

## DETAILS OF CAREER

## HOLY FATHER GAVE GREAT PROMISE FROM EARLY BOYHOOD

The newly elected Pope's father was Francesco Ratti, a native of Rogeno, Italy, and his mother Teresa Galli, a native of Savona. Achille was the third of six children. His oldest brother, Fermo, and the youngest sister, Camilla, are still living.

Francesco, the father, was a flandiere, a weaver and spinner—and, at the time of the birth of Achille, was in charge of the weavers employed by the Counts of Pusalano. Later the father went to Pertusella and then to Carugata to take charge of the weaving shops of the Gada firm. The Ratti family was neither rich nor poor, but belonged to the respectable middle class of artisans.

Achille was sent to a school in Desio conducted by Don Giuseppe Volonteri, a priest noted around Milan as an educator. Volonteri had started this school before Italian law made education obligatory and conducted it for three years, in his own house. While it was an elementary school, Don Giuseppe took extra pains with the more promising of his pupils singling them out for special training. So with Achille Ratti—he was one of the best of the contadini, or children of the middle classes, singled out by Volonteri for more intensive training.

Under this guidance, young Achille was able to enter the gymnasium of St. Peter Martyr. One who knows the new Pontiff stated tonight that in 1884, after he had been ordained as Priest and had become a professor at Milan, he went back to Desio to deliver the funeral sermon in commemoration of the humble father who had conducted this school and who had given Achille the rudiments of education. This sermon was delivered from the piazza of the parochial church. Ratti also wrote the epitaph for his teacher's tomb.

## HELED BY HIS UNCLE

Another man who had much to do with the formation of the mind and character of Ratti was his uncle, Don Damiano Ratti, who lives at Asso. Young Achille had been in the habit of spending his Summers at his uncle's home for several years. Numerous seminarians also followed the practice going to the Don's home during the Summer, making it almost a small seminary at that period of the year.

There are priests still living who were among these seminarians. They remember the uncle as a man of cordial and expansive good nature toward the young men who participated in these Summer studies and rare perspicacity in finding which of these were regarded by himself as qualified for the priesthood.

It is declared that his judgment rarely failed in this latter respect, and that he never hesitated to tell the young seminarian the blunt truth as to whether he was regarded as fit for the priesthood. One of the seminarians whom Achille Ratti met at Asso was Mgr. di Calabiana afterward a Cardinal, who used to call young Ratti a giovanevechio—a young old man.

In appreciation of the influence of the uncle upon his life and character, Mgr. Ratti in 1901, went back to Asso to preach at the silver jubilee of the uncle as a priest. From the gymnasium of St. Peter Martyr Ratti was sent to the lyceum in the seminary of Monsee, where he pursued for the first two years his classical studies, the third year of these studies being undertaken in the College of St. Charles Borromeo in Milan. Thence he went to the major seminary in Milan for three years, and so impressed the Archbishop that the latter sent him to Rome as a student in the Lombard College, where he took his classes in the Gregorian University, a Jesuit institution. Spending three more years in Rome, the man who is now Pope took his doctorates in philosophy, theology and canon law.

## EMBARSED ON LIBRARY CAREER

Returning to Milan in 1892, he first taught theology and sacred eloquence in the seminary of Monsee for five years, and then embarked on a notable career in the great church library in Milan.

On Nov. 5, 1888, he was chosen one of the college of doctors of the Ambrosiana Library, which has a very extensive collection of old codes and manuscripts, with an art gallery and museum. Achille Ratti devoted nearly twenty years of his life to his work in this library, and at that period was also zealous in the continuation of his pastoral work.

The Prefect of the Ambrosiana Library during most of that period was Mgr. Ceriani Antonio, a very learned man, and he too had strong influence on the education of Ratti.

During the time that he was connected with the Milanese Library Ratti went to Rome from time to time to pursue studies and research work in the Vatican Library and to obtain needed data on church documents. When Mgr. Ceriani died in March, 1907, Ratti was chosen to succeed him in charge of the Ambrosiana Library. He continued at this post until 1911, when he was called to Rome to become Vice Prefect of the Vatican Library by Pope Pius X. and assistant to Father Ehrle, a Bavarian Jesuit,



HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS XI.

who resigned in 1914 and went to Germany at the outbreak of the War. Ratti was then placed in charge of the Vatican Library as Prefect and for some time was connected with both these great libraries.

When Ratti returned from Rome to Milan in 1892, the first thing he did was to ask that he be sent to take charge of the tiny parish of Barni. When he went that Fall to teach in the major seminary in Milan he became the chaplain of the convent that was then being started in Milan by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Cenacle and has since been their chaplain.

He helped in the establishment of this convent and joined in all its work, using the convent as a retreat for women. He established various organizations and associations in that connection and was their spiritual director. In 1888 he organized an association of Catholic school teachers in Milan, of which he also has continued to be director. All classes of women from factory girls to women of the nobility attended the meetings in the convent.

During this period Ratti taught catechism to the children on Sundays and holy days and prepared them for their First Communion. He became well liked by the priests around Milan.

## INTEREST IN SCIENCE AND HISTORY

On the death of Monsignor Ceriani he started to teach Hebrew in the major seminary and was appointed to the Chapter of Canons of St. Ambrose, with the title of Monsignor. In Milan there are numerous academic and scientific bodies. Ratti worked with them, particularly in the restoration of the registers and archives of the Cathedral of Milan, the records of its many years of building, which were burned during the Milan Expedition of 1906. He also became a member of the Royal Lombard Institute of Science and Letters and the Lombard Historical Society, of which he is vice president. These various positions have won him a wide circle of friends throughout the Cathedral city.

Mgr. Ratti served as Prefect of the Vatican Library from the Summer of 1914, shortly before the War, until the Spring of 1918, when he was delegated by Pope Benedict XV. to the important position of Nuncio of Poland. During the four years of War that he was in charge of the Vatican Library, antipathies ran high between the Germans and Italians, as well as between clerics and anticlericals. His position was accordingly a difficult one, in dealing with the men of various nationalities using the library and its archives.

"During all that difficult period," said an ecclesiastic tonight, "Mgr. Ratti remained a true Italian in sentiment, but his temper was most equable, and he treated everybody well."

"Mgr. Ratti worked with splendid tact and prudence in the Vatican Library. Nobody ever accused him of giving that library a tendency. All who came on work of research or seeking documents received free access to all the facts and treasures of the library. He had faith in the cause of justice, and never doubted but that this cause would prevail against that of arms. He made no mystery of his attitude, but did everything in such a tactful way that he never compromised the Vatican in the responsible position the Holy See had given him."

## DIFFICULTIES IN POLAND OVERCOME

Mgr. Ratti started for Poland under Pope Benedict's commission on April 25, 1918, and what was

known in advance to be a hard diplomatic and ecclesiastical mission. Before that he had no previous experience in diplomacy except for some trips which he had made with Mgr. Giacomo Radini-Tedeschi to Vienna in 1891 and to Paris in 1893.

His trip into Poland was made about the time the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, which the Germans had imposed on the Russians. Poland was at that time occupied by German military forces. Leopold of Bavaria was the German Governor-General and General Von Bessler commanded the German army of occupation. Warsaw was under the control of a council of regents composed of Archbishop Kakowski, Prince Lubomirski and Baron Ostrowski.

There were many Poles who at that time suspected the regents, thinking that they were about to act as instruments of German domination. In this situation Mgr. Ratti was entrusted with the duty of stating that his mission was ecclesiastical and spiritual and without political significance.

He was in Poland practically throughout the period of the restoration of that country into an independent nation, and his duties were extended by the Vatican to cover the former Russian Provinces along the Polish Eastern frontier. Throughout these parts of Russia he traveled. He was entrusted with the task of establishing new dioceses where German bishops had resigned in Poland, and also established Bishoprics that had been suppressed in those parts of former Czarist Russia which he visited.

It was stated tonight that Mgr. Ratti succeeded beyond hopes in this work despite the fact that Poland was occupied by foreign forces and that in the face of revolutions in Russia he obtained results that could not be achieved under the regime of the Czars.

Immediately after the armistice of 1917 serious questions arose regarding the status of church properties and other matters in Poland and Russia. There was a popular movement for the division of landed estates in what had been German and Russian Poland. The churches possessed lands and became interested in the progress of this movement.

The Bishops declared they were not opposed to the division of the Church estates so long as this was done in consultation with the Church and without interference with the work of the Church. Mgr. Ratti played an active diplomatic and ecclesiastical rôle in this connection. He called together a commission of Bishops, which was recognized by the Polish Government and at the same time succeeded in obtaining from the Polish Constituent Assembly a resolution that no law as to Church properties would be enacted without consultation with the Holy See.

## FIRMNESS AS A DIPLOMAT

When Mgr. Ratti was first sent into Poland his mission was in reality that of a Papal visitor. One reason why he was only a "visitor" and not a full "Nuncio" was that Poland had not been a nation since its partition more than a century before. Later, after the Versailles Treaty, and the establishment of Poland as an independent nation, Mgr. Ratti was on July 6, 1918, made Nuncio at Warsaw. This represented a restoration of the old nunciature of Poland that existed before the partition.

This mission further revealed the qualifications of Mgr. Ratti as a diplomat and a man of firmness, courage and evenness of temper. During the Bolshevik invasion of July, 1920, when Warsaw's inhabit-

ants were panic stricken, Polish Government officials were in despair and getting ready for flight, the population made ready for Bolshevik horrors, and the Russian Reds were hammering at the gates of Warsaw, Mgr. Ratti stood at his post without losing his serenity and inspired others to do likewise. This was compared tonight by an ecclesiastic to the period in his early life as a mountain climber when he had to keep his head when clambering around precipices in the Alps.

Another mission was later performed by Mgr. Ratti when he was appointed high ecclesiastical commissioner for the plebiscite in Upper Silesia, a delicate task, for which he was chosen with the approval of the Polish, German and interallied commissioners. While serving on his mission in Russia he was active in helping to obtain the liberation of prisoners detained in their homes by the Bolsheviks. He treated for the liberation of some high personages, at times being instrumental in effecting the release of the Archbishop of Mohilew and the Bishop of Minsk, in whose behalf Pope Benedict had written him at the time.

Mgr. Ratti also aided in the distribution of food among the children and others of the Russian and Polish populations. A large part of the money for that purpose sent by Pope Benedict was sent to Mgr. Ratti for his supervision in its distribution.

It was on account of the ability displayed by Mgr. Ratti in his Polish and Russian missions that he was designated by the Pope for the red hat. Meanwhile, on July 3, 1920, he had been appointed titular Archbishop of Lepanto and was consecrated as such on Oct. 28, 1920, in the presence of officials of the Polish Government. Members of the Constituent Assembly and the Episcopacy of Poland. On April 19, 1921, he was created titular Bishop of Agana.

## POPE BENEDICT'S PRAISE

In the secret consistory of June 13, 1921, Pope Benedict created Bishop Ratti a Cardinal and promoted him to be Archbishop of Milan. On the occasion of the ceremony of conferring the red hat on Cardinal Ratti at Rome on June 15, 1921, Pope Benedict said in part:

"If we turn now our attention to the second of those who have been made cardinals, upon whom we have imposed this new dignity, we hear thousands of voices lifted in praise of this choice among the ranks of those who are adepts of diplomacy. Behold the students of the schools of diplomacy bowing before the former Prefect of the Ambrosiana Library of Milan and of the Vatican Library of Rome, praising the zeal with which he has always favored them in their search for the hidden treasures in ancient documents; beyond these students of diplomacy and with them their masters bowing also before the Apostolic nuncio of Poland who with firmness and yet with exquisite tact and imperturbable calmness has known how to establish concord between the State and the Church in times that were most difficult and under circumstances most dangerous."

After he received his red hat, Cardinal Ratti said to some of the large contingent of Milanese who had gone down to Rome for the ceremony:

## POPULAR AMONG MILANESE

His selection as Cardinal Archbishop of Milan was well received by the Milanese, despite the fact that there was considerable anticlericalism there. It is stated that his appointment was highly praised by all the papers, including those of the Socialists, particular mention being made of his scientific knowledge, the veneration in which he was held, his equality of temper, scholarly attainments and his generosity of soul, and the fact that he had been a deep student of history and archeology.

His interest in archeology resulted in his election in 1915 to be a member of the Roman Pontifical Academy of Archeology, before which he delivered two lectures, in one of which he dealt with the basilica of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way as recounted in ancient records in the Vatican library. While in charge of both the great libraries he became the author of numerous publications based on his research activities in their archives. Others he now has in course of preparation. Some of these works of the new Pontiff are to be found in the proceedings of the Lombard Institute of Sciences and Letters, the historical journal of Italian literature, the Lombard Historical Archives, and in various catalogues of old manuscripts.

Desio, in the archdiocese of Milan where the Pope was born and where his youth was spent, is on the road from Milan to Monza, where on July 29, 1900 the father of the present King of Italy was assassinated. It lies at the foot of the Brianza hills and from it can be seen the campine of Seregno, twenty miles away. At the neighboring Collegio Lombardo, young Ratti had as classmates Cardinal Luadi, Archbishop of Palermo, and Mgr. Radini Tedeschi, now Bishop of Bergamo.

The Seminario Maggiore of Milan, at which he first became a teacher, is one of the architectural beauties

of the Lombard city. It is on the left of the Corso Venezia and is entered through a magnificent courtyard; the grandiose entrance is the work of Francesco Richini, while the interior was designed by Medox. The two other edifices of Milan intimately associated with the life of the Pope, are the Ambrosiana Library, where he was first sub-prefect and then prefect, and the Archiepiscopal Palace.

## AT MILAN AT STORMY PERIOD

Ecclesiastically, politically and industrially the Archdiocese of Milan is one of the most important in the peninsula. Its Hierarchy is in number of officials and organizations second only to that of Etruria, which includes the dioceses of Florence, Pisa and Siena. When Cardinal Ferrari was Archbishop there the Communists for a time gained the upper hand and on the great metallurgic works waved the red flag.

The See had been without an Archbishop for over two months when Mgr. Ratti established himself in the palace fresh from his academic honors at Rome and his diplomatic victories at Warsaw. From the time of his arrival in April until he departed for the conclave in the last week in January, he only interrupted his work of Christian as well as of secular reorganization in the archdiocese to attend the consistories in June, when he returned to his palace a Cardinal.

When he first came in April, the great strike organized by the anarchist Errico Malatesta was still in force. He found the personnel of the palace disorganized on account of some of the servants joining the numerous committees, which, organized under the guise of Christian democracy, were, even against the will of their members, turned over to the Reds. His moral persuasion, however, might not have been such a powerful factor in restoring order, had he not been measurably aided by a party just organized for the protection of the State. This was the Fascismo, started in Milan by Benito Mussolini, who, from an extreme Socialist, had been converted by the War to patriotism. Although remote in many things, yet, in bringing order out of chaos in Milan, Archbishop Ratti was the complement of Mussolini, and the latter's paper, the Giornale d'Italia, while usually ignoring or attacking the Church, gave the Archbishop valuable support. It is reported that when Mussolini would have turned against the monarchy, as so many Fascists did just before the election, it was the influence of the patriotic Archbishop which preserved his allegiance to the House of Savoy.

## FATHER FRASER'S CHINA MISSION FUND

There are four hundred million pagans in China. If they were to pass in review at the rate of a thousand a minute, it would take nine months for them all to go by. Thirty-three thousand of them die daily unbaptized! Missionaries are urgently needed to go to their rescue.

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## TRAVELLING FOR CHRIST

## A TRIP UP THE BRANCH

The patient readers of these Missionary Notes will doubtless remember that I began them when Father Pat went away to visit the Indians. Recently he returned, and in consequence, I found myself confronted with a free Sunday. You may be sure that it was not long before Father Louis got wise to the fact. "In that case," said he, with the undisguised satisfaction of one who has an unanswerable though difficult proposition to suggest, "You will be able to take a trip up the Branch." I don't mind admitting that I did my best to put the good man off, but all excuses were of course, in vain. Up the Branch I hadn't been and up the Branch I would undoubtedly have to go. "Otherwise," said he, "you will never know the Branch."

While I thought myself that I could survive that calamity, there was no getting out of the proposition. To make assurance doubly sure he came down himself from the Branch — to help me to hop on to it, so to speak. The train was timed to leave at nine. His Matutinal Reverence was therefore on deck at six. Until seven he had mercy on me (I am awfully lazy in the mornings,) and then he virtuously and respectfully intimated that the hour of my own rising was at hand. I got up with some acerbity and teased the heater into renewed life and warmth. Then I dressed and washed and put on my beautiful purple Gothic vestment—a souvenir from overseas—and began the long Mass of Ember Saturday with as few distractions as possible. I say "as possible" because the total avoidance of distractions is hardly to be attained when one's altar is so near to the cook stove that even the discreetest rattling of pots and pans, mingled with the grateful aroma of coffee, are bound to assail at least two of the senses and trouble one's meditations on the numerous collects and epistles which precede the Gospel of that day. I did my best, however, and, having doffed my vestments, sat down to a hurried breakfast, while grumpily accepting the polite apologies of Father Louis for his culinary interruptions. Time fled with its usual pertinacity. In a few moments I was getting into my mackinaw, and Father Louis was pushing his poor feet into the enormous boots which he finds most convenient for his walking tours. Everything freezable having been relegated to the cellar, and all doors locked, we made for the depot, bade a sad farewell to the sympathetic ticket agent, and boarded the shabby-looking train, which was already fairly full. Miners and would-be miners sat cheek-by-jowl with the chubby-faced Anglican clergyman, and the grim-looking "Union" minister, whose efforts were to be added to my own at Mountain Park. Everybody looked as if they were unpleasantly conscious that they were in for a thoroughly uncomfortable time. Father Louis, of course, had a smile for everybody, and nearly everybody had a smile for him. We sat together and discussed Ecclesiastical Polity until we reached a desolate spot called "Weald," where the good soul got off and shouldered his pack for a seven-mile walk. I went out into the cold vestibule to see him off and, as I returned into the car, bumped into a rough-looking individual who said in a tone of deep conviction, "There goes a good man."

## TO BE CONTINUED

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## GENERAL BLISS LAMENTS DEATH OF POPE

Maj. Gen. Tasker H. Bliss, who was a member of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace at the end of the World War, and previously representative of the United States on the Supreme War Council at Paris, has written to Right Rev. Thomas J. Shahan, rector of the Catholic University, to express his condolence for the death of Pope Benedict. The untimely death of the two most beloved Popes, Benedict and Pius X., General Bliss says, was caused by the War. The Pontiff's death he calls a "loss to the whole world."

General Bliss' letter to Bishop Shahan follows:

"My Dear Bishop Shahan: "To me one of the saddest things about the recent War is the fact, as is generally believed, that it has caused the untimely death of two of the most beloved Popes, loved and honored by Protestants as well as Catholics. The one died while attempting to prevent the strife; and now the other, after fruitless attempts to end it and then wearing himself out in efforts to mitigate its horrors and in binding up its dreadful wounds.

"But, if the prayers of the righteous avail much, after death as well as before,—as I am sure they do,—he is still praying for the peace on earth which he had so much at heart while here.

"I join with you and your associates in sorrow for this loss to the whole world, and because it is a world loss it can be so no less to me than to you.

"With warm and sincere regards, I am,

Cordially yours,  
(Signed) TASKER H. BLISS.  
At present General Bliss is governor of the Soldiers' Home, Washington, D. C. He has been retired from active service after a distinguished career as a soldier beginning with his graduation from West Point Academy in 1875.

There is, I know not how, in the minds of men a certain presage, as it were, of a future existence; and this takes the deepest root, and is most discoverable in the greatest geniuses and most exalted souls.—Cicero.

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