

begun their weary watching for the opening of the doors of the great Basilica. An hour before the Mass there were probably eighty thousand people within the edifice and as many more struggling without. Saint Peter's, with its centuries of historic religious pageants, has perhaps never equalled the majestic grandeur of the scene that greeted the eyes of the Sovereign Pontiff as he entered from the Vatican Palace. One hundred thousand eager, uplifted, expectant faces were turned towards him and spoke out their silent message of love and veneration, and then from one hundred thousand throats burst forth such a cheer of welcome—deep, loud, long and hearty—as those who did not hear it can in nowise imagine. What an answer was this spontaneous outburst of enthusiastic homage to the living, what a comment on the dead demagogues, the sad outcome of our age, who, in their furious, virulent, blind hatred of all that is Catholic, thought—for that was their object—that the subversion of the temporal power meant the immediate weakening and ultimate destruction of the spiritual. There was scarce an individual in that vast throng but would have joyfully died for that feeble old man—the cynosure of all eyes—and every one of them was the delegated representative of thousands. If the heart of the venerable Leo could have been moved by feelings of selfish vanity or worldly pride, here indeed was an occasion to try him; but there was not a trace of the human in his deep, visible, touching emotion. Even the veriest scoffer must have been impressed by the almost divine majesty and the more than human weakness of the Sovereign Pontiff as, borne in the Sedia by a number of Roman nobles, he passed up between the ranks of his magnificent Swiss Guard and blessed the cheering, praying, weeping multitude that pressed on every side. The simple low Mass took almost an hour—it was said by a saint—and accompanied by the pure incense of devout prayer must have been an agreeable offering before the throne of Him whom the Catholic World was supremely honoring in the person of His Vicar. After Mass the entrance scene was renewed, if possible with more enthusiasm, though now with an evident tinge of sorrow. For in that immense congre-

gation there were thousands who were about to look their last on the form and features of him who to them represented the union of everything that is high and noble and holy on the earth. They were of many nations, had come to comfort him in the evening of his life, and were about to bid him a final farewell. There was a desperate agony in that parting cheer, like that of children—helpless for the moment—who saw an idolized Father-King deprived of his rights, restricted in his liberty, a prisoner in his royal city; but there was an undying purpose in it, too—the resolve of men—the claim of suffering justice—and faith and hope and certainty. The trembling Pontiff turned to give a last blessing, the door leading into the Vatican Palace opened and closed quietly, and like as a great silence and darkness—momentary only—fell upon all present. Then what but an instant before was a unified whole, swayed by a single thought and speaking a single, though wordless language, broke into an infinity of crowds, a Babel of tongues; the spell was broken, the principle of cohesive unity no longer active on the mass. But deep down in the heart of every individual worked the living influence of that glorious day—to be a precious remembrance and a powerful incentive for the remainder of his life. Some there were who had it revived and strengthened by the inspired words of wisdom of the Father in the audiences of the following days; but the vast majority left for their homes, happy in the thought of that last cheer, that last look, that last benediction.

Let there be no doubt as to the cause of Rome's preeminence. It is not the well-preserved Pantheon nor the stupendous ruins of the Coliseum, nor the Capitol, nor the old Roman Forum. Neither is it the Catacombs, or Saint Peter's, or Saint John of Lateran. With all their grandeur, they are but the little ant-like devices of man—clay, marble and mortar—and, though the world now tends to a deification of matter, the spiritual principle can command universal respect and enjoy universal love. Rome is the Eternal City, the centre of Catholicism; therein lies the secret of its greatness. What makes it more frequented than others, more beautiful than Paris and more influential