

THE THIRTEEN LEOS.

In lamentation and in expectation passed the Church her thirteen days of widowhood. Anguished in her grief, but consoled in her faith, she resembled Israel of old, awaiting in tears and with sighs the "fullness of time." And, as the promise of the Redeemer to come of a Woman to "crush the serpent's head," did sustain the "chosen people" throughout their strange vicissitudes of four thousand years, even so, that Redeemer's promise to remain with His Church for all time, was now the *sursum corda* of her millions of children in our bitter bereavement. Mourning the death of Pius, the best of Fathers and the greatest of Pontiffs—feeling that we should never look upon his like again, we knew that another "Christ by unction," another "Peter by power," would succeed him; and we waited, as holy Simeon did, for our "Consolation," and not less ardent than he in our desires, we were favored as he in their fulfilment. Thanks be to God! "Because my eyes have seen Thy Salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a Light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the Glory of Thy people Israel."

Leo XIII. is the successor of Pius IX. He sits in the Chair of Peter, undisputed Head of the Church of Christ, "the Bishop elevated to the Apostolic Eminence." The Cardinal Gioachino Pecci was the choice of the Conclave, as expressed by the third ballot, on Wednesday, February 20, after a session of only forty hours. Descended from a patrician family, he was born at Carpineto, in the Papal States, on March 2, 1810. His studies, begun in the Roman College, were continued in the Ecclesiastical Academy, reserved for the education of noble youths intending to embrace a clerical career. After following the usual curriculum in law, science, and theology, he was ordained priest in his twenty-fifth year, being then tall, slender, handsome, full of energy, and inspired with the spirit of true piety and love of souls. Soon he attracted the notice, and obtained favor in the eyes, of Gregory XVI, gloriously reigning, who called him to the Vatican, and made him Prelate of the Papal Household, and afterwards one of his private

secretaries. The Province of Benevento, within the Papal Dominions but near to the borders of the Kingdom of Naples, where highway robbery was carried on almost without restraint, was at this time infested with brigands and disturbed by bands of smugglers, whom the nobles, in their quest for gold, were disposed rather to protect than to punish. Pope Gregory determined to put an end to these disorders and reform the civil administration. Satisfied that Monsignore Pecci, notwithstanding his youth, was gifted with excellent administrative abilities, that he was cool, firm, and brave, he appointed him Delegate at Benevento to restore the reign of law and order. At once he began active measures against the lawless, organized a force of mounted police, drove the robbers and smugglers from their caves and hiding places to the castles of their protectors, which he stormed and captured if they resisted, and taking the guilty prisoners, he put the ringleaders to death. Within a few months the Province was rid entirely of brigands and plunderers, the nobles submitted to authority, and the young Delegate received the thanks of the Pope and of the King of Naples as well. Having succeeded so well in that difficult field, he was sent on a somewhat similar mission to Spoleto and Perugia, where, owing to his zeal, courage, and tact, peace, contentment and happiness were established. In 1843, being then only in his thirty-third year, the Holy Father raised him in the hierarchy by appointing him Archbishop of the nominal See of Damietta, and advanced him in the civil administration by sending him as Nuncio to the Belgian Court at Brussels. His office there was a most delicate one, requiring the finest diplomacy—to protect the interests of the Catholic subjects of a Protestant King. The Archbishop was equal to the task, and performed it to the satisfaction of both Courts. But his health failing him, owing to the climate and possibly to the cares of office, he asked to be recalled. The King, Leopold, learned this with regret which he publicly expressed. He conferred upon the retiring Nuncio the grandest decoration in his gift, and gave him a sealed packet to present himself to the Pope. This contained a letter to His Holiness,