

THE ROMAN ACADEMY AND THE OTTAWA UNIVERSITY.

AMONG the many great undertakings of the present Roman Pontiff, few are more important and more conspicuous than his efforts in the noble cause of Christian education. When, in 1877, Leo XIII succeeded to the Chair of Peter, the moral influence of the Vatican was by no means as strong and as widespread as it is to-day. The latter years of the reign of his predecessor Pius IX had been years of bitterness and struggle, and that kind-hearted pontiff had been betrayed and sold not only by enemies, but even by those who should have been friends. The attacks on the Papacy were directed by men of no moral principles, and these, while doing their utmost to deprive the Pope of external influence, tried also by their false maxims to corrupt the minds and hearts of the children of the Church especially of the young and inexperienced, and thereby to snatch them from her motherly care. Atheistic and Protestant professors were loudly declaiming against the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church, and, propped up with their sophisms and false philosophy, were openly denying and repudiating everything that had a tendency to religion and morality.

In Rome the very centre of Christian civilisation, the university founded by Gregory XIII for Catholic students of all nations, was robbed from its owners, and its 2,000 students, for the most part foreigners, were politely informed to betake themselves to other quarters. A state-university was established in its stead by the usurpers of the Papal States, and everything savouring of Christianity was put aside to make room for the new morality, that of a godless school.

During this time Pius IX though a prisoner in the Vatican did not remain inactive. The Roman University was

re-organised under his protection and encouragement, notwithstanding the fact that the greater part of the foreign students had returned to their respective homes. But the shock had been too great to allow of its being repaired at once. It was necessary to wait a little until the wound should be disposed of the cure by the healing hand of time. In the interim, worn out by cares and old age Pius IX died, and Cardinal Pecci was elected to succeed him on the Pontifical throne. The newly elected pope took the name of Leo, and chose as his motto the significant words "a Light in the Heavens".

From the very beginning of his reign all eyes were upon the new pope, and those interested in the sacred cause of education looked forward to see what would come from one whose position and reputation, to say nothing of the many personal qualities he had manifested, should be to them a warrant of powerful assistance. And indeed to whom could they look for instruction and encouragement in so grave a matter, if not to the successor of Peter. Is it not he who has received from on high the divine commission of confirming his brethren in the faith, of feeding the lambs and sheep of the one true fold, and of providing the bread of truth for the Master's little ones? Yes, the position of Leo told them that to him they should look and to none other. Moreover the reputation of the new pope seemed to qualify him for so exalted and responsible an office. Could he who had so highly distinguished himself as apostolic nuncio, who had shown such indomitable energy as papal governor, and had manifested such wise administration as Archbishop of Perugia, and afterwards as Cardinal of the Church, could he be indifferent in such an important matter as education? Surely not! And so the events proved.