

and the greatest glory of the noble nation whose praises we sound to-day. Making abstraction of the bare consideration that Leo XIII., holds the sceptre of that spiritual empire founded by Christ to watch over the souls of men, and viewing his life in all its different phases and varied relations from the tender years of infancy and childhood spent in holy blissful innocence amidst the beautiful Volscian hills down to the time of his accession to the Chair of Peter, what a grand and inspiring scene passes before us! What sweet recollections of him still linger at Carpineto and Viterbo! What sacred memories cluster around his name at Benevento, Spoleto and Brussels! What a train of noble virtues and endearing qualities are associated with his life during the thirty-two years of his glorious episcopate at Perugia! And to-day as we contemplate him gloriously reigning over the Catholic world, lifting his hand in benediction over millions of loving subjects the beautiful vision of his papal career flits before us.

On that memorable 7th. of February, 1878, when the sad silvery peals from the dome of St. Peter's announced to Rome that the saintly and care-worn Pius IX., had exchanged the heavy burden of the cross for the crown of eternity a gloom of sadness such as had not been witnessed since the death of the Saviour on Calvary was cast over the Christian world. During his long pontificate especially in the closing years of his reign, the Church was on trial as perhaps at no period of her existence since the days of the early persecutions. In the course of the centuries many and severe were the battles waged against her; often had she been assailed by fierce and powerful enemies and threatened with destruction, but always emerged exulting and triumphant from the conflict. Prophecy had again and again impiously predicted the downfall of the Papacy, but still it survived in all its primitive beauty and vigor. But now the horizon was darkened with fateful forebodings and the signs of the times augured most inauspiciously for the future. He who for so many long years had fearlessly braved the tempest of persecution and piloted the Bark of Peter over the billows of adversity was now no more. The usurper's flag floated triumphantly from the Castle of Sant Angelo, and the wretched spoliators who had sacrilegiously and iniquitously stripped the unarmed and defenceless pontiff of his temporal