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AN ESTIMATE OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF PIUS X.

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1. HIS CAREER. Giuseppe Sarto was born at Riese in the diocese of Treviso, July 2, 1835, of a family of the common people. Having finished his elementary studies in his native village he attended school at Castelfranco, to reach which he had to make every day a rather long journey on foot. He early felt the call to the priesthood; but, to become a priest there was need of means which his family did not have. His father was a poor employee of the city; the mother was a sewing-woman for the country folk; and at home there were eight children; two brothers and six sisters.

In 1852, at the death of his father, young Sarto, being seventeen years old, through the good offices of the parish priest of Riese, was able to enter the Seminary of Padua. It was the first step on the way which was to lead him to the Pontificate. The successive stages of his career we here state briefly: priest in 1858; arch-priest, 1867; Bishop of Mantua, 1884; Cardinal and Patriarch of Venice in 1893; Pope in 1903.

2. THE MAN. The more salient characteristics of the life of Giuseppe Sarto during his long career are the following: *an irreprehensible life*. Always severe with himself, as Bishop and as Patriarch, he was severe with the priests which he had under his jurisdiction. If he knew how to tolerate and pardon in his clergy, errors committed through the lack of intelligence or of tact, he never tolerated or pardoned the misdeeds of lewd and corrupt priests. His was "*the simple life*"; it was such even from the first years of his priesthood in the diocese of Vicenza to the last days of his pontificate. A commoner he was born and a commoner he lived and died. Eccle-

siastical honors did not inebriate him; he always fled from luxury; and even in the midst of the splendors of the Vatican he knew how to remain what he was during the first nine years which he passed as a poor priest in the modest village near Vicenza. His was a *pious life*, of a piety simple, infantile, all of one piece, which we so frequently find in our country communities; a piety which, born in the sanctuary of the home, the medieval studies of the Seminary only rendered superstitious and intolerant, which the doubts of modern research never disturbed. His was a *life of profound and delicate sentiment*. In the ancient parish of Tombolo lives still the memory of the good "Don Beppi," always ready to "rejoice with those who rejoiced," but even more to "weep with those who wept." We all remember with what profound and sincere grief he participated, at Venice, in the mourning of Italy for the violent death of King Humbert; and there is no one who does not know the anguish which smote him upon the breaking out of the cruel war which afflicts Europe. It is not a mistake that it was said that one of the first victims of the war was Pius X.

3. THE POPE. It is not possible to judge of a pope when the tomb, which holds his mortal remains, has scarcely been closed. It is possible, however, to gather together a few facts of which also history will have to take account when she girds herself to pronounce her judgment which has been matured by time.

Giuseppe Sarto was nominated pope for the purpose of *contrast*. It was due to the desire to follow the *political* pontificate of Leo XIII by a *religious* one. And if Giuseppe Sarto, the mystic, showed himself well adapted in this respect to succeed the diplomatic Gioacchino Pecci, it is a fact that, as *Pope*, Giuseppe Sarto was nothing more than a fish out of water. Nothing is more touching than the internal struggle which we saw him undergo at the time of his election and of his hesitancy at the moment of his acceptance. During all the pompous

functions which accompany the seating of a new pontiff, Pius X seemed possessed of a sort of spiritual vertigo, and submitted passively to the grandiose ceremonies, the pope's chair, the oriental fans, the applauses, the apotheosis. But when the storm of pagan worldliness had passed, which in those circumstances pass over the Vatican, Pius X reacted, returning as much as possible to his old tranquillity and appeared to be again that which he was formerly, showing the same good nature, the same pastoral simplicity, the same tender love for his sweet Venetian dialect.

Many have asked themselves, Why did Pius X ever select as Secretary of State, Merry del Val? This Spaniard was only forty years old; was Director of the College of the Nobles; had been Secretary of the Conclave, but was not Cardinal; and the selection of him as Secretary and Cardinal awakened general surprise. The reason of the good fortune of Merry del Val was due precisely to this fact: that he possessed that which the pope lacked, that is, the knowledge of the languages and a certain diplomatic experience. Moreover, his youth rendered him docile, and Pius X being near on to seventy and being of a simple nature had been fascinated, without knowing it, by that young prelate, so obsequious, so distinguished in his manners, and who knew so well the ways of the world. Pius X felt that he and Merry del Val were made for each other; but things turned out very differently. Merry del Val besides filling out that which the pontiff lacked, went to work to transform the Secretaryship of State into a most powerful instrument of government, and together with Cardinal Vives y Tuto, another Spaniard, and with Cardinal De Lai, constituted that triumvirate, which, having in hand the reins of the three ministries of Affairs Extraordinary, Affairs Ordinary and Apostolic Briefs, governed and misgoverned the Church.

Two months after his election, Pius X gave out his first official document, the Encyclical *E supremi*, in which he announced clearly his program. "*Instaurare omnia in Christo*" (an unhappy way in which the Vulgate translates "to sum up all things in Christ." Eph. 1:10). This program, which was not exactly a eulogy upon the preceding pope, pleased very many, since that purpose of general restoration in a religious sense responded to the desire of the majority. The intention of the pope was honest and sincere; but alas! what religious restoration could ever be possible in a system, in which religion was never more than a varnish? According to the confession of illuminated and spiritual Roman Catholics, the Vatican is no longer a religious organization which lives by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit, but is a political organization that maintains its power through the ability, the astuteness and intrigue of him who directs it. When an institution has changed its physiognomy and nature, as Roman Catholicism had done in the hands of the Papacy, it can no longer be *restored*; and to restore it in Christ would mean neither more nor less than demolishing it by means of reconstructing it again. For such a task Pius X was not the man, because of his lack of the proper temper of character and breadth of views and power of spirit. But what am I saying? For such a task no man would be capable. God alone is omnipotent.

In his relations with Italy Pius X was a disappointment; he could be only what he was. When upon the occasion of the assassination of Humbert, the Patriarch Sarto knew how to weep in such a Christian way with Margherita, as to win the imperishable gratitude of the widowed queen; and when a little later Italy knew that he had gone to the royal palace at Venice to pay a visit to the new sovereigns of Italy, all said; "Here is a prelate who breaks the tradition of intransigency; a man who, though being a priest, does not forget that he is an Italian and patriot. And when Cardinal Macchi from

the outside loggia of St. Peter's gave the solemn announcement, which was met with a storm of applause from the dense crowd in the great square, that the Patriarch Sarto had become Pius X, the crowd began to cry, "Let him come out! let him come out!" and begged for the papal benediction from the external loggia. And perhaps at that cry there passed through the heart of the pope a powerful thrill of Italianism. But alas! the benediction from the external loggia would signify the forgetting of the breach in the wall at Porta Pia made in '70, the accepting of Rome as the capital of the Kingdom, the reconciliation of the Vatican with Italy and the Quirinal; and the oath which Giuseppe Sarto had had to pronounce at his nomination as Cardinal and repeat at his nomination as pope sounded clear: "*We promise and vow and swear that whoever of us, God so disposing, shall be elevated as Roman Pontiff shall never cease to assert wholly and strenuously, and to reclaim also, the temporal rights, especially of the civil preeminence of the Roman Pontiff and the liberty of the Holy See.*" Pius X not being master of himself and yielding to the suggestions of Cardinal Oreglia allowed himself to be conducted where others wished, and the inaugural benediction was given from the internal loggia that guards the basilica. When I say that he was "not master of himself" I do not exaggerate. He had to do more than "restore all things in Christ." When one is elected pope and is called to make upon the altar of the Vatican the sacrifice of his own feelings and aspirations and his very individuality, it is necessary that he adapt himself to becoming a wheel, and not always the principal wheel, in the colossal machine.

4. HIS WORK. The first preoccupation of Pius X was to put in order the deranged finances of the Holy See. He abolished offices which complicated uselessly ecclesiastical bureaucracy and were useful only to those who enjoyed the fat salaries; and simplified the cere-

monial of the palace. Many, on account of these innovations, were hit hard in their financial interests; and not indifferent opposition began to be felt. But the idea of the pope was good, that is, to reform, commencing at his own house.

One of the very first papal acts was that concerning the *jus exclusivæ*, that is, the *veto*, which for several centuries had been exercised by the courts of Vienna, Paris, Madrid and Lisbon, and which was accepted or submitted to by Rome. It is known that in the same conclave, in which was elected Pius X, Cardinal Rampolla failed of election on account of the veto of Austria. Pius X wished to break with tradition. The act bearing the date of January 20, 1904, denies to the sovereigns the prerogative of the veto, and threatens the major excommunication against the cardinals who allow themselves to become the bearers in any manner whatever, of lay interference of whatever sort with the conclave. This act, while it was an admonition to Cardinal Puzyna, who in the conclave of 1903 was the bearer of the veto of Vienna and a comfort to Rampolla, who had been a victim of that veto, was indeed a courageous affirmation of the principle, that if Cæsar ought to have the things that are Cæsar's, Cæsar had no right to lord it over the things of God.

But the most important work of Pius X consisted without doubt in the reforms introduced in the *Canonical Rights*, which reforms can not be easily summed up in a few words, from the fact that it is difficult to enter into the ins and outs of the Catholic organism in which every century has left its traces, represented by laws, customs, institutions, uses and abuses, and all covered under the one mantle of *Canonical Rights*. The fact is, the reforms introduced here by the pope were neither few nor secondary, in that he succeeded in simplifying matters in such a way as to render the work of the Congregations more rapid, to suppress more than one worn out organism, and

to bring greater harmony into the discipline of the Church. In this field of administration Pius X labored much by himself, not asking the views of the others except in controverted cases. Here perhaps more than elsewhere, he unfolded his character which was eminently imperious. The conception which he had of himself, as head of the hierarchy and of the *Holy See*, can only be compared to the conception which the Emperor of Germany has of himself and his mission in the empire. And this trait of character shows a contradiction that presents itself at once to him who studies the relations of Pius X with democracy. Pius X in contrast with his predecessor, was always strongly opposed to the Christian democratic movement. It's a strange thing, that while Leo XIII, an aristocrat by birth and education, had seconded the rising Christian democracy, forming the basis of it with the encyclical *Rerum novarum*, Pius X, democrat all his life, did nothing more than oppose it. Why was this? Precisely because the democracy of the young men aimed at a certain liberty of action, and hence at autonomy before the bishops and parish priests; and the pope, imperious by nature, never wanted the Catholic organizations to act outside of their dependence on the hierarchy.

The politics of the pope did not fail to have disappointments and defeats. The breaking off of diplomatic relations between Rome and France was only the solution of a question, which the pope, ascending to the pontifical throne, found already at issue and inevitable, since for many years the French government had aimed at the separation of the Church from the state. During the year 1910, which was the most unfortunate year of all the pontificate of Pius X, the events succeeded one another with dizzy rapidity revealing the vulnerable points of the diplomacy of the pope and his government. They were: the German dissension, which commenced with the struggle of Cardinal Fischer, who represented the liberal

tendency, and Cardinal Kopp, who represented the "stand-pat" or intransigent tendency, which later Pius X favored, without however wishing to seem to do so: the centennial commemoration of St. Carlo Boromeo, on the occasion of which, the pope had to eat his words in the Bull *Editae saepe*, in consequence of the protests of Germany, moved by the insults which the encyclical had launched against the Reformation; the diplomatic conflict with Spain, where the radical cabinet of Canalejas aimed to put up a barrier against the monastic invasion: the revolution in Portugal which took immediately an anticlerical attitude, aiming at the secularizing of the eleemosynary institutions and to expel the Jesuits: the Christian Democratic Congress at Modena, that, in the face of the Vatican that wished too tyrannically to manage everything, took a daring and independent attitude, almost of revolt. All these facts put in relief, the indecision, and insufficiency of the papal criteria for resolving the great questions of a politico-religious nature of the more advanced countries; his incompetency to liberate himself from an atmosphere, befouled by the traditional hate against the Reformation which even enlightened Catholics consider now as a movement which was a benefit to Europe. These facts taught above all that the reactions provoked by his spiritual tyranny are tremendous and push to resistance and rebellion even those who had always meekly submitted to him.

A reformation in the order of morals was introduced by Pius X in the papacy which not only brings praise to his memory but will remain in history as a solemn admonition to all his successors. Giuseppe Sarto having been born poor, knew how to remain such even in the midst of the pomp of the papal court; and a poor man he died. He left nothing to his family; but requested his successor to assign, if he thought best, the modest pension of sixty dollars a month to his poor sisters; and concerning a legacy of a few thousand lire which a benefactor

had left him personally, he wished, because of a conscientious scruple, that those whose duty it would be to judge in the matter should decide if the legacy might pass to his family, or be included in the papal patrimony. What a lesson to the nepotistic popes who enriched their own families with millions and millions!

5. MODERNISM. The principal characteristic of the pontificate of Pius X was the struggle against modernism; a struggle that was tenacious, violent and ferocious. This is not the place to give the story of modernism, that is, of the reformation movement in the bosom of the Church. It is enough to say here that this movement was divided into several tendencies, which went from the more radical, rationalistic and revolutionary to the more mild and evangelical which was represented by the "Pious Society of St. Jerome," which wished a spiritual revival of the church obtained by the diffusion of the gospel among the people. But the Vatican bound all these tendencies up into the same bundle and called it all by one name, *Modernism*. The first attack was made in December, 1903, in the placing on the Index five works of Loisy; then came the condemnation of the *Santo* of Fogazzaro; then the hue and cry after the then anonymous *Letter to a Professor of Anthropology*; then the suspension *a divinis* of Romolo Murri; then the condemnation of the Milanese Review, *il Rinovamento*; then in September, 1907, the famous encyclical *Pascendi*, the great anti-modernist manifesto; and following the encyclical the most odious system of espionage that one can imagine, to discover and punish the modernists, the result of which was the ex-communication of Loisy, of Tyrrel, of the editors of the *Rinovamento*, of Murri, of Minocchi, of Schnitzer, the closing of the Seminary of Perugia, the oath of orthodoxy imposed in a very special way on the teaching clergy.

The pope from his point of view was logical, as the Church of Rome was always logical when she sent here-

tics to the stake. If the Church of Rome is the only and legitimate depository of all the truth, and if God has confined to her the monopoly of this truth, he who resists the Church, resists God, and the lightning-stroke of the anathema only strikes him justly. But if the Church of Rome is not the only and legitimate depository of all the truth, and if it is true that she has mutilated and corrupted in adding non-Christian elements and defiling in a hundred other ways that portion of truth which God had confided to her, not to monopolize it, but to administer it as a faithful housekeeper, the part of the clergy and laity which moved by another sense of the Divine and by a true love for the truth, desired a reform of the Church in the sense of return of the Church to the pure fountains of the Gospel of Christ, did not commit a sacrilege. It was the Church that had committed the sacrilege. The pious modernists wished only her conversion; wished that the Church should return to Christ, to her first love; that she should renounce every worldly glory, that she might seek only the glory of God. Pius X, a man with poorly illuminated faith, of scant culture, attached to the hierarchy, of an absolute and intolerant spirit, inveighed against modernism, with a violence which displeased not a few of the cardinals themselves; and the fact that his repressive measures struck so many ecclesiastics and laymen, esteemed for their piety and their spotless life, brought desolation into the Church. Giuseppe Sarto, who as Patriarch of Venice had showed himself indulgent toward priests accused of Rosminianism, because he knew them to be zealous in their ministry and pure in their conduct, as pope showed himself practically to prefer priests who professed a blind obsequiousness to traditional doctrine even though they limped morally, to studious priests and investigators of truth, but conscientious in the exercises of their ministry and spotless in their life. Time and facts will demonstrate the folly of such a procedure; and they will demon-

strate also, that though men may be annihilated, ideas cannot be, which when they are just and holy, end always with triumphing over the violence of pitiless tyranny.

Such was the man and his work, which history will judge later with its serene, just and complete judgment.

In the meanwhile, though recognizing all the personal qualities of this man, upright, severe with himself and rigid with others in the application of that which he believed in conscience to be good and right, and while taking account of all the improvements brought about by him in the hierarchical administration, a papacy like this one, inaugurated with a grand program of wishing to "restore all things in Christ," I, from the Christian viewpoint, could not better define than in this way: a papacy of good intentions that were not realized, on account of the lack of the fibre of a reformer in the pope, on account of the stubbornness of those who surrounded him and on account of the very conditions of the papal institution, which, since it is what it is, cannot be "restored in Christ," because with Christ it has nothing to do.