

THE ELECTION OF A POPE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF «THE DAWN OF ITALIAN INDEPENDENCE.»



WHEN the death of the reigning Pope draws near, the cardinal secretary of state informs the dean of the Sacred College, who summons his colleagues to the residence of the dying man; the cardinal vicar issues orders that prayers be offered in the Roman churches; the cardinal penitentiary attends the bedside of the Pope, to whom the sacristan of the Pope's chapel administers extreme unction. As soon as may be after death has occurred, the body must be formally recognized by the cardinal camerlingo, who, in obedience to an ancient custom, first knocks thrice on the door of the bed-chamber. Getting no answer, he enters, and taps thrice with a silver mallet on the dead man's forehead, and thrice calls him by name. No response coming, the camerlingo declares that the Pope is dead. Thenceforth the camerlingo is the most important of the cardinals, having charge of the preparations for the conclave, of the government of the palace, and of the transactions with the representatives of foreign powers, to whom he officially announces the Pope's death; the papal guard of Swiss halberdiers attends him when he goes out; his arms are stamped on the medal of the vacant see; he takes an inventory of the property in the palace, and affixes seals to the dead pontiff's papers. But in order to prevent him from overstepping his authority the Sacred College appoints three cardinals—a bishop, a priest, and a deacon—who are called the Heads of the Orders, and whose business it is to oversee his acts. They serve for three days, being replaced by others chosen in rotation.

Meanwhile the great bell of the Capitol, the so-called «Paterine,» has tolled the news to the citizens in Rome. Formerly this was the signal for unlocking the jails and for unrestrained disorders. Brokers used to set up booths where pools, as at a horse-race, were sold on the probable next Pope, enormous sums being squandered in this species of gambling; more recently that scandal has been less open. Every one is on tiptoe with excitement; churchmen as well as laymen display an eagerness out of tune with the grief

in which the church is officially declared to be plunged.

For during the novendial, or nine days succeeding the Pope's death, the celebration of his obsequies and the mourning for his loss are supposed to absorb universal attention. His body must first be embalmed and then attired in funeral apparel. When masses have been said over it in the presence of the cardinals, it is removed to St. Peter's, where, on a magnificent catafalque, it lies in state. Finally, on the ninth day, the public funeral—one of the great pageants of the world—takes place, after which the body is cofined and laid away in the temporary receiving tomb, to rest there until, when the next Pope dies, it is lowered into the crypt of St. Peter's for permanent burial.

Needless to say, the funeral ceremonies of the novendial cause no abatement in the preparation for the conclave. The day after the Pope dies as many cardinals as happen to be in Rome meet to confer. The oldest of their number, the dean of the college, presides; they swear to preserve the utmost secrecy concerning all their proceedings; they renew their oaths of allegiance to the holy see, binding themselves to defend and guard the rights, prerogatives, and temporal possessions of the church «up to the effusion of blood»; then they discuss questions of immediate urgency, listen to the reading of the laws governing the election, and hear the camerlingo's report of his business. The congregation reassembles each day, its numbers being constantly increased by the arrival of cardinals from a distance.

So soon as the last ceremonies for the dead Pope have been performed in St. Peter's, all is ready for the conclave to begin. As its sessions must be held, if possible, where the late Pope died, the Quirinal Palace was usually chosen; but the conclave of 1878 sat in the Vatican, where Pius IX. died. To preserve an appearance of secrecy, the quarters occupied by the cardinals are isolated from the rest of the building and from the outer world by the walling up of every door and window and aperture. Each cardinal has a separate room, which he draws by lot and may not exchange;

he is also accompanied by two conclavists, or attendants, who may be ecclesiastics or laymen, provided they have formed part of his household for half a year previous. But these are only a part of the personnel of a conclave, which has a master of ceremonies, a secretary, a confessor, a physician, barbers, carpenters, masons, and serving-men—in all some two hundred and fifty souls.

In St. Peter's, or other church, the cardinals gather. Their dean celebrates the mass of the Holy Ghost, after which an eminent prelate preaches a sermon admonishing them to set aside every personal consideration, and with all diligence to give the bereaved church a new shepherd. Then according to prescription the master of ceremonies takes the papal cross, and marches, followed by the cardinals in the order of their rank—first the bishops, next the priests, and last the deacons, all in violet capes. Their attendants precede them, followed immediately by the papal choir singing the hymn «Veni, Creator Spiritus.» The prelates follow behind the cardinals. Thus in procession they enter the conclave, and having reached the chapel, the cardinal dean at the altar recites the prayer «Deus qui corda fidelium,» after which the cardinals read the ordinances on the election of a pope and swear to uphold them; then they retire to their rooms, where they hold a general levee. Not until three hours after sunset, at the third ringing of a bell, are they left to themselves.

A great throng of spectators and friends escorts the procession into the palace. «Hither hie all the ambassadors and envoys and political agents in Rome, to snatch the last opportunity afforded for unrestricted conference, to give the last stroke to eager appeals of soft persuasion or deterring menace, the last touch to cunning combination, and particularly to deposit in the hands of an intimate confederate the knowledge of those whose nomination their courts will absolutely not brook.»

At the third ringing of the bell the master of ceremonies cries, «Extra omnes!» («All out!») Yet there are still laggards, who go only after vigorous persuasion. The last having departed, the cardinal camerlingo and his three colleagues lock the great door and draw the bolts on the inside, while the prince marshal, an officer who has for centuries been either a Colonna or a Chigi, turns the keys on the outside. Thenceforth the conclave has no ostensible communication with the world. There are, however, two cylindrical dumbwaiters, or wheel-boxes, through which food and other necessaries can be passed; and

standing at one of these, the ambassador of a Catholic power delivers a final exhortation to the cardinals listening within. In 1829 it fell to Chateaubriand, in 1846 to Pellegrino Rossi, to give the Sacred College this lecture. When they have dispersed to their cells for the night, the camerlingo, lighted by men with torches, inspects the whole vast quarters, peering into each dark corner, looking under beds and into closets, to make sure that no unauthorized person is hidden there. Then, except for the whispered conferences of wakeful electioneers, the conclave sleeps.

On the morrow the balloting begins. Before describing that, however, let us see how the cardinals and their escort live during their seclusion. Formerly each cardinal had his food sent from his palace, and it was one of the features of this occasion for the cardinalitial lackeys, the so-called *dapiferi*, to pass daily with large hampers through the streets of Rome. A prelate specially appointed received these hampers at the wheel-boxes, and it was his duty, before allowing the food to go farther, to search every morsel of it for concealed letters. The oath of secrecy, fortified by menace of dire penalties to those who break it, has never constrained either the cardinals or their attendants or their friends in the city. It has simply sharpened the wits of would-be communicators to discover safe means of sending messages. Many an important missive, secreted in the belly of a capon or in the heart of an orange, or pasted under the label of a bottle of wine, has reached its destination in spite of the vigilance of the bishop inspector of viands; and answers have been slipped back through crevices in the plastered walls, or tossed out of the window in hollow coins. Thus from day to day certain members of the conclave and their associates outside exchange counsel; and it has happened, as in 1831, when Gregory XVI. was elected, that news from abroad has precipitated an election. When secrecy is violated in this way while the decision is still pending, we need not be surprised that the history of the proceedings, in their minutest details, is subsequently published by those who take part in them. The best account of the conclave of 1800, for instance, was written by Cardinal Consalvi, who acted as its secretary.

At the conclave of 1878, which sat in the Vatican, the food was not sent in, but was prepared in a common kitchen, whence it was carried to the cells by the servants of the respective cardinals. Gregory X., in 1271, with a view to hasten the election by making

the electors as uncomfortable as possible, provided that during the first five days the ration at each meal should consist of a single dish, after which only bread, wine, and water should be allowed. But this ascetic rule was not observed. Latterly cardinals have eaten what they pleased. Their ordinary fare consists of coffee or chocolate and rolls in the morning; soup, two dishes of meat, with vegetables, wine, and dessert, at the noontide dinner, and again at supper. The conclavists usually eat with their patrons; the servants and artisans mess together near the kitchen, and they grumble at their fare as loudly as college students at commons.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon the cardinals, having heard early mass and taken communion, assemble in the chapel,—the Pauline Chapel when the conclave met in the Quirinal, the Sistine when in the Vatican,—which has been arranged as a voting-place. A green carpet covers the floor, and round the walls are ranged as many chairs, or thrones, as there are cardinals. Over each throne is suspended a baldachin, hung with purple if the cardinal was created by the Pope just dead, and with green if he dates from an earlier pope. Before each seat is a table, with cloth of corresponding color, and paper, ink, pens, pencils, and the list of the Sacred College. In the middle of the chapel a large table bears two gilded vases: into one, chalice-shaped, with a lid, the ballots are cast; in the other, pyx-shaped, they are placed when they have been counted. The ebony box with lock and key beside them is used for getting the votes of those cardinals whom illness detains in their cells. Three gilt plates, other lists, inkstands, and a box of little balls for checking the names of the voters, complete the furnishings of the table, at which are set three stools for the scrutators.

In one corner of the chapel, near the Door of the Sovereigns (if we suppose the conclave to be in the Sistine Chapel), a long stovepipe leads up from a small stove to a window. To the right of the entrance a wooden booth incloses the water-closets. Farther on, another booth serves as a buffet, where the cardinals can refresh themselves with wine and biscuits. Near this are two chests, in which are kept three sets of pontifical garments, of large, medium, and small size.

Having come to order at the request of the dean, if the formality of recognizing the cardinals be dispensed with,—and in so small a body it is hardly necessary, because no impostor could hope successfully to palm himself off as a cardinal,—the first business is to

choose three scrutators, one from each order, to count the ballots, and three *infermieri*, who collect the votes of the sick. The canons define three kinds of election: by inspiration, by compromise, and by ballot. Election by inspiration takes place when «all the cardinals, as if by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, proclaim one candidate as pontiff unanimously and *viva voce*.» A single dissenting voice vitiates this method, which, we may remark, has perhaps never been carried out in literal conformity to rule, although several popes, after more or less wire-pulling, have been chosen by acclamation.

Election by compromise has sometimes been resorted to, after a long deadlock, by the appointment of a committee consisting of representatives of the various rival factions. The conclave merely ratifies the candidate nominated by the committee.

But election by ballot is the ordinary method. The ballots, when open, are about four inches long and three broad. In the first or upper section the cardinal writes his name; in the middle, the name of the candidate whom he proposes; in the lower section, some motto from the Scriptures. When he folds the sheet his name, being inside, is covered by the lower section, and only the candidate's name or the seal comes uppermost. To guard against the ballot's opening he seals it with a seal he has chosen, but it must not be one which the scrutators might recognize. Going to the central table, he deposits the ballot in the chalice, repeating at the same time this formula: «*Testor Christum dominum qui me judicaturus est, me eligere quem secundum Deum judico elegi debere et quod idem in accessu preestabo.*»

When every one has voted, and the *infermieri* have brought the ballots of the sick members, the first scrutator takes each ballot from the chalice, and opening it (but only so far as to read the motto), hands it to the second, who, having entered the vote opposite the candidate's name on the list, passes it to the third, who reads it aloud. During this process the other cardinals keep the tally on the duplicate lists which each of them has before him. At the conclusion all the ballots are taken to the stove and burned, the smoke from the chimney being a signal which multitudes outside the palace await. According to common belief, when no smoke appears at the usual time it is a sign that the Pope has been elected. The last ballots are burned like the rest, however, the difference in the volume of smoke being due to the fact that as no straw is used at the last burning there is very little smoke.

There being no election, the cardinals now return to their quarters for dinner, after which, at three o'clock or a little later, they reassemble for another ballot. This differs from the morning one in that the cardinals, instead of voting for their favorite candidates, vote for their second choice. The process is called «acceding,» and seems devised for breaking a deadlock. Each must vote for some one who has received support at the morning trial; but if none of these suits him, being prohibited from again casting for his favorite, he may simply vote for «nobody.» Thus it might happen that the Pope chosen in the *accessus*, or acceding, was a candidate whom very few or none of the cardinals would select on their first choice. As a matter of fact, however, not many popes have owed their election to the *accessus*, in which the cardinals generally throw random votes for candidates who have little chance of success.

Such is the daily routine of the conclave, it being rare that more than two ballots a day are taken, until some candidate receives the requisite two-thirds vote of the members present. At the largest recorded conclave, that of 1878, sixty-one cardinals were present; the conclave of 1800, held in the Church of San Giorgio Maggiore at Venice, had only thirty-five. The duration of a conclave depends on many considerations—personal ambition, political intrigues, and factional jealousies. That of 1800 lasted one hundred and four days, that of 1878 only three days. It may be well to remark here that the canon law does not prescribe that the Pope must be a cardinal, or even a cleric. Nevertheless, since the election of Urban VI. in 1378 the successful candidates have belonged to the members of the Sacred College, although as late as 1758 a non-cardinal was voted for several times. At least two laymen—John XIX. (1024) and Adrian V. (1276)—have occupied the papal throne, and there is to-day nothing to prevent laymen from being created cardinals, although they are not entitled to vote in the conclave unless they can produce a special permit from the late Pope. Up to the meeting of the conclave of 1823, Cardinal Albani had never taken orders, and there is still some doubt as to whether he did so then.

The official routine of the conclave, which consists in the celebration of mass and the morning and afternoon ballots, represents only a small part of its activity. Long before politics, through the extension of constitutional government, became a trade in other countries, the princes of the Roman hierarchy

were masters of political strategy. The preponderance of Italian cardinals practically limits the number of aspirants to the Papal office to about forty. Among these perhaps half are tacitly ruled out as unavailable. A candidate, to be «popeable,» as the phrase is, must have a happy combination of qualifications, among which mediocrity sometimes counts for much. Age also is an advantage, because old popes make frequent conclaves, which gives unsuccessful candidates another chance. In the case of Pius IX. mediocrity seems to have overcome the objection of comparative youth, he being fifty-four at his election; but Leo XIII., who was sixty-eight and apparently frail, has outlived most of his competitors. Leo XIII.'s election also broke the tradition that the cardinal camerlingo will not find favor with his colleagues, who cherish a similar hostility to the cardinal secretary of state. The camerlingo and the secretary of state, being the chief executive officers, have more occasion than any others to render themselves unpopular. They are regarded, besides, as the special beneficiaries of the late Pope, and on the theory that turn about is fair play, the Sacred College usually prefers, by ignoring them, to give a different faction its share of offices and powers. The Romans have a proverb, «No one can be pope twice,» which sums up the disappointment of many secretaries who aspired to the higher office.

Day and night, therefore, while the conclave lasts it is the scene of conferences. Faction quietly measures forces with faction; neutrals of the «flying squadron,» uncommitted to any candidate, are eagerly solicited by all. Rumors and innuendos do equal service with arguments. If a faction has reason to expect that one of the powers will veto its candidate, it first puts forward a sham candidate to draw the veto; that done, it can safely work for the election of its favorite. Sometimes still more disingenuous ruses are resorted to. When it became evident in the conclave of 1799–1800 that Cardinal Bellisomi would be chosen on the next ballot, Cardinal Herzan, by intimating that the choice might be distasteful to Austria, actually persuaded Bellisomi's supporters to postpone the final vote for a fortnight, until a messenger could be sent to Vienna and return. Whether the messenger ever came back is not reported; but it mattered not, for the delay sufficed to ruin Bellisomi's chances. In 1823 a candidate who had almost reached the goal was defeated by the rumor that he had once drunk chocolate on a fast day. In 1829 Cardinal Castiglione had thirty-five votes, more than the required

number, but it was announced that one vote was lacking from the total, which vitiated the ballot. Suspicion fell on two scrutators, one of whom is supposed to have hidden the missing vote in his sleeve. The next day, however, Castiglione was chosen by an increased majority. These instances, which might be indefinitely augmented from the testimony of those who took part in and left records of conclaves, will show that cardinals, whatever they may profess, do not rely wholly on divine guidance in their selection of a pope.

At last, however, the final ballot is reached, and the scrutators proclaim that, two thirds of the votes having been cast for one cardinal, he is elected. If he has only the required number of votes, they open the ballots to make sure that he did not vote for himself, a precaution rarely taken, because nearly always the outcome of the decisive ballot is foreseen, and there is a stampede to the candidate who has been agreed upon. As soon as he announces his acceptance of the triple crown, all the other cardinals lower the baldachins over their thrones, and conduct him to the altar. Papal robes are brought, and when he has been dressed in garments that fit him, the Sacred College performs the first act of adoration, or homage, to the new sovereign.

Meanwhile the news has spread from the chapel to the other parts of the palace. The masons tear down the plaster wall before one of the balconies, from which the cardinal dean proclaims the election to the expectant throngs beneath, as, for example, «Cardinal Pecci has been elected, and he takes the name Leo XIII.» When Pius IX. was elected he himself came to the balcony and blessed the people.

In due time other ceremonies, prescribed by canon or custom, are observed. In the Sistine Chapel the second act of adoration takes place. Then the pontiff is borne into

St. Peter's on the papal litter, attendants waving huge fans of white peacocks' feathers beside him, and the cardinals and prelates follow in procession. Reaching the high altar, he sits on a cushion placed upon it, and while the *Te Deum* is chanted the cardinals go through the third act of adoration, kissing his hand and foot, and being embraced by him in return, after which he bestows the papal benediction on the multitudes in the vast basilica.

The final pageant, and the most gorgeous of all,—the coronation,—is celebrated a few days later. It begins in the atrium of St. Peter's, where the Pope, seated on a throne, receives the homage of the archpriest and clergy of the basilica. Thence he is borne in procession through the church to St. Gregory's chapel, where he is attired in the pontifical robes of state. As he comes out, a master of ceremonies stops him and, kneeling, holds before him a silver wand tipped with tow, which a cleric lights. As the tow burns, the master of ceremonies sings, «Sancte Pater, sic transit gloria mundi.» After a second burning of tow, which symbolizes the evanescence of even papal pomp, the Pope proceeds to the high altar to receive the pallium. Mass is celebrated, during which the general clergy do homage; that concluded, the Pope is borne to the balcony which overlooks the square of St. Peter's, and there, in the presence of tens of thousands of spectators, the miter having been taken off, the triple crown is placed on his head by the second cardinal deacon. «Receive the tiara adorned with three crowns,»—thus runs the ancient formula,—«and know that thou art the father of princes and kings, the rector of the globe, the vicar on earth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom is honor and glory, world without end.» The Pope then gives his benediction, «*urbi et orbi*,» the multitude applauds, and the pageant ends.

William Roscoe Thayer.

NIGHTFALL.

HER eyes so deep, the light
Looked in and was a shade;
Now on my spirit lies the night,
The tender night, they made.

Heaven's friendly shadows fall
Along the field and town;
A star burns on the mountain wall;
The world's night gathers down.

Hide, soothe the world, kind skies!
For me, below, above,
Only the night of her dear eyes,
The shadow of her love.

John Vance Cheney.