

was Head, stands there, in the sight of all nations, as firm as ever upon the Rock.

Pius IX lived his last years and died in prison. He was prevented by revolutionaries from carrying out the grand reforms he had inaugurated, and completing the great public works he had begun. But he had his victories! In the face of Infidelity and Protestantism, he propounded the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, promulgated the Syllabus, and defined the Infallibility, three of the most important declarations ever issued from the Chair of Peter, and any one of them sufficient to immortalize his name. Besides, he restored the hierarchy in England, and was about to do the same in Scotland. And who of all the Popes was as lavish as he in dispensing the spiritual treasures of the Church? Who ever instituted so many popular devotions, accorded so many indulgences, established so many pious works, canonized so many saints, sent out so many missionaries, published so many bulls and encyclicals, and encouraged with such earnestness the Catholic press? "*Non est inventus similis illi in toto Israel.*" No, there is not to be found his equal in the long line of the Successors of St. Peter, for in him were combined and consolidated the grand characteristics and happy qualities of all the great Popes; and in his age the Church, in struggle and in triumph, has lived over again her eighteen centuries of existence.

O Pius! who didst light our way on earth, remember us in heaven!

W. J. M.

LENT.

The holy and penitential season of Lent sets in this month,—the salutary exercises to which it gives birth will be commenced by millions,—the trumpet will be blown, the Fast proclaimed, and the warning voice of the Church, exhorting all everywhere to do penance, will meet with a ready response from numberless souls in every walk and condition of life, in every country and clime, in every tribe and tongue, and people.

Amongst the holy and salutary duties of this "acceptable time," fasting holds

a prominent place, and comes recommended by its solemnity by its antiquity, by its universality.

Its continuance during forty days,—the great festival of Easter, to which it is preparatory, and which it ushers in,—the receiving the holy communion,—the sublime and life-giving duty which the faithful are then strictly bound to fulfil,—the fervour which it imparts to devotion, and the impulse which it gives to good works,—the consolation for the present, and the hope for the future which it nourishes,—all these combine to confer on the fast of Lent a solemnity peculiarly its own. Its antiquity none can controvert, as it dates back to the creation of the world, as appears clearly from the command of God to Adam, while still sojourning in the earthly paradise, from the practice of the patriarchs and the prophets, and the other holy and just ones who walked in the ways of the Lord before His adorable will was more clearly intimated amidst the "thunderings and lightnings," on Sinai's Mount, and who persevered in well doing, without fail, even unto the day when He came "who was to be sent." That the wholesome custom did not grow into desuetude on the occurrence of that blessed event is incontestably established by the language and writings of the Apostles, by the canons and decrees of the early councils, by the testimony of holy and learned men, who have left, as a precious legacy to their successors in the faith, written imperishable monuments, communicating to modern times the belief of other days, and the practises, the holy and the saving ones, to which that faith gave existence and value. Its universality is established by the fact that it obliges the monarch on his throne no less than the humblest of his subjects, the philosopher in his study equally with the mechanic in his workshop, the artist in his studio no less than the hind who follows the team, and carols as he goes. In the fourth century, the great St. Basil spoke thus of the universality of this fast of Lent. There is no island, no continent, no city, no nation, no corner of the earth ever so remote in which this fast is not proclaimed. Armies, travellers, sailors, merchants, though far from home, everywhere hear the