

of the Sacred Heart, and other institutions of learning and charity, besides building no fewer than thirty-six churches.

In July 1877, Cardinal Pecci was appointed Cardinal Camerlengo by Pius IX. The post of Cardinal Camerlengo gave him the presidency of the Apostolic chamber, and the chief charge of the temporalities of the Holy See. He was not destined to hold this office long. On February 7th 1878 the illustrious Pius IX breathed his last and on the Cardinal Camerlengo devolved the duty of superintending the funeral ceremonies of the dead Pontiff and of making the preparations for the conclave of Cardinals to choose a successor.

The conclave met in the Vatican, on the 18th of February, and on the 20th, after three ballots had been taken, Cardinal Pecci was found to be the choice of the conclave by more than the two-thirds majority required. In accepting the decision of the Sacred College, he announced that, as Pope, he would take the name of Leo, in memory of Leo XII, whom he had held in high esteem. On the same day he wrote to his brothers, of whom he had three older than himself, Charles, John Baptist, and Joseph, afterwards created a Cardinal, announcing his elevation to the Papal throne, and asking the assistance of their prayers. Here is the first letter of our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII.

From the Vatican, February 20th, 1878

My Dear Brothers.

I announce to you that in this morning's ballot the Sacred College has decided to raise my humble person to the Chair of Peter. My first letter is the present one which I address to my family, to whom, imploring for them every happiness, I send with affection the Apostolic Benediction.

Pray earnestly to the Lord for me,

LEO XIII. POPE.

For fifteen years Leo XIII has presided over the universal Church, sitting on the throne and exercising all the authority of the Prince of the Apostles. During those fifteen years the power of the Papacy has been felt throughout the civilized world, and the potency of its influence for good recognized in quarters where hostility previously reigned. The first care of Pope Leo has naturally been for the Church he was chosen to rule. No Pope, in truth, has upheld with a firmer hand the dignity

and authority of the Holy See, nor done more to make known the teaching, and extend the influence of the Catholic Church, whose earthly head he is. But he has accomplished this with the least possible clashing with antagonistic forces. His aim has been to conciliate and win. Beholding with unsurpassed clearness of vision the dangers that threaten society with destruction, his endeavor has been to unite, under the ancient banner of the Popes, their natural standard, all the saving forces of society. In a series of encyclicals, remarkable alike for their brilliancy of style, and deep philosophic thought, he has pointed out the evils that have crept into society and menace its stability, the usurpation by the state of the rights of the Church, false ideas of liberty springing from false principles of philosophy, and the loosening of the bond of marriage, whereby society is wounded in its source. With a power truth alone could give, he has denounced secret societies as the enemies of christianity, has inveighed against the socialistic and communistic teaching of the age, the degradation of matrimony, and the exaggerated doctrines of state rights. He has taught the world as it has never been taught before, the true principles on which society must be based, on which alone it can hope to be permanent. These principles are the indissolubility of marriage, the true relations of Church and State, and the mutual rights and duties of labor and capital. Leo XIII has sowed abundantly the good seed, but it is at best a weed-choked soil, this modern society, and it is too early yet to judge of the fruit.

In his diplomatic relations with the European states Pope Leo has been eminently successful. His greatest triumph has been in Germany. The historic journey to Canossa has been made by the great German Chancellor, who found his way made easy by the conciliatory policy of the Pope, and later, when Germany and Spain disputed the sovereignty of the Caroline Islands, the dispute was at the proposal of the German Prince, left to the arbitration of His Holiness, in whose wisdom and impartiality he avowed the fullest confidence. What Leo XIII. has accomplished may be summed up in the words of a great English writer, "He ascended the throne of St. Peter as much