

ever since the sixteenth century. On his mother's side, the late Pope claimed descent from the celebrated Cola di Rienzi, 'the last of the Roman tribunes.' In 1817, his father, Colonel Count Pecci brought his seven-year old boy to Rome. When eight years old he was sent to the Jesuit college at Viterbo, where he remained six years, afterwards removing to Rome where he completed his studies, gaining the highest honors in philosophy, mathematical science, and chemistry. His father, being himself a soldier, wished him to adopt a military career, but his mother, who seems to have had some presentiment of her son's future greatness, wished him to join the ranks of the priesthood, silencing her husband's protests by assuring him that Gioacchino

Would One Day be Pope

Gioacchino was one of the poets that are born so. He probably 'lipped in numbers,' for we are told that at eleven years of age he commemorated his first communion by a sonnet in Latin verse. Years and cares weighed heavily on him since those days, but he ever, till his farthest old age—and even on his death-bed—cultivated the Muses, at one time trying to charm away pain by the aid of poetry, and with a fair measure of success too, for he says 'pain, when charmed by verse, seemed half allayed'; at another time writing exquisite poems on such up-to-date subjects as photography and electricity, using Latin, the language of the ancients and of the schools, as the vehicle to convey his thoughts on modern science

After a most brilliant college career he was

Ordained Priest in 1837

and appointed one of the Pope's prelates. Almost immediately he attracted notice, being appointed the following year as Papal delegate to the province of Benevento. Benevento had long been the home of brigands, who flourished there, protected on one hand by a kind of false hero-worship which casts a glamour of romance about evil-doers of the Robin Hood type, and on the other hand by the liberal distribution of their ill-gotten gains to a decaying nobility and landlord class, who, in return, sheltered them from the officers of the law. Monsignor Pecci saw clearly how matters stood. He knew that he would have to fight not only the brigands, but the more formidable nobles who backed them up, and who threatened to have the delegate recalled to Rome if he showed too much courage and vigor in the crusade. Pecci took prompt and vigorous action against the brigands, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the district clear of those unwelcome parasites.

The following years were years of rapid change for Monsignor Pecci. In 1841 we find he was recalled to Rome and sent to Spoleto; shortly after to Perugia—he was

Appointed Archbishop

there some years afterwards—and then made Nuncio to Brussels. When he was appointed to Brussels his knowledge of French was of the slenderest kind. But those were not the days of the Empire trains and 'sud-expresses,' and so he improved the many shining hours that it then took to get to the Belgian capital by learning the language of diplomacy. Ten days' detention at Nîmes through illness, helped him to still further master the language, so that he was able to express himself correctly and fluently on his arrival in the Belgian capital. Belgium was then the youngest country in Europe. It had all its new problems to face and solve, and its rulers found in the new Nuncio a broad-minded and sympathetic friend, who watched the early struggles of the little nation with deep interest. It must have been pleasing for him to note in after years how that little country has more than realised the sanguine hopes of its early friends, and stands to-day amongst the most happy and prosperous nations of the earth, and an affliction of spirit to the over-ardent pulpit orators who try to prove that Catholicism and national decadence are convertible terms.

On his recall from Brussels, he journeyed to London, where he was received by the late Queen Victoria; and it is pleasing to note that the most cordial good-will ever afterwards existed between him and the good Sovereign who preceded him to the grave. On the occasion of her golden jubilee and record reign celebrations, Pope Leo's congratulations and good wishes were conveyed by special envoy; and on her part the late Queen sent the expression of her compliments and good wishes to him from time to time, and in 1888 presented him with a magnificent set of vestments, for which she received a flowing measure of rough abuse from her 'loyal' subjects of the Orange order. He arrived in Rome only in time to hear of the death of his kind friend and patron, Pope Gregory XVI., and to know that Cardinal Mastai Ferretti had been raised to the Papal chair, under the title of Pius IX. The new Pope gave him a most cordial welcome, sent him to the See of Perugia, and made him Archbishop in recognition of his valuable services as Nuncio at Brussels. In Perugia, the new archbishop labored with indomitable energy in the promotion of every good work. He established during his two and thirty years there, colleges, schools, hospitals, and all manner of charitable associations. Later on (in 1853) he was made Cardinal, and in 1877 was nominated by Pius IX. to the dignified and commanding office of Cardinal Camerlengo (that is, Cardinal Chamberlain). It was in that capacity that on the decease of Pope Pius IX., he was called upon to verify the fact of death, to destroy the Fisherman's Ring (or Papal Great Seal) so as to prevent its further use, to enter upon the administration of the Apostolic Palace (the Vatican), and to make

the arrangements for the Conclave, which ended in his elevation to the Papal throne.

A Striking Ceremonial

There is a strange and striking ceremonial, by which the Cardinal Chamberlain assures himself, and the Vatican, and the outer world, that the late Pope is actually dead. The examination of the corpse is duly made by medical men and Vatican officials in the Cardinal Chamberlain's presence. When it is completed, the Cardinal, holding in his hand a little silver hammer, prostrates himself before the bed, calls the dead man three times by his baptismal name, each time touching him lightly on the forehead with the silver hammer. The silence which follows this appeal by voice and touch is final proof that he who makes no answer to it is beyond its reach, and the Chamberlain announces to the waiting officials that the Pope has ceased to live. Pope Pius did not answer to the sad, unhoping call, and then Cardinal Pecci announced that Pius IX. was dead. Such is the ceremony as described by one who knows it well.

It was in February, 1878, that the Conclave of Cardinals assembled to elect the new Pope. The choice, as already stated, fell upon Cardinal Pecci. This was on February 20. He took the name of Leo XIII., and his election was announced from the loggia or gallery of St. Peter's to the expectant throng in the crowded and magnificent piazza below. His coronation took place on March 3, 1878.

His First Acts

The very first act of any international interest or importance performed by the new Pope after his enthronement brought him into a certain relationship with the people of Great Britain. On March 4, 1878—one day after his coronation, fifteen days after his election—he published a Bull re-establishing the Catholic hierarchy in Scotland. This was indeed but carrying on the policy of his predecessor. Pius IX. had re-established the Catholic hierarchy in England, an act which stirred up an extraordinary hurricane of popular passion. There was, indeed, a demonstration and some wild talking on Glasgow Green immediately after the promulgation of the Pope's Bull, a copy of which was melodramatically burned in the presence of thousands of spectators. It was, however, a mere patty-pan ebullition and ended there. Scotland as a whole viewed this so-called instance of 'papal aggression' with commendable good-temper and common-sense.

The new Pope ascended the Papal throne under peculiar conditions. The temporal power of the Pope passed away when Victor Emanuel occupied Rome in 1870. The gaze of the world was turned towards Rome to see how the new Pope would grapple with the altered conditions. Leo had a special training in the ways of diplomacy, he had met and measured the great ones of the earth, was credited with a keen insight into ways and motives that actuate public men, with a sound judgment and a strong will to execute a well matured policy for the benefit of the Church. In Italy the politicians thought Leo would relinquish the views of Pius IX. with regard to the States of the Church and kiss the hand that had deprived her of the patrimony of Peter and give his blessing to the monarch who had made Rome the seat of an usurper's Government. In regard to the Italian Government Leo carried out the policy of Pius IX. He would not recognise the Italian Government any more than he did the brigands of Benevento. His motto, like that of Pius IX., was 'ne eletti ne elettori' (neither elected nor electors—Catholics were not to go to the polls) and he spurned the annual allowance—or bribe—voted him by the Italian Parliament under the Law of Guarantees. When we recollect that this annual grant, if accepted, would now amount to some £8,000,000 we can form a good idea of what the Pope has sacrificed for a principle. His first encyclical letter was published on April 21, 1878. Its subject was the evils affecting modern society—their cause and remedy. It was awaited with keenest interest by the nations. Something defiant was expected. But it was nothing of the kind. It was, instead, a masterly and sweetly reasonable treatment of a difficult and perplexing theme. The rule of the new Pontiff could not well have been more wisely and graciously inaugurated than by this appeal to the understanding and the conscience of the civilised world.

His Personal Appearance

We first set eyes upon the deceased Pontiff in 1880. He was then in the full flush of virile, though advanced, manhood—keen-eyed, alert, of active step, and, though only middle-sized and thin and transparently white, he was a commanding and impressive personality—a very king of men. Justin McCarthy, writing of him a few years ago, said: 'Pope Leo XIII. is a man of singularly graceful and imposing presence. He is generally described as very tall, but his slender form gives him the appearance of being much taller than he really is. He is not a man much above the middle height, but very slight and stately. His face is as bloodless as that of a marble statue. He dresses in white, and the white of his robes is only of a different tone from the pallor of his face. Even now, despite his advanced years, the Pope moves with a quick and easy tread, which has no suggestion of creeping old age about it. He enters readily and simply into conversation, and has the native-born sympathy which enables him to come at once into a cordial and thorough understanding with his visitors. It can hardly be necessary to say that he is brought into constant communication with men and women from all parts of the world, and I have never heard of any one who did not go away impressed with his geniality