

LUMEN IN CÆLO.

JOACHIM PECCI, having completed his studies at the Roman College, entered the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics, and devoted himself with profit to the study of Law and Theology. Gregory XVI., who had a keen knowledge of men, became deeply interested in him, and attached him to his person by appointing him Prelate of his Household and Signature Referendary (March 16, 1837). Shortly afterwards he sent him as Delegate to Benevento, then to Spoleto, and afterwards to Perugia. In these cities Mgr. Pecci displayed uncommon ability and attracted public admiration. He possesses, at the same time, a holy charity, incorruptible integrity, and unyielding firmness.

His first act of administration is deserving of mention.

He was at Benevento, a place then in a deplorable condition; situated as it was, far from Rome, which could give it but little attention, and hemmed in by the kingdom of Naples, which was the resort and asylum of smugglers and brigands. The government of this Province presented all manner of difficulties to the Delegate. There were families there with feudal notions, powerful in rank and fortune, despising authority, but timidly yielding to Neapolitan brigandage, which they protected against authority itself; just as Sicily is at the present time. Mgr. Pecci had then to combat two powers united against him. And let it not be forgotten that the brigands committed acts of cruel ferocity, and that these families had influential support at Rome.

Mgr. Pecci, grieved at the deplorable condition of the Province, resolved to make a change for the better—even at the risk of his own future prospects.

He began by obtaining from the Pontifical Government an efficient officer, Sterbini, who reorganized the Custom House business. He then went to the King of Naples, informed him of his designs, and prevailed upon him to enact severe measures against the violators of the law. This done, he secured the good will of the officers of the army and of the police force, and then went to work. It became necessary to fight regular battles, to follow the brigands to the castles in which they entrenched themselves, and enter these citadels by force; because their strange hosts, the Lords of the manors, claimed that the Delegate was violating their lands and their demesnes, and they, therefore, showed resistance.

The most powerful of them sought Mgr. Pecci, and, with threats, told him that he was going to Rome, and would soon return with an order for his recall.

"Very well, Signor Marchese," coldly replied Mgr. Pecci. "But before going to Rome, you will spend three months in prison, and I will give you black bread for your food, and water for your drink."

The Marquis's castle was, in the meantime, taken by assault, the brigands either killed or captured, and the people loudly applauded the Delegate.

In a few months the whole province was cleared of brigands; the Lords submitted; the Pope publicly congratulated Mgr. Pecci, and Ferdinand II. summoned him to receive the marks of royal consideration.

The Delegate was, about this time, stricken down with a dangerous malady, the clergy and the people were filled with alarm, and the streets of Benevento witnessed processions of penitents who walked bare-footed and their heads covered with sackcloth, and offering up prayers for his recovery.

Mgr. Pecci's administration over Spoleto and Perugia was marked by the same energy and promptness of action. In the latter city, which has a population of some twenty thousand inhabitants, and which was the chief town of the Province, the prisons under his administration were empty; there was not a single person under arrest. To the great regret of the Perugians, Gregory XVI. recalled him in 1843; he preconized him Archbishop of Damietta (Egypt), although he was only thirty-three years of age, and sent him as Nuncio to Brussels.

Mgr. Pecci won golden opinions not only from the Belgian Court, but from all conditions of society. Leopold I., a wise monarch, delighted in consulting him, and in manifesting every mark of affection towards him. But the climate—and perhaps the labours of his charge—affected his health so much that, at the advice of his physicians, he was obliged to ask for his recall. Leopold I. was sorely grieved at this; he conferred the Grand Cordon of his Order upon him, and requested him to carry a sealed package from him to the Pope. The Prelate inquired whether the commissions of the king were very urgent, as he desired, before returning to Rome, to visit some portions of Europe, and to study their political institutions, as he had done in Holland and Belgium.

"It will suffice, Monseigneur," replied the king, "for you to deliver my message to the Holy Father on your return to Rome."

When Mgr. Pecci reached the Eternal City, Gregory XVI., after reading the royal letter, said to him:—"The King of the Belgians extols your character, your virtues, and your services; and he asks something for you that I will grant with all my heart; the purple.

But here is a deputation from Perugia that has come to ask me to confide to you the administration of the Diocese. Accept, then, the See of Perugia; you will soon receive the Cardinal's hat."

Mgr. Pecci preconized Archbishop-Bishop of Perugia, at the Consistory of January 19, 1816, was, at the time, created Cardinal, and reserved *in petto*. But Gregory XVI. died in the course of the year, and he did not receive the Cardinal's hat until it was given him by Pope Pius IX., of holy memory, on December 9, 1853. During all this time, Mgr. Pecci never left his Diocese.

Cardinal Pecci has passed through some very trying times, and has always proved equal to the occasion. He is a man of great Catholic learning and of great political common sense. The new masters of Italy took his Seminary from him.

"I need only a few rooms," said the Cardinal. He opened his palace to the Seminarians, he lived with them and spent his recreation amongst them. He invited them to his table.

He founded for the priests of his Diocese, an Academy called St. Thomas, he presided over their theological discussions, encouraging the labours of each one, and brought forth men worthy of the better

days of the Church. It was through his efforts that the same scientific movement was inaugurated at Perugia that Cardinal Riario-Sforza inaugurated at Naples. He is himself endowed with the most varied culture, and was, at times, a poet.

In dealing with Syndics, Prefects, and other Italian authorities, Cardinal Pecci, like Cardinal Riario-Sforza, rose above all parties. There was never any doubt about his devotion to the Holy See, and he is incapable of weakness; but he is known to be submissive to the decrees of Providence. He has never permitted an officer of the present regime to cross his threshold or to come into his presence, and yet the civil power honoured his virtues, and occasionally tempered some of its measures out of regard for him.—*N. Y. Freeman's Journal*.

THE HERO OF THE METROPOLIS.

TIMOTHY O'BRIEN may well be called the "Hero of the Metropolis." By his own unaided exertions he rescued from the breakers and surf nearly fifty persons. Timothy is a native of the County Limerick, Ireland; is about thirty-four years of age, five feet six inches high, very stout built, a Hercules in strength, and of the greatest physical endurance. This is the second wreck from which he has escaped with his life, the first being that of the steamer Golden Gate, which was lost off Acapulco, on the Pacific coast, in 1863. She was burned to the water's edge, and O'Brien was one of the twenty-five persons who swam ashore, a distance of seven miles. Soon after the Metropolis struck and began to break up, there was a general rush for the rigging. O'Brien secured a position high on the mainmast, but when it became apparent that the only chance for life was to swim ashore, he boldly jumped from the rigging over the heads of the others and struck out for the beach, which he reached safely, the fifth man from the wreck. Realizing the peril of his fellow-passengers, O'Brien hastened over to the Currituck Club House, three-quarters of a mile distant, where he procured a pair of overalls and a quantity of dry matches. He returned, built several fires, after which began the work which marks him a hero. The sea was full of the struggling victims buffeting with the breakers, and, one by one he brought the nearly-exhausted and, in some instances, half-dead victims ashore, and placed them in the hands of others at the fires. He never halted until five o'clock in the evening when the last survivor had reached the shore. In the seven hours during which he was thus engaged O'Brien had saved nearly fifty people, many of whom would have perished but for his great coolness and his manly aid.—Exchange.

THE ELECTION AND PROCLAMATION.

THE Conclave was closed by Prince Chigi, the Marshal, on Monday night, February 18th; and on Tuesday morning the first ballot was taken. Solemn prayers had been ordered by the Cardinal-Vicar in various churches in Rome, to be continued for a month; and it was arranged that pilgrimages should be made to the principal sanctuaries in Rome by members of the various Catholic associations to obtain the blessing of a speedy election of a new Pontiff. On Wednesday morning it is said that Cardinal Pecci received 36 votes, and that thereupon Cardinal Franchi and others added their votes, by the system known as "accessus" to those already recorded for him, thus giving him more than the number required. This information is, however, not authentic, and we must wait till next week for accurate intelligence on this matter. By Tuesday night all the Cardinals except three seem to have been present at the Conclave—the absentees were Cardinals Cullen, Brossais St. Marc, and McCloskey. The first of these only started from Dublin on Saturday last; the second is ill; and Cardinal McCloskey arrived in Liverpool from America on Wednesday. The result of the election seems to have been known to the inhabitants of the Vatican about twenty minutes past twelve, and to have soon spread through the city, as we read that about 20,000 people were collected together in the Piazza of St. Peter's when Cardinal Caterini read the formula announcing the election, from the balcony of St. Peter's. The Sovereign Pontiff, after being invested in the Pontifical robes, received the homage of the Cardinals, the Marshal of the Conclave, and others, and then retired to his rooms. Preparations then commenced for the formal Benediction in St. Peter's. Some uncertainty seems to have prevailed as to whether the Holy Father would appear outside St. Peter's or no, but soon after half-past four the balustrade over the door inside St. Peter's was covered with a crimson drapery, and shortly after his Holiness appeared. This was the signal for loud and long-continued cheers. When silence was restored, Leo XIII. came forward, and in a distinct and loud voice gave his first Benediction to his flock. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed, we are told, not only in St. Peter's, but among a dense crowd which filled every street leading to the Basilica.—*Tablet*.

A FALSE MIRACLE.

AN alleged "miracle" in Mauch Chunk, Pa., says the *Catholic Review* was most indiscreetly made the subject of abundant and ridiculous newspaper remark. Assuming the newspaper reports to have been accurate, it was manifest that "some one had blundered" very seriously. The Archbishop of Philadelphia marked his official sense of the impropriety of the principals in the case by causing the following letter to be read in the churches of Mauch Chunk:

The Archbishop having heard and carefully considered the circumstances preceding and accompanying what is derisively called the Mauch Chunk miracle, said to be wrought on the person of a woman whose eccentric piety has neither good sense nor sound Catholic doctrine for its foundation, requests me to instruct you that, in his judgment it is a delusion and a pious fraud. Without inquiring as to the extent to which others participated in this lamentable folly, he desires to mark the whole proceeding and the principal actors in it with his distinct and unqualified disapprobation and condemnation, and to say that a repetition of anything of the sort in this diocese will be visited with the severest censure authorized by the laws of the Church,