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THE FIRST LEO.



THE name of Leo undoubtedly carries with it more weight of majesty, and high authority, and is more immediately suggestive of a beneficent and far-reaching influence than that of any other leader, religious or political, known to the civilized world to-day. So much has been wrought for it not alone by the reflected glory of the vast spiritual sovereignty vested in him who bears it ; nor yet by the lustre it inherits from bygone ages when other Leos lived to do it honour ; but also, in great part, be it said, by the blameless life, the uncommon capacity, and the unequivocal political pre-eminence of the present illustrious Roman Pontiff. Not Catholics alone, but all classes of Christians, and even infidels have obeyed an irresistible impulse, during the course of recent events, by publicly manifesting their respectful admiration for this great central figure of our times.

The numeral after the present Leo's name, informs us that he shares it with a goodly number of predecessors, and naturally excites a certain degree of laudable curiosity concerning the first prelate who introduced into the chair of Peter, a title destined to be so much favoured, and always honourably borne by later successors to the dignity of the Pontificate. We must travel back