

THE NEW POPE

AN APPRECIATION

The Rome correspondent of the London 'Times,' writing on August 5, supplied the following sketch of the new Pope's career and character, the particulars being gleaned from trustworthy sources:—

Riese, the birthplace of Giuseppe Sarto, is a very small country town of some 5000 inhabitants a little to the north of Castelfranco Veneto, which is its nearest station on the railway between Vicenza and Treviso. The family of the new Pope, simple people of the peasant class, was fairly large, and he has still living one brother, Angelo, a collector in the post office of Granzie, near Mantua; three sisters who are married, and three unmarried, two of whom have been living with him in Venice. His mother, who is also living, still inhabits the little house where the future Pope was born and where the Patriarch of Venice was wont to pay her not infrequent visits. Absolutely simple and modest in his own ideas, Giuseppe Sarto, even after he became Cardinal, had no wish to change the position or way of life of his family. His sisters are married respectively to a tailor, a sacristan, and an innkeeper, and their husbands still ply their several professions on the most modest scale.

As a child Giuseppe Sarto was first sent to the parish school of Riese to learn the rudiments of letters and religion. His aptitude induced his family to send him to a school in Castelfranco Veneto, where he won a small scholarship which had been given to the school by a former Patriarch of Venice. Thence he passed first to the seminary of Treviso and afterwards to that of Padua, distinguishing himself in the study of theology, and in 1858 was ordained priest. He was sent first as curate to the parish of Tombola, where he remained nine years. In 1867 he was appointed parish priest of Salzano. This promotion seemed to many of his colleagues over-sudden, and some complaints were made on account of the youth of the new pastor—he was then 32—but his zeal in his new post soon satisfied them of his fitness to hold it. Here he remained nine years more, attracting the attention of his Bishop by the devotion and tact with which he discharged his parish duties.

A parish priest in a very small and unimportant country parish, at the age of 40, Giuseppe Sarto can hardly be said to have been specially favored by fortune. At this period of his life, however, the tide began to turn for him decidedly, if at first slowly. The Bishop of Treviso had long marked his exceptional qualities, and in 1875 made him a canon of the Cathedral. In 1876 he relinquished his parish for his canonry, becoming at the same time a professor of ecclesiastical history in the seminary of Treviso, and afterwards episcopal chancellor and vicar-general of the diocese. On the death of the Bishop the Chapter of Treviso showed their appreciation of his merits by unanimously electing him vicar of the Chapter. He then passed to the diocese of Mantua, where for two years he was rector of the seminary. Here he attracted the notice of Leo XIII, who, in 1884,

Created Him Bishop of that City

The excellent results that he had achieved under such difficult conditions won the sympathy and protectorship of a powerful protector in the shape of Cardinal Parocchi, then intimately connected with Venice. It was partly owing to his good offices that, in 1893, Sarto was summoned to Rome by Leo XIII, and created a Cardinal in the Consistory of June 12 that year. Three days later, on June 15, he was appointed to the vacant Patriarchate of Venice. This appointment gave rise to a political incident which, at the time, made a certain stir. The Italian Government refused to grant the 'exequatur' on the score that this nomination was a right inherited by the new kingdom of Italy from the ancient Republic of Venice. The Holy See, on the other hand, held that the nominations which used to be made by the Republic of Venice were only made under favor of a special privilege, granted temporarily to the Republic, which could not be transmitted to the heirs of the Republic. It was while this dispute was still going on that the late King Humbert visited Venice for the purpose of meeting the German Emperor. The Cardinal Patriarch waited on him there, and the King expressed his personal sympathy with the new Patriarch, and his regret that the question should have arisen. Crispi, who was then Prime Minister, also had a great respect and liking for the ex-Bishop of Mantua, and it was not long before the Italian Government yielded on the legal point and granted his 'exequatur.'

His work in Venice was as successful as that in Mantua. The Venetian authorities found in him

A Man of Great Common Sense,

and, moreover, one who was strongly imbued with the principle of giving to Caesar that which was Caesar's. Cardinal Sarto has often been accused by his Liberal opponents with time-serving. The accusation was mainly due to the annoyance that they felt at his never giving cause for offence. He recognised the great desirability of working in harmony with the official authorities and did his best, without yielding any crucial points, to preserve that harmony. Of the Sindaco, Count Grimani, he became a personal friend, and it was no time-serving motive that allowed him to take part in the official ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new Campanile, when he stood before the people of Venice in company with the Count of Turin and the Italian Minister Nasi. He acted then as a good Venetian, and also as a Cardinal-Bishop who had the true sense of the dignity of his office. And it was no time-serving motive that brought him later to the ante-chamber of King Victor Emmanuel when the latter visited Venice. That was an act of courtesy which the King himself certainly did not misunderstand.

There is nothing to add to what has already been said elsewhere of Cardinal Sarto's public life in Venice. Of his private life one can only say that its main characteristic is its absolute simplicity and modesty. He is reported to be even more frugal in the matter of meals than Leo XIII. himself, and, though bearing himself with a great natural dignity on all occasions, is no lover of outward pomp and state. In nearly every respect he offers a strong contrast to his predecessor. But Pontiffs, when once they have assumed pontifical names, have a way of resembling each other more closely than their personal difference in character would lead one to believe, and it would be premature to prophesy yet any radical changes in the Vatican itself. This, at least, may be said of the new Pontiff—if it was desirable to have an Italian Pope, it was even more desirable to have one who, like Giuseppe Sarto, combined the very best qualities of the Italian character.

Physique of the Irish Race

We ('Saturday Review') have often been struck by the astonishing number of Irishmen to be found among American athletes. It is scarcely too much to say that the greatest weight-putters, hammer-throwers, and jumpers in Britain and the States have all been Irishmen, or of Irish extraction. The success of the Americans in the Palma competition at Bisley, though done in the main to the perfection, we may say the excessive perfection, of their weapon, may be claimed as an Irish victory. The first three names were all Irish—surely an extraordinary instance of the way in which Irishmen come to the front as soon as they leave their own country. But, in these days, Ireland is being claimed as the play-ground of the Empire. One may hope that it will become a playground on which Irishmen will remain to develop their native genius. We have heard much lately of the degeneration of British physique. It is probable that the physique of the men in some parts of Ireland is the best in the civilised world, not excluding the Sikhs; and perhaps the Tawarcks only excel them from among the less civilised. As to the perfection of the weapon which these three Irishmen held so straight, it is said that the elevation, the test of the gun, and its sights, rather than the man's steadiness were perfectly accurate in every shot fired by the American team.

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