

Current Topics

Evvival!

Personal anniversaries are the mere funerals of empty years to the growing race of idlers and to the lackadaisical throng

'Who talk beneath the stars
And sleep beneath the sun,
And lead the life of going to do,
And die with nothing done.'

Poles apart from these are the anniversary years of the great and good Pontiff who now occupies the See of St. Peter. To-morrow, fifty of them will have passed by since the happy day—September 18, 1858—when he received the power and the grace of the priesthood within the consecrated walls of the *Duomo* of Castelfranco. Those fifty years have been, not empty time-measures, but fifty golden argesies freighted with rich treasures of personal merit and of zealous and fruitful toil for souls. Like Goldsmith's village pastor, he not alone 'allured to brighter worlds,' but 'led the way.' His fifty golden years of strenuous work for God and souls brought earth and heaven nearer within the various circuits of his jurisdiction; and their myriad hours are so many steps in

'The ladder of the vision,
Whereon go
To and fro,
In ascension and demission,
Star-flecked feet of Paradise.'

The crowded years have dealt gently with Pius X. He is seventy-three years young: his busy mind apparently as full of virile strength and activity as if he had not yet passed the *medio del cammin di questa vita*—the full meridian of his life. The best years of life, according to Mark Twain's experience, are those that begin at seventy. Old age, too, does not truly begin until one has acquired the habit of looking backward. The Pope dies. The Papacy lives on, nor knows wrinkle or decay. And the habit of retrospection that spells old age seems, somehow, foreign to the idea of the hard-wrought earthly Head of a Church whose future embraces all the years until the end of time. May long and heaven-blessed years yet be in store to our beloved Pontiff

'Till like ripe fruit he drop
Into his mother's lap'

And may each day of his remaining life-span be laden with an overflowing measure of blessing and of fruitful service for the Church of God!

The Pope's Face.

Longfellow loved a face that had a story to tell. 'How different,' says he in his *Hyperion*, 'faces are in this particular! Some of them speak not. They are books in which not a line is written, save perhaps a date.' A glance even at the counterfeit presentations of Pius X. shown in our sun-engravings amply shows that his face is a face that speaks. The distinguished artist, A. Muller Ury, who recently painted the Holy Father's portrait from special sittings, says: 'His face is one beautiful to a painter, for it combines the spiritual with a pleasing virility. The head is one but seldom matched. He has the brow of a thinker. But his eyes attract me most of all his features. They are greenish, bluish, greyish in color, both large and singularly and beautifully luminous. I have never seen a man with eyes quite like those of Giuseppe Sarto.' Always kindly benevolence shines through them.

Those who have recently seen the gentle Pontiff assure us that no portrait can convey the spirituality and benignity which illumine his mobile countenance. Yet our engravings will enable the reader to understand what was meant by Cervantes when he said of

a good man whose benevolence breathed from his countenance, that 'he had a face like a benediction.'

A Mare's Nest

Mare's nests are, perhaps, valuable assets—especially if you happen to catch the old mare sitting. The Protestant 'Defence' Association in Australia has a large and extremely varied assortment of this class of asset stowed away in its cellars, and from time to time it keeps adding to its stock. Its latest 'find' relates to the recent Burns-Squires prize-fight, and the announcement thereof in a Melbourne paper added to the enjoyment of life beyond the Tasman Sea. 'Mr. Batley (Grand Secretary) said that he held in his hand a picture showing Cardinal Vaughan in America blessing Burns before entering on one of these brutal contests. Mr. Burns was a pet son of the Roman Catholic Church—so was Mr. Squires—and this occasion, as there was no Protestant to knock out, no blessing was given.—(Laughter.)'

In the (journalistic) scene that ensued, Tommy Burns took a hand. He struck the Grand Secretary at pretty high velocity, and you could almost see the stars and smell the smoke of the impact. The 'Grand's' assertions (he declared in the Melbourne *Argus* of September 1) are 'nothing more nor less than a tissue of misstatements. In the first place, I have never received a blessing before entering the ring, nor is such a thing ever done. Secondly, there are no such persons in the Roman Catholic Church as pet sons, whatever may be the case with the Protestant Defence League. Thirdly, Squires is not, and does not profess to be, a Roman Catholic, though certainly he is not a member of the Protestant Defence League, for which nobody is more thankful than Squires himself. Fourthly—but this is a small matter, evidently, in the eyes of the aforesaid Grand Secretary—Cardinal Vaughan, who, by the way, blessed the soldiers before they went to South Africa to fight for the British Empire against the Boers, has been dead for some time, and, as far as I can learn, has never been in America. Fifthly, Father Bernard Vaughan, a brother of the Cardinal, was the reverend gentleman present on a platform with me on one occasion in London, who, if he were to be belittled by a comparison between himself and the Grand Secretary already alluded to, would, in the opinion of people of all creeds of not the United Kingdom only, but of the world, rank as far above the Grand Secretary heretofore mentioned with reference to sanctity of life, charity towards the poor—not to mention good family, intellectuality, manliness, and courage—as man is above the fallen angels.' Burns then proceeded to detail the circumstances under which he came into contact with Father Bernard Vaughan, 'who' (as he truly remarks) 'is as well known among the poor of the East End of London as he is at his Farm street church, in the heart of the aristocratic section.' A charity performance had been organised by the clergy of SS. Mary and Michael's Catholic Church, Commercial road, 'in one of the very poorest districts in London.' 'As a public entertainer, I was requested to lend my services for the cause of charity, which, as I knew it to be genuine, I gladly did.' Father Bernard Vaughan 'signified his intention to be present, although I was unaware of this until I entered the hall.' Burns had managed, with considerable difficulty, to be present, having had to come from Croydon (ten miles outside London) and to return thither the same night in order to fulfil his public engagements. 'I did not,' writes he to the *Argus*, 'enter a brutal contest, as the Grand Secretary would class an ordinary contest, but I boxed two exhibition rounds with my present sparring partner, Pat O'Keefe. I received no money for this, nor should I have taken it, any more than I should in the case of a similar charity here in Australia, and Father Vaughan, to quote his own words, "was pleased to stand on the same platform with the champion boxer of the world, a man who, by his own clean life, set an example that our young men should follow. He is with us to-night performing for charity;

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