

PREFACE

THESE pages do not undertake to frame or to resolve religious problems ; they are not a treatise in Canon Law ; neither will they attempt Church history in any proper sense of the word. I have called my little book a " political sketch," and in that light, with all due courtesy, it is offered to the Home University collection. Its purpose may be stated in a sentence. I desire to explain how it is that the Twentieth of September, 1870, when I saw the Italian army enter Rome, forms a landmark in the story of Western Europe and, by consequence, in the development of modern society on both sides of the Atlantic. For if the scene is Rome, the horizon is America. There are three terms of comparison involved—the Papacy, the Absolute State, and the American Constitution, which last, derived from England, owes its principles to the Great Charter and to Edward the Confessor. Putting these high abstract forms into the concrete, we may behold on our stage, Washington, Napoleon, and Hildebrand. Of these, Washington needs no description ; he shines by his own splendour in the sky of liberty, *sua se luce signat*. Hildebrand, the least known to men at this hour, is by no means the least important. He stands outside my limits, but in theory and ideal he pervades the whole narrative, from Boniface VIII. to Pius IX. As for Napoleon, he is Cæsar come to life again, inheriting from the Roman Empire, from Philip the Fair and Louis XIV., his conception of untrammelled power, and from many an Italian tyrant his ambition to found a Kingdom of Italy. Napoleon first abolished the Temporal Power in principle and in fact ; he is the true author of the Venti Settembre.

But its causes go very far back ; it was already pre-ordained as a fatal term to this unique dominion from the