; "you should think of her."

"God will provide for my mother," was the answer; "these poor souls were in greater need than she."

Invitations to preach in other parishes became more frequent, as the fame of the preacher increased. What he said was always simple, but it was full of teaching and went straight to the heart. The young priest had, moreover, a natural eloquence and a sonorous and beautiful voice. It was so evident that he spoke from the fulness of a soul on fire with the love of God that his enthusiasm was catching, and his sermons bore fruit.

It happened on one occasion that a priest who had been invited to preach on a certain feast-day in the neighbouring village of Galliera was prevented at the last moment from coming. There was consternation at the presbytery. What was to be done?

"Leave it to me," said Don Carlo Carminati, curate of Galliera and a friend of Don Giuseppe; "I promise you it will be all right," and jumping into the presbytery pony-cart he took the road to Tombolo.

It was a Sunday afternoon in October and the hour of the children's Catechism class. Don Giuseppe was at the church door about to enter.

"Stop, stop," cried Don Carlo, "I want to speak to you." Don Giuseppe turned.

"You must come and preach at Galliera," said Don Carlo; "our preacher has fallen through."

"What are you thinking of?" exclaimed Don Giuseppe. "I cannot improvise in the pulpit!" and he turned once more to go into the church.

"You have got to come, your rector says so, and there is not a minute to lose," replied his friend; and, laying hold of the still expostulating Don Giuseppe, he packed him into the pony-cart, bowed to Don Antonio who stood smiling at the scene, and whipped up his steed.

Arrived at Galliera, Don Carlo conducted his victim to an empty room, provided him with pencil and paper and left him. An hour later, having been set at liberty by his triumphant fellow-curate, Don Giuseppe vested and entered the church.

The sermon that followed was so eloquent and so appropriate to the occasion that what had threatened to be a calamity became a cause for rejoicing.

"Did not I tell you?" exclaimed Don Carlo with pardonable exultation.

Don Giuseppe's energy was boundless, and to him no labour was degrading. "Work," he used to say, "is man's chief duty on earth." When the presbytery cook fell ill, he both nursed him and took his place; for in his eyes any kind of labour was a thing to draw men nearer to the Christ who was "Poor and in labours from His youth."

Whether it was preaching, teaching, playing with the village children to keep them out of mischief, visiting the sick, helping the dying, hearing confessions, catechising infants or studying theology, it was all the same to him—work for the Master, and as such ennobling and honourable.

So the time passed, until Don Giuseppe had been eight years at Tombolo. Much as Don Antonio loved and appreciated his curate, or rather because of this very love and appreciation, it distressed him to think that his talents should have no wider sphere than a little country parish. He spoke of this one day to one of the Canons of Treviso who was paying him a visit. The two curates of Galliera who were present joined enthusiastically in the praise of their friend. The Canon became thoughtful.

"Do you think he could preach in the Cathedral of Padua for the Feast of St. Anthony?" he asked after a moment of reflection.

"Most certainly, Monsignore," was the answer.

"Well," continued the Canon, "if you will be responsible for his accepting, I will see to it that he is asked."

The sermon was prepared, and the great day approached. The rector of Tombolo was more anxious than if he had been going to preach in the Duomo himself, for his interest in his beloved Bepi was that of a father, and he had formed great hopes for the future.

The feast-day sermon was naturally a topic of burning interest in Padua. "Who is to preach?" was the question on everybody's lips on the morning of the great day.

"Don Giuseppe Sarto, a young priest who is curate of Tombolo," was the reply.

Now it was customary on the Feast of St. Anthony to ask a preacher of some distinction to occupy the Cathedral pulpit.

"The curate of Tombolo!" was the apprehensive comment. "Oh dear! A country curate from an out-of-the-way village!"

The Cathedral was crowded for the High Mass celebrated in honour of Padua's patron saint. When the slight young figure of Don Giuseppe mounted the pulpit stairs there was a gasp of astonishment, which soon gave place to an expectant silence.

"His intelligence and culture were no less remarkable than his eloquence," wrote one of the congregation to a friend. "His imagery was beautiful, his style perfect." The sermon lasted over an hour, and no one thought it too long.

In the May of 1867 Don Giuseppe was appointed rector of Salzano. A wail of lamentation arose from the little parish where he had worked so faithfully for nearly ten years. "He was our father, our brother, our friend, and our comfort," cried the heartbroken Tombolani. In the heart of Don Antonio grief for his loss contended with joy at the thought that the merits of his beloved Don Bepi had been recognised at last.

Salzano is a small country town in the province of Venetia. It has a handsome church with a graceful campanile and a somewhat imposing presbytery. The country is fertile, and the people, who are wholly given to agriculture, are quiet, steady, and hard-working.

The new rector arrived on a Saturday evening in July. At Mass the next morning, in spite of the oppressive heat, the church was crowded, for the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages had assembled in force to hear the sermon of the newly appointed "Parroco."

The result was a delightful surprise. "What was the Bishop thinking of," they asked one another as they met when Mass was over, "to leave a man like that buried all these years at a place like Tombolo?"

As for Don Giuseppe, he set to work at once to visit his people. His frank simplicity, his understanding sympathy and zeal for their welfare gained their hearts at once. As at Tombolo, he gave special attention to the instruction of children; and, not content with this, inaugurated Catechism classes and classes of Christian doctrine for the adults of the parish.

"Most of the evil in the world," he would often say, "comes from a want of the knowledge of God and of His truth."

In spite of the large parish and the handsome rectory, Don Giuseppe's habits were as frugal as ever. There was more to give to the poor, that was all. His sister Rosina kept house for him.

"Bepi," she said one day, "there is nothing for dinner."

"Not even a couple of eggs?" asked the brother.

A couple of eggs there were, and on these they dined.

But there was always a welcome at the rectory and a share of anything that was going for any old friend who dropped in. Don Carlo came one evening for a visit, and found Don Giuseppe in the kitchen playing games with some little children of the parish. They were sent home with a promise that the game should be continued on another occasion, and Don Carlo was pressed to stay. The next morning he was accosted by Rosina.

"Don Carlo, you are an old friend, and a very kind one," she began hesitatingly, "there is a man coming to-morrow who sells shirting."

"Really?" answered Don Carlo, rather at a loss to connect the statements.

"Yesterday my brother got a little money," continued Rosina, "and he has hardly a shirt to his back. Now if you were to try to persuade him to buy some shirting, I think he perhaps would do it. Will you do your best?"

Don Carlo promised, and took the first opportunity of broaching the subject.

"Nonsense, nonsense," was the answer, "there is no necessity at all," and the plea was cut short in its infancy.

But Don Carlo was not so easily beaten, he knew the sunny nature of his friend, and determined to have recourse to strategy. On the arrival of the pedlar, he at once accosted him, examined his materials, selected what he considered suitable, and set to work, after the manner of his country, to bargain. Having agreed on what he considered a fair price, he ordered the required length to be cut off, and turning to Don Giuseppe who had been innocently watching the transaction. "So many yards at such and such a price," he declared. "Pay up, Don Giuseppe!"

The rector was disgusted; but there was nothing to be done but to obey. The bargain had been made and the shirting cut off. "Even *you* come here and plot to betray me," he complained.

As for Rosina, her delight knew no bounds. "God bless the day you came, Don Carlo," she said, meeting him outside the door. "If you had not been here to-day, to-morrow there would have been neither money nor linen!"

Salzano was a large parish, and the rector had to keep a conveyance. It was not much to look at, but it did hard service, being at the disposal of everybody who had recourse to the well-known charity of its owner. The horse came home one day with both knees broken.

"I am very sorry," pleaded the borrower, "an accident . . ."

Don Giuseppe swallowed down a very pardonable indignation. "Never mind, never mind," he said; "it is all right."

One day—there had been a bad harvest that year, and there was much poverty in the parish—the rector asked a friend who was in easy circumstances to sell the horse for him. "You have so many relations with money," he pleaded.

The horse having been disposed of, it was then suggested that the same friend might also sell the carriage.

"I don't think I shall succeed," he remarked doubtfully, "for you must allow that it is not in the best condition." His fears were too true; no purchaser was found, and the carriage remained in the presbytery stable at the disposal of anyone who possessed a horse without a vehicle.

In 1873 there was a serious outbreak of cholera. The people of Salzano knew little of hygiene and less of sanitation; it was hard to make them take the most necessary precautions. Don Giuseppe was everything at once: doctor, nurse, and sanitary inspector, as well as parish priest. Not only were there the sick and the dying to be tended, but the living to be heartened and consoled. "If it had not been for our dear Don Giuseppe," said an old man in later days, "I should have died of fear and sorrow during those dreadful times." Some of the people took it into their heads that the medicines and remedies ordered by the doctor were intended to put them quickly out of their pain, and would not take them unless they were administered by the priest's own hand.

For fear of infection, the dead had to be buried by night, and no one was allowed to attend the funeral. Anxious lest in the fear and the haste of the moment due honour should not be paid to these victims of the epidemic, Don Giuseppe was always there to see that all was done as it should be. Not only did he recite the prayers and carry out the ceremonies prescribed by the Church on such occasions, but would take his place as coffin bearer, and even helped to dig the graves. Sorrow at the heartrending scenes he had to witness, added to these incessant labours by night and by day, would have ruined a less robust constitution than his.

It is small wonder that Don Carlo Carminati, coming to visit him soon afterwards, was horrified at his appearance.

"You are ill?" he exclaimed.

"You think so?" was the quiet answer.

"He *is* ill," interposed Rosina vehemently, "but what can you expect? He is everybody's servant, he never spares himself. He has not only given away the food from his own mouth, but the night's rest which would have restored him. Look at him, nothing but skin and bone!"

"Your sister is right, you are doing too much. Remember that the pitcher can go to the well once too often; and when it is quite worn out, at a given moment it will break."

"You are becoming quite an eloquent orator," commented Don Giuseppe with a smile.

Don Carlo was a man of action. He wrote to Don Antonio Costantini telling him that their dear Don Giuseppe was killing himself, and begging him to give a hint to the diocesan authorities. The hint was duly conveyed and duly taken. The Bishop wrote to the rector of Salzano, ordering him to take a little more care of himself; but this was an art which Don Giuseppe had never studied, and he did not know how to begin. He continued to devote himself body and soul to his flock, leaving himself to the care of God. His strong constitution gradually recovered from the strain it had undergone, and the apprehensions of his friends were fortunately not realised.

With Don Giuseppe the service of Christ in His poor went hand in hand with the service of Christ on the altar. During his ministry at Salzano the parish church was greatly improved and beautified. He got together a voluntary choir of young men and boys and taught them himself to sing the stately Gregorian music that he loved for its devout and prayerful spirit. Even those who knew the stark poverty of the rector's private life did not always understand how the means could be obtained to carry out the plans he had at heart.

"But how will you get the money?" they would sometimes ask.

"God will provide," was the quiet answer, given with the serene faith characteristic of the strong.

CHAPTER III: *Canon and Bishop*

IN the early spring of the year 1875 the Chancellor of the diocese of Treviso was removed to Fossalunga. A Canon's stall was also vacant, while the seminary was in need of a spiritual director whose influence would be powerful for good. It was the general opinion that if these three offices could be held by one holy, wise, and purposeful man, it would be an excellent thing for all parties concerned.

"I have him!" said Monsignor Zinelli the Bishop. "Don Giuseppe Sarto is the very man we need."

No sooner said than done. The rector of Salzano was named Chancellor and Residential Canon of the Cathedral of Treviso, and appointed spiritual director of the seminary.

The Bishop had not forgotten the warnings of Don Giuseppe's friends. By this arrangement the newly appointed Canon would reside at the seminary, where the care of his health would not be left entirely in his own hands. He would, moreover, preside at the professors' table, and therefore would be unable to indulge his tendency to starve so as to feed the poor.

The news was received with mixed feelings by the people of Salzano. Joy that their beloved Father should receive such a mark of honour struggled hard with their grief at losing him. It comforted them a little, they said, to think that his precious gifts, instead of being spent on Salzano alone, would now find full scope in a diocese that counted two hundred and ten parishes.

It was not until the autumn of the same year that Don Giuseppe bade farewell to his sorrowing parishioners, and, taking possession of his Canon's stall, sang the first vespers of Advent Sunday in the Cathedral of Treviso.

Like all the other professors of the seminary, Canon Sarto had three small rooms set apart for his use. From the windows, open to the sun and air, he could look across the neatly kept garden to where the quiet waters of the Sile, flowing by the old ivy-coloured walls, widened out into little silvery lakes amongst the thickets of poplars and plane trees that lay beyond.

The rector of the seminary was none other than Don Giuseppe's old friend, Don Pietro Jacuzzi. There were in the college 160 lay students and 54 aspirants to the priesthood. "I well remember Monsignor Sarto's first instruction," said one of the latter in after years. "'You are expecting to find in me,' he began, 'a man of profound learning and of wide experience in spiritual matters, a master in asceticism and doctrine. You will be disappointed, for I am none of these things. I am only a poor country parish priest. But I am here by God's will—therefore you must bear with me.' I have forgotten the instruction," added the narrator, "but the preamble I shall never forget." It was a lesson in that rarest of virtues—humility.

A regular course of instructions and meditations was begun at once, and immediately won the attention of the students. The lucid simplicity with which

Monsignor Sarto exposed his points carried the minds of his hearers straight into the heart of the truth which they were considering. The boys were never tired, never puzzled, his instructions being eminently practical and within the grasp of his audience. His aim was to inculcate a real and solid piety which would endure throughout the troubles and temptations of life. It is not everybody who knows the art of appealing to the young; it was one in which Monsignor Sarto excelled. Even in his familiar talks with the boys, full of merriment and sympathy as they were, there was always something helpful and uplifting. Personal cleanliness, not as a rule the most prominent characteristic of Southern nations, was a thing on which he laid particular stress. Gentle and kind as he was to all weakness and suffering, he could be stern enough when it was necessary, and his reproofs were seldom forgotten. If any of the boys fell sick, he would nurse them with a mother's tenderness; and to those of the seminarists who were the sons of poor parents he gave material as well as moral help.

It happened that one of these young students was in great distress by reason of a family difficulty. His father, a poor working man, was in urgent need of a few pounds, and there was no means of obtaining the sum. He confided his trouble to one of his companions, who asked him why he did not go to Monsignor Sarto and tell him all about it. The advice was taken, and the lad knocked at the familiar door.

"Come in," cried a cheery voice, and he entered. Monsignor Sarto was seated at his table reading by the light of a little lamp. "What can I do for you?" he asked kindly.

The young man, who found it difficult to put his trouble into words, stammered out the whole sad story, Monsignor Sarto listening with compassion.

"I am so sorry," he said when the tale was ended, "but I have only a few lire, nothing like the sum you require."

The poor student broke down completely, for his last hope was gone.

"Come, come; courage!" cried the good Canon, greatly distressed; "come to me to-morrow, and if I cannot give you all, I may be able to give you part of the money."

Next morning the seminarist returned.

"Well?" said Monsignor Sarto.

"Well?" answered the student nervously.

"Do you really think," continued the Canon, "that I can manufacture banknotes?" Then, seeing the distress of the boy, he added hastily: "Come come, my son, I was only joking, I have got the money," and, opening a little drawer, he took out the required sum.

"You will soon be a priest," he continued, "and when you can do so without inconvenience, you must give it back to me, for you see I have had to borrow it myself."

The winters were sometimes bitterly cold at Treviso, and the house was unwarmed. The needy students would often find warm clothing provided for them by the same charitable hand. A tradesman of Treviso can certify that he received many orders from Monsignor Sarto for warm cloaks, with strict injunction to keep the matter secret. That the Chancellor had seldom more than a few lire in his possession was not surprising.

It was a labour of love to him to prepare the little boys for their First Communion. The vice-rector begged that this task might be left to those of the staff who had more time to spare.

"You have too much to do as it is," he urged kindly; "leave that to others."

"It is my duty," was the answer. "Am I not their spiritual father?"

In order to obtain the necessary time Monsignor Sarto deprived himself of the evening walk which was his only recreation after a day of hard work; and, assembling his lively little band of neophytes in the church, he would hold them spellbound with a simple instruction that made the hardest things seem easy.

His kindness and quick sympathy made him as popular with the masters as with the boys. At table he was the life and soul of the party. Laying aside the cares of his office together with the big bundle of papers that accompanied him everywhere, he set himself to make the time spent in the refectory as refreshing for the minds as it was for the bodies of his colleagues. The amusing stories told by him and the interesting discussions he set afoot were long remembered, as was his sly teasing of certain professors which provoked much merry laughter. These were not the moments, he held, for discussing grave and serious questions; anyone who mentioned the word logic, for instance, was obliged to make amends by telling an interesting or useful story. When Monsignor Sarto's place was empty, everything fell flat.

He still kept up his old habit of working during part of the night. His neighbour in the seminary would often hear him moving in his room long after everyone else had retired to rest. "Go to bed, Monsignor," he would sometimes call out. "Lay down the cares of your office until to-morrow; he works ill who works too long."

"Quite true, quite true, Don Francesco," would come the quietly humorous answer; "put that into practice. Go to bed and sleep well." It was past midnight before Monsignor Sarto's light went out, and he was up again by four o'clock.

In the year 1879 Bishop Zinelli died, and Monsignor Sarto was elected Vicar-Capitular, with the task of administering the diocese while the see remained vacant. He announced his nomination to this important post in characteristic words.

"Called by the votes of my colleagues to administer the diocese of Treviso, in place of him who for so many years has ruled it with such wisdom, prudence, and zeal, I must frankly confess that I have accepted this heavy burden, not only because I feel assured that they will help me in my task, but because I know the spirit of the clergy. That you will earnestly co-operate with me in upholding the most precious prerogatives of the priesthood I have no doubt. I ask you, therefore, to remember the words of the Apostle: 'Walk carefully, that our ministry be not blamed'; let our actions be such that our enemies shall find nothing in us worthy of reproach. You are full of zeal for souls: seek to win them rather by love than by fear. The supreme wish of Our Lord for His own was that they should love one another, and this wish found its fulfilment in Apostolic times, when the Christians were one heart and one soul in Christ. A priest's life is a continual warfare against evil, which cannot fail to raise up powerful enemies. In order that they may not prevail against us, let us be united in charity amongst ourselves; thus we shall be invincible and strong as a rock."

Monsignor Sarto administered the diocese of Treviso for less than a year, but in this short time he accomplished much. Although he still retained his position as spiritual director of the seminary, he preached oftener in public, his sermons invariably rousing the enthusiasm of his hearers. In the February of 1880 he was relieved of this office on the nomination as Bishop of Monsignor Callegari, who was to find in his Chancellor a devoted and faithful friend.

The Bishop, however, was destined to remain but a short time at Treviso. In 1882 he was promoted to the diocese of Padua, Monsignor Apollonio, formerly Bishop of Adria, succeeding him at Treviso.

In September, 1884, Monsignor Apollonio, who had been making the pastoral visit of his diocese, returned home rather unexpectedly. Monsignor Sarto, who was busy as usual with the affairs of the Chancellorship, was not a little surprised at being summoned somewhat mysteriously to the Bishop's private oratory. "Let us kneel before the Blessed Sacrament," said Monsignor Apollonio gravely, "and pray about a matter which concerns us both intimately." Still more astonished, Monsignor Sarto knelt, and the two prelates prayed for a moment in silence. Then the Bishop rose, and, handing a letter to his companion, bade him read it. Thus did Monsignor Sarto learn his nomination to the Bishopric of Mantua.

Seldom has such an honour been received in such a spirit. The strong man who all his life long had welcomed hardship and suffering with a cheery smile, wept like a child. He was, he declared, utterly incapable, quite unworthy of such a trust. The Bishop, who knew better, but whose heart was touched at the sight of his friend's distress, comforted him as best he could. "It is God's will," he said; "trust in His help." Convinced, however, in his own mind that the Pope was wholly mistaken in his judgment of him, Monsignor Sarto wrote to Rome to profess his incapacity and worthlessness. Needless to say, his arguments were not accepted.

The news of the nomination spread rapidly throughout the diocese. Amongst those who knew his qualities of mind and heart, his purposeful energy, his abnegation, and his work as Vicar-Capitular, the appointment caused great rejoicing; to nobody was it a surprise. "It is what we have been expecting for a long time," said the people; "he is cut out for a Bishop."

Early in November, amidst enthusiastic demonstrations, the Bishop-elect set out for Rome. At Padua he met with a fresh ovation, Monsignor Callegari himself came to the station to greet his old friend and to wish him well. On the evening of the 8th he was received by Pope Leo XIII., and left his presence consoled and full of courage as to the future. Consecrated Bishop on the 16th, he remained in Rome for ten days longer, returning on the 29th to Treviso, where he was to remain for some months before entering on his episcopal charge.

It was during this time that he went one day, accompanied by a friend, to visit a Venetian city. In the railway-carriage were two gentlemen, who, while conversing on local subjects, touched on the election of the new Bishop of Mantua. They wondered what kind of a man Monsignor Sarto was; not very intelligent, they feared, nor very gifted. The Bishop-elect, with a sign to his companion to keep quiet, joined in the conversation, endorsing most heartily everything that they said in his own disparagement. He then proceeded to contrast the poor picture he had painted of himself with the qualities that were necessary for an ideal Bishop, and this with such ability and discernment that his two hearers were greatly impressed.

The Bishop was the first to leave the carriage.

"Who is that delightful priest?" asked the two gentlemen of his companion, who was preparing to follow.

The latter, who could contain himself no longer, made a low bow. "Monsignor Sarto, Bishop-elect of Mantua," he answered with elaborate irony.

The consternation of the other two may be imagined; but the Bishop heartily enjoyed the joke.

He spent Holy Week and Easter that year with his mother and sisters at Riese. It was a double festival for his family and the friends of his childhood who crowded round him to offer their good wishes. Back again at Treviso, where he had spent so many happy days, he had not the courage to face a public farewell. "Read them this letter at dinner," he said to the rector of the seminary; "tell them I keep them all in my heart, and that they must pray for me." Then, slipping unnoticed out of the house, he went to meet the carriage ordered to wait for him at a little distance, and so set out for Mantua.

At the station a large crowd had gathered to receive him, composed of priests, people, representatives of the noble families of the place, and of the divers associations of town and country. Outside the Bishop's palace, in the great square of St. Peter's, a vast multitude of townspeople were awaiting his arrival. "We want to see our Bishop," they cried tumultuously, and their desire was immediately satisfied. Stepping out into the balcony which overlooked the square, their new pastor greeted them with warm affection and gave them his episcopal blessing.

Mantua, say the Italians, has always been a fighting city, and in 1885 it was still true to its reputation. Of Etruscan origin, and the birthplace of Virgil and Sordello, throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries its episcopal see had been usually held by members of the famous family of Gonzaga.

The task which lay before the new Bishop was no easy one. There were divisions between the priests and the people; the seminary, which had been recently founded, was almost empty of students; many parishes were without a priest; no synod had been held within the memory of man.

The spirit in which Monsignor Sarto took up his new work showed itself in his first pastoral letter to his flock.

"I shall spare myself neither care nor labour nor vigils for the salvation of souls. My hope is in Christ, who strengthens the weakest by His divine help; I can do all in Him who strengtheneth me! His power is infinite, and if I lean on Him it will be mine; His wisdom is infinite, and if I look to Him for counsel I shall not be deceived; His goodness is infinite, and if my trust is stayed on Him I shall not be abandoned. Hope unites me to my God and Him to me. Although I know I am not sufficient for the burden, my strength is in Him. For the salvation of others I must bear weariness, face dangers, suffer offences, confront storms, fight against evil. He is my Hope."

His first care was the seminary, and in a little more than a year he was able to write to a friend: "I have a hundred and forty-seven boarders, young men with healthy appetites who can digest anything and everything."

The scarcity of priests in the country villages was indeed disastrous. The Bishop lost no time in convoking a synod. "If people do not hear of God, of the Sacraments, and of eternal life," he said to the priests assembled, "they will soon lose every good sentiment, both civil and social. Do not believe that any difficulty is insurmountable," continued this intrepid soldier of Christ; "nothing is impossible to those who will and those who love."

The difficulty that at that moment seemed most insurmountable was the want of money. The hundred and forty-seven young men required feeding, and the seminary was poor. The Bishop sold the few fields at Riese that were all he possessed to meet the immediate need, and others, inflamed by his zeal and eloquence, came forward to help him in the good work.

A thorough visitation of the diocese enabled Monsignor Sarto to understand more fully its needs. He liked to hear both sides of every question, and asked everyone to be perfectly frank with him in discussing both good and evil. "Joy shared is joy doubled," he would say, "and grief imparted becomes easier to bear." An old man who came one day to the palace was received with such familiar kindness that, concluding he had to do with the Bishop's secretary, he talked to him at great length about a little personal affair. "Can I believe you?" he asked wistfully, as the kind priest assured him that all would be right.

"What!" was the answer, "can you not trust your Bishop?"

In order that the pastoral visitation might be no burden on the country priests, whose life was a continual struggle with poverty, he ordered that no preparations whatever were to be made for his reception. Nothing extra was to be provided; he would share with them what they had. Instead of a demonstration at the station, he begged that the people might gather in the churches for Holy Mass and Communion. "That is the greatest honour they can do me," he said; "that will be my greatest reward. I desire no useless pomp, but the salvation of souls."

One of his first acts was to write to the mayor of the city to ask his assistance, thus holding out the right hand of fellowship to the civil authority, and enlisting it in his behalf. "Your new Bishop," ran the letter, "poor in everything else, but rich in love for his flock, has no other object than to work for the salvation of souls and to form among you one family of friends and brothers."

The question of Church and State, always a thorny one in Italy, had not of late years found a happy solution in Mantua. This gracious act of the new Bishop was the first step towards a better understanding. He interested himself much in social questions; and it was through his efforts that the first Italian Social Congress was held at Piacenza in 1890. He understood the power of the Press, and started in his episcopal city a flourishing paper called the *Citizen of Mantua.*

As at Tombolo, at Salzano, and at Treviso, so at Mantua was the teaching of Christian doctrine one of the Bishop's first cares. Schools and confraternities were established everywhere throughout the diocese, and on his pastoral visits the Bishop would catechise the children himself in order to see that they were properly instructed in the Faith. The parents who would not allow their children to attend were threatened with severe penalties; on this subject the Bishop, so gentle towards sorrow and suffering, was stern and inflexible. The children's souls were at stake, he said, and he would not see their birthright withheld from them. He insisted that Church music should be decorous and religious, and that the Gregorian chant should be used when possible.

The Bishop's day was a strenuous one. At five he celebrated Mass in his private chapel, and, his thanksgiving ended, went straight to his confessional in the Cathedral. After breakfast, which consisted of a cup of black coffee and a mouthful of bread, he began the oft-interrupted day's work, for he would have no set hours for receiving visits. Those who wanted him were admitted at any hour, and received with the most genial kindness. "No matter with what faces they go in," it was said of his visitors, "they always come out smiling—that is, unless they have done something dreadful." On these occasions the Bishop could scorch the offender with words of fire, but at the first sign of repentance he was ready to forgive, to lift up the sinner and set him on the right road. Towards evening he would take a walk in the town, speaking familiarly to all he met. At nine he said the rosary with the members of his own household, after which he worked or studied till midnight.

St. Anselm of Lucca, friend of Gregory VII., and, like him, inspired with holy zeal for the reformation of the clergy, is the patron saint of Mantua. In 1886 his centenary was celebrated with the greatest pomp and splendour in the Cathedral where he lies buried. Owing to the zeal and energy of the Bishop the ceremonies were brilliantly carried out. Nor did the tercentenary of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, whose family was one of Mantua's olden glories, pass without special honour. A stirring address was given by the Bishop himself to the young men of whom St. Aloysius was the special patron.

"Religion has no fear of science," said Monsignor Sarto, attacking one of the most popular fallacies of the present day; "Christianity does not tremble before discussion, but before ignorance. Tertullian proclaimed as much to the Emperors of Rome. 'One thing,' he said, 'our faith demands: not to be con-

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MONSIGNOR SARTO, BISHOP OF MANTUA

demned before it be known,' and it is this that I ask of you, young men most dear to me, not to condemn religion before you have studied it."

Pilgrimages were inaugurated to the birthplace of the saint at Castiglione; an earnest mission was preached to the boys and young men of the district; solemn processions were held. The celebration of the festival did a great deal of good in the diocese, impressing as it did upon the people the fact that the best way to honour their saints was by following in their footsteps.

In 1887 the sacerdotal Jubilee of Pope Leo XIII. was celebrated throughout the world. The words in which the Bishop of Mantua announced the approaching celebration to his flock found an echo in every Catholic heart.

"The moment has come," he said, "to prove to the august Vicar of Christ our unchanging affection and fidelity. For us Leo XIII. is the guardian of the Holy Scriptures, the interpreter of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, the supreme dispenser of the treasures of the Church, the Head of the Catholic religion, the chief Shepherd of souls, the infallible Teacher, the secure Guide, who directs us on our way through a world wrapped in darkness and the shadow of death. All the strength of the Church is in the Pope; all the foundations of our Faith are based on the successor of Peter. Those who wish her evil assault the Papacy in every possible way; they cut themselves adrift from the Church, and try their best to make the Pope an object of hatred and contempt. The more they endeavour to weaken our faith and our attachment to the Head of the Church, the more closely let us draw to him by the public testimony of our faith, our obedience, and our veneration."

The fame of the zeal and piety of the Bishop of Mantua soon spread beyond the bounds of his own diocese. His conspicuous merit and ability had not escaped the vigilant eye of Leo XIII., who had marked him out for a higher dignity still.

"If the Mantuans do not love their new Bishop," he had said on the appointment of Monsignor Sarto to that see, "they will love no one."

But the Mantuans were not so hard of heart, and the quarrelsome city, in the hands of one who, like his Master, was meek and humble of heart, had become a city of peace.

CHAPTER IV: *Patriarch of Venice*

THE last day of the year 1891 was the last day on earth of Cardinal Agostino, Patriarch of Venice. The Bishop of Treviso, Monsignor Apollonio, who was appointed some time later to the vacant see, considering that his state of health justified him in refusing so difficult and responsible a position, humbly submitted his opinion to the Holy See. His plea was accepted, and the Pope resolved to appoint another Venetian prelate, Monsignor Sarto, Bishop of Mantua, of whom there had already been question. Knowing, however, the humility of the Bishop, Cardinal Rampolla took the precaution of warning him that another refusal would greatly grieve the Holy Father. The only course open to Monsignor Sarto was to submit.

The announcement of his nomination in May, 1893, was received with an outburst of joy throughout the Province of Venetia and the diocese of Mantua, a joy which was increased still further by the news that the Patriarch-elect was to be created Cardinal at the next Consistory.

On the 7th of June, accompanied by his secretary, Don Giovanni Bressan, Monsignor Sarto set out for Rome, and on the 15th, in the presence of representatives from Venice, Treviso, Mantua, and Riese, received the Cardinal's hat with the title of San Bernardo delle Terme. The wisdom and modesty of the new Cardinal, added to his singular charm of manner, won him many friends during his stay in Rome.

For sixteen months Cardinal Sarto was unable to take possession of his see; for the Italian Government, having claimed the right to nominate the Patriarch, refused to sanction his appointment; and the municipality of Venice, which was largely anti-clerical, was only too glad of a pretext to show hostility to the Church.

The Cardinal's first visit after his return from Rome was to his mother at Riese. At one of the stations on the way thither he was met by a deputation of his old friends the Tombolani, headed by their parish priest. Quite forgetting in their joy the respect due to a Prince of the Church, the simple peasants rushed at their old rector, shouting vociferously, "Don Giuseppe! Don Giuseppe!" The Cardinal, well pleased with their enthusiasm, only laughed, and greeted his old friends with much affection.

All the bells were ringing in the little village of Riese as he entered it; all the people, young and old, were there to meet him and to escort him, the centre of a laughing, weeping, shouting crowd, to the church. Everyone assisted at Benediction, and when the old friends had been greeted and good wishes given and received, the greatest joy of all was still to come—the meeting in the little home of his childhood, where Margherita had her son at last to herself.

Next morning, after saying Mass, the Cardinal preached to the people, thanking them for their welcome, and speaking of all the precious memories that centred for him round the altar where he had made his First Communion and said his first Mass. The day was spent in receiving visits; there was a kind word of greeting for new friends, and a still kinder word of remembrance for the old.

Early next day, having vested in his scarlet "Cappa magna," Cardinal Sarto went to his mother's room, and, standing beside her bed, showed himself in all the glory of the "sacred purple." Margherita wept with joy; but there were tears of sorrow before night. It was the last day at Riese, and although neither of them knew it, that parting kiss was to be the last on this side of the grave. The old mother clung to her son with a passionate tenderness as he clasped her frail figure in his arms for a last farewell. She was eighty years old, and at that age partings are hard. A few months later the sorrowful news of her death reached the Cardinal, now back at Mantua and busy with his episcopal duties. The joy of the last meeting and the grief of the last parting had been too much for the old mother's heart.

In September, 1894, the Government gave way at last before the growing indignation of the people of Venice, so long deprived of their pastor, and the *Exequatur* or confirmation of the Papal Bull arrived. A few weeks later Cardinal Sarto pontificated for the last time in the Cathedral of Mantua, and, bidding a loving farewell to the diocese where he had laboured so long and so strenuously, set out for Venice.

The difficulties between Church and State in Italy had culminated seven years before in the nomination of Crispi, a man wholly hostile to the Church, as Prime Minister. On the eve of the elections in 1890 his friend Semmi, like himself a freemason and Grand

Master of the Italian lodges, had spoken strongly on the necessity of destroying the "Great Enemy." "We have applied the knife to the centre of superstition," he wrote in a wonderful combination of mixed metaphors, "and the very presence of ***** at the head of Government is a guarantee that the Vatican will fall beneath the blows of our vivifying hammer. Let us work with all our strength to scatter its stones, that we may build with them a temple to an emancipated nation. The enemy is the Pope; we must wage a relentless war against him. The Papacy, although but a phantom presiding over ruins, yet reflects a certain glory, waving as it does in face of, and in defiance of the world, the Cross and the 'Summa Theologica.' A miserable crowd still prostrates itself to adore. It must be war to the knife."

And the war had waged relentlessly. Decrees had been passed forbidding religious teaching in the schools; charitable works had been "laicised"; in other words, the goods of the religious confraternities and charitable societies had been confiscated by the State, the revenues of the Bishoprics had been refused to prelates appointed by the Pope, and rights of patronage had been claimed by the Government over many Italian Bishoprics. The result of all this was soon to be seen in a growing materialism in all ranks of society.

"God is driven out of politics by this theory of the separation of Church and State," wrote the new Patriarch in his first letter to his flock. "He is driven out of art by the degrading influence of realism; from the laws by a morality which is guided by the senses alone; from the schools by the abolition of religious instruction; from Christian marriage, now deprived of the grace of the Sacrament; from the poor hut of the peasant, who, groaning under the burden of poverty, is taught to disdain the help of Him who alone can make his hard life bearable; from the palaces of the rich, who are no longer taught to fear the eternal Judge who will one day ask from them an account of their stewardship. We must fight this great error of modern times, the enthronement of man in the place of God. The solution of this, as of all other problems, lies in the Church and her teaching."

On his way to Venice, the Patriarch stopped for a few days at Treviso, where he was received with a tremendous ovation. All the people of the city seemed to have gathered in the great square before the episcopal palace to greet with one voice their old friend, and to receive his benediction. The Cardinal, who at once recognised the significance of this welcome, was deeply moved, and before he blessed the expectant crowd expressed in a few words his surprise and joy to find so many people gathered together on a working day to do him honour. At these words and at the smile which accompanied them, the crowd broke out into tumultuous cheering.

But the rejoicings at Treviso were nothing to those at Venice. The Venetian people were determined to show their new pastor that the representatives of the Government were not the representatives of popular feeling. Amidst the rich decorations which adorned the town, the municipal buildings alone remained untouched; amongst the crowds that gathered to meet the Patriarch, the members of the municipality were conspicuously absent. The people resolved to avenge the insult by an ovation the like of which had never before been seen. As the Patriarch entered the magnificent launch from the Royal Arsenal that had been sent to receive him, the bells of all the towers in the City of the Sea rang out a joyous welcome; from every balcony and bridge came bursts of cheering, while a closely packed and enthusiastic crowd occupied every available space along the route. At the prow of the launch stood the Cardinal in all the splendour of scarlet robes, a noble and manly figure, full of dignity and sweetness, blessing the crowd with the winning smile that was characteristic of him, and surrounded by naval officers in gala uniform.

On the following morning took place, in St. Mark's, the first pontifical function. Having listened graciously to the congratulatory speeches addressed to him, the Cardinal turned to the people, and in the breathless silence that followed, his clear voice rang out to the farthest recesses of the Cathedral which is the glory of Venice.

"I should be ashamed," he said, "to be the object of such honour, did I not know that it is offered, not to my poor person, but to Jesus Christ, whose representative I am, and in whose name I come among you. You wish to show me that you see in me your Bishop, your Father, and your Patriarch, and I am bound to love you in return. When Jesus Christ gave to St. Peter the charge of His sheep and of His lambs, He asked him three times for the assurance of his love, thus giving him to understand that love is the greatest necessity for a pastor of souls. From this moment I gather you all into my heart; I love you with a strong and supernatural love, desiring only the good of your souls. For you are all my family—priests, citizens great and small, rich and poor. My heart and my love are yours, and from you I ask nothing but the same love in return. My only desire is that you should say of me, 'Our Patriarch is a man of upright intention, one who holds high the banner of our Lord Jesus Christ, who seeks nothing but to defend the truth and to do good.' And since God has raised me, a son of the people, to this high dignity, He will certainly give me the strength and the grace necessary for so great a mission. It is the duty of a Bishop to proclaim God's truth, to interpret it to the people; and I look upon it as a holy duty to speak frankly in its defence. I am ready to make any sacrifice for the salvation of souls. You who have zeal for the things of God, work with me, come to my assistance, and God will give us the grace that is necessary to achieve our ends."

The Venetians were deeply moved; they felt that their new Patriarch was a truly Apostolic man, and the impression only gathered strength as time went on. The doors of the episcopal palace were always open to anyone, rich or poor, who wished to speak to the Patriarch; the troubles of the least of his flock were his own. He threw himself with all his heart into every movement for the bettering of the condition of the poor, settling often, by his tact and zeal, bitter disputes between capital and labour. The municipality was, as we have seen, anti-clerical. He rallied the Catholic forces with such success that within a year the Catholic element prevailed. For he knew the way to obtain his ends; and while throwing into the struggle the whole influence of his forceful personality, he inaugurated throughout the diocese, both before and during the elections, a regular crusade of prayer. Wherever he went, peace and reconciliation followed in his footsteps. "Possessed of much sweetness and charm of manner," wrote one who knew him, "and uniting a certain stateliness and dignity with a graceful address and a delightful sense of humour, he preached the Gospel of personal culture, putting cleanliness next to godliness, and good manners next to good morals, himself setting the example in these things by his refinement and old-world courtesy."

As at Mantua and at Treviso, he insisted strongly on religious instruction for all classes. Ignorance of Christian doctrine, he said, was the great defect of the times, and very many evils sprang from this alone. Many who were learned in secular sciences were deplorably ignorant of the truths of their faith. Preachers were apt to take it too much for granted that their congregations were well instructed, and on this account their sermons bore little fruit.

"There is too much preaching and too little teaching," said the Patriarch; "put aside these flowery and elaborate discourses, and preach to the people plainly and simply on the eternal truths of faith and on the teaching of the Gospel. Think of the good of souls rather than of the impression you are making. The people are thirsting for truth; give them what they need for their souls' health, for this is the first duty of a priest."

He insisted strongly on religious instruction for adults as well as children, but reminded his priests that all these things required study, preparation, and prayer. As nothing pertaining to the dignity of the priesthood was small in his eyes, he insisted that the clergy should be neatly dressed and scrupulously clean. He himself mixed freely with the people, stopping often to talk to those he met in a friendly and familiar fashion. The Venetians, who loved him dearly, would stand and watch him till he disappeared from sight. "There goes our dear Patriarch," they would say, "intent on some good. God bless him and the mother who bore him." His home life in the Patriarchal palace was as simple as ever, and his charities as great. His two sisters and his niece kept house for him—there were no servants. His steward had to put him on an allowance, so unmeasured was his almsgiving, and it was said that the episcopal ring of the chief pastor of Venice was more than once in pawn.

"Times are changed," said an old friend who was visiting him at Venice, as the Cardinal pulled out a handsome gold watch from his pocket. "Do you remember the silver one which was always going to the pawnbroker at Tombolo?"

The Patriarch looked ruefully at the watch. "The person who gave it me," he said, laughing, "had the unfortunate inspiration to get the Patriarchal arms engraved on the back!"

"I am so sorry to have to send you such a wretched sum," he wrote to a priest in Mantua who had applied to him for money for some charity; "I was poor at Mantua, but here I am a perfect beggar. Take what I send in the same spirit, and forgive me."

The diocesan visitation begun by the Cardinal soon after his arrival in Venice was no small affair, and took several months to accomplish. "We appreciate greatly the zeal and charity of our Patriarch," said the people, "but we are praying that he may sometimes think a little of himself, for such people are precious, and we want to keep him as long as we can." As at Mantua, he begged that there might be as little pomp and ceremony as possible, and that no extraordinary preparations might be made in the different parishes for his arrival. With quick intuition he saw at a glance exactly what was needed in the way of reform or development, and at the synod which followed showed a perfect knowledge of the requirements of the arch-diocese.

The Eucharistic Congress in Venice which took place in August, 1898, was prompted and carried out by the zeal and energy of the Patriarch, who spared no pains to make it a success. Inaugurated as a reparation for the many sacrileges offered to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, its aim was to stimulate the faith of the people, and to arouse in them a greater love for this mystery of their faith.

Each parish was to take its part in the celebration, the whole Congress being carefully organised by the Cardinal himself. "The heart of man," he said, "is inconstant in good; it grows cold and languid if from time to time it is not stirred up to action." Conferences were held and missions were preached in many of the Venetian churches to prepare the people for the great event. The bells of all the towers in the city rang out to announce the beginning of the Congress, which opened with a magnificent procession from the Patriarchal palace to St. Mark's. The inaugural address was preached by Cardinal Svampa, Archbishop of Bologna; on the following day the Patriarch himself addressed the people.

"Jesus is our King," he said, "and we delight to honour as our King Him whom the world dishonours and disowns. We, His true subjects, offer our true homage to Christ the King; the intensity of our love shall be greater than the coldness of the world. We meet around the tabernacle where Jesus remains in our midst until the end of time; there faith springs up anew in our hearts, while the fire of His charity—the very fire that He came to cast upon the earth—diffuses itself within us. The object of this Eucharistic Congress is to make reparation to our Lord Jesus Christ for the insults offered to Him in the Blessed Sacrament; to pray that His thoughts may be in our minds, His charity in our institutions, His justice in our laws, His worship in our religion, His life in our lives."

On the afternoon of the third day the procession that ended the Congress was one of the most magnificent of all the magnificent pageants ever seen in the City of the Sea, even in the days when the Doge went in solemn state to wed the Adriatic. Cardinal Svampa carried the monstrance, while before and after him went Cardinals in scarlet, priests and Bishops in cope and mitre, religious Orders, the various confraternities with their banners and insignia, prelates and priests of the Greek, Melchite, and Armenian rites in their gorgeous vestments. "Splendid as a dream," wrote one who was present, "it seemed as if the very Greek saints had stepped out of the mosaics in the Cathedral to be present at the solemn passage of Christ in their midst."

Cardinal Sarto had not been long at Venice before he determined on a thorough reform of Church music. He summoned to his assistance Don Lorenzo Perosi, a young cleric whom he had known at Mantua and who was a skilled musician. Music, said the Patriarch, was intended to excite the faithful to devotion and to help them to pray; the music in vogue did neither. The fearful and wonderful performances of string orchestras, dear to the hearts of many, were banned, as was the use of drums, trumpets, tambourines, and whistles. No instrument but the organ was to be used in the churches, and even that was to be subordinate. The words of the Mass were to be sung to the Gregorian chant with solemnity and dignity, and by men and boys alone. That the change was not acceptable in all quarters was hardly to be wondered at. The operatic efforts of loud-voiced ladies singing the *O Salutaris* during Mass to the air of the serenade from "Faust," or a Creed that was like the Brigands' Chorus from an opera, still found many admirers.

Nevertheless, when a Mass of Palestrina's was sung, under the leadership of Perosi, for the first time in the Cathedral of St. Mark's, the Venetians realised the difference. "Enchantingly beautiful," they said as they gathered round their Patriarch when all was over. But it was uphill work at first, and Don Lorenzo would have lost heart altogether had it not been for the support and encouragement of his holy patron.

One of the poorest of the island parishes of Venice was Burano, which in ancient times had been famous for its point lace. The Cardinal, whose tender heart was touched at the misery of its inhabitants, determined to revive the industry; but only one old woman remained in the place who knew the art. A benevolent lady who was persuaded to interest herself in the work, got the old woman to teach her, started a school of lace workers, and soon had six hundred girls in training. Clubs were started for young men and boys, not only here, but in many other parishes. There was no difficulty, no misery for which the Patriarch did not try to find a cure. He had the art of giving without offending people whose decent appearance covered a poverty often more bitter in that it had to be hidden. He went one day to see a friend who had fallen on evil times, and who was in dire need of help. "I am so sorry," said the Patriarch, "I have absolutely nothing left, but take this," presenting him with an exquisite carved ivory crucifix which had been given him as a present; "it is valuable, and will realise a good sum."

Although unflinchingly firm in everything that concerned the faith and the rights of the Church, the frank courtesy of the Patriarch and his conciliating spirit kept him always on good terms with the Government. He bade his priests and people respect all lawfully constituted authority, recognising that "the powers that be are ordained of God." "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," he would often say. When King Humbert of Italy was assassinated he ordered that a magnificent Requiem should be sung for him in St. Mark's; and when the widowed Queen came to Venice for rest and change of air, he visited and consoled her with the most heartfelt sympathy. "The restoration of society in Christ is the only cure for all the world's evils," he would constantly repeat. "No good is good which is not rooted and founded in Christ." He had the gift of inspiring others and rallying them to his own charitable schemes, filling them with a fire and energy like his own.

The 14th of July, 1902, was a day of grief for Venice. The beautiful Campanile of St. Mark's, which had stood for centuries watching over the glories of the City of the Sea, crumbled and fell in ruins. The universal lamentations were changed, by order of the Patriarch, into thanksgivings that no one had been injured, and that the Cathedral itself had not suffered. The reconstruction of the Campanile was immediately determined on, an undertaking in which not only the Italians but lovers of beauty in all countries of the world took the keenest and most practical interest.

On the 25th of April, 1903, the feast day of the great evangelist and patron saint of Venice, the first stone was laid. The square of St. Mark was a sea of heads; every window and balcony was crowded. The Duke of Turin, a prince of the House of Savoy, was present as the representative of the King, who had contributed generously to the reconstruction fund. The Cardinal in his scarlet robes stood before him. Church and State were face to face, with the memory of all that had passed since the beginning of the Italian Revolution between them. Was conciliation possible? It might have seemed that day that it was—that in charity and justice lay the solution. The tact and courtesy of the Cardinal on this occasion, as on so many others, put everybody at ease. The discourse with which he opened the proceedings won the admiration of all present.

"It is a good and beautiful thing," he said, "for men to ask God's blessing on their work. The genius of man is at its highest when it bows before the Light Eternal. I rejoice, therefore, with you, most noble representatives of Venice, that, faithful interpreters of the public spirit, you have decided that the rebuilding of our beloved Campanile must be inaugurated with a solemn act of religious worship. I rejoice that you have shown yourselves worthy sons of your Venetian forefathers, who, knowing well that 'unless the Lord build the house, their labour is in vain that build it,' began no enterprise without asking God's blessing and the protection of His Virgin Mother in their work." After having shown that all the glory of medieval Venice sprang from her faith and her religion, he turned to the Duke of Turin and the other illustrious guests who were there, with a gracious word of thanks for their presence. "A man of personal fascination and splendid presence," wrote a member of the French Government who was at the ceremony, "with handsome open face and strong clear cut features, softened by eyes in which shines the light of perpetual youth. Nothing proud about him, nothing obsequious, his manner with the Duke of Turin was perfect, that of a man who is completely at his ease."

Prince of the Church as he was, he was always ready to fulfil the duties of a simple parish priest. He would carry Holy Communion to the sick, hear confessions, give the spiritual exercises in the churches of the diocese, and visit the prisons, the hospitals, and the reformatories, preaching to their inmates and comforting all their sorrows. The religious Orders were amongst the most favoured of his children; he was always ready to visit them on their feast days, and loved and esteemed their work for souls. Those whose patrimonies had been confiscated by the State were succoured by his charity. Both saint and sinner found in him a kindly strength and simple goodness which set them at their ease at once. The very sight of his face was a welcome; there was no affectation of holiness or austerity which might repel or frighten the less perfect; no one could feel stiff or awkward in his presence, all shyness and reserve gave way before his genial manner.

An intimate friend of the Cardinal's, who was staying with him at the episcopal palace, asked one day if he might say Mass at an early hour next morning, as he had to catch a train. "Why not?" was the answer, "I will see that all is ready for you."

What was the astonishment of the priest when he went to the private chapel of the Patriarch at an early hour to find his illustrious host himself preparing everything for the Mass.

"But who will serve?" asked the celebrant.

"I," answered the Cardinal very simply.

"Oh, Eminence!" protested his guest, quite aghast at the suggestion.

"What!" exclaimed the Patriarch smiling, "do you imagine that a Prelate of my rank does not know how to serve Mass? A fine idea you have of the Princes of the Church!"

There was nothing to do but to submit, and the Cardinal, having helped his friend to vest, served his Mass like the simplest acolyte. He hated ostentation of any kind and would often travel about the

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country incognito. He was going one day to a ceremony at the convent of the Sisters of Charity at Crespano, when feeling sure that at Bassano, where he had to get out, there would be an ovation in his honour, he wrote to a friend telling him that two Venetian priests who were going to Crespano and who did not know the country would be very glad if a carriage could be sent to meet them at the station. The train arrived, and the two priests made their way to a ramshackle little carriage which was standing outside the station. The friend, who was waiting to do the honours to the Cardinal's priests, came forward eagerly, and was just about to greet the elder of the two when he recognised the Patriarch. "Your Eminence!" he stammered, utterly taken aback; but the Cardinal making the sign of the Cross on his lips in warning, jumped into the carriage, followed by his companion, and drove away. Little did he guess that the time was close at hand when his desire to be unnoticed could nevermore be fulfilled, when he who loved to take the lowest place was to be obliged to take the highest in the world.

CHAPTER V: *The Papal Election*

THE news of the death of Leo XIII., on July 20th, 1903, came as a crushing blow to the whole Catholic world. The old man of ninety-four, whose wonderful intelligence had remained unimpaired until the very end of his life, had guided the bark of Peter with sure and unswerving hand during the twenty-five years of his pontificate. His blameless life, his lofty ideals, and his indomitable moral courage have been borne witness to by men who had small sympathy for the Catholic Church. "The original attitude of Leo XIII. towards the new social forces," wrote the *Quarterly Review*, "will make his pontificate a memorable epoch, not only, in the history of the Roman Church, but in that of all Christian countries. His personal conception of the duties of the Church towards the labouring classes was catholic in the broadest and best sense of the term. It was such a conception as befitted the chief Pastor of Christendom."

Yet this was only one side of the activity of the great statesman and Pope who had passed away. "Pray that God may send to His Church a Shepherd after His own heart," said Cardinal Sarto when he announced to his people at Venice the sad news of the Pope's death. Little in his humility did he think how that prayer was to be answered. Yet Leo XIII. himself not long before his death had said to an intimate friend, "If the Conclave chooses a

Cardinal non-resident in Rome, it is Cardinal Sarto who will be elected."

The announcement of the death of Leo XIII. was sent out by the Camerlengo, Cardinal Oreglia, to all the Cardinals throughout the world, with the intimation that the Conclave for the election of his successor would be held on the 31st of July.

It was not until the 26th that Cardinal Sarto was able to set out for Rome. He laughed at the apprehensions of his sisters that he might not come back to them. His secretary, Don Giovanni Bressan, was busy putting together what was necessary for the journey.

"Where is Don Giovanni?" asked the Cardinal of his niece Amalia. "Go and tell him that a journey to Rome is not a journey to America."

"Get the Conclave over and come back quickly," said Amalia.

"Sooner or later," replied the Cardinal, "it does not matter. In the meantime you shall go to Possagno for a change of air and I will pick you up on my way back."

But the sisters were sad, and refused to be comforted.

The whole city turned out to greet the Patriarch as the gondola made its way to the station; from every balcony and bridge good wishes and farewells followed him. At the station there was a regular ovation, poor and rich crowded round him to kiss his ring or catch one word from his lips. With tears in his eyes he thanked them for that demonstration of filial affection, and for the love they bore him.

"One more blessing! one more blessing!" pleaded the people, "who knows if you will ever come back?"

"Alive or dead, I shall come back," was the answer.

"Take a return ticket, it will be cheaper," he had said to his secretary, Don Giovanni. But the return ticket was destined not to be used; the premonitions of the people were true. The train began to move, and from its window Cardinal Sarto looked his last on his beloved Venice; it was good-bye for ever. He had written to the Lombard College for rooms, and here he remained until the opening of the Conclave, paying and receiving visits. A Venetian lady who lived at Rome, having come to see him, expressed a polite wish that he would be the future Pope. Cardinal Sarto laughed. "It is sufficient honour," he replied, "that God should make use of such as I to elect the Pope." As he passed the Castle of St. Angelo one evening on the way to his modest lodging, a young Venetian captain who was on guard ordered his men to present arms as to the sovereign Pontiff. The Cardinal laughed at the boyish prank, and passed with a blessing.

A French Cardinal who did not know him spoke to him one day. "Your Eminence is probably an Italian Archbishop?" he asked.

"I do not speak French," replied Cardinal Sarto, in Latin; "I am the Patriarch of Venice."

"Ah! if you do not speak French," answered his questioner, "you will be not eligible for the Papacy."

"Thank God, no," was the answer; "I am not eligible for the Papacy."[1]

[1] There is a saying that he who enters the Conclave Pope, leaves it Cardinal. Opinion pointed to Cardinal Rampolla, Secretary of State of Leo XIII., as the most likely candidate.

"I think the election will be quickly over," said Cardinal Sarto to an Italian journalist who came to visit him in Rome. "The Pope will probably be elected at the second scrutiny."

"I venture to disagree with your Eminence," was the reply, "and on these grounds. I hope—for I think it is permissible—for a Cardinal who resides in his diocese. Not that the Cardinals of the Curia are wanting in breadth or in experience, but as a rule those Prelates who live in the provinces are in immediate contact with the people. They have a better chance of seeing things from the inside than those who occupy an official post in Rome, important and indispensable though these may be. But of necessity the non-resident Cardinals are less well known in Rome than those of the Curia, their candidature must therefore be slower and the election longer."

The election of the Pope is one of the most solemn functions of the Church, and is safeguarded by wise and stately regulations. On the death of the Pontiff the Cardinal Camerlengo, as representative of the Sacred College, assumes the charge of the papal household, notifying to all the Cardinals of the Church the death of the late Pope and the impending election. Every Cardinal has the right to vote in the Conclave, but he must be present in person to do so. Each one may take with him a secretary, who is generally a priest, and a servant. In the meanwhile a large portion of the Vatican palace has been walled off and divided into apartments or cells for the conclavists. Access to it can be had through one door alone, which is left open until the Conclave begins, when it is closed and barred from without by the Marshal of the

Conclave, and from within by the Cardinal Camerlengo. All communication with the outside world is then at an end until the result of the election is announced.

The Conclave opens officially on the evening of the tenth day after the Pope's death. On the following morning the Cardinals hear Mass in the Pauline Chapel and receive Holy Communion from the hands of the Cardinal Dean, who solemnly adjures them to elect as Pope him whom they believe to be the most worthy.

Soon after Mass they assemble in the Sistine Chapel, where the actual voting takes place. The stall of each Cardinal has a canopy overhead and a small writing desk in front. The door is shut and bolted and the voting begins. Each Cardinal having written the name of his candidate on the paper provided, deposits it in a chalice on the altar, taking as he does so the required oath: "I call to witness the Lord Christ, who will be my Judge, that I am electing the one whom before God I think ought to be elected." The ballots are then counted and read aloud, and if no candidate has received the necessary number of votes, they are burnt in a little stove together with a handful of damp straw. As the chimney of this stove extends through a window of the chapel, the colour of the smoke or "sfumata" can be clearly seen by those outside. Not until the election is made are the ballots burnt without the accompanying straw, when the clear white smoke is the first notification to the people that the Pope is elected. Voting takes place twice a day, morning and evening, until a majority of two-thirds of the votes has been attained.

The Veto is the alleged right of certain Catholic countries to object to the election of a Cardinal of whom they do not approve. It has been exercised rarely and has never been formally approved by the Church. Although Pius IX. had forbidden any inter ference by the secular power in a papal election, an attempt was made to exercise the Veto at the Conclave which resulted in the election of Pius X. After the third scrutiny, in which Cardinal Rampolla came first with twenty-nine votes, a Cardinal, who, although by birth a Galician Pole, was an Austrian subject, having accepted the mandate of the Austrian Government in the name of the Emperor, read a declaration excluding Cardinal Rampolla, without giving any particular reason for the exclusion.

The Cardinals protested against the interference, and the votes in Cardinal Rampolla's favour were found to have increased still further in the evening scrutiny. But Cardinal Sarto's had been mounting steadily from the beginning and continued to do so until they reached the number of fifty.[1]

At five o'clock on the 31st of July the Cardinals, sixty-four in all, assembled at the Vatican. At nightfall the last door was closed and bricked up; the Conclave had begun. At the first scrutiny Cardinal Rampolla had twenty-four votes, Cardinal Gotti seven, and Cardinal Sarto five. There was nothing alarming in this; but when, at the second scrutiny, the votes in favour of the Patriarch of Venice had doubled, and at the third doubled again, it was another matter, and his anguish was obvious to all.

[1] The exercise of the Veto was definitely abolished by Pius X. soon after his accession to the Papacy.

With trembling voice and tears in his eyes, he spoke to the Cardinals, begging them to give up all thought of him. "I am unworthy, I am incapable," he pleaded, "forget me."

"It was that very adjuration, his grief, his profound humility and wisdom," said Cardinal Gibbons, "that made us think of him all the more; we learnt to know him from his words as we could never have known him by hearsay." The voting continued. In the evening of the second day Cardinal Sarto, who at the last scrutiny had obtained twenty-four votes, passed several hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, exposed in the Pauline Chapel. On returning to his room he found several of his colleagues who had come to beg him not to refuse the burden if God should call upon him to bear it. "I was one of those who went to visit him in his cell in the evening, to try to induce him to accept," said the American Cardinal. "Those who had gone before had shaken his resistance, so that I almost hoped he would resign himself to what seemed to be inevitable." On the third day the votes for Cardinal Sarto went on increasing, until on the morning of the fourth day fifty out of the sixty-two were in his favour, eight more than the forty-two required for a valid election.

They asked him if he would accept, but he had already accepted in his heart. The sacrifice had been made in the silent hours of the night. "I accept," he said, with tears, "for I see in the manifestation of your wills the Will of God."

"What name will you take?" they asked him.

"Pius X.," he replied.

Pale and trembling, he was clothed in the white Pontifical vestments; the official ring was placed on his finger, and he was led to the Throne to receive the obedience of the Cardinals. The ceremonies ended, the Pope returned to his cell, where he remained for long in prayer before the Crucifix. The faithful servant who had followed him from Venice begged him several times in vain to take some nourishment. At last he rose, and, turning to his secretary, Monsignor Bressan with something of his old serenity: "Come," he said, "it is the Will of God."

The news was telegraphed to his sisters at Venice. "We knew it," they said weeping, "we felt that some terrible sorrow had befallen us; our hearts were breaking and we kept saying to each other, 'Oh, if they would only make the Cardinal of Prague Pope, and free us from this terror! He is young. Why must they take our brother? We shall never see him again. We feel his tears in our hearts!'"

Immediately after his election, when leaving the balcony from which he had given his first blessing inside St. Peter's, Pius X. expressed his wish to go and visit Cardinal Herera y Espinosa, Bishop of Valencia, an old man eighty years of age who was lying sick in his cell. He had been taken ill a few days before, had received the last Sacraments, and was at the point of death. Hastening to the bedside of the dying man, the Pope blessed him, and at his blessing the old Cardinal sat up as if inspired with new life. Three days later the man for whom the doctors had declared there was no hope was well enough to get up. He returned soon after to Spain, cured, as he himself always declared, by the blessing of the Holy Father.

The news of the election was received with joy in Italy. Outside of that country Pius X. was little known. "What kind of a Pope will he be?" was the question on many lips. The world had not long to wait for the answer. Two months had scarcely passed before his first Encyclical rang like a clarion call throughout the Catholic world.

"It matters not to tell with what tears and with what earnest prayers we have sought to thrust from us this appalling burden of the Pontifical office," he begins, echoing the lament of St. Anselm on his election to the episcopate. "We could not be other than disturbed at being appointed the successor of one who, after having most wisely ruled the Church for wellnigh six-and-twenty years, showed such power of genius and so shone with the splendour of all the virtues that even adversaries were constrained to admire him."

Going straight to the heart of the world's unrest, the Pope as a skilful physician lays bare the cause of the disease—"the falling away from and forsaking God, than which there is nothing more nearly allied to perdition."

"As, borne up by God's might, we set our hand to the work of withstanding this great evil, we proclaim that in bearing the Pontifical office this is our one purpose, 'to restore all things in Christ, so that Christ may be all in all.'"

Beautiful words, which embody the teaching and the work of a lifetime spent in God's service. No empty ideal either, but the one that Giuseppe Sarto had set steadfastly before himself from the very day of his consecration to the priesthood, and to which he had devoted himself strenuously ever since.

In a few words he foresaw the hostile judgments that were to be expected from certain quarters on every action of the Head of the Catholic Church.

"There will be some, assuredly, who, measuring divine things by those that are human, will strive to penetrate the purpose of our mind and wrest it to earthly ends and the aims of parties. In order to cut off this vain hope of theirs, we affirm with every asseveration, that in the midst of human society we desire to be nothing, and by the help of God we will be nothing but the minister of God whose authority we bear. The cause of God is our cause to which we are determined to devote all our strength and our life itself. Therefore, if any ask of us a symbol to show forth the purpose of our mind, we shall ever give this one alone—'to restore all things in Christ.'"

"To this, therefore," he continues later, speaking of the evils that follow on the forsaking of God, "must we direct all our efforts, to bring the race of men under the dominion of Christ; when once this is done, it will have already returned to God Himself."

"How many are there," he laments, "that hate Christ and abhor the Church and the Gospel by ignorance rather than by perversity of mind, of whom you may rightly say that 'they blaspheme whatever things they know not'; and this is to be found not only in the people or the common multitude, but in the cultured and even in those who enjoy no mean learning. It is not to be allowed that faith is quenched by the growth of science, but it is more truly quenched by the want of knowledge."

Speaking of those who are hostile to the Church, "Why may we not hope," he says, "that the flame of Christian charity will dissipate the darkness, and bring them 'the light and peace of God.' Charity is never wearied by waiting."

"A 'Shepherd of souls' was the verdict of the Catholic world on reading the Encyclical. 'Gentle and strong' was the judgment of a well-known American Bishop. But there was another side to the character of the Pope which later on became evident. 'Pius X.,' wrote one who had known him intimately at Venice, 'is a man of keen intelligence, and of great culture, thoroughly well up in the philosophy, literature, and social movements of the times.'"

But first and foremost a Shepherd of souls. The world was right in its judgment.

One of the first actions of the new Pope was to order the distribution of four thousand pounds amongst the poor of Rome, and half the amount amongst the poor of Venice. "Is it not rather a large sum?" suggested the Almoner respectfully, "considering the actual state of things?"

"Where is your trust in God's Providence?" asked the Holy Father; and the money was given.

He could no longer go to his beloved poor, but the order was given that they should come to him. Sunday after Sunday they were gathered, parish by parish, in the courts of the Vatican to hear from the lips of the Pope himself a simple sermon on the Gospel of the day. "Love God, and lead good

Christian lives," such was the burden of his teaching; but there was more teaching still in the warm welcome that awaited them, in the tender charity that shone forth in every word and movement of the Holy Father. "Sweet Christ on earth," was the title St. Catherine of Siena loved to give to the successor of St. Peter. Surely the name must have often come to the lips of those whose privilege it was to be much in the presence of Pius X.

CHAPTER VI: *The Aims of Pius X*

WITH a firm and sure hand the new Pope had traced out the programme of his Pontificate—the restoring of all things in Christ. It was not the first time he had used these words. We have already seen how as parish priest, Bishop and Patriarch they had been ever in his thoughts as the ideal and the aim of the sacerdotal life. The time had come when from the Chair of Peter he was to set them before the world as the remedy for all its evils, calling on the faithful children of the Church to help in the great work.

Not only had he pointed out the evils to be dealt with, but the means of dealing with them. Earnest prayer, the formation of a learned, zealous, and pious priesthood, religious instruction for the adult as well as for the child, wise efforts to ameliorate the condition of the poor and deal with the social question, the practice of Christian charity towards both friends and enemies, the faithful keeping of the commandments of God together with the frequent use of the Sacraments—thus was the "restoring of all things in Christ" to be accomplished.

All his life Pope Pius X. had been a strenuous worker. At sixty-eight he was still a hale and vigorous man. He rose early, making an hour's meditation and reciting his Office before saying Mass, which he did usually at 6 o'clock. After the hours given to prayer came the day's work, carefully planned out so that no time might be lost. A born organiser, the Pope had soon acquainted himself thoroughly with all that concerned the administration of the government of the Church and had set on foot several necessary reforms in the work of the different congregations. Practical, punctual, and exact in all his undertakings, he required that others should be the same. There was not a question of the day in which his quick and keen intelligence did not take a lively interest.

"He is a wonderful listener," said a French statesman who had an audience with him in the early days of his Pontificate. "He grasps the matter under discussion quickly and completely, going straight to the point, which he sums up in a few precise words. To my mind he possesses as much as Leo XIII. the qualities of a true statesman. He sees in one comprehensive glance what is possible and what is not. What struck me still more in him was his calm and steadfast courage. There is no rashness about him, he will be slow to condemn, but when he does he will be inflexible. If difficult circumstances arise he will show himself both a hero and a saint."

Pius X. had been brought up in no school of diplomacy, but the same goal may be reached by different roads. "A man born of the people," said another writer, "who has lived among working men, a student of sacred Scripture and of the Fathers of the Church, of Catholic Philosophy and Theology—a man rich in experience and knowledge of men and things."

Lovers of Church music in all countries had hailed with joy the news of Cardinal Sarto's election to the Papacy. The changes brought about in Venice had not passed unnoticed in the musical world; a need for reform was universally felt.

"May we not hope that your Holiness will do for the world what you have already done for Venice?" asked a French musician of Pius X. during the early days of his Pontificate.

"It shall be done and soon," was the reply, "but it will be a hard fight. And not the only one," added the Pope thoughtfully, musing on the work that lay before him.

Leo XIII. had more than once urged on the faithful the study of the traditional music of the Church. He had even sent to Venice for Don Lorenzo Perosi to take charge of the music of the Sixtine Chapel; but the Italians clung to their operatic effects, and the results had not been notable.

On the 22nd of November, 1903, the "Motu Proprio" on sacred music laid down definite rules on the matter.

"Nothing should have place in the temple that was unworthy of the house of prayer and the majesty of God," said the Pope. "Sacred music contributes to the decorum and splendour of the ecclesiastical ceremonies, and since its principal office is to clothe with suitable melody the liturgical text proposed for the understanding of the faithful, its proper aim is to add greater efficacy to the text, in order that through it the people may be the more easily moved to devotion and better disposed for the fruits of grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries. It must be holy, it must be true art, it must be universal; and since these qualities are to be found in the highest degree in the Gregorian chant . . . the more closely the composition of Church music approaches . . . to the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes, and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple."

The "Motu Proprio," however, did not exclude the use of modern music, provided that it was not unworthy to be associated with the Liturgy; but theatrical music was not to be tolerated. Definite rules were laid down to guarantee the dignity and solemnity of Church functions; paid singers, especially women, were not to be employed in the choir; bands and orchestral accompaniments were forbidden. Bishops were to institute in their dioceses special commissions composed of persons skilled in sacred music, to see that the rules laid down were carried out. Schools of sacred song were to be established in those seminaries where they did not already exist and in town and country parishes. From his personal experiences at Tombolo, Salzano, Treviso, and Mantua, Pius X. knew that this was perfectly practicable.

In the Papal letter to Cardinal Respighi, Cardinal-Vicar of Rome, written a few weeks later, the Pope laments once more that the beautiful musical tradition of the classical Roman school has almost totally disappeared.

"For the devout psalmody of the clergy," he writes, alluding to the singing of Vespers, in which the people also used to join, "there have been substituted interminable musical compositions on the words of the Psalms, all of them modelled on old theatrical works, and most of them of such meagre artistic value that they would not be tolerated for a moment even in second-rate concerts.

"Gregorian chant," he continues, "as it was handed down by the Fathers and is found in the codices of the various churches, is sweet, soft, easy to learn, and of a beauty so fresh and full of surprises that wherever it has been introduced it has never failed to excite real enthusiasm in the youthful singers."

The "Motu Proprio" was received with joy by true lovers of sacred music and with consternation by those who believed that operatic music was an attraction to the multitude.

"We are going to have good music in church," observed Pius X. to Don Lorenzo Perosi in the early days of his Pontificate. "The Pope has not been slow in carrying his words into effect," said a writer in the *Ecclesiastical Review*. "May he live long, this lover of the sanctuary and of the beauty of holiness; and may his kindly face soften those hard hearts that can still bring themselves to sing *bravura*, not to say *buffo*, boldly before the Blessed Sacrament, with fearsome shriekings, tremblings, and trills."

Some hearts were not softened. Pius X. had spoken the truth when he said, "The pleasure of a depraved taste rises up in hostility to sacred music; for it cannot be denied that profane music, so easy of comprehension and so specially full of rhythm, finds favour in proportion to the want of a true and good musical education among those who listen to it."

That reform was necessary in this country may be shown by the impression made on a serious-minded outsider by the music in use in some of our Catholic churches. "You have Miss A. singing duets with Miss B. to the words, 'Domine Fili Jesu Christe' as if they were singing 'O that we two were maying,' or 'There's Life in the Old Horse yet,' and to music which would disgrace a tenth-rate writer of music-hall songs. Or if it be a male choir, you hear thunderous basses without a note in tune, and emasculated tenors . . . engaged over worrying the most solemn words of the Creed as though they were prize dogs, and the Creed a pack of rats."

It was not that the Pope cared for nothing but classical Church music and the Gregorian chant. He was a lover of all good music, whether profane or secular. He merely considered that operatic music, however beautiful, was unsuited to the sanctuary. It is possible to admire the pictures of Watteau, without desiring to see them used as altar-pieces.

In his first Encyclical Pius X. had already touched on the question of Catholic social action. In his "Motu Proprio" of December, 1903, he spoke still more definitely on the subject. Born and brought up in the midst of the people, he could thoroughly understand their needs. He foresaw also the dangers of rash and imprudent action which might rely too strongly on popular effort and influence. It was not the movement towards social reform itself which stood in need of being checked, but the extravagances of some over-enthusiastic reformers.

"Christian democracy," he declared, "must have for its basis the principles of Catholic faith and morals, and must be free of political parties." His great predecessor Leo XIII., having luminously traced the rules of Christian popular action in his famous Encyclicals (continued the Pope), his own desire was that those most prudent rules should be exactly and fully observed. He had therefore decided to collect them in an abridged form that they might be for all Catholics a constant rule of conduct. After having laid down the fundamental inequality of the different members of society and man's right to the use and permanent ownership of property, he passed on to the obligations of justice between masters and men, and the utility of aid societies and trades unions. Christian democracy, he maintained, had for its special aim the solution of the difficulties between labour and capital, but in order to do this effectually it must be based on the principles of the Catholic faith and morality; it must not be made use of for party purposes; it must be a beneficent activity in favour of the people founded on the natural law and the precepts of the Gospel. Catholic writers, when upholding the cause of the people and the poor, were to beware of using language calculated to inspire ill-feeling between the classes. Here, as in other matters, obedience to the laws of God and of the Church were to be the means to the solution of the many difficulties which existed. "Godliness is profitable to all things," he had said in his first Encyclical to the Catholic world, "and when this is whole and vigorous, in very truth the people shall sit in the beauty of peace."

In 1905 an Apostolic Letter to the Italian Bishops defined still more clearly the lines of Catholic social action. "Such," he says, "is the power of the truth and morality taught by Jesus Christ, that even the material well-being of individuals, of the family and of human society receive from them support and protection." The civilisation of the world is Christian civilisation; the more frankly Christian, the more frankly true, the more lasting, and the more productive of precious fruit; the more it withdraws from the Christian ideal, so much the feebler does it become, to the great detriment of society. The Church has been throughout the ages the guardian and protector of Christian civilisation. What prosperity and happiness, what peace and concord, what respectful submission to authority, what excellent government would be established and maintained in the world if the perfect ideal of Christian civilisation could be everywhere realised. But, given the constant warfare of flesh with spirit, of darkness with light, of Satan with God, so great a good in its full measure can scarcely be hoped for. Yet this is no reason for losing courage. The Church goes fearlessly on, and while extending the Kingdom of God in places where it has not yet been preached, she strives by every means to repair the losses inflicted on the Kingdom already acquired." Once more the only means that can achieve the desired end are clearly pointed out : "To reinstate Jesus Christ in the family, the school, and society; to re-establish the principle that human authority represents that of God; to take intimately to heart the interests of the people, especially those of the working and agricultural classes—to endeavour to make public laws conformable to justice, to amend or suppress those which are not so . . . to defend and support the rights of God in everything, and the no less sacred rights of the Church."

"What can I do for the Church?" asked a lady of Pius X. at a private audience.

"Teach the Catechism," was the prompt, and perhaps rather unexpected reply.

"It is manifestly impossible," said the Pope, "to re-establish all the institutions found useful in former times; instruments must be suited to the work intended. There must be unity, co-operation in working, suitable methods, adapted to the times. In all Catholic social work there must be submission to ecclesiastical authority. Let everyone, therefore, strive to ameliorate . . . the economic condition of the people, supporting and promoting the institutions which conduce to this end . . . and let all our beloved sons who are devoting themselves to Catholic action listen again to the words which spring so spontaneously from our heart. Amid the bitter sorrows which daily surround us, we will say, with the Apostle St. Paul, if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort comes to us from your charity . . . fulfil ye our joy, that you being of one mind . . . agreeing in sentiment, with humility and due submission, not seeking your own convenience, but the common good, and imprinting on your hearts the mind which was in Christ Jesus our Saviour. Let Him be the beginning of all your undertakings. 'All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,' let Him be the end of your every work; 'for of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things; to Him be glory for ever. Amen.'"

A beautiful and noble programme; how far, alas, from being carried out in the world as it is to-day.

During the whole life of Pius X. the sacred Scriptures had been his favourite study. Every Encyclical he issued bears witness to his intimate knowledge and love of both the Old Testament and the New. The words in which he insistently recommended the accurate and loving study of Holy Writ to both priests and people would greatly astonish those of our separated brethren who persist in believing that the Catholic Church forbids the reading of the Bible to her children. Soon after his accession to the Chair of Peter, when receiving representatives of the Society of St. Jerome, instituted for the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures, he spoke with the greatest praise of the splendid work of this most deserving institution, which in the space of fifteen months had been able to give out more than 200,000 copies of the holy Gospels: to those Catholic theologians who were engaged in historical studies and Biblical research he always gave the warmest encouragement. "The Catholic faith has nothing to fear from knowledge, but much from ignorance," was a truth that he had more than once averred.

The Pope, who in his youth had entered keenly into all the games and sports of the seminary life, was a strong believer in schemes for the physical development of youth.

"I bless with all my heart your games and amusements," he said on the occasion of a display in the Vatican gardens by the athletic clubs of Catholic Italy. "I approve of your gymnastics, your cycle, boat, and foot races, your mountain climbing and the rest, for these pastimes will keep you from the idleness which is the mother of every vice, and because friendly contests will be for you the symbol of emulation in the practice of virtue. . . . Be strong to keep and defend your faith when so many are losing it; be strong to remain devoted sons of the Church when so many are rebelling against her . . . be strong to conquer all the obstacles which you will meet in the practice of the Catholic religion, for your own merit and for the good of your brothers."

To the pilgrimages that flocked from all parts of the world to do him homage, Pius X. addressed like words of sympathy and encouragement.

"I bless you all, great and small, rich and poor," he said to a band of poor peasants from Moravia—"the good that they may remain good; those who have strayed from the right path, that they may come back to it; parents that they may bring up their children well; children that they may honour the white hairs of their parents and the country that has nourished them."

"Tell the rich to be generous in almsgiving," he said on another occasion; "tell the poor to be proud of being chosen as the living representatives of Christ on earth. Bid them neither envy nor hate others, but practise resignation and patience."

But it was to those of his own country that a special tenderness was revealed. "If I could tell you all that is in my heart," he said one day to a pilgrimage from Treviso, "when night comes on I should be still speaking." It was hard for him to believe that he would never see his beloved Venice again. Walking one day in the Vatican gardens with a friend, he heard in the distance a shrill whistle. "Hark!"

he said, wistfully, "perhaps that is the train for Venice!" Much as he loved his own people there was no thought either in his mind or in theirs that honours might come to them through his position. "Thank God, we are all able to support ourselves," said one of his sisters soon after his election, "we need trouble him for nothing. Poor dear," she added compassionately, "he has all the poor people in the world to think of now." They had their own places in the Pope's private chapel, and on gala days at St. Peter's. That was their only privilege, and it was all that they asked.

It was said of the new Pope that his usual expression was one of overwhelming sadness, and to those who only saw him in public this might have seemed to be true. His humble spirit hated pomp and display, and the burden of his huge responsibility lay heavy on his soul. When borne through the crowd in the Sedia Gestatoria he seemed more than ever conscious of the weight of the cross laid upon him by his divine Master. "His face amid the scene of triumph spoke of the vanity of all earthly glory. He had ever the look of one who is weighed down by the sins and the sorrows of mankind—a look befitting the Vicar of Him of whom we speak as the Man of Sorrows," wrote Wilfrid Ward. At solemn functions in St. Peter's he would allow no outbreak of the applause which had become customary at Papal functions. "It is not fitting that the servant should be applauded in his Master's house," he said sternly as he gave the order. So it was in silence that he passed thenceforward amongst his people—but a silence tense and trembling with an emotion that could hardly be suppressed, and which would occasionally break out in spite of all attempts at restraint.

But those who knew him intimately had another tale to tell. The genial and merry spirit that had been his of old, though overshadowed at first by the burden he had to bear, was by no means dead. He had the art of making himself all things to all men; he could be gay and merry with the young, most wonderfully tender and gentle with those in sorrow or suffering. "He had the greatest heart," said one who knew him well, "of any man alive."

CHAPTER VII: *Pius X and France*

WE are inclined as a nation to pride ourselves on our sympathy with everything that stands for liberty, and as a consequence are not infrequently deceived. "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality," are fine words, but in France they cover a great deal that is poles apart from any of the three. The liberty of France is a very different thing from the liberty of England or of the United States; it keeps a very strong hold on everybody and on everything, and acts with a high hand.[1]

There are two forces at work in modern France, and the struggle between them is by no means at an end. On the one side stands the spirit of old France, Christian and Catholic, fitting heritage of "La Fille ainée de l'Église"; on the other the spirit of unfaith—anti-clerical, material, what you will—which has found its embodiment in the policy of the Third Republic. That this spirit of unfaith has its roots

[1] A letter written not long ago by a Catholic chaplain at the Front may serve to emphasise this fact. Having applied to the Commanding Officer for leave for our Catholic soldiers to join in the procession of Corpus Christi, he was told that every facility would be given. About 200 attended, the Irish Guards sending an armed Guard of Honour which marched beside the Blessed Sacrament and presented arms when Benediction was given at the altars of Repose which had been erected. An anti-clerical law of the French Government forbids French soldiers to take part in a religious procession. The sons of French liberty stood watching with envious eyes the representatives of British freedom. "It is we who should be there where the Irish are," they said to each other bitterly. "I don't think," commented the Chaplain, "that the French Government will be any the stronger for their anti-religious regulations."

in the influence of the Masonic Lodges, no one who has studied the matter can for a moment doubt; and that its idea of liberty is not ours is equally obvious.

"I am for liberty even in crime," cried one of the representatives of this party in the Chambre.

"Liberty is the ideal of slaves," says Ernest Psichari, a son of that brave new France which has arisen to-day on the ruins of the old, and of this kind of liberty it is undoubtedly true.

There is also a tendency in this England of ours to scoff at the idea that freemasonry in foreign countries is a force which makes wholly for evil. It is claimed that it is possible in this country for a man to be not only a freemason and a gentleman, but a freemason and a Christian. Freemasonry, we are told, is a wholly benevolent society, humanitarian and philanthropic in its aims. It exists only for the welfare of the masses, forming a universal brotherhood which offers inestimable advantages. It is due to the narrow-minded and overbearing intolerance of the Catholic Church that she should condemn it wholesale. It is not of her making, therefore she will have none of it.

That the Radical party in France, with its watchword of Anti-clericalism, has been from the beginning closely connected with freemasonry, and that its influence on the Republic is wholly anti-religious, is an open secret.

As long ago as 1876, M. Arago, Senator and French Minister in Switzerland, avowed this plainly. "The Church and religion must be shattered," he said. "Get Thee hence, Crucified One, who for 1800 years hast held the world bowed beneath Thy yoke. No more God, no more Churches—we must crush the *Infâme;* but the *Infâme* is not clericalism, it is God. We must eliminate from French society all religious influence, under whatever form it presents itself."

The programme of the Masonic Lodges was drawn out in 1902 with as sure a hand as that of Pius X. a year later.

" Until we have completely done with the religious congregations, whether authorised or not," said a prominent freemason at a banquet which took place at the close of the general assembly of the Grand Orient, " as long as we have not broken with Rome, denounced the Concordat and re-established lay teaching definitely throughout this country, nothing will have been accomplished."

" In drinking to French masonry," added this apostle of liberty, " I drink in reality to the Republic. For the Republic is simply freemasonry emerged from its temples, as freemasonry is the Republic masked by the ægis of our traditions and symbols."

" The triumph of the Galilean has lasted for twenty centuries," said another member on the same occasion, " He is dying in his turn. The mysterious voice which in the olden days on the mountains of Epirus announced the death of Pan, to-day announces the end of the deceitful God who had promised an era of justice and peace to those who believed in Him. . . ."

Many other instructive sidelights on the views and aims of the Grand Orient may be found in the utterances of prominent freemasons at their General Assemblies, at one of which it was decided that the duty of man to God should no more be taught to children in primary schools, its place being taken by instructions on the rights of the man and the citizen.

Let us glance for a moment at the policy and the laws of the Republic, and see how this programme was carried out.

On one point the freemasons and the Pope were in accord—the importance of the education of the child. But whereas education in the Pope's eyes was to make of the child an earnest Christian and an influence for good in the world, it seemed likely in the hands of the Republic to turn into an instrument for filling prisons.

Already in 1800 laws had been passed which were to open the way to the total exclusion of religious influence from education. Step by step during the nineteenth century the work proceeded. In 1904 a fresh decree forbade any member of a religious congregation to teach on any subject whatever. The best schools in France were those of the teaching Orders; the blow was struck at them. Within a few years the great religious houses were closed, the Religious themselves driven out of their country and their property seized by the State.

Bills were then introduced by the apostles of liberty imposing heavy penalties on those Christian parents who refused to allow their children to use the irreligious books provided for the scholars in the primary schools. What kind of books these were can be judged by the fact that they were condemned by the Roman Congregation of the Index as being unfit for the instruction of Christian children. The existence of a Supreme Being was consistently denied or ignored; the municipal Council of Paris even considered it necessary to have the name of God struck out of one of the fables of La Fontaine when an edition was being prepared for use in the State schools.

In 1906 freemasonry seemed in a fair way to attain its ends; education had become almost completely irreligious. The elementary schools were infected with atheism through the teaching of men and women who were often open enemies of Christianity. Looking back on the work that had been done during the past twenty years, M. Viviani, speaking in November, 1906, pronounced its panegyric. "We have bound ourselves to a work of anti-clericalism," he said, "to a work of irreligion. . . . We have extinguished in the firmament lights which shall not be rekindled. We have shown the toilers that heaven contained only chimeras. . . ."

Having done their best to dechristianise education —and the terrible increase of juvenile crime in France bore sad witness to the efficacy of their measures —the anti-clericals proceeded to attack the adult. Promotion was refused in both the Army and Navy to officers who practised their religion; for a school teacher to enter a church meant in many districts dismissal. People holding official positions were warned that their attendance at Mass could not be tolerated; in some cases the prohibition extended even to their wives.

"No one has any idea what a noxious and insupportable creature is the anti-clerical in the provinces," wrote a Frenchman in the *Journal des Débats*. "Always eager to accuse others of fanaticism, he is the bitterest and most oppressive of fanatics himself. Under the mask of free-thought he would like to prevent his neighbour thinking differently from himself. . . . He is an aggressive persecutor, malignantly meddling in things which do not concern him, attacking or denouncing honest folks, public functionaries, or others with whose consciences he has nothing to do, threatening them on account of their opinions, which he calls 'subversive' because they do not agree with his own. If he be a town councillor, or in any similar position, he uses all his influence to set up irreligion as a standard of citizenship."

So much for liberty—as interpreted by the French Government.

On the throne of Peter sat one who was watching —and had watched for years—the progress of events in France.

The separation of Church and State had long been the deliberate aim of the French Government. During the Pontificate of Leo XIII. the following resolution had been put to the vote and carried at an assembly of freemasons:

"It is the strict duty of a freemason, if he is a Member of Parliament, to vote for the suppression of the *Budget des Cultes*, for the suppression of the French Embassy at the Vatican, and on all occasions to declare himself in favour of the separation of Church and State without abandoning the right of the State to police the Church."

The Waldeck-Rousseau Ministry had already brought France to the verge of a breach with Rome. By means of a concession on the part of the Pope the difficulty had been bridged over, but all the efforts of M. Combes were directed towards making the separation inevitable. There was one difficulty in the way—how to make it appear that Rome was to blame.

"To denounce the Concordat just now," he said in a speech delivered in the Senate in March, 1903, "without having sufficiently prepared men's minds for it, without having clearly proved that the Catholic clergy themselves are provoking it and rendering it inevitable, would be bad policy on the part of the Government, by reason of the resentment which might be caused in the country. I do not say that the connection between Church and State will not some day be severed; I do not even say that that day is not near. I merely say that the day has not yet come."

The way was paved by a series of mean provocations designed to cast the responsibility and odium on the Pope. Pretexts for a quarrel were soon found in the visit of M. Loubet to Rome and the protest of the Holy See against the intended insult; in the discussions which arose with regard to the nomination of Bishops, and in Rome's treatment of the Bishops of Dijon and Laval. The Vatican White Book sufficiently indicates the long-suffering patience of the Pope with regard to these questions.

There were critics, even Catholic critics, who thought that Pius X. was slow in vindicating the rights of the Church. "God," said the Holy Father, speaking to a loyal son of France on this very subject, "could have sent us the Redeemer immediately after the Fall. And He made the world wait thousands of years! . . . Yet they expect a poor priest, the Vicar of that Christ so long desired, to pronounce without reflection grave and irrevocable words. For the moment I am passive—passive in the Hands of Him who sustains me, and in whose Name—when the time comes—I shall speak."

On the 10th of February, 1905, the Chambre declared that the "attitude of the Vatican" had rendered the separation of Church and State inevitable. "An historical lie," as M. Ribot, a Protestant member of the Chambre, trenchantly described the statement.

The Law of Separation of the Churches and the State, passed by the French Government in 1905, completely dissociated the State from the appointment of Bishops and parish priests, but, lest this might seem to be an unalloyed blessing, it must be added that it also suppressed the annual revenue of the Church, amounting to 42,324,933 francs. The departments and communes were forbidden to vote appropriations for public worship. Life pensions equivalent to three-quarters of the former salary were granted to priests who were not less than sixty years of age at the passing of the law, and life pensions equivalent to half to the former salary to those under forty-five. As a matter of fact, the State became the richer by eight million francs. The use of Catholic buildings was to be regulated by the "Associations Cultuelles." Without any reference to the Holy See it was decided by the Government that these associations for religious worship should be formed in each diocese and parish to administer the Church property. Several articles in the law regarding the constitution of these "Associations Cultuelles" left to the Council of State—a purely lay authority—the settlement of any dispute that might arise. In other words it lay with the Council of State to pronounce on the orthodoxy of any association and its conformity with the rules of public worship.

There was a good deal of discussion in ecclesiastical circles as to whether the "Associations" could be formed. Pius X., in his Encyclical "Gravissimo," August, 1906, definitely decided the question. He had examined the law, he declared, to see if it were at all possible to carry on under its provisions the work of religion in France while safeguarding the sacred principles on which the Church was constituted. After consultation of the episcopate he had sorrowfully to declare that no such arrangement was possible. The question at issue was whether the associations for worship could be tolerated. His answer was that "with reference to these associations as the law establishes them, We decree that it is absolutely impossible for them to be formed without a violation of the sacred rights pertaining to the very life of the Church." As to any other associations at once "legal and canonical," which might preserve the Catholics of France from the difficulties by which they were threatened, there was no hope of them, while the law remained as it was. "We declare that it is not permissible to try any other kind of association as long as it is not established in a sure and legal manner that the Divine Constitution of the Church, the immutable rights of the Roman Pontiff and of the Bishops, as well as their authority over the necessary property of the Church, and particularly over the sacred edifices, shall be irrevocably placed in the said associations in full security."

"God's law alone is of importance," said the Holy

Father at a private interview. "We are no diplomatist, but our mission is to defend it. One truth is at stake: was the Church founded by our Lord Jesus Christ or not? Since it was, nothing can induce us to give up its constitutions, its rights, or its liberty."

"Let it be clearly understood," said the Pope on another occasion, "we do not ask the members of your Government to go to Mass—although we regret that they do not. All we ask, since they pride themselves on recognising nothing but facts, is that they should not ignore one very considerable fact—the existence of a Catholic Church, its constitution, and its Head, which We at present happen to be."

Once more there were not wanting critics who spoke regretfully of the wholesale sacrifice of the "goods of the Church." "They speak too much of the goods of the Church and too little of her *good*," said the Holy Father. "Tell them that history repeats itself. Ages ago on a high mountain two powers stood face to face. 'All this will I give thee,' said the one, offering the kingdoms of the earth and their riches, 'if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' The other refused —he is refusing still. . . ."

The reply of the French Government to the Pope's Encyclical was the appropriation of all that was left of the property of the Church in France. The law of January, 1907, permitted the exercise of religious worship in the churches purely on sufferance and without any legal title. This looked like a concession, but had its uses. The simple citizen still saw the priest in the church; Mass was still said there. "All of which proves," said the Government to the unthinking public, "that the Church is in nowise persecuted; if she is not as prosperous as of old, she has only the Pope to blame."

The separation of Church and State was the signal for open war on the Church. Law after law was passed, making it more and more difficult for the priest to minister to the people. He was forbidden to enter a hospital unless his presence had been formally demanded by a patient. He was forced to serve his time in the Army in the hope that his vocation might be ruined. He was forced to pay a rent for his own presbytery, although he was often poorer than the poorest of his parishioners. Many of the beautiful old churches of France fell gradually into ruins, or were used for other purposes than worship—the more degrading the purpose the better. One has only to read M. Maurice Barrès' "La Grande Pitié des Églises de France" to learn for what anti-clericalism has been responsible.

Yet the principle which underlay the attitude of Rome in the matter was clear and consistent. The State having proclaimed its indifference, not to say hostility, to religion, having ignored the constitution of the Church and suppressed all means of negotiating with the Pope, claimed the right to legislate for Catholics, to control their organisation, to limit their material resources, and to decide their differences. The men who made the law had openly declared that their purpose was to decatholicise France. "In making his decision, has not the Pope appealed from the French Parliament to the French people ?" was a thoughtful question asked at the time.

"The apparent apathy of most French Catholics, the energy and cunning of their adversaries," says the same writer, "have deceived the world into believing that a little faction has the strength of a whole people behind it. . . ."

The refusal of the Pope to accept the Bishops proposed by the French Government had left many episcopal sees vacant in France. In February, 1906, immediately after the break with the French Government, Pius X. himself consecrated, at the Altar of St. Peter's Chair, fourteen French Bishops. It was the act of a great and apostolic statesman. "I have not called you to joy," said the Pope, "but to the Cross," and bearing the cross on their breasts they went forth, without stipend, without Government protection, intervention, or recognition. They went as merely apostolic men—to gain souls to God—and the result of their labours is manifest.

"Destroy the Church in France, and dechristianisation will follow," cried her enemies. "A short period of separation," said an orator at the General Assembly of the Grand Orient in September, 1904, "will complete the ruin of dogma, and the ruin of the Church."

Thirteen years have passed, and how has that prophecy been fulfilled?

"Our Bishops, priests, and people," wrote M. Georges Fonsegrive in 1913, "are absolutely devoted to Rome and obedient to the Pope. After the passing of the Separation Law all the orders of the Pope were immediately executed. At one word from him our Bishops and priests gave up their palaces and their presbyteries, and abandoned all their goods. Nowhere else has there been such docility and such unanimity. Our Church is truly and absolutely

Roman; therefore, every attack on its members attaches them more strongly to the source and centre of their life. The religious life is everywhere increasing in depth and in intensity. . . . The human mind has found the limits of science, and has felt that they are narrow and hard; all men of culture recognise to-day that our whole life is, as it were, wrapped in mystery. Faith is no longer looked upon as a suspect but as a friend. Those who have it not are seeking it, and those who have found it treasure it. Even those who despair of finding it respect it. And all, or nearly all, recognise that truth can only be where she declares herself, where she is supplied with all she needs to make her accessible to man, that is to say, in Catholicism, and finally in Rome."

And the world who during the last three years has seen the latent faith of France breaking out into a white heat of heroism can bear witness to the truth of what he says.

CHAPTER VIII: *The Pope of the Eucharist*

AT the beginning of the nineteenth century the last remnants of Jansenism were still influencing Catholic teaching in many countries of Europe. This most insidious of heresies, preached by men of austere life, and veiled by the pretext of reverence for holy things, was a danger to the lax and to the scrupulous alike. It laid down as conditions for approaching the Sacraments dispositions of soul which for the greater part of mankind were wholly unattainable; it presented God as the Jehovah of the Old Testament, terrible and awe-inspiring, rather than as the Christ of the New, tender and compassionate to sinners. "I tell you," said St. Vincent de Paul to one of his own Mission priests, "that this new error of Jansenism is one of the most dangerous that have ever troubled the Church."

Perhaps the most fatal effect of Jansenist teaching was that it drove the sinner from the sources of grace, and the weak from the sources of spiritual strength. Frequent Communion, which had been the custom in Apostolic times and which had been always upheld by the teaching of the Church, was to the Jansenist a tempting of Providence. In vain did Catholic teachers explain to the people that the Council of Trent "exhorts, asks, and beseeches the faithful to believe and venerate these sacred mysteries . . . with such constancy and firmness of faith . . . that they may be able *frequently* to receive the supersubstantial bread." Nothing, they declared, had been laid down as to the necessary dispositions for receiving Communion; and how were they to know that they possessed them? Opinions of theologians were divided on the subject, some teaching that very perfect dispositions were required, whilst others maintained that a state of grace and a right intention were sufficient. Another controversy had arisen as to the meaning of the term "Frequent Communion," some holding that weekly Communion came under this heading, others that it did not. Appeals were made from time to time to Rome to decide the question, that the minds of the faithful might be at rest.

In the first Encyclical of Pius X. where he sets forth as the one purpose of his Pontificate the restoring of all things in Christ, the frequent use of the Sacraments is mentioned as one of the four great means to this end. We have already seen how, when visiting his diocese as Bishop and later as Patriarch, he bade the people make no preparations for his coming save attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion, declaring that this would be the best welcome they could give him. On the 20th of December, 1906, the Decree concerning Frequent and Daily Communion decided the question, thus putting an end to all further controversy.

"The primary purpose of the Holy Eucharist is *not* that the honour and reverence due to our Lord may be safeguarded," says the Decree, "not that the Sacrament may serve as a reward of virtue, but that the faithful, being united to God by Holy Communion, may thence derive strength to resist their sensual passions, to cleanse themselves from the stains of daily faults, and to avoid those sins to which human frailty is liable."

"Frequent and daily Communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord and by the Catholic Church," runs the first clause of the Decree, "should be open to all the faithful of whatever rank and condition of life, so that no one who is in the state of grace, and who approaches the Holy Table with a right and devout intention, can lawfully be hindered therefrom."

Having defined a right intention as a purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united with Him by charity, and of seeking this Divine remedy for the weaknesses and defects of human nature, the Decree goes on to affirm that, although freedom from venial sin is to be desired, it is sufficient that the communicant be free from mortal sin, provided he has a firm purpose of avoiding sin for the future. The preparation and thanksgiving are to be according to the strength, circumstances, and duties of the individual. The Decree applies to religious Orders and congregations, to seminaries and schools. All priests and confessors are to exhort the faithful frequently and zealously to "this devout and salutary practice."

There was no mistaking this. "The Divine Redeemer of mankind," wrote a priest of the London Oratory, "is to be just as accessible to the struggling beginner whose feet have been ensnared in the meshes of sin, and who is struggling bravely against temptation, as He is to the man or woman who has been purified by many years of painful effort, but who is ever liable to fall. He is needed by the austere religious living in solitude in her cell. . . . He is needed by the poor dweller in the crowded slums who has so much to contend against—squalor, misery, drink, vice in various forms, and the depressing influences of grinding poverty. Children have need of Him that they may be formed to habits of virtue; youths have need of Him that they may obtain mastery over their passions; maidens have need of Him that they may preserve their innocence untarnished; grown up men and women have need of Him that they may advance in virtue and carry out faithfully the duties of their state of life; there are none who can afford to neglect the great source of spiritual strength, none who can do without Him."

Rome had spoken, but to many people the news seemed almost too good to be true. The old idea that frequent Communion was only for holy people was hard to eradicate. Jansenist bugbears as to the preparation required and the responsibility incurred frightened the timid. Much insistence on the words of the Decree was necessary before the objection "I am not good enough," was found to be worthless, but when it was finally done away with the fruits were at once apparent.

"What a wonderful metamorphosis there would be," Monseigneur de Ségur had written some forty years earlier, "if frequent Communion could be established in our colleges and schools! Experience shows the influence of Communion on a young man's daily life. There is no vice that the regular frequentation of the Sacraments will not extirpate, there is no moral resurrection beyond its power to effect."

The dream of the saintly French Prelate was now on its way to realisation. "Confessions," said a Jesuit who was giving a retreat to the students of a large public school, "are child's play now to what they used to be. In the old days they took two or three days—now nearly all the boys are daily communicants, and the result is that the confessions of the whole college take little more time than an hour."

"Yes," said a young working girl to a nun of the Sacred Heart, "I go every day. I cannot stay till the end of Mass, because I have to get to my work. But there are several of us who are all daily communicants, who take the same train to business, and we try to get into the same carriage, and make our thanksgiving on the way. And we love to think that in that train, full of people who seldom think of God, there is one carriage where He is being adored and worshipped. And we find it such a help in the day's work."

And not girls only, but men. The author will never forget a very early morning Mass in one of our big London churches. The church was full of working men in their working clothes. The procession to the altar seemed never ending; Holy Communion was still being given after the Mass was finished. They had come for help and comfort in their daily toil to One who on this earth had been a working man like themselves, One who is "rich unto all that call on Him," and they had learnt the strength of that union.

And after all, was it not the "man in the street" for whom our Saviour came? Were not the crowds who followed Him mostly composed of "men in the street"? And did He not choose from their ranks the Apostles who were to carry His message throughout the world? "In these days," says the Decree, "when religion and the Catholic faith are attacked on all sides, and the true love of God and genuine piety are lacking in so many quarters, it is doubly necessary that the faithful should be strengthened, and the love of God enkindled in their hearts by this salutary practice of daily Communion."

"Holy Communion is the shortest and surest way to Heaven," said Pius X. in an address to the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. "There are others, innocence for instance, but that is for little children; penance, but we are afraid of it; generous endurance of the trials of life, but when they approach us we weep and pray to be delivered. Once for all, beloved children, the surest, easiest, shortest way is by the Holy Eucharist. It is so easy to approach the Holy Table, and there we taste the joys of Paradise."

"The many newspaper comments, and also the large number of letters sent to the Sacred Congregation by Bishops and superiors of religious Orders," runs another Decree on the same subject published in 1906, "go to show the joy and gratitude with which the declarations and arrangements of the Holy Father have been received by the whole world."

This second Decree was published in answer to questions which had arisen regarding the frequent Communion of children who had only recently made their first Communion, and that of the infirm who were suffering from some chronic illness. The decision given was that the practice of frequent or daily Communion was for young children as well as for their elders, since it was highly desirable that their innocence and piety should be shielded by so powerful a protection. As for the sick, every facility was to be granted them to receive Holy Communion as often as possible.

The decision as to the frequent Communion of children was followed four years later by a Decree which fixed the age of first Communion at about the seventh year, the time at which the child begins to use its reason. In some cases it might be earlier; in some it would have to be later; this would depend on the intelligence of the individual child.

The Decree went straight to the root of the matter. "The pages of the Gospel witness to the extraordinary affection shown by Christ to little children when He was on earth," it begins. "It was His delight to be in their company; He was wont to lay His hands upon them, to embrace them, to bless them. And He was indignant at their being turned away by His disciples, whom He rebuked in these grave words: 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.'" After having pointed out that in the earliest days of the Church Holy Communion was given even to infants, and that if in later years for grave causes the age of reason or of discretion was fixed as the time for first Communion, this did not presuppose that a fuller knowledge was required for the reception of the Holy Eucharist than for the Sacrament of Penance. The Decree went on to deplore the postponement of first Communion until twelve, or thirteen, or even fourteen years of age, according to local customs. Even if this ensures a fuller understanding of the sacred mysteries, a careful sacramental confession and a longer and more diligent preparation," it continues, "the gain in nowise balances the loss. The innocence of childhood, deprived of this most powerful protection, is soon lost; evil habits have time to grow and become strong. Therefore, it is that the little ones, being in the most happy condition of their first candour and innocence, stand in the greatest need of that mystical food on account of the many snares and dangers of the present time." "As soon as children begin to have a certain use of reason so as to be able to conceive devotion to this Sacrament," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "then may this Sacrament be given to them."

In order that the above-mentioned abuses should be entirely removed and the "children from their very tenderest years should adhere to Jesus Christ, live His life, and find protection from the dangers of corruption," definite regulations concerning the first Communion of children were laid down and ordered to be observed in every part of the world.

The Decree caused a certain commotion in some Catholic countries. Once more the remnants of Jansenist teaching arose to frighten the faithful. Would a child of seven understand the reverence due to the Sacrament ? was the question anxiously asked, —children of that age are so thoughtless.

The objection had already been answered by Monseigneur de Ségur, whose words had been quoted in the Decree of 1906:

"To communicate well, it suffices to receive the Saviour with a good will. This is found just as much in children as in adults. The child loves Jesus Christ; it wishes to have Him; why, then, not give Him to the child? Thoughtlessness is no obstacle to Holy Communion, unless it is wilful. Children are thoughtless—yes, but they are good and affectionate; and because of their need to love, we must give their love its true nourishment."

Another objection, and one that seemed more plausible, was that in certain cases a late first Communion tended to preserve children from much that was evil. First Communion, in France especially, is a great event in the family; and French parents, even if themselves indifferent, seldom remove a child from religious influences before the first Communion has been made. For this reason it was often delayed as long as possible; an apparent safeguard which the new Decree threatened to do away with altogether. Experience has long since proved that here again the good obtained far outbalances the evil.

As for the argument that such little children cannot understand what they are doing, those who have the happy task of preparing them for their first Communion have a different tale to tell. "I have found it much easier," writes one who has had much experience of such matters, "to prepare little children than those who are older—the preparation is so much more objective than subjective. It is more a realisation of how lovable, how desirable, how loving our Lord is, than a preoccupation of how they can make themselves worthy—or less unworthy—to receive Him. . . . The actual first Communion appears to the little ones as the very loving embrace of a much-loved Father; to the older ones it is more a welcome to a loved and honoured guest, with—if I may so put it—the preoccupations of a hostess."

"Sometimes our Lord gives me such a lot of grace after Holy Communion," said a small mite of eight and a half, "that I feel I can't breathe." Another, aged nine, who had made her first Communion a year before, used this beautiful comparison: "Sometimes after Communion it is like when my father squeezes me in his arms, and I feel too happy even to talk to our Lord, but He *knows* how much I am loving Him."

The Pope delighted in the letters he received from many little first communicants thanking him for their joy at being admitted to the Holy Table; he loved children dearly and they returned his affection, crowding round him, speaking to him without the slightest fear or shyness, and giving him their confidence at once. He loved to give them Holy Communion with his own hands; there was a strange affinity between the white-souled Pontiff and the white-souled children who knelt at his feet—the innocence that had fought and conquered and the innocence that was as yet untried. All the little first communicants of Rome, gentle or simple, were invited to come to the Vatican. He would give them a short instruction suited to their childish understanding, ending with the hope that their last Communion would be as fervent and loving as the first. Then he would talk to them, and they to him, simply and without any ceremony. Quite unconventional sometimes were the appellations by which they called him. "Yes, Pope," would be the answer to a question. But the very little ones, seeing the gracious white figure bending over them and looking up into the gentle holy face of him that spoke, would often answer softly, "Yes, Jesus."

An English lady, who had a private audience with the Pope, brought her little boy of four years old to receive his blessing. While she was talking with the Holy Father the child stood at a little distance looking on; but presently, when the low-toned conversation seemed at an end, he crept up to the Pope, put his hands on his knees and looked up trustfully into his face. "How old is he?" asked Pius X., stroking the little head.

"He is four," answered the mother, "and in two or three years I hope he will make his first Communion."

The Pope looked earnestly into the child's clear eyes. "Whom do you receive in Holy Communion?" he asked.

"Jesus Christ," was the prompt answer.

"And who is Jesus Christ?"

"Jesus Christ is God," replied the little boy, no less quickly.

"Bring him to me to-morrow," said the Pope, turning to the mother, "and I will give him Holy Communion myself."

He would have been no less delighted with a little boy of four who made his first Communion in a London church under extraordinary circumstances. The child's elder brother was being prepared for first Communion, and the little one was sent with him to the instruction classes to keep him out of mischief, for their mother was a working woman with little time to spare. In due time the elder brother made his first Communion, and shortly afterwards went again to the Holy Table taking the little one with him to Mass. Great was the horror of the mother when she noticed that the four-year-old had followed his brother to the Communion rails and was kneeling there beside him. The priest had reached the children; there was no time to interfere; moreover, the child had received the Host and come down from the altar before the good woman had recovered from her stupor. As soon as Mass was over she took the little boy to the priest and explained to him what had happened. She was afraid, she said, that he did not understand in the least what he had been doing. The priest took the child on his knee and gently questioned him. "Why did you go up to the altar after your brother?" he asked.

"I went up," was the answer, "because he was going to receive Jesus, and I love Jesus, and wanted to receive Him too."

"It is all right," said the priest, "he knows quite enough, you need not be afraid."

Of sterner stuff was the priest who refused to admit a not particularly brilliant boy of seven who was rather hazy as to which Person of the Blessed Trinity Jesus Christ was. The nun who had prepared the children, passing by soon afterwards, found this particular little boy sobbing his heart out. "What is the matter?" she asked.

"Oh, I did so *want* Jesus Christ," was the answering wail.

The nun went straight to the priest. "I promise you, Father," she said, "that I will see to it that that boy knows which Person of the Blessed Trinity he is receiving, but you *must* let him make his first Communion." She kept her promise though it was hard work, and the boy was sound upon the subject of the three Divine Persons before the eventful day.

During a public audience at the Vatican a tiny girl ran up to the Pope and thanked him for letting her make her first Communion.

"Whom did you receive?" asked the Holy Father. "Our Lord Jesus Christ," was the answer.

"Was it our Lord in Heaven or our Lord on earth?" was the next question.

"Our Lord came down on the altar for me," said the little girl.

"Then there was a Jesus Christ on earth and a Jesus Christ in Heaven. Are there two Jesus Christs?" asked the Pope.

The child was silent for a moment. "No, Holy Father," she answered to the delight of Pius X., "there is only one Jesus Christ; our Lord in Heaven and our Lord in the Sacred Host are the same Jesus Christ."

At a children's audience the Pope was in his element—and they in theirs. It was on such an occasion that a little boy whose long hair floated on his shoulders attracted the Holy Father's attention.

"What is your name?" he asked, gently stroking the curls.

"Giulio," replied the little boy.

"Giulia," said the Pope, still playing with the curls—"a very pretty name."

"It is not Giulia," said the small boy indignantly, "but Giulio."

The Pope smiled, drawing the long curls through his fingers.

"Giulia—ah, yes," he said, "a very pretty name."

At this the little boy lost all patience.

"*Not* Giulia—Giulio, Holy Father," he cried; "can't you see I'm not a little girl ?" and pulling up his tunic he exhibited an abbreviated pair of knickerbockers. " Don't you see I've got knickerbockers on ?"

But the prettiest scene was when a pilgrimage of first communicants would come to visit the Holy Father, and he would talk to them, telling them in simple language how to be worthy of the grace they had received, and how to please our Lord in their daily lives. Obedience and unselfishness, diligence at their lessons and their prayers, zeal for God and His service, and above all the frequentation of the Sacraments and devotion to the Holy Eucharist —these were to be their apostleship amongst their young companions.

In the springtime of 1912, a pilgrimage of four hundred little first communicants from France arrived in Rome. Those who came of well-to-do families had made a collection for their poorer brothers and sisters, in order that the French children of every class might be represented. The album they presented to the Holy Father contained the names of 135,330 little boys and girls who had offered their Communion for the Pope's intentions on the feast day of his patron, St. Joseph.

" Emperors and Kings have come to Rome to kneel at the feet of the successor of St. Peter," said the Father-General of the Augustinians in a little sermon preached after the solemn Mass at St. Peter's celebrated for the children on the morning after their arrival, at which they all received Holy Communion. " Knights and crusaders have come to ask his blessing on their arms, men of all nations and of all classes have paid homage to Christ's representative on earth.

But never before has a crusade of first communicants come to thank the Vicar of Christ in his palace at Rome."

Two days later the young pilgrims were received by the Pope at a solemn audience in the Sixtine Chapel. The representative of the little boys having made a speech to the Holy Father expressing the gratitude of all the children of France for the privilege of early Communion, and their devotion to the Church and her visible Head, a small maiden of five and a half expressed the sentiments of the little girls, ending by asking the Pope's blessing for those who could not come, as well as for those who were present. When the speeches were over, and each child had received from the Holy Father's own hand a silver medal, he spoke to them of the words of our Lord, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me," reminding them of how the Divine Saviour had also set a little child in the midst of His disciples, telling them that "their angels see always the face of My Father." A simple instruction on Holy Communion followed, in which the highest and most sublime truths were placed within the grasp of the little creatures who listened so intently to every word that fell from the Pope's lips. A solemn blessing was then given to the entire pilgrimage, and the audience was at an end.

A French writer, M. François Laval, describes the impression made on the children by the Holy Father and his words. "As soon as they had returned from Rome," he says, "I went to see some little friends of mine to question them. There was no need, they talked without stopping of all they had seen. Every-

thing had been wonderful, but most wonderful of all —wonderful enough almost to blot out the memory of everything else—had been the Pope. They had not been a bit shy with him, they explained—it was impossible, he was so kind. 'The tears were in his eyes—but lots of us were crying too,' nearly all who could get near enough to speak to him were begging him for graces. 'Cure my sister, Holy Father; convert my father; I want to be a priest—and I a missionary!' It must have been rather like that when the people came to Jesus in Galilee."

"It seems to me," added the writer, "that in these days, when so many people are trying to enforce obedience, and failing signally in the attempt, that there is only one man in the world who is really master of the minds and hearts of others—an old man clothed in white garments. . . ."

CHAPTER IX: *Pius X and Modernism*

IN July, 1907, the Sacred Congregation of the Roman Inquisition issued the Decree "Lamentabili," which condemned sixty-five of the most distinctive Modernist doctrines. Two months later appeared the Encyclical "Pascendi," denouncing under the name of "Modernism" a group of errors which struck at the very roots of the Christian Faith.

It was not the first time that the Holy See had spoken on this matter, nor was Modernism a thing of yesterday. It had its birth in the Humanist philosophy of the eighteenth century, and came to its own at the French Revolution. The very name Modernism was coined by Jean Jacques Rousseau, the apostle of Humanism, when alluding to the writings of an atheistical philosopher.

The syllabus of Pius IX. which appeared in 1864, although directed chiefly against rationalism, condemned many errors which have since been appropriated by the Modernists. "It is astounding," says a modern writer, "how fearlessly he fought against the false liberalism which threatened to destroy the very essence of faith and religion."

Pius X., a no less fearless fighter than his glorious predecessor, had followed the progress of the movement with the grave intelligence that he brought to bear on all the questions which affected the Catholic Faith. In his Encyclical issued for the centenary of St. Gregory the Great in 1904, he had already pointed out the dangers of certain new theological methods, "which, based upon Agnosticism and Immanence, tend to divest Catholic doctrine of all objective, absolute, and immutable truth, especially when these methods are associated with subversive criticism of Holy Scripture and of the origins of Christianity."

It may be interesting to survey shortly the course of events, and to see how Modernism, the child of the Humanist teaching of the eighteenth century, came to be condemned by the Church in the twentieth as "a compendium of all the heresies."

The researches of German scholars—Protestants or atheists for the most part—in the field of Biblical criticism had during the last two hundred years tended to the negation of many of the doctrines of the Christian Faith amongst those who accepted their views as the outcome of the progress of modern science. To the views of Eichhorn, Hegel, Harnack, and other free-thinking critics, may be attributed the marked tendency at the present day outside of the Catholic Church, even among men who profess to be theologians, to look upon the chief doctrines of Christianity as open questions, to be believed or not according to individual opinion.

It is generally acknowledged that the principles of Modernism are largely derived from the teaching of the eighteenth-century professor of Königsberg, Immanuel Kant, who, as a rationalist, rejected supernatural religion. That their teaching is largely based on his philosophy is indubitable, although they may be said to owe still more to Schleiermacher, another German thinker whose plan was to reform religion by attempting to conciliate it with science. While rejecting, like the Modernist, natural religion as a pure abstraction, and declaring that dogma could only be derived from religious experience, Schleiermacher claimed the right to be acknowledged as a Christian. Here we have something very like the attitude of the Modernist of the present day.

In France, meanwhile, Modernism was progressing on more dangerous lines, inasmuch as it was within the Church itself. In the year 1896, Blondel, a French Catholic professor of the University of Lille, attacked the traditional methods of defence employed by the Church against the infidel philosophy and science of the day, declaring that they were antiquated and out of date. Père Laberthonnière, of the French Oratory, published in the following year a book called "The Religious Problem," in which the same charge was repeated. Like views had been already set forth by the Abbé Marcel Hébert, an avowed disciple of Kant, and professor of philosophy in the École Fénelon at Paris. They were joined soon after by the Abbé Loisy, who had already come before the public as a man of extreme views on scriptural subjects.

The Abbé Loisy, who was to become one of the leaders of the heresy known as Modernism, had begun his career as a professor in the Catholic Institute of Paris. Although a man of brilliant intelligence and of great learning, he had been dismissed by the Rector of the Institute on account of his marked tendency to liberalism. Having become chaplain to the Dominican convent of Neuilly near Paris—for he had not been formally condemned—he proceeded to publish anonymously papers and articles containing seditious and heretical arguments against the Church to which he professed to belong, a mode of action which has been characteristic of Modernists in every country where they have obtained a footing. He next appeared as an employé of the anti-clerical French Government, as professor in a lay school of higher studies in Paris, publishing—this time under his own name—what is perhaps his best-known work, "L'Évangile et l'Église." The book was condemned at once by Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris, as containing heretical opinions. It was rumoured that the author had submitted, a conjecture which was dispelled a few months later by the appearance of another book, "Autour d'un petit Livre," in which he further emphasised the statements contained in "L'Évangile et l'Église," treating the prohibition of the Cardinal, Archbishop and of the other Bishops who had forbidden the circulation of the book in their dioceses with an ironical banter which was nothing less than insulting.

While still Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Sarto had established, for the benefit of the younger priests of his archdiocese, a series of conferences on current topics. It is noteworthy that the first subject to be explained and refuted in this course was Abbé Loisy's book, "L'Évangile et l'Église." In the interval between its publication and the appearance of "Autour d'un petit Livre," the Patriarch had become Pope. Yet he found time to read this book himself before condemning it. His condemnation of Modernism three years later was therefore no hasty action, prompted by a misconception of the issues at stake. He had been observing with the closest attention the development of the Modernist theories, causing to be collected and digested every book, pamphlet, and article that had a bearing on the subject.

The official condemnation of Loisy's works was the signal for a storm of abuse in the rationalist, anti-clerical, and Modernist press. "The old shadowy images of Rome gagging her progressive men will be revived with added venom to poison the mind of the public," prophesied a writer in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, and the prophecy was certainly fulfilled. In vain did the Abbé Monchamp, Vicar of Liège, point out, after close analysis of Loisy's book, the impossibility of escaping the conclusion which places the writer in direct opposition to the authoritative teaching of the Church. The authoritative teaching of the Church, to the minds of many, was a much less important thing than the retaining of a few intelligent men within her fold. Yet even among those outside of the Church there were men who saw more clearly. "From the paternal standpoint of the Church of Rome," wrote Professor Sanday, "it seems to me, if I may say so, that the authorities have acted wisely. It is not an insuperable barrier placed in the way of future progress, but the intimation of a need for caution." This is much the same argument as that of a Catholic writer: "Loisy is condemned by the Church to-day because his statements not only lack sufficiently convincing proofs, but because they are an injury to the children of her household." The Church, while recommending the exercise of criticism according to sound principles and unbiassed by rationalistic presuppositions, is bound to condemn conclusions which are at variance with revealed truth.

But the storm of abuse which had arisen at the condemnation of Loisy, and which had been further strengthened by the publication of the decree "Lamentabili," reached its climax at the appearance of the Encyclical "Pascendi," which tore the veil from Modernism and exposed its errors with ruthless precision. Modernism, like Jansenism, had made up its mind to remain in the Church and to mould her teaching to its will; and now it was only one more of the many heresies that had fallen on the rock of the promise and has been broken in the falling. The Pope and Cardinal Merry del Val, who, as Secretary of State, had the honour of sharing in all the attacks that were levelled at his illustrious Chief, were denounced as intolerant fanatics. The one idea of Pius X., cried the Modernists, was to repress by violent means every indication of originality of thought and independence of judgment within the Church; he had attempted to stifle a movement with which some of the best thinkers of the age were in sympathy. He was a "good country priest," perhaps; but utterly incapable of dealing with the questions which were at issue. The Modernists, according to their own judgment, were to have been the light of the world, and he had done his best to quench it. Some, not content with assailing his policy, with that meanness which has strangely characterised the wilful heretic in every age and country, attacked, and are still attacking, the blameless life of the Pontiff, to which all lovers of holiness, even outside the Church, have paid a generous tribute. "A hypocrite," they said, "an intriguer, who by a feigned humility which was but the veil for an unscrupulous ambition, had wormed his way upwards and had now thrown off the veil." Thus Arius against Athanasius, the Jansenists against Vincent de Paul. History repeats itself.

"The Modernist movement had quickened a thousand dim dreams of reunion into enthusiastic hopes," wrote Father Tyrrell, the leader of Modernism in England, "when lo! Pius X. comes forward with a stone in one hand and a scorpion in the other."

"If you have not, and do not wish to have," wrote a Protestant theologian, M. Ferdinand Buisson, "either Credo, or Catechism, or Pope or Council, if you do not believe in the infallibility of either a man or a book, or in the immortality of any doctrine or of any institution, have the courage of your convictions, and call yourselves what you are—freethinkers." Although in these words M. Buisson was merely pointing out the dangers of liberal protestantism to Protestants, and they were written several years before the condemnation of Modernism, they can be applied equally well to the Modernist attitude.

To many Christians the Encyclical "Pascendi" revealed a danger that they themselves had never suspected; and the account of the Modernist doctrines which it so lucidly gave was for them a lesson more eloquent than any censure. It was no accusation, much less a travesty, as the Modernists themselves allowed, that masterly analysis of a system which claimed the right to substitute itself for the

Catholic conception of a teaching authority established by Jesus Christ.

"Yes or no, do you believe in the divine authority of the Church?" asks Cardinal Mercier.[1] "Do you accept outwardly and in the sincerity of your heart what in the name of Christ she commands? Do you consent to obey her? If so, she offers you her Sacraments and undertakes to conduct you safely into the harbour of salvation. If not, then you deliberately sever the tie that unites you to her, and break the bond consecrated by her grace. Before God and your conscience you no longer belong to her; remain no longer in obstinate hypocrisy a pretended member of her fold. You cannot honestly pass yourself off as one of her sons; and as she cannot be a party to hypocrisy and sacrilege, she bids you, if you force her to it, to leave her ranks. . . . The Modernism condemned by the Pope is the negation of the Church's teaching."

What *is* Modernism? is a question that has been often asked. It is not easy to put the matter in a nutshell, and various answers have been given. "Modernists differ so much among themselves," says Father Bampton, "that it is difficult to pin them down to one coherent set of opinions. But the general drift of Modernism in its bearing upon Catholicity is unmistakable. Its object is quite clear and open and avowed. That object is not ostensibly to set up a brand-new form of Catholicity, but to reconstruct the old on new lines. Its object, as Modernists are fond of saying, is to readjust Catholicity to the mentality of the age, to reinterpret

[1] "Modernism in Science."

Christianity in terms of modern thought. The question is," he asks later, "what *is* modern thought? Modern thought, thanks in great measure to Kant, is largely rationalistic. It is a difficult matter to interpret Catholicity in terms of rationalism, and Modernism has had the hardihood to attempt the task."

"Modernism," says a French writer, "is an application of Pragmatism to religious beliefs."[1]

Professor Périn, of Louvain, describes Modernism as the "humanitarian tendency of contemporary society—the ambition to eliminate God from all social life." This, he admits, is Modernism in its extreme form; in less acute stages it may be described as liberalism of every degree and shade.

"Modernism," says the Abbate Cavalcanti, "is a morbid state of conscience that professes manifold ideals, opinions, and tendencies. From time to time these tendencies work out into systems that are to renew the basis and superstructure of society, politics, philosophy, and theology, of the Church herself, and of the Christian religion."

"Modernism," says Cardinal Mercier, "consists essentially in affirming that a religious soul must draw from itself, from nothing but itself, the object and motive of its faith. It rejects all revelation imposed by the conscience, and therefore becomes a negation of the doctrinal authority of the Church established by Jesus Christ, to which it denies the right to govern Christian society."

"Modernism," says the same writer, "is *not* the modern expression of science; consequently the con-

[1] Abbé Houtin.

demnation of Modernism is not the condemnation of science nor a disapproval of her methods."

But for the complete analysis of Modernism we must go to the Encyclical itself. After condemning Modernism as "the meeting-ground of all heresies," the Pope denounced in it a group of errors which included—the separation of an historical from a religious Christ; the reversal of the Incarnation by the denial of the ingerence of the Divine in the domain of fact; the degradation of faith to the region of sentiment; the reduction of religious authority from an Apostolic to a mere presidential basis; and the superannuation and substitution of the Bible and revelation in favour of interior revelation. After alluding to the gravity of the situation, the Encyclical proceeded to deal with the subject in three parts. First came the analysis of Modernist teaching, with agnosticism as the basis of its philosophy, and immanence as its positive side, thus placing the explanation of religion in man alone, and lifting conscience to the same level as revelation. Faith and science to the Modernist are separate, the latter being supreme, and religious dogmas are not only inadequate but must be changeable to be adapted to living needs. Everything must be subject to evolution, and these principles were being applied to the deformation of history and of apologetics.

In the second part Modernism was traced to its causes.

"The proximate cause," said the Holy Father, "is without any doubt an error of the mind. The remoter causes are two: curiosity and pride. Curiosity, unless wisely held in check, is of itself sufficient to account for all errors. But far more effective in obscuring the mind and leading it into error is pride, which, as it were, dwells in Modernism as in its own house. Through pride the Modernists have overestimated themselves. They are puffed up with a vain-glory which allows them to regard themselves as the sole possessors of knowledge, and, elated with presumption, makes them say, 'We are not as the rest of men,' and which leads them, lest they should seem as other men, to embrace and to devise novelties even of the most absurd kind. It is pride which . . . causes them to demand a compromise between authority and liberty. It is owing to their pride that they seek to be the reformers of others while they forget to reform themselves."

"If from moral causes we pass to the intellectual, the first and most powerful is ignorance. These very men who pose as Doctors of the Church, who speak so highly of modern philosophy and show such contempt for scholasticism, have embraced the one with its false glamour, precisely because their ignorance of the other has left them without the means of recognising the confusion of their ideas and of refuting sophistry. Their system, replete with so many errors, has been born of the union between faith and false philosophy."

"Modernism is inclined to Pantheism by its doctrine of Divine immanence—*i.e.*, of the intimate presence of God within us," continues the Pope. "Does this God declare Himself as distinct from us? If so, then the position of Modernism must not be opposed to that of Catholicism, nor exterior revelation rejected. But if God declares Himself as not distinct from us, the position of Modernism becomes openly Pantheistic." Such was the dilemma in which the Modernists were placed by the Encyclical.

In the third are set forth the remedies for the evil, amongst which are the enforcement of the study of scholastic philosophy in seminaries and by clerics at the Universities; ceaseless activity and watchfulness on the part of the Bishops by a diocesan censorship of books, and the presentation of an oath to clergy and professors in Universities, by which they were to bind themselves to reject the errors denounced in the Encyclical and Decree. The gravity of the sentence was only to be accounted for by the gravity of the case. "The security of the Catholic name," said the Pope, "is at stake; to keep silence longer would be a crime."

The danger was indeed a serious one. The Modernists had put themselves forward as the champions of science, led to the conclusions they defended by mere anxiety for scientific truth. Their movement, from the point of view of many, marked a religious reaction against the materialism and positivism which had failed so signally to satisfy the longings of the human soul. It was a reaction in the right direction which had taken the wrong road, and which threatened to land its votaries in a deeper abyss than that from which they had set out. There was therefore an attractive side to its teaching, especially to youthful minds, even amongst the faithful children of the Church.

"Whence comes the charm of Modernism for youthful minds?" asks Cardinal Mercier, "and what are its dangers?"

"In the first place," he answers, "comes the false analogy which confuses the constitution of the Catholic Church with the political organisations of modern society and which would apply the rules of the one to the other. Secondly, timid believers and superficial thinkers, ignorant of Catholic philosophy and theology, and conscious of intellectual weakness when confronted with the conclusions of free-thinking science, look to find a position of security here. Thirdly, the failure to comprehend that the unity of Christian faith is safe only in the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church's stability derives only from the Chair of Peter.[1]

Pius X., in the Encyclical "Pascendi," speaks more clearly still. "Excited and confused by this clamour of praise and abuse—for when a Modernist falls under the condemnation of the Church the others hold him in veneration as almost a martyr for the truth—young men, some of them afraid of being branded as ignorant, others ambitious to rank among the learned, and both classes goaded internally by curiosity and pride, not infrequently yield to temptation and give themselves up to Modernism."

"The adversaries of the Church will doubtless traduce Us as the enemy of science and of the progress of humanity," continues the Pope. "As a fresh answer to such accusations . . . it is Our intention to establish a special Institute, in which, through the co-operation of those Catholics who are most eminent for their learning, the advance of science and every other department of knowledge may be

1 "Modernism." Cardinal Mercier.

promoted under the guidance and teaching of Catholic truth."

This scheme was carried out a little later, when Pius X. established in Rome the Biblical Institute, where young ecclesiastics who had finished their course of philosophy and theology could give themselves, under the direction of the most eminent Catholic scholars of the day, to the special study of the sacred Scriptures.

The storm raged hotly for a while round the Pontiff who had spoken so fearlessly; but a deep thanksgiving was in the hearts of those who could see the issues at stake.

"In his dealings with France," wrote one of these, "the Holy Father saved, so to speak, the body of the Church, but now he has saved her soul." "The Pope has spoken, Modernism has ceased to be," wrote the famous French novelist and academician, Paul Bourget, a year or two later. Modernists still survive, it is true, and by their venom we may know them, but their system is shattered—the veil is torn away."

"Five years ago," wrote Monsignor Benson on the death of Pius X., "it was proclaimed that by his action thought was once more thrown back into the fetters from which it was shaking itself loose, and that Rome henceforward must be considered as finally out of the struggle; that once more she had feared to face the light, and held back or cast out those of her children who honestly desired it. And now there is practically not a Christian anywhere—a Christian, that is to say, in the historic sense of the word, who believes that Christ's mission lay in the revelation which He promulgated, and not merely in the impulse which His coming gave to spiritual aspiration—there is not a Christian in this sense, however far his sympathies may be from the Catholic interpretation of the contents of that revelation, who does not acknowledge that Pius stood firm where their religious leaders faltered or temporised; and that Rome, under his leadership, placed herself on the side of plain Gospel truth, of the authority of Holy Scripture, and of the Divinity of Christ."

CHAPTER X: *Pius X and the Priesthood*

A PERSONAL friend of Pius X. was speaking to him one day with hot indignation of the abuse levelled at the Head of the Catholic Church by a Modernist writer. The Pope's answer was as characteristic as the smile that accompanied it.

"Come," he said, "did not he allow that after all I was a good priest? Now, of all praise, that is the only one I have ever valued."

"A man who hid a boundless ambition under a pretence of humility," wrote another of the defeated army that had challenged the Church of Christ. And in one sense most certainly Pius X. was a man of ambition, an ambition that had taken shape within him as he knelt before the altar of the Cathedral of Castelfranco to receive the sacred unction of the priesthood with all that it entailed. Study, prayer, labour, self-denial and unlimited self-devotion; charity, poverty, and loyal-hearted obedience to authority—all these were part of that ambition—the ambition to be a good and fervent priest, to walk in the footsteps of his Master. It had been his guiding star through life; he had sacrificed everything to it; and in a certain sense it was true that this ambition, realised most perfectly in his holy life, had placed him against his will on the Throne of Peter.

A noble and worthy priesthood, according to his first great Encyclical, was to be one of the means towards that restoring of all things in Christ "which was to heal the wounds of the world." "The priest is the representative of Christ on earth," he said on one occasion to the students of the French Seminary in Rome; "he must think the thoughts of Christ and speak His words. He must be tender as Christ was tender, pure and holy like his Lord; he must shine like a star in the world." This was not easy, he acknowledged, for human nature; it needed a long preparation of study, of self-discipline, and of prayer. The spiritual weapons must be well tempered for the combat, for the fight would be hard and long.

"A holy priest makes holy people," he said on another occasion; "a priest who is not holy is not only useless but harmful to the world."

And it was not only the cultivation of virtue on which he insisted, but the cultivation of the intellect also. The man who all his life had curtailed his hours of sleep in order to study, had done it to perfect his priesthood, to fit himself to cope with the dangers that were abroad, to be armed at every point against error. Although his enemies were never tired of asserting that he was ignorant and unlettered, and he himself was quite ready to let the world believe it, his knowledge and the extent of his learning could not be concealed. Those who came in contact with him and with his personal work could not be otherwise than impressed with his depth of thought, the extent of his reading, his literary and classical training, and his strong grasp of philosophy and theology. His wide and far-reaching appreciation of men and things in different countries all over the world was astonishing in a man who had not travelled, as many statesmen often remarked after conversing with him. He

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read French perfectly, although he felt shy at attempting to speak it, for want of practice. He was an excellent accountant. Refined in manner and in gesture, the delicacy and nobility of his dealings with others were unequalled. A certain apostle of the new learning, received by the Pope with his usual genial kindness, attempted once to worst him in an argument on philosophy and theology. Disgusted with the calm and unexpected firmness with which the Holy Father held his own, his opponent ended by losing his temper. "It is useless to continue this discussion," he exclaimed impatiently, "for I see that we shall never understand each other."

"You are quite mistaken, my son," was the quiet answer, "we understand each other very well; so well, that I can give my approval and my blessing neither to you nor to your works."

"In order that Christ may be formed in the faithful," said the Pope in his first Encyclical, "He must first be formed in the priest," and with this end in view he set himself to the task which lay before him. The first six years of his Pontificate were chiefly spent in work which concerned the priesthood and sacerdotal institutions. Uniform rules of study, of discipline, and of ecclesiastical education, were given to all the seminaries of Italy, which were to be inspected carefully from time to time by apostolic men, who, like himself, had at heart the perfection of the priesthood. The small seminaries in dioceses incapable of supporting them on these lines were suppressed. The Bishops were exhorted to further the work by all the means in their power; care was to be taken in the selection of candidates for the priesthood, who, after a thorough training in the seminary, were to be wisely directed in the first exercise of their ministry, safeguarded against rationalism and the errors of the day, and encouraged to keep up their studies without detriment to their zeal in active work. The Academy of St. Thomas in Rome and the Catholic Institute of Paris won special praise from the Holy Father for the excellence and thoroughness of their teaching. Special regulations were laid down for the examination of those about to be ordained. The study of Holy Scripture was to be pursued in the seminaries during the four years of the theological course, while especially gifted students were to be set apart for more advanced studies. Special rules were laid down for foreign priests residing in Rome, and retreats organised for the Roman clergy. Bishops and Archbishops were to proceed with caution, making sure before all ordinations that the candidates for the priesthood were not unworthy of their high calling. On those who were already, or about to be ordained, the Pope enjoined constant and fervent prayer, daily meditation on the eternal truths, the attentive reading of good books, especially of the Holy Scriptures, and diligent examination of conscience. The priest was to stand forth as an example to all by the integrity of his life, his deference and obedience to all legitimate authority, his patient charity with all men. It was not by a bitter zeal that they would gain souls to God; they must reprove, entreat, and rebuke, but in all patience; their charity must be patient and kind with all men, even with those who were their open enemies. "Such an example," said Pius X., "will have far more power to move hearts and to gain them than words or dissertations, however sublime." "The renovation of the priesthood," wrote the Pope a little before the celebration of his sacerdotal jubilee in 1908, "will be the most beautiful and acceptable gift that the clergy can offer to Us."

The beautiful gift that the Holy Father himself bestowed on the Catholic priesthood on this the 50th anniversary of his ordination was the wonderful Exhortation to the Catholic Clergy, published on August the 4th, 1908. It was a labour of love, and every word of it was his own. Embodying as it does the wisdom and experience of a lifetime spent in God's service, the Exhortation set before the Catholic clergy of the whole world the model of "the Man of God"—the perfect parish priest. Its fervent and eloquent appeal to the clergy of all countries to show themselves worthy of their high calling, by being truly the "salt of the earth and the light of the world," is followed by a clear and practical exposition of the means necessary to attain this great end. Fervent and assiduous prayer, daily meditation on the things of eternity, the reading of good books and especially of the Holy Scriptures, with frequent examination of conscience, will alone enable the priest to acquire and maintain the sanctity worthy of his sublime office. His ministry must be in deed as well as in word. He must remember that he is not only the servant but the friend of Christ, Who has chosen him that he may go and bring forth much fruit. And as friendship consists in unity of mind and will, it is the first duty of a priest to study the mind and will of his Master, so as to conform himself in all things to them. Stress is laid on the necessity of cultivating the passive virtues—those which perfect the character of the man himself—as well as the more active ones which are exercised outwardly, and which are called forth by contact with other people. The Exhortation, written for priests, by one who was a model of all priestly virtues, and given from the Throne of the Apostle, is a perfect rule of life for every priest who aspires to sanctity.[1]

Once more he recommended, as he had so often done before, preaching to the people plain and simple Gospel truths rather than flowery and rhetorical sermons. Once more, but this time as Head of the Universal Church, he insisted on the necessity of clear and simple instruction in Christian doctrine to adults and children alike, again reiterating his conviction that the growth of unbelief in the world was largely due to ignorance of the teaching of Christ.

"It is in a time of sore stress and difficulty," he writes in his Encyclical of 1905 on this subject, "that the mysterious counsel of Divine Providence has raised up our littleness to bear the office of chief Shepherd over the whole flock of Christ. . . . It is a common complaint . . . that in this age of ours there are very many of the Christian people who live in utter ignorance of those things, the knowledge whereof is necessary for their eternal salvation . . . we do not only mean the masses and those in the lower walks of life . . . but those who, though not without talent and culture, abound in the wisdom of

[1] An English translation of the Exhortation, with a preface by Cardinal Bourne, is published in booklet form by Messrs. Washbourne

the world, and are utterly reckless and foolish in matters of religion. . . . They hardly ever think of the supreme Maker and Ruler of all things, or of the wisdom of the Christian faith . . . they in no wise understand the malice and the foulness of sin . . . a great many . . . fall into endless evil through ignorance of those mysteries of the faith which those who would be counted among the elect must needs know and believe."

"The erring will of man has need of a guide who shall show it the way . . . this guide is none other than the intellect. But if the intellect itself be lacking in the true light . . . it will be a case of the blind leading the blind, and both will fall into the ditch. . . . It is only the doctrine of Jesus Christ that makes us understand the true and wondrous dignity of man . . . and is it not the doctrine of Jesus Christ again that inspires in proud man the lowliness of mind which is the origin of all true glory? From this doctrine we learn the prudence of the spirit whereby we may shun the prudence of the flesh, the justice whereby we may give to everyone his due, the fortitude whereby we are made ready to endure all things and may suffer with gladness for the sake of God and eternal happiness; and lastly the temperance by which we may love poverty itself for the kingdom of God, and may even glory in the Cross, despising the shame. . . . Since then such dire evils flow from ignorance of religion and . . . the necessity of religious instruction is so great, because no one can hope to fulfil the duties of a Christian without knowing them, it only remains to ask whose duty it is to eliminate this deadly ignorance from the minds of the people and to impart to them this necessary knowledge."

The answer is obvious—that duty falls on the priesthood, and this the Pope most clearly points out. "There is nothing nearer or dearer than this to the heart of Jesus Christ," he continues, "who said of Himself through the lips of Isaias, 'to preach the Gospel to the poor He hath sent Me.'"

Having laid down in strong and urgent words the duty of the shepherds to feed the flock committed to their care, the Pope expounds the mission of the Catechist, its beauty and its power for good. Having promulgated several rules for the ensuring of uniformity in this matter and impressing the necessity for special instructions to adults, he quotes the words of St. Gregory the Great on the apostles of Christ. "They took supreme care to preach to the ignorant things easy and intelligible, not sublime and arduous," ending the Encyclical with the saying of his great predecessor, St. Peter, "as every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

It was the Pope himself who took the first step towards the introduction of a uniform Catechism into Catholic schools, revising with his own hands that in use in Northern Italy, which he prescribed for the dioceses of the Roman province and recommended for general use. It is a most practical little Catechism, containing an introductory part that even infants can understand, with two more for younger and older children respectively, arranged so that the later parts develop the teaching of the earlier.

To Pius X. the Breviary had always been a book of predilection. It is said that as a child he had often seen Cardinal Monico with his Breviary in his hands, and had wondered vaguely what beautiful stories there could be in the big book that so engrossed the attention of the Prelate. And when in later days he opened its cover for the first time himself, his childish dreams found their fulfilment. For the Breviary is the story of the Church and her saints, and the whole Psalter enwraps it like a glory. It was to the treasures of that great book that he went all his life for his morning meditation until he knew it as one knows the heart of a friend. And loving it with the love of a true friend, and seeing faults amidst its beauties, he would let it also share in his great scheme, "the restoring of all things in Christ." For over four hundred years a redistribution of the Psalter throughout the week had been sighed for, but so far every scheme had failed. Pius X. appointed a Commission to deal with this problem, giving certain general lines on which to base the reform, with the result that in a few years the New Breviary was issued. The rearrangement secures the recitation of the whole Psalter once a week, the length of the Office on Sundays and ferias has been reduced, while the complexities of the Calendar have also been much simplified.

"No one can fail," wrote the Pope, "to be stirred by those numerous passages of the Psalms which proclaim so loudly the immense majesty of God, His omnipotence, His ineffable justice, His goodness and clemency. . . . Who can fail to be inspired . . . by those thanksgivings for benefits received from God, by those lowly and trustful prayers for benefits desired by those cries of the penitent soul deploring its sins? Who is not kindled with love for the picture of Christ the Redeemer so lovingly shadowed forth, and whose voice Augustine heard in all the Psalms, praising or mourning, rejoicing in hope, or yearning for accomplishment? With good reason in past ages was provision made by Decrees of the Roman Pontiffs, Canons of Councils, and monastic laws, that members of both sections of the clergy should chant or recite the whole Psalter every week."

Having dealt with the reasons which prevented this, the Pope spoke of the many pleas that had reached him that the old custom might be restored, and of the work that had been done to this effect, which was but a prelude to a farther emendation of the Breviary and the Missal. The reform of the Roman Curia was another undertaking which did much to simplify the government of the Church.

The various Roman Congregations were founded by Sixtus V. to study the questions submitted to the decision of the Pope and to deal with any legal questions that might arise. As the proper administration of justice required that persons of experience and mature judgment alone should deal with these matters, various committees were formed, each of which attended to its own particular branch of business. But time had rolled on, and the organisation of the different Congregations needed to be adapted to the requirements of the present day. Pius X., with the practical spirit which distinguished all his undertakings, completely remodelled the Curia, fixing the number of the Congregations at thirteen, and while defining clearly the work of each one, provided for the better exercise of its functions. The Constitution "Sapienti consilio" on this matter instituted also many other important reforms in the tribunals and offices of the Curia.

The purchase of the Palazzo Mariscotti, near the Church of San Francesco alle Stimmata, and assigned to the Cardinal Vicar of Rome and his officials, enabled Pius X. to carry out another long-cherished plan for the thorough reform of the Roman Vicariate, inadequate in its organisation to the needs of the present day. Want of space, which had been the chief difficulty in the way of reorganisation, having been thus supplied for, the necessary reforms were at once set on foot. In many other important matters the needs of modern times called for the simplification and amendment of methods that had become obsolete.

The reform and codification of Canon Law was another laborious work carried on by the Pope for eleven years, and brought to a triumphant conclusion by his successor Benedict XV.

The needs of emigrants were also taken into consideration, and an office or department founded in one of the Roman Congregations to find out their necessities and to apply a remedy to the existing evils.

Family life, too, found in Pius X. a strenuous defender. The discipline of the Church regarding Christian marriage was renewed in the "Ne Temere" Decree, special rules being laid down which greatly simplified the regulations on this matter, and safeguarded the integrity and sanctity of the marriage contract. The great feature of the Decree was that it established a uniform law for the whole Church.

As might be expected, it has been attacked with a good deal of virulence in non-Catholic countries.

With affectionate interest the Pope watched the progress of Catholicism in England.

"If there is any Church in the whole Christian world," he wrote in January, 1912, on the occasion of the founding of the two new ecclesiastical provinces of Birmingham and Liverpool, "which merits the special care and forethought of the Apostolic See, it is certainly the Church of the English, which, happily founded among the Britons by St. Eleutherius and still more happily established through apostolic men by Gregory the Great, was subsequently made famous by the numbers of its children distinguished by the holiness of their lives, or by the martyr's death courageously suffered for Christ."

"It is with the greatest pleasure that I greet you, my dear children of Great Britain," he said at an audience given to four hundred English pilgrims presented to him by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, "worthy descendants of your Catholic forefathers who during ten centuries remained constantly faithful to the Church and the Holy See, and who, by the purity of their faith and by personal holiness, gave many saints to God. And although through the blind passion of an unworthy King your country has fallen into schism, the Faith is still alive in her midst, for are you not the children of those valiant Christians . . . who gave their lives for the truth, and won for Great Britain her title of "the Island of Saints"?

When the Bishops and clergy of France, sacrificing everything that the world holds dear at the word of the supreme Pontiff, professed themselves ready to stand by their Chief through good and ill report, their representative in Rome could bear witness to the joy of the Pope. In the clear sunshine of the winter morning he stood, erect and white, reading and re-reading the address, his eyes bright with unshed tears. "Beautiful, most beautiful!" he said over and over again as he read—his children were loyal, they had not disappointed his hopes. And when, a few months later, he consecrated in St. Peter's fourteen French Bishops in presence of three thousand of their compatriots, that promise and that loyalty received their final seal.

The beatification of the Maid of France in April, 1909, was one more token of the Pope's love of the country that had given so much for God, and the presence in Rome of forty thousand of her children, led by sixty-seven of her Bishops, was but another proof of her true spirit. And when at the end of the ceremony, borne in the Sedia Gestatoria through the crowd, the Holy Father, leaning forward, lifted the fold of the French flag that had been lowered at his passage and reverently kissed it, the enthusiasm knew no bounds. That flag had stood for much that was not noble; the memory of its origin was still in the minds of many. But by that kiss it was consecrated for ever—blood shed in battle for the right was to wash out the stain of blood shed in mad passion—it stands now for the soul of France.

Dear as were all his priests to the heart of Pius X., he had a special love for apostolic men.

Monsignor Blanc, a Marist Father and missionary in Oceana, wrote thus to his clergy after an audience with the Pope: "My attention was completely captivated by his expression and his eyes. I could not tell you what the room was like nor what the Holy Father wore; I could see nothing but those eyes, and the light of them I shall never forget. He made me sit down beside him, and I spoke to him of our people, our natives, the country that I love. If the life of the missionary is sometimes hard, let us remember that the Pope has said 'the missions are my great consolation.' He was full of interest in all I had to tell him of your work, your zeal and your devotedness. I spoke of our schools and he was delighted. 'Tell them to devote themselves there without counting the cost,' he said: 'it is the most important thing of all.' With touching graciousness and cordiality he gave his blessing to you, to our people, to all for whom I asked it."

"You cannot go near him without loving him," said another priest, "his kindness and sweetness are irresistible." Father Boevey Crawley, a South American priest, and an ardent apostle of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, went to Rome to obtain the Pope's blessing on his mission. His story was a strange one. Attacked while quite young by a serious form of heart disease, he was sent to Paris by his superiors to consult a specialist. The American doctors had told him that he had but a few months to live; the Paris specialist confirmed their verdict. Father Crawley had an overwhelming devotion to the Sacred Heart and to Blessed Margaret Mary. He went straight to Paray-le-Monial to ask through her intercession the grace of a holy death. Scarcely had he knelt down in the little chapel, when he felt himself shaken from head to foot. He was cured. That very night while kneeling in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament he received a divine intimation from our Lord. He was to go forth and conquer the world, family by family, to the love of the Sacred Heart. To preach *love*, that, he said, was henceforward to be his mission, for what is devotion to the Sacred Heart, but love of the Love of Christ? The conversion of his father, who was a Protestant, was the first fruit of his apostolate.

Kneeling at the Pope's feet, he told him the story of his life, asking, like a loyal son of the Church, permission to begin the work to which he was called.

The Holy Father listened with the deepest interest until he had finished. "No, my son," he said, "I do not give you permission."

Father Crawley looked up at him in utter consternation; the Pope's eyes were shining, and there was a little smile lurking in the corners of his mouth. "But, Holy Father . . ." pleaded the priest.

"No," repeated the Pope, "I do not give you permission." Then, seeing the distress of Father Crawley he opened his arms and took him to his heart. "I do not give you permission," he said again. "I *order* you to do it. Do you hear? I am the Pope, and I command it. It is a splendid work; let your whole life be consecrated to it."

The young priest—he was only thirty—went out as one inspired. His mission had been solemnly blessed by the Head of the Universal Church. With nothing but that blessing and the ardent love of God which consumed him, he travelled from country to country winning hearts to Christ. He said simple things quite simply, and the miracle was worked. The force of a holy personality—that force which, as Pius X. himself so often said, is the strongest in the world for good, did the rest.

"He had the greatest heart that it was possible for a human being to have," was said of Pius X., not once but many times. Even for treachery he had no condemnation. A betrayal of trust which had affected him deeply came to his knowledge after the death of the culprit. Folding his hands he prayed silently for the departed soul. "He is dead," he said gently, "may he rest in peace."

He met with a sad smile an indignant accusation of treachery against one who was still living; an accusation which could not be denied. "Traitor is a hard word," he said, "let us say that he is a man of many skins—like an onion. . . ."

One more picture—drawn by a master hand[1]—but drawn from life. A young priest, tortured by doubts, knelt shaken with sobs at the feet of the Pope. The white figure bent compassionately over the kneeling man, the strong and gentle hands of the Holy Father held the head of the suppliant closely to his heart. "Faith, faith, faith," repeated the ringing voice over and over again. "Faith, my son, must be your place of refuge."

[1] M. Camille Bellaigue.

CHAPTER XI: *The Pope of the Suffering*

AS a young parish priest at Salzano, Don Giuseppe Sarto, during the cholera epidemic of 1873, had been the stay and comfort of his people. Consoling the grief-stricken, nursing the sick, burying the dead, utterly regardless of his own safety, his one thought had been for his suffering parishioners. This tender compassion for every kind of pain or sorrow was characteristic of him throughout his life. Not without reason was it said of him that he had "the greatest heart of any man alive." The very sight of suffering moved him even to tears; there was no trouble of body or soul that failed to awaken his sympathy.

While Patriarch of Venice he was walking one day through one of the poorest quarters of the city, speaking as was his wont to all whom he met, and giving a smile and a caress to the children who came up to receive his blessing. Suddenly from a very poor house at the end of a mean street arose the piercing cries of a child who was being cruelly beaten by its mother. The Cardinal strode down the street and pulled the bell vigorously. A window opened overhead and in the embrasure appeared the head of a woman, a regular virago, crimson with fury. "Stop beating that child at once!" was the indignant mandate. The woman, astounded at seeing the Patriarch standing on her doorstep, shut the window in some confusion and retired. For some time to come there was no more beating.

Anything like tyranny roused his instant indignation. When reports too circumstantial to be doubted reached him as to the condition of certain Indian tribes in South America, and of the atrocious treatment to which they were forced to submit, all the Archbishops and Bishops in the country were exhorted to do their utmost to put an end to what was nothing less than a cruel slavery.

"Every day I receive fresh news of the persecution that is raging in Asia Minor and in Macedonia," said the Pope one day sorrowfully at a private audience. "How many poor Christians are massacred! What cowardice and what barbarity are shown by this Sultan who trembles with fright, who begs as a favour that he may not be put to death, who is always whining 'I have never done anyone any harm!' He who had in his palace a secret room in which he himself assassinated his victims, where only a week ago he put a young girl to death!" These were some of the sorrows that wrung the heart of him "who bore the care of all the Churches."

All the calamities that befell the world awakened his sympathy, earthquakes, floods, fires, railway accidents, no matter what. The sufferers were comforted with kind words, and as far as possible with material help. It rejoiced him on these occasions to hear of acts of heroism, of Christian charity, and of piety. Even the papers—and those least favourable to the Church—noticed his personal and fatherly interest in the joys and sorrows of his people. His appeal to the charity of Catholics on the occasion of the Calabrian earthquake in 1908, which in a few moments totally destroyed Messina, Reggio, Sille and the surrounding villages, burying more than 100,000 people in the ruins, met with a magnificent response. The sum of 7,000,000 francs, which was generously offered, served to supply the immediate needs of the unfortunate survivors, who in many cases were left totally destitute.

But it was not only to make others give that the Holy Father exerted himself; he gave himself to the utmost of his power. The very day after the Messina disaster he sent a number of men with Monsignor Cottafavi at their head to investigate and report, to search out the victims most urgently in need of help and care and to bring them to Rome. Trainloads of sufferers arrived daily and were taken to the Papal hospice of Santa Marta, the Pope making himself responsible for over five hundred orphans. His Christlike compassion, his grand initiative and masterly organisation of relief, won a burst of praise in which even the anti-clerical Syndic of Rome joined; while the nations of Europe expressed their admiration. "This Pope, of whom it was said that his sole policy was the Gospel and the Creed, and his sole diplomacy the Ten Commandments, fired the imagination of the world by his apostolic fearlessness, his humility, his simplicity, and single-minded faith."

"Who that has seen him," wrote Monsignor Benson, "can ever forget the extraordinary impression of his face and bearing, the kindness of his eyes, the quick sympathy of his voice, the overwhelming fatherliness that enabled him to bear not only his own supreme sorrows, but all the personal sorrow which his children laid on him in such abundance?" An irresistible impulse seemed to drive the suffering to seek his presence and to ask his prayers, and they seldom failed to find the help that they sought.

Perhaps it was his ardent desire to help and comfort pain of any kind, united with personal holiness and fervent prayer, that made the touch of his hand or even his blessing so strangely efficacious for healing. It belongs to Holy Church to decide on the question of miracles, but the wonderful graces obtained through the prayers and the touch of "Il Santo" were the talk of Rome; and men and women who had seen the marvels with their own eyes bore witness to the facts.

Rumours of what was happening came to the ears of Catholics in other countries, and a young girl in England who had just been reading the Acts of the Apostles was seized with a great desire to go to Rome. Her head and neck were covered with running sores which would not heal. The shadow of St. Peter falling on the sick, she said, had cured them; the shadow of his successor would certainly cure her. Her entreaties at last prevailed with her mother who took her to Rome, where both were present at a public audience given to forty other pilgrims. The Pope passed slowly through the crowd, speaking a few words here and there as he went. To the kneeling girl he said nothing, but as he blessed her she felt that she was cured; and indeed, when on their return to the hotel, her mother removed the bandages in which the poor head had been wrapped, she found that the sores were completely healed.

More remarkable still because more public was the wonderful case of two Florentine nuns, both suffering from an incurable disease. They made the journey to Rome with great difficulty, their condition exciting the compassion of all with whom they came in contact. Admitted to a private audience, they begged the Holy Father to cure them. "Why do you want to be cured ?" he asked.

"That we may work for God's glory," was the answer.

The Pope laid his hands upon their heads and blessed them. "Have confidence," he said, "you will get well and will do much work for God's glory," and at the same moment they were restored to health. Pius X. bade them keep silence as to what had happened, but the facts spoke for themselves. At their entrance, the two nuns had hardly had strength to drag themselves along; at their exit they walked like strong and healthy women. Their return was greeted with the greatest enthusiasm by those who had seen them enter; but their cab-driver, an unimaginative man of sturdy common sense, refused to take them back to their convent. "Not at all," he said, "I will take back the two I brought or their dead bodies."

"But we are the two you brought," they insisted merrily.

"Not at all," repeated the *vetturino*, "the two I brought were half dead; you are not in the least like them."

What happened in the end, whether the coachman relented, or the two nuns walked back to their lodgings is not recorded, but it was patent to everybody that they were quite capable of doing so.

At another of the public audiences given by Pius X. was a man who carried in his arms his little son, paralysed from birth and unable to stand. "Give him to me," said the Holy Father; and taking the child on his knee, he began to talk to another group of pilgrims. A few minutes later the child slipped down from the Pope's knee and began to run about the room like any other child of his age.

That the touch of a holy man, or the garments he has worn, or even his shadow falling on the sick should have power to cure them, is vouched for by Holy Scripture.[1] "Perhaps so," say some, "but the age of miracles has passed." To the Catholic the age of miracles has not passed, nor will it ever while there is faith on the earth; for faith, as Jesus Christ Himself said, alone makes miracles possible. At Nazareth even His Almighty power could not work them, because of the unbelief of the people. Where the age of faith has passed, the age of miracles has passed with it, but in the Church of Christ they both endure.

More marvellous still than the graces obtained by the touch of Pius X. were those obtained—sometimes at a great distance—by his blessing and his prayers.

In one of the convents of the Sacred Heart in Ireland was a young nun suffering from disease of the hip-bone. For eight months she had not put her left foot to the ground, as any weight on it caused acute pain. The disease, said the doctor, was making rapid progress; it appeared to have attacked the knee, which was also very painful. For some time the sufferer was able to drag herself about on crutches, but soon this was almost impossible, and she was forced to remain constantly on her back. Before the illness became apparent she had had charge of the children in the National School, who loved her

[1] Acts v. 15 and vi. 12; Matt. xiii. 58.

dearly and were always asking when their dear Mother would come back to them. In the October of 1912 the Superior of the convent, having lately heard of a wonderful cure obtained through the prayers and blessing of the Holy Father, determined to have recourse to him. Knowing the Pope's love of children, she told a little girl of six years old, the daughter of the convent carpenter, to write to the Pope, asking him to bless the dear Mother who was ill, and to pray for her. The secret was so well kept that no one knew of it save the Superior, the child, and a Sister who taught in the National School.

During the night of the 29th of October the sick nun suddenly realised that the pain had entirely left the injured hip—so entirely that she was able to turn and lie on it. The next morning she sat up in bed and asked to be allowed to try to walk, as she felt no pain at all. Receiving permission from the Superior, who was delighted at the marvellous effects of her plan, but who still kept the secret, the invalid, without any help whatever, rose, made her bed and walked to the church, where she knelt for some time in prayer. It was then that she was told of the letter to the Pope. "I did not know what had happened," she said, "all that I knew was that the pain was gone and that I could walk."

The joy and delight of the community at the sight of their invalid going about the house was great, their astonishment greater still. The children of the boarding school cheered till they were hoarse when they saw Mother M. walking about like everybody else; as for the children of the National School nothing would content them but to go straight to the chapel to thank our Lord for His goodness. The carpenter nearly wept when he heard the result of his little girl's letter; he brought his whole family to Benediction that afternoon in the convent chapel, where he was able to work off some of his excitement by blowing the organ.

X-ray photographs were taken of the affected bone, showing no trace of the disease whatever. These could be compared with those taken before the cure, when its effects were clearly visible.

A worker on the railway had a little boy of two years old who lay dangerously ill of meningitis. The doctor, who had given up all hope, asked the priest to break the sad news to the young parents, who at once cried out, "We will write to the Pope! We used to go to confession to him at Mantua when we were children, for, Bishop as he was, he used to hear the confessions of the poor." A simple and touching letter was written and posted to the Holy Father, who wrote with his own hands several lines in reply, bidding the young couple pray and hope. On the following day the child had completely recovered.

But these are only a few of the many graces obtained in the same way. The cure of a Redemptoristine nun in the acute stages of cancer by the application of a piece of stuff that had been worn by Pius X. was borne witness to by Cardinal Vives y Tuto. The sudden return to life and speech of Don Rafael Merry del Val, father of the Cardinal Secretary of State, at the prayer of his wife, who, when everyone else had given up hope and death was declared imminent, tried the same remedy; a French lady who was dying of heart disease, and denied the very existence of God, was not only cured by the Pope's blessing, but reconciled to the Church and henceforward a fervent Catholic: these are only a few of the marvels obtained.

The Holy Father did his best to hush the matter up. "I have nothing to do with it," he continually exclaimed; "it is the power of the keys."

"I hear that you are a 'Santo' and work miracles," said a lady to Pius X. one day, with more enthusiasm than tact.

"You have made a mistake in a consonant," replied the Pope, laughing, "it is a 'Sarto' that I am." No less witty was his reply to a gentleman who came to solicit a Cardinal's hat for one of his friends. "But I cannot give your friend a Cardinal's hat," said the Holy Father. "I am not a hatter, but only a tailor."[1]

The Portuguese revolution in 1911 was a fresh heartbreak to the Pope.

"At the opening of the year 1910 a discontented and disorganised nation was ruled over by a disorganised Government, which in its turn was ruled by alternate gangs of corrupt politicians who exploited the people in the most shameless manner," writes M. Léon Poinsard in his book "Le Portugal Inconnu." The appointment of a dictator, in which lay the only hope of the country, cost Don Carlos his life. His successor, Don Manoel, was too young and inexperienced to deal with the almost impossible situation. The majority of the Portuguese people, although desiring the necessary reforms, did not desire a revolution, nor did they want a republic.

[1] Sarto. *Anglice*, tailor.

The revolution was in fact engineered and carried out by a small clique of men belonging to secret societies, united in a bitter hatred of the Catholic Church and of everything for which it stood.

"It would be useless to deny," wrote Senhor Homem Christo, a Portuguese officer, an agnostic and a republican, "that there *were* revolutionary elements in the army. But those elements were small in number and bad in quality."

"In Lisbon," writes an Englishman who was travelling in Portugal at the time of the revolution, "the crowds that paraded the streets, sacked the convents and took on themselves the work of arresting everybody who looked like a priest, were unquestionably street-loafers of the worst type."

"Why did the revolution take place at all?" he pertinently asks; "it expelled a King who was doing no harm at all, and retained a gang of corrupt politicians who were notoriously ruining the country. If they had expelled the politicians and kept the King, there would have been something to say for them."

The chief characteristic of the Portuguese Republic was that it was bitterly anti-Catholic and anti-clerical. The first action of its representatives was to expel the religious Orders and to confiscate their buildings and belongings. This was done in the most brutal manner, defenceless nuns being driven off to the State prisons, after their convents had been looted and some of the inhabitants put to death. Many died of the privations endured, while others testified to the humanity of their gaolers by going mad. Religious instruction of any kind was prohibited in the Government schools; priests were arrested and imprisoned; the Bishop of Oporto was driven from his diocese. The Separation law of Church and State, which fell more heavily on the Church in Portugal than even that of France, made it impossible for priests to discharge their duties, depriving them of the rights of common citizenship. It was the kind of law to be expected from a Government which counted amongst its Ministers a man who openly declared that "the religious sentiment is a lie, and every kind of Church a farce." Its object was the elimination of the Christian faith from Portuguese society.

These things fell heavily on the heart of the Father of Christendom, who sorrowed with his sorrowing children. He protested against the injustice in his Encyclical "Jamdudum in Lusitania," in which he set forth and condemned the oppressive measures of the Republic. A touching letter of thanks expressed the gratitude of the persecuted hierarchy of Portugal for the Pope's courageous protest. That some of the harshest features of the law seemed in a fair way to be relaxed during the years that followed was some small consolation to the Holy Father.

In the autumn of 1912 a pilgrimage of French working men came to Rome to ask the Pope's blessing.

"Your presence here," said the Holy Father in his address to them, "rejoices my heart. You are workers in factories and workers in the fields, occupations blessed by God Himself, since our Saviour when He came to redeem the world lived the life of a working man. Although the toiler in the field and in the factory, through the sin of our first parents, must earn his bread in the sweat of his brow, if, after the example of his Lord, he bears his burden willingly and is contented with his lot, his life will be peaceful and happy. Because it is so with you, and you try to walk in the footsteps of Christ, I congratulate you and rejoice. May you find in your life of hard work the treasures of peace, of contentment and of happiness. I bless you, your labour, your families, and all whom you hold dear, and I wish you all strength and comfort." After the audience the members of the pilgrimage sat down to a banquet which had been prepared for them in the hospice of Santa Marta, Cardinal Ferrata, who had said Mass for them that morning at St. Peter's, presiding.

In the spring of 1913 the health of the Pope gave cause for anxiety; an attack of influenza which had greatly weakened him, being followed by a relapse with symptoms of bronchitis. From every part of the world came assurances of prayers and sympathy, while in Rome the anxiety felt by poor and rich alike lay like a weight on the city. But the Holy Father, who, during his illness retained all his spirit and vigour of mind, made a quick recovery. He was not a good patient, and his doctors had the greatest difficulty in keeping him quiet. No sooner was he convalescent than he accused them of being pitiless tyrants, whose only idea was to make him waste the time that belonged to the Church. Over and over again they would find that in their absence he had disobeyed orders and received some Prelate or settled an urgent piece of business.

" Just think of our responsibility before the world !" said Dr. Amici one day to his recalcitrant Patient.

"Just think of mine before God," was the energetic answer, "if I do not take care of His Church!"

They began to talk to him seriously, trying to make him promise to be obedient in the future.

"Come, come," said the Holy Father with his irresistible smile, "don't be cross; surely it is my interest to get well quite as much as it is yours to make me so."

It was during the winter before this illness that Donna Rosa Sarto, the Pope's eldest sister, died of an attack of paralysis. She had been with her brother nearly all his life, having gone at the age of seventeen to keep house for him when he was a curate at Tombolo, and afterwards accompanying him to Salzano. During the years when he had been successively Vicar-General at Treviso and Bishop of Mantua, she had lived with her mother, whom she tended until her death, after which she came to Venice with her two younger sisters and her niece to live with the Patriarch. On Cardinal Sarto's election to the Papacy the little group had made their home in Rome in a small apartment not far distant from the Vatican, where they led a quiet life given up entirely to charity and good works.

Those who went to pray beside the dead woman were equally struck by the humble surroundings and the peace that prevailed there. A small room, a common iron bedstead, a sweet, almost transparent old face framed in a plain white cap, violets scattered here and there over the white recumbent figure. The funeral took place at the Church of St. Laurence without the Walls, the Requiem Mass being celebrated by Monsignor Zampini, sacristan to the Pope.

All the Cardinals in Rome were present, together with a great crowd consisting of members of the Diplomatic Corps, priests and religious, eager to do honour to one so near and dear to the Holy Father, while Requiem Masses were celebrated in many of the Roman churches.

The Pope alone could not be present. Following in spirit the funeral procession he knelt in his private Oratory praying for the soul of his sister. Telegrams from every part of the world bore witness to the sympathy felt for the sorrow of the Pope who had made the sorrows of the world his own. This hearty demonstration of filial love and interest was a comfort to him in his grief, and touched him deeply.

But a fresh blow was in store for Pius X. in the sufferings of his children in Mexico. Carranza, the State Governor of Coahuila, had headed a revolution against Huerta, the President of the Mexican Republic. An ex-bandit named Villa who was Carranza's chief supporter soon turned against him and started a counter-revolution of his own, followed by a systematic persecution of religion. Many priests were forced to flee the country, ten Bishops crossed the frontier into the United States to save their people from a favourite trick of the insurgents, who, arresting a Bishop and relying on the people's love of their pastor, would demand an exorbitant ransom. Horrible outrages followed; priests were shot, hanged, or thrown into prison; churches were converted into barracks, the sacred vessels were carried off to the bar-rooms as drinking cups. The venerable Archbishop of Durango was compelled to sweep the streets; religious were shot for refusing to betray the hidingplaces of their brethren, while the fate of many of the nuns is not to be described. Although the revolutionary government set up a press bureau in the United States and subsidised writers to deny these facts and to fill the mails with calumnies against the Church, the truth became gradually known—not in all its entirety until after the Pope's death—but enough to wring the brave old heart with a fresh pang of anguish. . . .

. . . "The Sedia advanced," wrote one who was present about this time at a function in St. Peter's, "bearing the Pope aloft above the heads of the people. He was clothed in a red cope and wore a high golden mitre. His face was sweet and sad; his soul, far away from all this pomp and splendour, seemed lost in the contemplation of the distance that separates the things of earth from the things of Heaven, while his hand moved from right to left in blessing. The sadness was so deeply engraved on that pensive face that it seemed as if no smile could ever lighten it; truly he bore on his shoulders the weight of the world's grief. Suddenly a movement in the crowd brought the procession to a halt; the thoughtful face was raised as if the Pope had awakened from his silent contemplation; he bent forward. A smile of infinite sweetness and kindness, like a ray of sunshine in a winter sky, lit up for a moment those sad features, while beneath me I heard two Italians murmur, "O Father, dear, dear old Father!"

CHAPTER XII: *The Pope of Peace*

AT the private Consistory held in the May of 1914, Pius X., alluding to the consolation which had been afforded him on the occasion of the celebration of the 16th centenary of the Peace of Constantine the year before, spoke words which in the light of later events might well have seemed prophetic.

"During these months," he said, "the Catholic world, while confirming its own faith, has presented to the suffering human race the Cross of Christ as the only source of peace.

"To-day more than ever is that peace to be desired, when class is rising against class, and nation against nation; when interior conflicts, by their increasing bitterness, not infrequently end in open hostility. The wisest and most experienced men are devoting themselves to the amelioration of human society and are trying to find some means of putting an end to the terrible massacres entailed by war, and to secure for the world the benefits of lasting peace. Yet this excellent endeavour will remain almost or wholly sterile, if at the same time an attempt is not made to establish in the hearts of men the laws of justice and charity. The peace or the strife of civil society and of the State depend less on those who govern than on the people themselves. When the minds of men are shut out from the Divine revelation and are no longer restrained by the discipline of the Christian law, what wonder if the greater number, inflamed with blind desire, rush headlong down the road to ruin, persuaded by leaders who think of nothing but their own personal interests.

" The Church, constituted by her Divine Founder the guardian of charity and of truth, is the only power capable of saving the world. Would it not be more in conformity with social interests therefore, not only to allow her freely to fulfil her mission, but to help her to do so ? As a matter of fact, it is the contrary that happens; the Church is too often looked upon as the enemy of the human race, when she is in reality the mother of all civilisation.

" Yet this need not surprise us; we know that after the example of her Founder, the Church, whose mission is to do good, is also destined to bear injustice and contempt. Divine Help will never fail her, even in her darkest moments. Christ Himself has said it, and History bears witness to the fact."

The Pope had been lately exerting himself to promote peace in Mexico—an example to the world at large of the truth of his statement, that where the laws of justice and charity are not observed, peace cannot be possible. The three Catholic Republics of Columbia, Chile, and Peru had offered to attempt by arbitration a settlement of the political disputes which were afflicting that unfortunate country. The Holy Father gave to the suggestion his strongest approval and support, urging the Archbishop and the Catholics of Mexico to do all in their power to further it, a mandate which they gratefully and loyally obeyed. The peace delegates, who met at Buffalo, succeeded in warding off war between Mexico and the United States, although, owing to the unscrupulous character of the party leaders, who were as ready to break promises as to make them, little could be done to put an end to the anarchy that prevailed within the country.

On the 24th of June another of the Pope's efforts towards peace was crowned by the signing of the Concordat between the Holy See and Serbia, which gave to Serbian Catholics full liberty for the exercise of their religion, constituted a new ecclesiastical province in that country, which was to depend exclusively on the Holy See, and established an ecclesiastical seminary at Belgrade. Any future difficulties that might arise were to be settled amicably between the Holy See and the Serbian Government in accordance with the principles of Canon Law.

The Catholic world was busy over the preparation of the twenty-fifth National Eucharistic Congress, which was to be held at Lourdes from the 22nd to the 26th of July. The Pope had appointed Cardinal Granito di Belmonte as Papal Legate to the Congress, and his last Pontifical Brief was written on this subject.

"Never," wrote the Holy Father, "has Mary ceased to show that motherly love which, till her latest breath, she poured forth so fully upon the spouse that her Divine Son purchased with His precious Blood. It might indeed be said that her sole work was to care for the Christian people, and to lead all minds to the love of Jesus and zeal in His service. May the Divine author and preserver of the Church at last look upon that most noble part of His flock, which is afflicted to-day by so many calamities; may He stimulate the generous virtue and willingness of the good, and, pouring out the fire of His love, may He revive the half-dead faith of those who now barely retain the name of Christian. This, in our paternal love for the French people, we most earnestly ask of God through the Immaculate Virgin."

The Congress was one of the greatest that has ever been held. The procession of distinguished Prelates, Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots and clergy, secular as well as regular, seemed unending.

Every country, even China, Japan, Canada, and Australia could boast its representative. Never, it was said, had men of so many nations been seen together in one place; the confusion of tongues was like Babel. Nor was the priestly element alone conspicuous. Lay folk of every age, rank, and race came flocking from every quarter of the globe, all moved by one impulse—devotion to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. The Pope had desired that the Congress, besides being a magnificent expression of the honour due to the Holy Eucharist, should be full of solid and sublime teaching on the nature of the Sacrament which the Catholic world regards as the centre of Christian worship and the source of all true spiritual life. Eminent theologians had therefore been chosen to read papers bearing on this subject, as well as on that of frequent Communion and the Communion of children.

One characteristic of the Congress, and this was remarked by everybody present, was the wonderful spirit of union with the Holy Father which bore witness to the love of all the children of the Church for their saintly Pontiff. The Papal Legate, Cardinal Granito di Belmonte, who presided at every sitting, never appeared without receiving the warmest demonstrations of affection, while every time the name of Pius X. was pronounced the enthusiasm of the huge audience could not be repressed. How little did those present think that within a month their venerable Pontiff would have breathed his last.

It was scarcely more than three weeks before the opening of the Congress when the news of the murder at Serajevo of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife came like a thunder-clap upon the European world. The assassins being Serbians, Serbia was at once accused by Austria of complicity in the crime, and a drastic note, to be answered within a time limit of forty-eight hours, was presented for her acceptance. Of the policy which caused this move, and of the Powers behind it, this is not the place to speak.

The Pope, to whom the text of the Note was officially communicated by the Austro-Hungarian Government, foresaw most clearly the catastrophe that must inevitably follow. The Papal Nuncios received instructions to do all in their power to avert an international conflict, but it was too late to prevent the calamity; all efforts were in vain. In less than a fortnight the first act of the great tragedy had begun, and Austria, Serbia, Russia, Germany, Belgium, France and England were at war.

The blow fell crushingly on the Pope, whose heart was heavy with the thought of all the sufferings that war would bring in its train. The representative of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy asked him in the Emperor's name to bless the armies of the dual Empire. "I bless peace, not war," was the stern reply.

The exhortation to all the Catholics of the world, published in the *Osservatore Romano* of the 2nd of August, was a touching expression of the Holy Father's sorrow:

"While nearly all Europe is being dragged into the whirlpool of a most deadly war, of whose dangers, bloodshed and consequences no one can think without feeling oppressed with sorrow and alarm, We, too, cannot but be anxious and feel Our soul rent by the most bitter grief for the safety and for the lives of so many citizens and so many peoples for whose welfare We are supremely solicitous. Amid this tremendous upheaval and danger We deeply feel and realise that Our fatherly charity and Our apostolic ministry demand of Us that We direct men's minds upwards to Him from Whom alone help can come, to Christ, the Prince of Peace, and man's all-powerful Mediator with God. Therefore We do exhort the Catholics of the whole world to turn, full of confidence, to His throne of grace and mercy, and let the clergy lead the way by their example and by appointing special prayers in their respective parishes, under the order of the Bishops, that God may be moved to pity, and may remove as soon as possible the disastrous torch of war and inspire the supreme rulers of the nations with thoughts of peace and not of affliction."

When the Pope appeared to bless the crowds gathered in the Cortile di San Damaso on the same day, it was noticed that an expression of the deepest sadness replaced the usual kindly smile of welcome. "My poor children! My poor children!" he exclaimed in sorrowful accents as despatch after despatch confirmed the rumours of fresh mobilisations. All the Bishops who visited him during those sad days were urged to start a crusade of prayer in their dioceses to avert or to mitigate the impending disaster. Groups of pilgrims were received during the week, but blessed in silence; no public address was given by the Pope; the awful burden of the world's tragedy weighed too heavily on his heart. Night and day he prayed and suffered, trying to think of some way of bringing peace out of the conflict.

The rumour that the Pope was ill was spread about on the Feast of the Assumption. As a matter of fact, he was merely feeling indisposed, and had suspended his usual audiences. His doctor, usually inclined to be overcareful, and his sisters, always overanxious, looked on his illness as of no importance, and evinced not the slightest anxiety.

On Tuesday, the 17th of August, as the Cardinal Secretary of State, himself unwell at the time, was unable to go to his usual daily audience, the Holy Father sent him a message assuring him that he was all right. "*Dica al Cardinale,*" he said, "*che stia bene, perche quando sta male lui, sto male io!*"[1] His sisters saw him on the Tuesday evening, and went home after leaving a message for the Cardinal that the Holy Father was doing well, and would be all right in the morning. He had been at his writing-table as usual, and had received a Franciscan Father, who left him without any idea that he was ill. During the night of Wednesday, the 18th, he became very much worse, and at eight o'clock in the morning was declared to be seriously ill, though the doctor had

[1] "Tell the Cardinal to get well, for when he is ill I am ill too."

not given up all hopes of recovery. A few hours later it was announced that the Pope was dying.

The Cardinal Secretary of State and those of the Cardinals who could be present, hastily summoned, knelt around him, unable to restrain their tears. The Pope lay, or rather sat, propped up with pillows and breathing with difficulty; his sisters were by his side, a Brother of St. John of God in attendance as nurse.

The last consecutive words he had spoken were to his confessor, "I resign myself completely," he said, after which his answers to the prayers recited grew fainter and fainter until they ceased altogether.

"One was not conscious of time and it was all unreal," wrote one who was present. "Suddenly the deep notes of St. Peter's great bell boomed out, tolling '*pro Pontifice agonizzante,*' and at that signal Exposition began in all the patriarchal Basilicas with special prayers. The hot scirocco, the buzz from the Piazza San Pietro far below, whispering Prelates and attendants, the boom of the bell—how strange it all seemed; and behind everything the catastrophe of the present public situation and war."

So the hours of the afternoon wore on into the night. The Pope could not speak, but he recognised those who approached him, received the clasp of their hands with an answering pressure, raised his own to bless them, and from time to time made slowly on his brow and breast a long sign of the Cross. At a little after 1.15, in the profoundest peace and calm, Pius X. passed away. He died as he had lived, quietly and simply; and few strangers, had they seen the plain, austerely furnished bedroom where the Holy Father lay, noble and majestic in death, though not yet clothed in his Pontifical vestments, could have believed that this was the death-chamber of a Pope. Opposite the bed, which was surrounded by four great candles, stood a plain altar, where from the small hours of the morning Mass succeeded Mass; two Noble Guards were on duty beside the dead Pontiff. The grief felt for his loss was deep and universal; Cardinals, Prelates, servants, all sorts and conditions of men, wept openly as they went about their duties. Diplomats expressed in heartfelt accents to Cardinal Merry del Val their admiration, veneration, and love for the saintly Pope who had passed away. "The whitest soul in this blood-stained tempest-torn world has left us," wrote an Italian Prelate to a friend. "The Holy Father has died of a broken heart," said another.

The body of the Pope, clad in full pontificals, was exposed in the Sala del Trono and afterwards carried to St. Peter's, where it was placed in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, raised aloft and visible to the crowd. A continuous stream of people passed through the huge Basilica, getting thicker and thicker as the day went on. Pius X. had asked that he might be buried in the crypt of St. Peter's, forbidding absolutely the embalming of his body. His wish was carried out on the 23rd of August; he lies, with so many other saintly Popes, near the first great Bishop of Rome, who, like himself, was a man of humble birth and of great heart.

"The will of the Holy Father," said one of the Cardinals, "is the will of a saint." Opening with an invocation of the Blessed Trinity and an expression of confidence in the mercy of Almighty God, it continued

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thus: "I was born poor, I have lived poor, and I wish to die poor." A sum not exceeding £12 a month was left to the Pope's sisters, and 48s. a month to his private valet, while a legacy of £400 was bequeathed to his nephews and nieces, subject to the approval of the next Pope. The maintenance of 400 orphans, victims of the Messina earthquake of 1908 and undertaken by the Holy Father, was also provided for.

"Pius X. has left his mark on the world," wrote Monsignor Benson in the *Tablet* of August 29th . . . "perhaps more than any Pontiff of the last four centuries. That humble cry of sorrow, which, we are told, broke from him only a few days ago when he deplored his impotence to check the madness of Europe, indeed witnessed to the great historical lesson that those who reject the arbitration of Christ's Vicar and the elementary principles of Christian justice will surely reap—indeed are already reaping—the bitter fruits of disobedience; but along other lines he has done more than any predecessor of his since the days of that great schism, to reconcile by love those who throw over authority; and the secret of it all lies in exactly that which he would be the last to recognise—namely, the personal holiness and devotion of his own character."

"It is a wonderful consolation to realise how, for the first time perhaps for centuries, the Shepherd of the Flock has succeeded in making his voice heard, and a part, at least, of his message intelligible among the sheep that are not of his fold. Pontiff after Pontiff has spoken that same message, and Pontiff after Pontiff has been, without the confines of his own flock, little more than a voice crying in the wilderness. Now, for the first time, partly no doubt through the breaking down of obstinate prejudice, but chiefly through the particular accents of the voice that spoke and the marvellous personality of the speaker, that message has become audible, and Pius X. has succeeded where diplomacy and even sanctity of another complexion have failed. Men have recognised the transparent love of the Pastor where they have been deaf to the definitions of the Pontiff; they have at any rate paused to listen to the appeals of their Father, when they have turned away from the authority of the *Rector Mundi*."

Nor was it the Catholic Press alone that paid tribute to the holy life and noble aims of the dead Pontiff, but that of the whole country, and, for the most part, of other countries as well. Even the enemies of the Catholic Church, all, that is, but the most prejudiced and mean-souled amongst them, could admire the saintly personality of Pius X., if they did not agree with his policy. "All men who hold sincere and personal holiness in honour," said the *Times*, "will join with the Roman Catholic Church in her mourning for the Pontiff she has lost. The policy of Pius X. has had many critics, not all of them outside the Church he ruled, but none has ever questioned the transparent honesty of his convictions or refused admiration for his priestly virtues. Sprung from the people, he loved and understood them as only a good parish priest can do. That was the secret of the love which he won amongst them from the first, and which at Venice made him a great popular power. Not that he ever courted popularity; he taught them as one having authority and could insist upon obedience. But the Roman Church mourns in him something more than a saintly priest and a great Bishop; in him she also deplores a great Pope. In the spheres of Church politics his reign has witnessed grievous disasters. It has seen the separation of Church and State in France and in Portugal, and the whole process of "dechristianising" national and social life, of which that measure was the symbol. Unprejudiced judges cannot blame a Pope for rejecting all compromise with a policy which, on the admission of its authors, was deliberately aimed at the destruction of the faith which it was his mission to uphold. Compromise, it has been said, ought to have been possible, but there are principles which Rome cannot waive or abate. Pius X. conceived that such principles were jeopardised in all the accommodations with the new system which were suggested to him. It was no light thing for him to impose upon the faithful clergy of France and of Portugal, a course which brought to them the loss of their revenues, their homes, and even of all legal right in their churches. But his decision was to him not a question of expediency, but of right and wrong. He gave it in accordance with the dictates of his conscience, and the wonderful obedience which the priests whom it impoverished have shown to his commands has filled with a just pride his children throughout the world. . . . His reform of Church music was in the main a return to the pure and noble manner of the best masters of the sixteenth century . . . his zeal for establishing the true text of the Vulgate—the "authorised version" of Latin Christianity—illustrates in yet another field the plain practical nature of his mind. . . . The sweeping condemnation of "Modernism" was the most conspicuous act of his Pontificate within the domain of dogma. It was a consequence of his position and of his character as inevitable as his repudiation of compromise with the secularism of M. Combe or M. Briand. Few persons familiar with the elementary doctrines of the Roman Church could suppose that the tendencies of the new school were compatible with them. To the downright plain sense of the Pope the desperate efforts of men who had explained away the content of historical Christianity to present themselves as orthodox Roman Catholics were simply disingenuous. . . . The elevation of Giuseppe Sarto to the most ancient and most venerable Throne in Europe is a striking illustration of the democratic side of the Roman Church to which she has largely owed her power. Hildebrand himself, who brought the Emperor as a suppliant to Canossa, is said to have been the son of a carpenter; Sixtus IV., Julius II. and Sixtus V.—whose father was a market gardener—were poor Franciscan monks. The only English Pope began life as a servitor and perhaps as a beggar. Has not his own friend and bookseller recorded how the poor priest, to whom mankind owes the library of the Vatican, used to get into debt for the beautiful books which they both loved? The story is not without its lessons for statesmen and for educationists. The Church did not attempt universal education, but by her monastic schools, her bursaries and her seminaries she set up a ladder leading to the most exalted of all her dignities for the most fit. It was long since a peasant's son had won the Triple Crown. In this, as in so much besides, the reign of Pope Pius X. was a return to the past."

In the crypt of St. Peter's the last Pope, who was a peasant, lies close beside the first, who was a fisherman, and this is the inscription on his tomb:

PIVS PAPA X

PAVPER ET DIVES
MITIS ET HVMILIS CORDE
REIQVE CATHOLICAE VINDEX FORTIS
INSTAVRARE OMNIA IN CHRISTO
SATAGENS PIE OBIIT
DIE XX. AVG. A.D. MCMXIV.[1]

Thither the rich and powerful, as well as the poor and friendless, come to ask, through the intercession of "Il Santo," for graces great and small, and rumour has it that they do not ask in vain.

[1] POPE PIUS X

POOR AND HUMBLE OF HEART
UNDAUNTED CHAMPION OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH
ZEALOUS TO RESTORE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST
CROWNED A HOLY LIFE WITH A HOLY DEATH
XX AUGUST, A.D. 1914.

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