

PIUS X., THE NEW POPE

IN April 1902 when the late Pope Leo XIII was in practically perfect health and there was no probability that his brilliant reign would be so soon cut short by the grim reaper, the pontiff remarked in a serious conversation with Father Perosi, the Italian priest whose musical compositions have made him famous the world over, that he was convinced that his successor would be Cardinal Sarto, the patriarch of Venice. When the recent conclave went into session there seemed little probability that Leo's prophecy would be fulfilled, for Rampolla seemed to have an almost commanding lead among the members of the college of cardinals, with Oreglia, Gotti and Serafino Vannutelli as strong possibilities. Besides these, there were several others who were thought to be likely candidates in case the rivalry among the leaders should become so intense as to make the election of any one of them impossible. But Sarto's name was scarcely mentioned except among the most reverent who remembered the prediction of Pope Leo and those who were mindful of the popularity in the Catholic church of Cardinal Sarto, which by many was regarded as being second not even to that of Leo himself. Cardinal Sarto, now Pope Pius X., evidently did not seriously consider himself as one of the papabili, for the evening before his election he declared, in speaking to a friend who had suggested that he might be the next pope, that when he started for Rome from Venice he had

nature, beloved by many millions of people. It is certain that no prelate would have a more enthusiastic sanction from the laity.

Pope Pius X. is sixty-eight years old. He was born at Riese, in the province of Venice, and was educated in the Salesian Institute at Cottolengo, founded by the famous Dom Bosco. He was always of a serious turn of mind and when a young man his rector said to him that he had "never been a child."

Cardinal Sarto was not "discovered" until he had reached middle age. He was a parish priest in the province of Venice for the most of his years and finally became a bishop. His high executive qualities and unexcelled learning became known soon after his elevation and were recognized by the authorities of the church. It was not until 1893 that he was created a cardinal, at which time he was also named as patriarch of Venice. Thus the modest but able parish priest became the head of the province in which he had served so many years in a lowly position. His selection was made by the consistory of 1893, which was compelled to sue the throne for the privilege of installing him as patriarch of Venice. In return for this concession, which was made through Premier Crispi, the church appointed an ecclesiastical vicar apostolic in northeastern Africa to assist the premier in his pet scheme of extending the African colonies.

Cardinal Sarto had not been in office

his availability was commented upon by the really thoughtful writers more frequently than that of any other cardinal. As an example, a special correspondent of a prominent American daily last April wrote as follows to his paper concerning Cardinal Sarto and the papacy:

"It is Cardinal Giuseppe Sarto, the patriarch of Venice, the friend and patron of Abbe Perosi, the composer, who is at the present moment regarded not only throughout Italy, but likewise in the principal capitals of Europe, as destined to become the next pope. So little has been heard of him until now in connection with the papal succession that he may be regarded in the light of a dark horse in the race, which is perhaps due to the fact that he rarely goes to Rome, that he has never been a resident of the Eternal City, and that from the time of his being appointed vicar general of the diocese of Treviso until now he has held steadily aloof from all the projects of the curia.

"The vast majority of the Italian cardinals, and especially those who, forming part of the curia, are established in the Eternal City, have won their promotion to the sacred college as members of the diplomatic service of the papacy rather than as priests. And when a prelate has spent the greater portion of his life in diplomacy, and has found it the stepping stone to high honors, it naturally leaves him at the close of his career as representative of the Vatican abroad, with a greater



POPE PIUS X., FORMERLY CARDINAL SARTO.

bought a return ticket. But the unexpected has happened, and Leo's prediction has been fulfilled—Cardinal Sarto is Pope Pius X., and the Roman Catholic church is satisfied that the progress made during the reign of Leo XIII. is to be continued and perhaps amplified under the administration of the present pontiff.

Pope Leo's prediction was considered remarkable by reason of the fact that because of Sarto's position with reference to a *modus vivendi* between the church and the state he seemed to be on that important point directly opposed to Leo. For instance, Cardinal Sarto publicly announced his joy when there were strong probabilities of a union between church and state, and his accession to the pontificate has long been regarded in certain quarters as the solution of the Roman problem so long unsolved and so long a cause of dissension over all Italy, to say nothing of its bearing upon the attitude of other Catholic countries. Cardinal Sarto is noted for his prudence, having never meddled with politics, and for extreme independence. He is also a patron of the arts, and launched Father Lorenzo Perosi, the celebrated priest composer.

The cardinal is recognized as one of the most learned men in the church. He is a stickler for the exact truth as between the church and the people, and von much renown some years ago by destroying certain relics of doubtful authenticity. He brings to his high office a character of most attractive modesty, unusual energy in the direction of matters large and small, the talents of a fine administrative officer and the first qualities of an organizer. In addition to his abilities and his undoubted Christian character, the cardinal is, from the sweetness of his

more than a year before he publicly declared for a union between church and state, speaking in no uncertain way. His utterances created a great sensation, and it was felt that he might have offended the holy father by the fervor of his words. Apparently he received the silent approbation of the pope, in whose estimation he ever held a firm place.

It was said at the time that Cardinal Sarto made his public announcement that the Austrian and Prussian ambassadors at the Vatican were endeavoring to induce the papal authorities to agree to a *modus vivendi*. Emperor Francis Joseph is reported to have written several letters to the pope with this end in view, and Emperor William of Germany is said to have been equally anxious to bring about an understanding between the Vatican and the Italian government.

For more than three decades a gulf has yawned between the rival palaces of king and pope, a gulf material and political. For thirty-five years—since the Italians battered down the massive walls near the old Porta Pia—earnest men and noble women of all parties have been dreaming and hoping that the mighty breach between victors and vanquished might in some way be closed.

It was said of Pope Leo that in 1878, when he had just succeeded Pope Pius IX., he longed for some amicable arrangement with the Italians, but if he did reason of state outweighed his private wish. He was silent, and thus pledged himself to the no compromise party.

It is strange that while Sarto was never seriously considered by the public at large or by the ordinary press correspondents as a papal probability,

leaning toward statecraft than toward the administrative and doctrinal duties of his office at Rome. Many persons declare that it is imperative that the next pontiff should be a prelate who would devote his entire energies to reforms of an administrative and economic character, and likewise to the more rigid enforcement of the doctrines and discipline of the church.

"Cardinal Sarto, the patriarch of Venice, is the man of all others who fills these requirements. He is probably the most able administrator of the Italian episcopacy, combines firmness and determination with abundant tact and common sense, and has managed to institute a number of very practical reforms in his archdiocese of Venice without giving offense either to the clergy or to the laity. He avoids all newspaper notoriety. Indeed, his name is rarely mentioned in the press. He has always understood how to maintain an agreeable yet dignified *modus vivendi* with the Italian authorities, from whom he derives his stipend, and has shown his enlightenment by the vigorous campaign which he has carried on against the veneration of relics of questionable authenticity. He is on friendly terms with the members of the reigning house of Italy, during the late reign took part with King Humbert and Queen Margherita in the launching of a man-of-war at Venice, as well as in other state ceremonies at which they were present, and would certainly be a most agreeable choice as pope to the present ruler of Italy. He is just sixty-eight years old, which will be in his favor in the eyes of the conclave, since, as a general rule, that number of years constitutes a guarantee that the pontificate will not be of undue length."



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