

ROME IN THE YEAR OF JUBILEE.



EVER was Rome more emphatically the centre of the world than it is to-day—not Rome, the capital of what geographers through professional courtesy, diplomats through political necessity, and the *profanum vulgus* through vincible ignorance style United

Italy—but Rome of the Popes—Saint Peter's and the Vatican that small portion of the Eternal City still comparatively undesecrated by the despoiling hordes of the sacrilegious usurper, and whence the August Prisoner—a Light in Heaven—the King of Christendom—illuminates the path and rules the hearts of more than two hundred millions of love-bound subjects. All the splendour of the Imperial Caesars' undisputed sway pales into insignificance beside the beneficent rule and peaceful glory of this Prisoner-King who inspires such devotion and summons such state as no mere earthly monarch was ever able to command. The mock-royalty of the counterfeit King who holds his Robber-Court in the Quirinal, forms the dark background of the picture, and makes thoughtful foreigners wonder aloud how long the common sense and decency of Europe will tolerate this bogus, bankrupt kingdom that exists on the alms of Catholic pilgrims to its host of beggars and the bribes of Protestant sight-seers to its army of officials.

Heaven only knows—or hell, rather—by what bye paths and crooked ways Humbert's father came to the crown, but history has the clear record that the chief plotters in the dark scheme were cut off in the very blossom of their sin and sent to their account with all their imperfections on their heads, “unhonsell'd, unanointed, unanneall'd” The curse is on them still, for Humbert's full-grown son, he who is to perpetuate the dynasty and place the reigning house on an immovable foundation, receives little but contempt

from his future subjects, and vainly seeks a consort in all the courts of Europe. The national, well-nigh universal, feeling with regard to him may be fittingly expressed in the sarcastic question :

“What's this
That rises like the issue of a King,
And bears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sov'reignty?”

But the Holy Father—the real King, in justice and in the hearts of his people—has more loving subjects. So when the thirteenth Leo and two hundred and fifty-eighth Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth approached his fiftieth year in the Episcopacy, the Catholic World—his Empire—judged the event worthy of some universal expression of reverence, attachment and filial respect. The strength and extent of this sentiment soon became apparent. From every clime and from all classes came princely presents, the richest that nature's treasure-house could afford or the art of man produce. From every nation and in all tongues, messages of congratulation and consolation, the most lofty and the most tender that human eloquence could utter or filial love suggest. But precious above all and most highly prized were those eager crowds of devout pilgrims who, leaving home and country, braved the dangers and fatigue of a long journey, that they might lay the homage of their hearts at the feet of the successor of the Prince of the Apostles.

It is a mistake to suppose that the celebration of the Jubilee was restricted to the actual date of the anniversary and the few following days—or even to the Jubilee Month. With the New Year began the numerous manifestations of joy and tributes of fealty to the illustrious Pontiff, and they will scarcely end within the twelvemonth. Still the 19th of February was the great day, the pivot on which everything turned. On that day His Holiness was to celebrate the Jubilee Mass in St. Peter's. The ceremony was marked for nine o'clock; four hours earlier thousands of patient pilgrims had already