

# Leo XIII

## A RETROSPECT.



ANOTHER milestone has been set up on the road of History, and the world has just lost one of its greatest men. In the ninety-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-sixth of his Pontificate, our Holy Father Pope Leo XIII. has yielded up his soul to God. Saint, scholar and statesman, he has for a quarter of a century fed the lambs and sheep of Christ. It will not be amiss for us to glance back at that long and laborious career of the great Pope. Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci was born at Carpineto in the Volscian mountains on March 2nd, 1810. He came of a noble family of Sienese origin. His father was a colonel in the army of Napoleon I., while his mother traced her descent from Cola di Rienzi. At seven years of age young Pecci was taken to the Jesuit school at Viterbo. He remained there eight years and then proceeded to the Eternal City, to pursue his studies in the famous Roman College. In 1832 he won his Doctor's cap and was admitted to the College of Nobles to study diplomacy. In 1837 he was created Monsignor, and in 1838 Apostolic Delegate at Benevento where his success was so complete that three years later he was promoted to the Delegation at Perugia, and the following year made Nuncio at Brussels.

During those few years among the fierce and lawless people of Benevento and grim Perugia his motto had been : firmness, tempered by kindness : chastisement, followed by reform. In Brussels his success was equally marked. He became a *persona gratissima* to the King and Queen, maintained harmony between Church and State, and began to show that interest in educational work which was to be one of the glories of his Pontificate. In 1844 Mgr. Cittadini, Bishop of Perugia died, and both clergy and people begged that Mgr. Pecci might take his place. In 1846, consequently, he left Brussels, passing through England where he dined with Queen Victoria and heard O'Connell speak in Parliament.