

PIUS IX.

Pius the Great, the Good, the Immortal, is no more in the flesh. His spirit has fled. The Vicar of Christ, having seen "the years of Peter," has at last met his Divine Master in Heaven.

There is mourning on earth in every land where the Cross of the Saviour is raised. Two hundred and fifty millions of Catholics are plunged in grief. It is silent grief, but deep and sacred. No tongue can express it, no pen can describe it. It cannot find relief in tears.

He died on Thursday, February 7th, about four o'clock in the afternoon of Roman time. There was no painful agony, and the great mind of the loved Pope retained its faculties until the last throbbing of his noble heart. "Guard the Church I loved so well," were his parting words to the Cardinals at his bedside—his last will and testament, his bequest and legacy, to them in their sphere of teaching and government, and to us in our's of obedience. For, we are his heirs as well as they, to that holy example of pure and unchanging love for the Church from his early youth unto the end of his glorious Pontificate. Oh! yes, Pius taught us well to love our Mother Church. And we love thee, grand old Church, we love thee dearly! Thee will we guard, as Father Pius with his last breath willed, by our obedience to thee unreservedly in all things soever. This we swear over the corpse of the Pontiff-Confessor and Martyr. So help us God!

His precious remains were embalmed, according to custom, and lay in state for nine days exposed to the veneration of the faithful. After their interment, which is about to take place at this time of writing, the Cardinals in Rome, whither the first American Cardinal has been summoned with the rest, will assemble in Conclave, and, guided by the Holy Ghost, Who remaineth with the Church forever, proceed to the election of a successor. Long may he live, "*lumen in cælo!*"

Two and thirty years ago, the members of the Sacred College at that period were convened, for the same purpose, on the death of Gregory XVI. By their unanimous choice, as expressed on June

16th, 1846, a successor was elected in the person of Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferrotti, born in Sinigaglia, Italy, May 13th, 1792, of noble parentage; raised to the Priesthood in 1819, to the Archiepiscopal see of Spoleto in 1827, and to the Cardinalate in 1839. He had been tried in many ways and found a "good and faithful servant," as a director of poor children in the school of Tata Giovanni, as Secretary to the Apostolic Legate to Chili, as Superintendent of the Hospital of San Michele a Ripa, as well as in discharging the duties of higher and more responsible offices at Spoleto and Imola.

He began his reign as a Reformer, correcting all abuses ecclesiastical and political, amnestying all political offenders, remodelling the entire criminal and civil codes, founding schools for the masses, hospitals and refuges for the sick and indigent, encouraging manufactures, and opening public works to give employment to the working classes. But he could not satisfy the Revolution. He gave a constitutional form of government to the Pontifical States, and in return, the Count Pellegrino Rossi, "the noblest Roman of them all," was assassinated. Next, his Secretary, Monsignore Palma, was shot in his own presence. And then, a Radical Ministry was forced into office. All this in the name of Liberty! And from this point Protestant writers date the "retrogressive policy" of the Pope.

The Pope, in disguise, fled on November 24th, 1848, to Gaeta, whence he addressed a solemn appeal to the Catholic Powers of Europe, which soon had effect. France, Spain, Austria, and the Kingdom of Naples responded to the call of their Common Father. A French army landed at Civita Vecchia on April 25th of the year following; laid siege to Rome, and stormed and captured the city after a desperate resistance. The Holy Father returned to his Capital, and re-entered it in triumph, signaling his victory by a proclamation of amnesty. But henceforward there was to be no peace between the world of the Nineteenth Century and him. No peace, no rest for Pius, but "*crux de cruce.*"

Again, in 1859, were the States of the Church attacked, when Naples was lost to them and annexed to Sardinia, then