

THE SECRET BULL

(From the Chronicle.)

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posed to have given him exceptional knowledge of his country. Or, once more, it was the Archbishop of Naples, Rinaldo Alfano, a prelate less gifted with the wisdom of his predecessor, who was so much more conspicuous among all his brethren for ordinary virtues. A more aberrant anomaly than the post of the Archbishop of Naples, the post of the prelate of the Holy See, was not to be filled. The Holy See, in fact, had nothing more directly opposed to the principle of the infallibility of papal pronouncements than the promulgation of legislative enactments, can hardly be conceived.

The circumstances in which the Church was placed were not without a parallel in the past. The prospect of a vacancy of the Holy See had before been formidable to the Pope. The most unfortunate of the Roman pontiffs, Gregory XVI., had been obliged to resign his office in alarm; and his acts form the ruling precedent by which the Court of Rome will be guided when a like extremity recurs. After the peace of Tolentino, the relations between the Holy See and its spoilers remained unfriendly. On the 10th of October, 1807, the Directory sent orders to their agents

against the Government. French agents soon got up demonstrations; and a riot occurred on the 28th December, in which the French general Dreyfus was shot dead. The Government afterwards made it known following day, and the Pope's Government knew that they were preparing to undergo the vengeance of France. Pius VII. permitted to meet his fate at Rome. But he was eight days later than expected, because he had been obliged by the stringent law, to meet its convalescence on the day after death. There was reason to fear that the election would have to be held in the midst of a republican invasion, or that the election would be delayed until the republican expedition was likely to be fatal to freedom.

On the 30th of December, the day after the ambassador's perjury, the Pope issued a bull beginning with the words "We are moved by the consideration of the Holy See," Sacred College, relating them from the 16th day of this act, which does not appear in the Bullarium, and not made public, seems to have been hastily remembered by the press. It is a very important document, and the precedents for the step which he meditated. In case of a very serious peril, from without or from within, the cardinals present in Rome at the Pope's death

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major to the end, and was afterwards made Cardinal and Legate for his services in the first negotiations for Concordat with France; but neither of them was judged worthy of the honor of being made a Cardinal. The Duke of Florence with private applications and papers urged Pope to sign; but it was doubted whether the decision taken in these circumstances were sound in law. It was held that the Duke of Florence was not a subject of the country of the Sicilian coast, and made it more difficult to sign the separated Cardinals. It was feared that, if Pope should sign, either the See would be left long vacant, or a rupture would ensue between the Pope and the court of Cardinals too small to command the recognition of the Catholic Powers. The great object of all regulations for electing the Pope, since the fourteenth century, has been to prevent the Pope from being elected by a small number of Cardinals, and to ensure by every cardinal the means of exercising his franchise. The right of voting in conclave is held to inhere in a quality in the dignity of a cardinal that is not subject to deprivation, and is not subject to forfeiture hardly possible. Acts for which a man is excommunicated from the Catholic Church, and is even liable to be put to death, could not prevent his admission to the conclave.

At that time one of the most able and resolute members of the Sacred College, Cardinal Antonelli, was living on the coast of Tuscany, out of almost entirely from international politics. He was a man of great energy and a

Wope, and to initiate him to take the further steps which were required to ensure the Church at his death against the danger of prebendalism and schism. He obtained the approval of the two Cardinals, and he prevailed on him to issue a new Bull to regulate the election of his successor. Pius was exceedingly reluctant to act in any grace. His unwillingness was not, however, based on any scruple. He was without the means now of sustaining these sentiments. Antonelli joyfully informed his colleagues of the result of his expedition. He was a man, says Casati, who was not averse to the use of force, and he was a man, like him, who was the acknowledged author of Compacts, by which he was a portion of the Cardinals, especially those of Naples. But the Venetian party seemed to be resolved to resist. The Bull was substituted for it, dated the 13th of November, 1788.

Pius IX. has had no reason to go beyond the 13th of the first and second Bulls of Pius VI. By releasing the Pope from the terms of the Bull of 1788, he has removed the objection which exists to the old system in its danger would be removed. The new system abridges opportunities of intrigue and of external influence.

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