

Holiness would receive us next day at noon.

An hour before noon we drove up the winding way behind St. Peter's. At sight of our veiled heads a corps-de-guard admitted us to the vast cortile S. Damasco, the royal court of the Vatican. An immense room at the head of the Scala Pia is the office of Monsignor Bisleti, Maggiodoro of the Pontifical household. Here are wide tables for wraps. One pauses to unglue. To the right on a secluded staircase heading into the heart of the Vatican, Swiss guards in pikemen's armor leveled their medieval lances, challenging crisply: "Aspetta!" (Wait, please.)

The billet of audience brought them to salute. In the Sala Clementina a picket of lounging Palatines sprang to attention.

Through far-reaching ante-chambers every door was opened for us by a bussolandi, superb in crimson brocade, knee breeches, full skirted coat and 15th century shoes. Again and again the low-voiced "A momentino, senora," and the quick recognition of the audience paper. Obviously the Vatican is well guarded.

The sense of approaching a sovereign sharpens in passing through a splendid vista of vast rooms hung with Gobelin tapestries or vivid with frescoes set high up under the coffered and gilded ceilings. Here and there are stately, lovely figures, monsignori of the Famiglia Pontificia in purple, silent retainers in strong bright colors.

The apostolic palace is a treasure house of the ages than which none is greater.

Time was, and not so long since, when only the prosperous could prepare for a special audience. During the pontificate of Leo, the prince, women were expected to dress a L'Espagnole, a lace mantilla, a few well chosen white jewels were obligatory. These things are not for the poor.

Pope Pius, the son of a peasant,

has changed this etiquet. He wishes to be accessible to the people. Resolutely practical, with a homely realization of the value of money, His Holiness has brought frugal simplicity into the papal palace. Today any serviceable black frock is admissible to the Pontiff's little throne room.

In the anticamera d'Onore, ante-chamber of Honor, several officers-in-waiting of the Noble Guard were on duty. Their gold epaulettes, gold crested helmets, gold cross belts focused the sun rays. The papal apartments, looking south and east across the piazza San Pietro were flooded with sunlight. The great bell of St. Peter's rang Angelus. It was the hour of audience, a Pope lives by the clock.

A violet-clad monsigneur-of-the-throne silently invited us to approach a doorway. In the room beyond was Pius the Tenth, Pontifex Maximus. The door opened noiselessly, we kneeled and looked up to meet the smiling glance of a benevolent old priest.

Sincere goodness, wisdom and heart rendered his comely face paternal. The Holy Father stood alone, motionless, as his visitors made their second obeisance. His air of apostolic simplicity seemed to deprecate the draconian etiquet. In another moment, looking quietly into my eyes, he offered his ringed hand.

"What can I do for you, my child?" The voice was soft and clear.

"Beatissimo Padre, implora della Santita una benedizione per i poveri degli stati Uniti occidentali."

Which translated is: "Holy Father, I would beg from your Holiness a special blessing for the low-wage workers of the United States."

The Pontiff's face grew grave with Latin susceptibility.

"Ah, my child, the poor are everywhere—always. With all my heart I beg God to bless them. More especially at this moment do I beg God to bless those working men and