

CHIT CHAT.

Most people will see in the elevation of Cardinal Pecci to the Pontifical throne, a most remarkable fulfilment of the prophecy of St. Malachi who, seven hundred years ago, pointed out the Pope to succeed Pius IX. as "*lumen in celo*." It so happens that the motto on the armorial bearings of the Pecci family for centuries back has been this same "*lumen in celo*." It is not a little significant therefore that a member of the Pecci family should at this particular time have been selected by the Conclave to succeed Pope Pius IX. Some will say—that the motto made the Pope—that the Cardinals knowing the prophecy and the motto, were led to choose Cardinal Pecci Pope in order to fulfil the prophecy—not that the prophecy foretold the Pope. Very well; but, how does it happen that there was just at the right time a "*lumen in celo*" to choose? Even if we grant the violent supposition of "collusion among the Cardinals," and that they chose Cardinal Pecci, solely and only to fulfil the prophecy of St. Malachi, we shall have other equally violent suppositions to take for granted before the remarkable coincidence can be disposed of. It was Pope Gregory XVI. who created Pecci Cardinal—are we then to suppose that he did so, in order that he might be available to be made Pope immediately after his successor's death? This would be a very violent supposition indeed. But even supposing it granted—supposing that Pope Gregory, knowing the "*lumen in celo*," and St. Malachi's prophecy, did choose a Pecci to be Cardinal in order to be Pope, in order to fulfil St. Malachi's prophecy—how does it happen that there was an ecclesiastic of the Pecci family to make a Cardinal to be made Pope in order to fulfil the prophecy? We fear the explanation is more violent than the fact is startling. But if our friends do not like to admit the possibility of St. Malachi's prophecy having been fulfilled, let them look to another curious coincidence connected with this elevation of one of the Pecci family to the Pontificate. This family is descended from an ancient patrician family of Anagni in the Papal States:

Conspicuous amongst their heraldic bearings is the *fleur-de-lys*. Now Dante, in the 20th canto of his immortal Purgatorio, sings, as translated by Longfellow:

"I see the *fleur-de-lys* Anagni enter,
And Christ in His own vicar captive made."

This is, we think, something more than a mere startling coincidence. *Nous verrons*.

How times do change things. In the Catholic ages, personal government by the king himself was not only not objected to by the people, but was absolutely insisted upon by them. If a man was king, he was expected to be one, and had moreover to be his own prime minister, his own commander-in-chief. When, however, his kingdom was too large for all these duties to be performed by one man, albeit he was a king, it naturally followed that some friend, in whose powers the king could rely, was called in to assist in the government. As long as this assistant was some dignitary of the church, all went well, for the people had confidence in him for his ecclesiastical character. If he was not a dignitary of the church he was looked upon with distrust, and was called a favorite. Sometimes, it is true, churchmen were looked upon as "favorites," but this was seldom; for even their greatest enemies acknowledge that "the power of governing communities systematically, was the great science of the ancient church." It was Wolsey, remember, "(who had loved his king more than he had loved his God)," who could alone hold his royal master's passions in anything like decent check; when he was gone, then the floodgates were opened, and after that—the reformation. But then these churchmen could only help to wield the civil power of the realm, for after all, it was only once in a long time that the world heard tell of a bishop buckling on his armour to fight the enemies of the kingdom, and then unbuckling his armour, after he had overcame them, to put on his stole to shrive them before they were sent to the gallows. The king's lay-favorite superintended the army, and woe betide him and his master if he dared lay unprivileged hands on the sacred ark of the civil government, as is abundantly