

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

FROM PETER TO LEO.

An Historical Retrospect—Peter's Recognition by History.

BY REV. ROBERT KANE, S. J.

The following eloquent Lenten conference was given recently by Rev. Robert Kane, S. J., in the Church of St. Francis Xavier, Dublin. The preacher's text was: "Thou art Peter" (Matt. xvi., v. 18), and the special phase of his subject: "Peter's Recognition by History." Father Kane said:

He stood by the Galilean shore a Man without a past and without a future. More narrow and more steep than the hills which shut in His cottage at Nazareth, the stubborn cliffs of social tradition and the impassable peaks of political exclusiveness had, until His thirtieth year, walled up His life within the mental darkness and torpor of a village sacred at even by the county folk for the dullness of its people. No vibration of great ideas could come to Him from Rome; no spark of intellect from Athens. The world of His own race He must have heard of in its unflinching and ceaseless struggle to remain alone amongst the nations, untaught, untouched, uninfluenced by the outside world. But no book had ever brought to Him from beyond His intellectual horizon the wisdom of philosopher, the song of poet, or the craft of statesman. "Is not this the Son of a carpenter?" men said; and again: "how knoweth this Man letters, having never learned?" He was only a tradesman, unknown, and therefore without history; untaught, and therefore without promise. Was it a dream that He dreamt, as He stood by the Galilean shore? What? He, isolated, obscure, without power without wealth, without honor, without education, without influence, He, unaided and alone, without help from the strong or warrant from the wise, proclaimed that He had fulfilled a doctrine which shall come to supersede the Testament of the Jew and the Philosophy of the Gentile. Yea! He proclaimed His own Kingship over an empire which shall cleave in one wide hold all the nations of the earth, and which shall wax still stronger and statelier with the decay and death of the ages, nor fall till the end of time. With a boldness that made a polished history of the past, with a courage that challenged the present, He promulgated His claim to a Kingdom that should be stopped by no frontier in space, nor be outstripped by the steps of time; a Kingdom that should be an universal brotherhood of men and AN ETERNAL NATIONHOOD OF SOULS, two ideas equally antagonistic to the received notions of Gentile or of Jew; a kingdom which everyone who hears of it must enter; a kingdom visible to all as a city on a mountain top; a Kingdom of which He is Himself not only Lord but ruler of thought, not only Master but motive of life; all promulgated, foretells His own betrayal, abandonment, foretells His own betrayal, abandonment, and ignominious death. "King, nay! No human brain could have conceived an ideal so Divine. No mortal heart could give birth to love that was infinite. A dream that was impossible to man was not made fact by hand of angel. Nay, nay! No mere man was He Who by His word changed the world. He is Nazareth was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Between theory and fact there is an abyss. But, in the words of Richter, Christ, "between the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy, has lifted with His pierced hand empires of their hinges, has turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages." How did Christ set about the realization of His ideals? Here again

THE WONDER OF GOD'S WAYS is manifest. To be the Rock on which His Church should stand unshaken ever by the powers of darkness; to be the holder of the keys of earth and Heaven; to be the king shepherd of His shepherd princes; Christ, with Divine disregard of human prudence and with Divine recklessness of human help, chose a man that was ignorant, dull, poor, uncouth, ill-tempered, old, a mere commonplace fisherman who barely earned his daily bread with his boat and his net from the waters of the Galilean Sea. "Simon, the son of John, thou shalt be called the Rock." In the second year this promise was fulfilled. So Saint Mark tells us: "It was then Christ first established the college of His apostles and gave them authority to teach. Saint Matthew chronicles the occasion thus: "The names of the twelve apostles are these, the first Simon who is called the Rock," and the rest. Saint Luke: "Simon, whom also He called the Rock." Now, as Tertullian in the second century, remarked on this passage, a remark constant among the Fathers and obvious to any student of Scripture, when God gave a name, its meaning was

A DIVINE SYMBOL AND SANCTION of the bearer's office and authority. So was it with many, as with Abraham, Sara, Oshu, and Jesus, the Word made Flesh. In the third year of His ministry, the Son of God explained to Peter the meaning and power of His name: "Simon, son of John, I say to thee, thou art the Rock, and upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give to thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in

Heaven." And again: "I prayed for thee that thy Faith fall not, and thou, being once confirmed, confirm thy brethren." "That the word that we translate 'firm' is a term of architecture, implying to fit anything so firmly that cannot be shaken. It was a term given after Peter's own faith had secured by Christ's prayer. After Resurrection a further fulfillment. As Christ, Who is

THE ONE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, said to His Apostles, the sharers in His mission: "Ye are the light of the world;" and as Christ, Who is Cornerstone, made Simon the Rock, who is the Church is built; so, Who is the one Shepherd of the Fold, that is to say, according to the meaning of the word, the one King, said to Peter, "Give food to My sheep." "Give food to My sheep." "Give food to My sheep." "Be thou King-lamb," said: "History is given over My sheep. In the words of St. Chrysostom: "In the Acts, the promise of Christ in the carried into execution." Agassiz's great saint says: "The Acts called the Acts of the Apostles they are the Acts of their Hierarchy, the first twelve chapters, Acts, which are a history of the days of the Church, are a history of Peter. Peter's name occurs thirty times, the other rarely. His name is always first; he is the leading part and when the Apostles are mentioned, Peter alone is always body chief. "Peter was eleven; "Peter with the twelve Apostles;" "Peter and the answering said;" Peter of always answers and speaks. When Simon, son of John, he away, the Apostle who does lived in the Peter who was Now, the history of Peter's through the ages is the a revelation, which while it the inward understanding of full and the outward action, formulas, is itself the same full in its meaning and message, identical always in acter and always changing truth. Hence the Church's of her teaching and warrant of her law, for

THE IDEALIST STAMPED upon her social conduct of the unbroken seal fixed ter of her rights, must I now Christ did not found nor an aristocracy, nor a state nor a communism. His Church a Monarchy, with its visible Head and under its King. So it is in Peter Simon, and so it is in Peter XIII. That this was not of fraud or pride is ev of the holiness of the long it all of whom, for the first and thirty six years—five number—were recognized by foretold throughout the Without Peter's sanction Council has ever been held. Two very ancient histories and Sozomen, relate that always, from the first, in always been the one of matters of Faith, by ever the Christian world. ways been acknowledged supreme church of Peter has the supreme Court of Appeal in morals, in questions of or of Order, not only for Churches, but for the Peter has summoned before nal not merely the apost their judges of whatever Peter has always been presentatives to exercise preme authority in the East and West. Time for me to mention some of These I gather from the which the ignorance of ant Ignorance of the Primacy of Peter was until

THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE to rebel against Peter was the true faith. While Evangelist was still I arose amongst the Church. The matter was him, one of the twelve Peter's successor, St. Clement whose letters not merely dispute, but were records of the church. In 142 the con sought the approval in order to silence all demn his teaching. B 177 an appeal against from Lyons to Pope I 157 St. Polescar, Bis went to Rome to Pape fer on doctrine, and time Denis of Cortina supervision of Rome from es as "custodian of wards" St. Irenaeus wrote of the supremacy of sary that the faith should be in commun 250 Origen admits the In the following year Spain appeal to against the decision council. In the next died the Montanist Febriani appealing. St. Cyprilian, because he foed against the the opinion, about the re, wrote: "To th hereby can have no self asked St. Stephen's supreme authority of Gaal. In 262 we

Son, who will be thy reward?" She who spoke these strange words—heard for the first time in Rome, and in a market,—"was an old woman, almost an octogenarian, who crouched at the foot of the platform. She had cried "Courage!" and yet she wept. The respiration of the soul cannot control the tortures of the heart. Cecilia had heard the three cries, her eyes searched the crowd, and she found a smile for the three persons who watched over her.

She also remarked a man, who, springing forward from his place of concealment behind a pillar, whence he had observed, with anxiety, the proceedings we have described, hastened to speak to Parmenon. It was Marcus Regulus.

"Take care!" he said hurriedly to the slave-trader; "they want to set Cecilia away from you! Here is the divine Aurelia, the niece of the emperor, coming with her escort. You must induce her to stop and to buy the girl. A hundred eyes searched the crowd, and she found a smile for the three persons who watched over her."

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With one bound, the divine Aurelia, her beautiful face bathed in tears, was in her guard's arms. "Who are you?" asked Aurelia, some what angrily. "I come from the country of Aurora," replied the unknown, bowing respectfully, "with this man and these murrine vases, which I intend offering to the Emperor Domitian. He will, undoubtedly, be pleased that his niece should be so pleased."

"I accept, I accept!" cried the delighted young girl, extending her hands toward two amphore of admirable design. "But," she added, "these vases must be worth a considerable sum, and I wish to pay for them. Will you appraise them, my dear Vibius?"

"A friend of mine," said Vibius, "recently bought a cup of myrrh for seventy talents! It was larger than these two vases put together, but I must say that it is not of such fine make, nor had it the three colors, so precious in the eyes of lovers of the fine arts, and which are perfect in these vases."

"Then you will send this tavern-master one hundred and forty talents this very day, provided, my dear guardian, that you authorize this folly of your ward; but these vases are so beautiful!" And turning to the unknown—"What is your name?"

"Polonius of Patras, madam." "What I call you by this Apollonius who has filled Rome with reports of his prodigies?"

"Yes, madam," replied the philosopher, bowing again with still more deference; "I can assure you that the emperress's niece should pay me for the very unworthy present which I am but too happy to offer her."

"Very well," replied the proud young patrician girl, "but the emperor's niece cannot be so easily bought, or she shall be paid for, in money or otherwise. What is it you wish?"

This favor was so great that an enormous price was paid for it. It could be looked upon as a liberal compensation for the richest present. Aurelia hesitated a little. "You shall have your audience," she said at last; "however, it is my pleasure that in exchange for the murrine vases, you shall accept from me two Corinthian cups, which will be sent to your tavern to-day."

Polonius bowed for the third time without making any reply. When he looked up, the divine Aurelia was already some steps off. Two of her hand-maids carried the murrine vases.

When she reached the peristyle, Aurelia found her litter and her attendants. "Let us return by the way of the Villæ publica," said she to Vibius; "I wish to see if my empress's and myrrh vases which are sold there can compare with mine."

The villa publica was an immense bazaar, where Rome displayed all the treasures of her commercial and industrial empire; where, also, the shame of her public vices, and degradation could be seen in all its nakedness.

Aurelia's wishes were orders for Vibius; he commanded the escort to take the way to the Villa publica. When she reached the Villæ publica, she was met by the attention of her eight Ethiopian eunuchs, who had been ordered by her to wait for her.

On a high platform erected in the centre of a tavern already known to us, stood a number of half-dressed wretches, men and women, boys and girls, all wearing a label or ticket tied to their neck, and a white woollen cap or crown of foliage on their heads. It was a slave market.

Parmenon, whom we seen in such intimate conversation with Marcus Regulus, paraded in front of the platform, addressing the crowd and praising his human merchandise. The wretch held in his hand a slip of parchment, on which he had written the name of the man, and the price for which he was to be sold. The wretch held in his hand a slip of parchment, on which he had written the name of the man, and the price for which he was to be sold.

The Forum and the Campus Martius were not only the centres of the political life of the Romans, but the spots where the greatest magnificence of the emperors displayed their power. There were to be found its finest monuments and most sumptuous porticos; its wealthiest temples and most elegant walks; its most fashionable shops or taverns; all the enjoyments and seductions offered to the idleness and voluptuous existence of its million illustrious citizens.

Modern art never could imitate the wonderful splendor of some of the edifices contained in the Campus Martius. Among these marvels were the porticos of magnificent architecture. Pompey's portico, a vast parallelogram of five hundred and seventy Roman feet in length, on a width of three hundred and fifty feet, was the largest and most pleasant of the Hecatonychia.

It was the habitual resort of the aristocratic society of Rome which thronged daily the wide space between the three hundred pillars of red granite forming the interior courts shaded by plane-trees, and embellished with statues and fountains. The interior of these galleries was ornamented with paintings from the great Greek masters; whilst on the exterior walls, the statues of the gods and goddesses invited the visitors to rest and conversation.

When Aurelia entered Pompey's portico, the crowd gave way with respect, and gazed upon her with curiously mingled interest and solicitude. Every one knew this young girl as the emperor's nearest relation, and no one was ignorant of the high destinies which awaited her.

With a single glance Aurelia had scanned the immense multitude, and had sought in vain the only person she wished to see. "My cousin is not here," she exclaimed with vexation.

"It is true, Augustus ward," replied Vibius; "I had forgotten that his tutor recently lost his two sons in a few days."

"But I must see Vespasian," said Aurelia; "I wish to speak to him by all means, and you know that my uncle and aunt do not receive me any longer." "You can write to him, my dear ward. Besides, I shall arrange an interview. But, for the present, you must seek some diversion, and think no more of things that grieve you. Do you not like the sight of this portico, of the elegant society which fills it? I will call your escort, if you desire, and we shall go to the Appian Way."

AURELIA; OR, THE JEWS OF CAPEPA GATE. CHAPTER III.

WARD AND GUARDIAN. The burning rays of a July sun filled with light the dark and narrow streets of Ancient Rome. The divine Aurelia, who was surrounded by her maids, sat passive in her cubitulum (bed-room), cast a languid glance on the bright sky, and addressing the attentive slaves who awaited her commands,

"I want to go this afternoon," she said, in an imperious tone, "to Pompey's portico. Let my guardian, Vibius Crispus, be notified immediately, and let everything be in readiness at the eight hour of the day (4 o'clock, P. M.)." It was no little matter, this going out of a matron of Aurelia's rank. When she left her house, where she usually led the silent and retired life of the gynecium, to appear in public, it must be with an escort proportionate to her high condition.

No sooner, then, was the order of the noble patrician transmitted, than her five hundred slaves were in commotion and Clæra's ancient house was made noisy with their preparations for so great an event.

But it is time we should say something of this Aurelia, whom Marcus Regulus never failed to designate as the divine Aurelia, a title that may appear, perhaps, too honorific for a simple mortal. We shall take the same occasion to explain why the Grand Vestal—the illustrious Cornelia, as Regulus styled her—happened to be in Aurelia's house, instead of inhabiting the atrium regime, the sacred abode of the Virgines of Vesta.

Aurelia Domitilla—as she bore these surnames in common with all the female members of the Flavia race—was the grandniece of the Emperor Vespasian, the grandniece of Flavius Sabinus, son of Sabinus Major, Vespasian's elder brother; and her mother, Julia, the daughter of Titus, so much beloved by the Romans.

She was, therefore, the niece of Flavius Domitian, and also the niece of Flavius Clemens, her father's brother. We must also mention—for all these names belong to our narrative—that her cousin, Flavia Domitilla, had become her aunt, having married Flavius Clemens, whose supposed conversion to the Christian faith had brought about her marriage. Another cousin, hearing also the name of Flavia Domitilla, was likewise suspected of being a Jewess or Christian.

Our charming young heroine was, therefore, doubly connected with the imperial family; and during the reign of Domitian, who claimed from all who addressed him the title of "Master" and "God" (Dominus et Deus noster), no one would have dared to speak of a relative of the emperor, with contempt or in a title that admitted her participation in this much-feared divinity.

Moreover, Domitian, whose only child had died in his infancy, had recently by a public act, designated for his successors to the empire the two sons of Flavius Clemens, whose names he had changed into those of Vespasianus and Domitianus. The education of these two young men had been confined to the celebrated Quintilian.

The eldest, Vespasian, was to marry his young cousin, Aurelia, who would thus share with him, after Domitian's death, the throne of the universe. The divine Aurelia was, therefore, the greatest of all the emperors, although, at the time of our narrative commences, she had barely attained her fifteenth year. Her wealth and influence were immense. Besides her house in Rome, and the five hundred slaves which filled it, besides several magnificent villas situated in the finest sections of Italy, the enormous amount of money, money, money, she possessed, she had barely two billions seven hundred millions sesterterii, and her jewels were valued at forty millions sesterterii.

But Aurelia was an orphan. The years of childhood flow rapidly when she is under the eye of a mother. This had been the young Aurelia's bitter experience.

However, her youthful sorrow had been soothed by the tender affection of a young girl near whom she passed her early years in the sanctuary of Vesta. This young girl, connected with the most illustrious family of Rome, the family of the Scipio, the Sillas, the Cinna, etc., was the Vestal Cornelia, with whose beautiful and marvellous history we shall acquaint the reader.

The vestals, six in number, were chosen from among young girls between six and ten years of age, and remained during thirty years attached to the temple. During the first ten years they studied the rites and ceremonies; during the second period of ten years, they practised, and during the third they taught.

The vestal who survived the trials of this long service, and became the most ancient, was styled the Grand-Vestal, or ancilla; and she was distinguished from her five companions by greater honors and higher prerogatives. But her responsibility increased with the time, and she had often to bear alone the cruel punishments awarded for faults committed by other vestals.

Such was the case with Cornelia; she had attained the supreme rank of Grand-Vestal, but had soon become apprised of its perils.

She had suffered the chastisement of slaves!

The Sacred Fire having been extinguished through the neglect of one of the priestesses, Halvius Agripola, Domitian substituted in the sacrificial fire the responsibility of this fault which was considered a most unhappy omen, and the proud patrician girl was subjected, like the vilest of slaves, to the tortures of flagellation.

Shame, even more than physical pain, had made her seriously ill; and being authorized, according to custom, to withdraw to a private house during her sickness, she had left momentarily the Atrium Regium, for the roof of one of her father's houses, at the age of twelve years, as fixed by the Roman law, had had to leave the temple of Vesta.

This necessary digression being ended, we shall now resume the thread of our story.

The curtain of Aurelia's apartment was drawn aside, and an old man of small stature, with a smiling and pleasant countenance, entered, bowing to the young girl with every demonstration of respect. He wore the laticlave, indicating the rank of senator. It was Vibius Crispus, Aurelia's guardian, whom she had sent for.

It was he who incurred the displeasure of Domitian by an impudent joke pe-