

SEVEN DAYS IN ROME
A R E M E M B R A N C E
OF THE
FIRST WORKERS' PILGRIMAGE

By Abbé ANINARD

HONORARY CANON

Curate at the Madeleine, chaplain of the Pensionnat Sainte-Marie

Editor of the *Semaine Religieuse d'Aix*



AIX
J. NICOT, PRINTER, RUE DU LOUVRE, 16
1887

THIS EDITION

This is an English translation of the original French text, made for the website leonharmel.com in 2026. It follows the original sentence by sentence, without cuts or additions.

The text is given in full, translated from the 1887 edition. It has been typeset in the spirit of the original: title pages and headings follow the layout of the book; the illustrations have been cut out of the digitised document and restored.

The numbered notes are those of the original work; here they are numbered continuously from beginning to end. The notes marked with an asterisk * have been added for this edition, to shed light on the historical context.

Léon Harmel, le Bon Père du Val-des-Bois

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The account that follows was published in the issues of 6, 20 and 27 September 1887 of the *Semaine Religieuse d'Aix*, by one of its editors.

The man whose task it was to write it on returning from the first *Workers' Pilgrimage* to Rome would never have thought of publishing a pamphlet about a ten-day journey; but the pilgrims who *went* with him *have* asked him to have these articles, which recall moving memories for them, printed separately.

He will consider himself very happy if these few lines can also help people to appreciate the *workers' movement*, to *love* the Sovereign Pontiff even more, and encourage his occasional readers to undertake the ever-fruitful pilgrimage to the capital of the Christian world.

SEVEN DAYS IN ROME

A R E M E M B R A N C E

OF THE

FIRST WORKERS' PILGRIMAGE



I

The departure. — The Corniche. — The customs at Ventimiglia. — The Roman Campagna. — Modernised Rome. — Rome, the most complete of pilgrimages. — Rome, Jerusalem. — Rome, the victory of Christianity: the Forum, the Mamertine Prison. — The Colosseum and the social question.

Several weeks have already gone by, and we have still not been able to tear ourselves away from the charm of a beautiful and all too brief ten-day dream, in which we saw pass before our eyes, together with the grandiose memories and the ruins of ancient Rome, all the splendours of the papal city.

At the Vatican it was granted to us to behold the venerated features of Leo XIII, the Vicar of Christ, to hear his voice which stirs the world, to kiss his hand and to bow beneath the most august and most powerful blessing that a Christian can receive here below.

We readily believe that the faintest echo of so holy a pilgrimage, however weak and distant it may be, cannot leave any Catholic soul indifferent. It will always bring it a life-giving breath of faith and hope. That is what has decided us to write this account.

On Thursday 13 October, at about half past nine in the morning, a fast special train left the station at Marseilles and carried us towards Rome with more than eight hundred travellers, the third contingent of a magnificent workers' pilgrimage made up of two thousand pilgrims. Two other trains, which had left Paris under the leadership of Mr Harmel, the organiser of the project, were heading for the same goal by way of the Mont Cenis.

The train from the South was under the direction of Count de Villechaize. It carried more than thirty travellers from the diocese of Aix, among them a large group of men and women of Arles whose chaplain was a canon of Saint-Trophime.

Through a thoughtful foresight on the part of the organisers, each section of travellers was able to stay in the French carriages until the return journey. We were thus spared the Italian carriages and the nuisance of several changes of train.

The most admirable discipline governed the boarding of the carriages, and the most Christian charity showed itself from the very start in the compartments where the chances of the journey had brought together, at random, travellers who were strangers to one another. Priests, workers, ladies, members of the ruling classes, all are soon united by the bonds of the most respectful intimacy; all chat, laugh and above all pray, vying with one another in ardent emulation. To the murmur of the Rosary our train moves off; we greet Notre-Dame de la Garde, who blesses us from the top of her hill. Soon hymns ring out, and our pilgrimage train, in contrast with so many other trains of business and pleasure, proclaims in its own way the triumph of Christianity over modern civilisation.

The Corniche line that we are following enjoys a cosmopolitan reputation that is not undeserved. We shall not take our eyes off the blue waves of the Mediterranean until after Civitavecchia. Toulon supplies us with a new contingent, and so will Nice. Saint-Raphaël

begins to display before us the luxury of those ravishing villas that are one more wonder on these enchanting shores.

Soon the sight of the Lérins Islands makes the hearts of the people of Arles beat faster; with a prayer we greet our great archbishops, St Honoratus, St Caesarius, St Hilary, St Virgilius; and in the last glimmers of the sunset we can still gaze, with an admiration mingled with sadness, upon the delightful creek of Monaco, a little harbour in miniature overlooked by the establishment of Monte Carlo, which, alas, awakens in us memories other than those of the Isle of Saints.

With the shadows of night we were to experience our first nightmare, thank God the only one of our journey: it was the appearance of the Italian tricorne hats at Ventimiglia. The customs were there, and we had to prepare ourselves for their odious searches.

What a long and tedious wait in crowded rooms! What upheaval and what anarchy in the trunks as in the smallest handbags! If this is part of the customs of the nation and the traditions of the trade, let it pass. But there are certain practices and certain aggravations that must not pass unchallenged through the customs of natural law, of common sense and of public opinion. It is our duty to point them out, even supposing that no ill will towards the French pilgrims and the pilgrims to Rome inspired them.

Workers organised in corporations or sections carry their banners with them. They are going to have them blessed by the Sovereign Pontiff. Can they be compared to silk merchants? What army has ever sold or abandoned its flag? No matter: these flags must be charged an exorbitant duty. Even a priest's ceremonial cloak and the silk petticoat of a woman of Arles are judged taxable at will. And the reason is most ingenious: these articles are new! It is forbidden to enter the kingdom with clothes that are not worn!

Fortunately the French spirit has never known frontiers. A worker, the standard-bearer of his circle, saves the situation by in-

flicting a glorious wound on his banner with a knife. Another does the same to the lining of his frock coat, another to his scarf, and so on. Marked with the stigmata of glory or of use, these articles are no longer new; they will pass duty-free.

Italian Machiavellianism is defeated!

These incidents are soon forgotten in a night whose short sleep is interspersed with prayers and pious hymns. Arriving at Pisa at day-break, we cannot make out the slightest leaning tower on the horizon. We make up for it by soon gazing at the island of Elba and later at Civitavecchia.

Orbetello has a most Jewish buffet-keeper, against whom it is well to put the next pilgrimages on their guard^{*}.

After levying shameless profits on our purses, we see him, as we leave, rubbing his hands in his doorway with obviously uncivil intentions. Let him be called back to respect for the tariff and for travellers, and let future pilgrims consider themselves warned. Everywhere else we have nothing but praise for the conduct of all the staff, of the gendarmerie, and even of the police.

At last the Roman Campagna appears before us with its poetic desolation, its green mounds and its vast rolling plains, peopled with black horses and great white oxen, which remind us, by a striking contrast, of the black oxen and white horses of our Camargue. We look with interest at everything in the bearing of the peasants, wearing Tyrolean hats, with their odd teams of horses harnessed three

^{*} **NOTE** Joseph Aninard here (p. 8 and 15) uses the word “Jew” as a pejorative term, to designate a tradesman judged dishonest, and takes up an idea then common in preaching, that of a Jewish people “accursed” for having denied Christ; the Catholic Church has since abandoned it, at the Second Vatican Council (declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 1965). These commonplaces were then widespread, and the pilgrimage of 1887 came shortly after the success of *La France juive* by Édouard Drumont (1886), which left its mark on a large part of the Catholic press. We reproduce these lines out of fidelity to the document: they belong to their time, and this edition does not make them its

abreast or unevenly paired, that may reveal to us the picturesque ways of a foreign people.

Our emotion grows stronger. Rome is there behind that hill. Here is the muddy Tiber, which we greet as another Jordan. Here are the brick ramparts of the Eternal City, its melancholy old aqueducts. Already we can measure the greatness of these ruins. Our eyes seek in vain the dome of St Peter's; here at least is one of the great basilicas, St John Lateran, the mother and mistress of all churches. Gazing with pious wonder at its distant façade, crowned with gigantic statues, we address to God, through the intercession of the two Saints John, to whom it is dedicated, and through the intercession of the Apostles Peter and Paul, that heartfelt prayer which, in the capital of Catholicism, must spring spontaneously from every Catholic heart, with more faith than in any other place in the world.

While we pray, a charming child of eight or nine, sitting alone in an empty train of new carriages, a true little angel of Raphael who might have stepped down from the picture of the Sistine Madonna, looks at us with smiles at once intelligent and innocent, making with the tips of his fingers, in the Italian manner, the prettiest of greetings. We understand that he is performing an act of piety and recognises friends of the Pope; and so this gracious welcome, I was about to say this angelic salutation, seems to us of the very best omen.

As we leave the carriages we find the platform adorned with a number of dashing Italian officers, cold and solemn, who have evidently come on our account and under orders. All are in full dress, with towering plumes. After the delays required by a vast organisation, omnibuses and carriages carry us off in groups to our respective hotels. Everywhere, a great display of police and gendarmerie.

We were then able to observe that the entry into Rome by railway has nothing very characteristic about it. The station, situated in an outlying district, is surrounded only by brand-new streets bearing, for the most part, the names of conspirators or of so-called great re-

volutionary men. They are adorned with umbrella shops and opera-glass shops, whose appearance destroys any inclination to poetry. This is the modern Rome that Italy wishes to set up against the Rome of the Caesars and the Popes.

It was better in the days of the *vetturini*. They would invite you to get out of the carriage at the first sight of the domes of the papal city, which one greeted kneeling, and then one entered Rome by one of its great squares adorned with fountains and grandiose palaces.

The first monument we finally catch sight of, at the top of a spacious street, is again a basilica, that of St Mary Major. It is to her that Notre-Dame de la Garde, who blessed our departure, seems to entrust us on our arrival. We shall be well guarded by this good Mother.

By nightfall we were comfortably settled in the *Pension de l'Union*, on the Piazza di Montecitorio with its obelisk, in the very centre of Rome, not far from the Antonine Column and the *Corso*.

After a quick meal, in spite of the rainy weather, we climb into an open carriage, and by the light of electricity and of a few scattered stars we gaze upon the grandiose appearance of the Eternal City, the outline of its principal monuments, and above all of the immense Colosseum, where we delight in calling to mind the many thousands of martyrs who watered its arena with their blood, regretting that the impiety which tore down its Cross leaves us no hope of being able to follow the Way of the Cross there.

Such a spectacle was enough to send us to our rest, our souls overflowing with the strongest emotions, as we thought of the intellectual joys, and above all the holy joys, that all too swift morrows held in store for us.

On Saturday 15 October at ten o'clock, on Montecitorio, the carriages requisitioned for the *Union* group set off, picturesquely overloaded with assorted pilgrims, and were soon moving in a long line through the streets of Rome, often crossing similar caravans. It was

in this array that we were able to go and visit the basilicas, the holy places and the ancient monuments, led by our guides.

The first hours of the morning were free. We took advantage of them to go and celebrate or hear holy Mass in the most famous sanctuaries.

The 15th being the feast of St Teresa, I wished to be driven to the Discalced Carmelites. My coachman, who had given me a most expressive sign of understanding as he listened to my fanciful Italian, drove me, in all good faith...., to a shoemaker! In spite of this incident, I reached the church of the Carmelites in Trastevere, where I was able to see how the convents of Rome know how to celebrate the feasts of their saints.

The porch was decorated with hangings and garlands, above which appeared the image of the holy Reformer. Priests, religious, prelates and a cardinal were celebrating holy Mass. The Reverend Carmelite Fathers showered us with attentions. They gave each of the visitors, as a keepsake, a large and fine engraving representing the transverberation of the heart of St Teresa, and insisted that we go up to a vast hall to share in a festive breakfast accompanied by *gelati*, that is to say ices, which, it seems, are always in season in Italy. We were in the company of priests and religious of various orders who had come to take part in the celebration.

This gracious welcome, and the happiness of praying to the powerful virgin of Ávila in the midst of her children, seemed to us, on the first day after our arrival, a fresh sign of divine favour.

Pilgrims to Rome, we saw it from the very first: the capital of the Christian world is the greatest and most complete of pilgrimages. Without speaking of those old basilicas, so rich in relics and memories, which the Popes, in embellishing them, have not made lose their original character, here at every step we come upon a holy place, a crypt, a catacomb, a historical testimony of faith that would suffice to justify unceasing pilgrimages from every corner of the world. Here

we have seen and verified, touching them with our fingers, the truth and the wonder of our Christian origins: *Quod vidimus quod manus nostræ contrectaverunt*.¹

With what pious care each religious family has preserved the smallest traces of the holiness of its own. With what intelligent and jealous attention Rome has kept, since the earliest ages, the traditions of the sanctified places and the circumstances of the torment of her most illustrious martyrs: the catacombs of St Sebastian and St Agnes, the place where God miraculously preserved that virgin from seduction; the baths where they sought to suffocate St Cecilia; the well where St Praxedes pressed out the blood of the confessors and hid their bodies; the instruments of the torment of the great deacon St Lawrence, whose roasted body, laid on a slab of marble, left on it an imprint that we kissed. How many miraculous things we must pass over in silence! But the chains of St Peter, his famous prison which was also that of St Paul, the column on which the head of the Apostle of the Gentiles was struck off, the hill where the Prince of the Apostles was crucified head downwards, their sacred tomb: have these not sufficed to justify the most numerous and the holiest gatherings? It is the pilgrimage that all great Christians make, and to which a sacred custom summons the bishops at certain fixed times.

That is what we have seen.

But Rome is Jerusalem itself, from the Crib, whose wood is preserved at St Mary Major, to the Cross. Is that not the truth St Helena wished to affirm when she had Santa Croce in Gerusalemme built on earth she had had brought from that city? There we venerated, together with the thorns of the crown, one of the nails that pierced the limbs of the divine Saviour, the Title of the crucifixion, and the largest part of the wood of the true Cross still in existence. After contemplating, with contrition in our hearts, at Santa

1. 1 *Epist.* St John 1:1.

Prassede, the column to which the divine Master was bound, after climbing on our knees the *scala santa*, the staircase up which Jesus went to be handed over in mockery by Pilate to the clamour of the crowd, what is left for us to envy those pious Crusaders who, after so many battles and so much bloodshed, still shed such loving tears of contrition and sometimes died of love over the venerated tokens of the infinite love of a God?

By order of Leo XIII, the exposition of these great relics, which may be contemplated only at rare times of the year, was made everywhere with a kind of lavishness whose exceptional favour we well knew how to appreciate.

But Rome is above all the living victory of Christianity over paganism and over all the successive powers of hell. Whoever has not understood this is not worthy to tread the soil of the holy city; he is not even worthy to see the light of the sun. This truth appeared to us with triumphant brilliance from the very first visit we were able to make to its ancient monuments, led by the intelligent and obliging guide who accompanied us in all our wanderings.²

We were at the foot of the Capitol, in the midst of that old *Forum* where so many ruins are heaped up, broken columns, some of which still bear their capitals with such majesty. Here, the remains of many temples; there, three triumphal arches still standing; in the distance, the gigantic Colosseum; on the right, the Palatine. On the opposite side, the Mamertine Prison, and it is there that we must go to look for the light that illuminates these sumptuous ruins, and the philosophy of this history of the sovereign people, admirably summed up in this narrow space.

The spot where we stand was at first only a marsh separating the Romans and the Sabines after their alliance. Tarquin drained it by means of the *cloaca maxima*, the great main sewer that still runs be-

2. Mr Settimio Zama, Roma, Borgo Sant'Angelo, 112.

neath our feet, and which was one of the wonders of Roman power; so solid that no upheaval of the city or of the globe has been able to shake it; as if the most imperishable thing that paganism was to bequeath us were its sewers!

How much mud, how much filth has passed through this *cloaca maxima*! How much blood too, and how many streams of tears!

Soon the sovereign people grows, the nations become its tributaries, the temples and the *Forum* rise up more splendid; here is the site of the rostrum from which Cicero spoke; here is the Sacred Way by which the triumphators went up to the Capitol; here is the palace of the Caesars, oppressors of the universe. Whole passages of Tacitus, engraved on the ruins, produce the most eloquent effect. What scenes! What names: Tarquin and the first kings! Cicero! Tacitus! We are gripped by the greatest images of history as by the most distant memories of our first classical education and of our humanities. And the guide, by some inspiration or other, suddenly leads us into the Mamertine Prison; there too there are stirring classical memories; but in vain does he speak to us of Jugurtha, of Catiline, of our own Ver-
cingetorix: one memory alone fills and illuminates the dark two-storeyed prison, that of St Peter and St Paul!

For us, that is everything! The prison is a crypt. It is a church! It is there that they suffered; it is there that they prayed; it is there that, to make Christians of their converted guards, they miraculously caused to spring forth those waters of baptism which will regenerate the world and cleanse it of all the filth of paganism, that *cloaca maxima*.

And now let us go out; we understand everything.

Why all these ruins? To create a new world. To whom do these remains serve as a pedestal? To Peter, the fisherman of Galilee. These are the materials of his churches and his palaces.

The triumphal arches also proclaim his glory. The Arch of Titus, by affirming the ruin of the Jewish people, accursed for having denied

its Saviour^{*}; the Arch of Constantine, by proclaiming the triumph of the *Labarum*. Then look into the distance at that shining dome: it is his triumphal tomb; and beside this tomb, see that palace for which the same colonnade serves as a portico: it is the palace of St Peter, for St Peter is immortal; he lives in his successors; he utters infallible oracles!....

Today Peter is Leo XIII, and we have come to Rome to ask him for the solution of the social question.

At the sight of the Colosseum, whose dilapidated skeleton rises before us, terrifying in its size, it is easy to see the immense distance the social question has travelled, thanks to the papacy.

Before Christianity, did those living prey that were thrown by the thousand into the arena, the vanquished, the gladiators, the slaves, count as part of humanity? And this so-called sovereign people, or rather this degraded populace that demanded in the same breath bread to eat and human blood to drink, *Panem et circenses*, what notion did it have of human dignity? What were the patricians, at once proud and grovelling? Above all, what were the masters of the world? One can learn it here. I do not speak of the all too numerous monsters produced by Caesarism, but of the best princes, such as Titus, called the *delight of the human race*.

It was he who had the Colosseum, begun by his father Vespasian, built by the Jewish captives, and who threw these unfortunate men, ten thousand in number, to the beasts as soon as they had finished it.

This trait of manners is enough to let us judge a society in which such monstrosities were carried out naturally, as a matter of course.

The human race then placed its *delights* very badly!

Priests, bishops and Popes, after proclaiming the Gospel to the poor and to the slaves, whom they seated at the same table of the agape as the patricians, did not fear to go down into the amphitheatre

^{*} **NOTE** See the note on page 8.

or to mount the pyres and the racks, there to die beside thousands of martyrs whose inspirers and leaders they were. It was thus that they began to affirm the invincible rights of conscience and to raise up human dignity, and this was the first foundation for solving the social question.

While the *cicerone* recalled these facts, explaining to us the details of the monument, I thought, not without indignation, of those historians who, failing to recognise such benefits, dare to present the pagan past to us as an ideal, and do not blush to take the side of the persecutors against the martyrs.

Minds of this stamp lack loftiness above all, and reason under the impulse of a selfishness all the more ferocious for being unconscious. They forget only one thing among the data of historical problems: the most sacred rights of humanity.

If they study Caesarism, they find it strong and brilliant, convenient even for those who enjoy its benefits; and by a practical instinct of which they gave proof under a modern Caesar of a decadent empire, they always see themselves “on the side that holds the stick.”

At the Colosseum they are seated on the *podium*, and from that reserved place they find the *morituri te salutant* very fine!

If they were forced to take the place of the vanquished, beside the martyrs, the bishops and the Popes who walked in the footsteps of Christ, perhaps, given their principles, they would be hard put to hold it with any grace.

Then they would certainly change their historical and social point of view.



II

The two thousand workers before the tomb of the Holy Apostles. Cardinal's Mass. — Coachmen's strike. — The Pope's jailers. — The Pope's soldiers. — Solemn audience, address of the Sovereign Pontiff. — Princely servants of the workers. — The private audiences.

It was on Sunday 16 October, at noon, a day henceforth memorable in their lives, that the members of the workers' pilgrimage had the happiness of being received in general audience by the Sovereign Pontiff.

From the morning, a solemn meeting had been appointed for us in the church of St Peter. On entering this basilica, the most beautiful in the world, I at first remained hesitant under the overwhelming majesty of this gigantic monument, whose beauty was mysterious and indefinable to me, because I could not at first grasp its overall idea.

Guided, moreover, by a higher thought, we were only able later to stop and consider its magnificence, so eager were we to prostrate ourselves before the tombs of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Then, gathered in the apse before the Chair of the Prince of the Apostles, we heard holy Mass celebrated by His Eminence Cardinal Langénieux, assisted by the Pope's masters of ceremonies.

In such a place, the most natural prayer that can spring from the heart, and whose use has become traditional, is the recitation of the Creed. So I leave you to imagine the grandiose effect of our *Credo*, suddenly sung by two thousand voices beneath those vaults and that dome under which the abominable Diderot himself admitted that he felt Catholic.

The Cappella Giulia, which sings according to the same system as the Sistine Chapel, then let us hear its famous chants, new to many

of us, which for my part stirred me to the depths of my soul, above all because of their expression.

The general Communion lasted more than an hour, although it was distributed simultaneously by the Cardinal and two bishops. Finally the *Te Deum*, sung alternately by the mass of those present and the singers of the Vatican, was followed by the exposition of the great relics from the loggia of the dome. Thus ended this unforgettable ceremony.

Great was our astonishment, on leaving St Peter's, to find that the finest square in Rome was completely empty of public carriages. We did not know that a coachmen's strike had broken out on the very day of our audience, and so conveniently timed that it was easy to recognise in it the hand of the Masonic sects.

God certainly wished to make this audience, the great joy of all, more meritorious. And so Providence took care, on our return to the Vatican at noon, mercifully to add to the absence of carriages a most abundant downpour, which everyone, moreover, workers, clergy and ladies of society, received with the most cheerful resignation. The newest gala clothes, the silk dresses and the ceremonial cloaks were soon worthy to pass unchallenged through the customs at Ventimiglia.

When it rains, the Parisian lets it rain; that day we were all Parisians, and the Provençals more than anyone. This good French attitude did no little to disarm the strikers, who from the very next day put themselves at our service.

When we arrived in St Peter's Square, the rain had stopped, and a magnificent sun was lighting up the great obelisk which proclaims to the world with such majesty: *Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat!* "Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands and delivers us from all evil." At the same moment we saw coming out of the right-hand colonnade, and marching across the square in good order, a dense and numerous body of men that from a distance might

have been taken for a regiment of soldiers. The Romans hurried up to see this sight, which filled us with patriotic pride, for these were our workers lodged at Santa Marta, who were making their way, like us, to the princely gate of the Vatican. They were in their Sunday clothes, carried their banners furled, and made a very fine show.

At the entrance to the Palace one fully understands that it is a prison for the Pope: masses of gendarmes and policemen prowl around it shamefaced, casting furtive and jealous glances at the Swiss Guards and the pontifical gendarmes who defend its interior and cannot step out onto the threshold in uniform. Our hearts sank. Most of the convents of Rome have been seized by force from their lawful owners and serve to house the soldiery. Is that what they would also like to make of our Vatican?

It belongs to Christendom; it is ours, this palace of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. We understand it from the threshold, from the open and friendly faces of the Swiss Guards in their medieval costume and of the pontifical gendarmes, who open their ranks before our steps. We breathe the atmosphere of our father's house.

The contrast between these tastefully dressed gendarmes of the Pope and those of the Italians is not to the advantage of the latter, whose funereal garb seems copied from that of the executioner Sanson in the engravings of the death of Louis XVI. It would be impossible to choose, with a more perverted and perhaps a more intelligent taste, the uniform that must denounce the henchmen of a usurping and revolutionary power.

Aesthetics triumph no more in the other uniforms of the army. The humblest officers have their chests adorned with aiguillettes of endless intricacy; they also plume their hats with feathers in profusion. The feather in the hat is, for the Italianissimo, the military badge par excellence.

Come, gentlemen! Raise your plumes high! It is hard to reach the height of the dome of St Peter's.

These excesses of plumage seemed to us abusive.... even for guardians of the Capitol!

No corps of the Italian army can be compared with the Noble Guards, who gather of their own free will around their dispossessed sovereign to form for him a guard of honour whose full dignity they understand.

They wear their uniform, at once rich and sober, with a natural distinction and a military bearing that recalls that of our finest French officers.

Here we are on the superb royal staircase with its columns by Bernini. It opens that succession of marvels which will not cease to dazzle our eyes in this palace, the most beautiful in the world, a sanctuary not only of religion but also of the arts; in the midst of which sits, as in its natural centre, the papal kingship, the inspirer, in every order of ideas, of all that is beautiful here below.

There our workers first form up under their banners. As I have the honour of representing the worthy canon who directs our circle in Aix, I am invited to adorn my buttonhole with the chaplain's insignia, and I take my place among the members of the Saint-Mitre circle.

But soon we receive, with the greatest respect, orders from on high issued by the Sovereign Pontiff.

We must part from our banners, which will be carried separately so as to be blessed together. After the standard-bearers, first the workers, then the clergy; the employers will come only last of all.

All insignia must be removed. It is forbidden to raise any *vivat* or to make any kind of demonstration. Orders to keep the most absolute, the most respectful silence ... *As at the elevation!* says a voice, — That is just it, comes the reply; and this word, deeper than it seems, will characterise our silent and moved veneration when we bow our heads before the real majesty of him who represents Jesus Christ here below.

These various orders prove at once the extreme prudence and the scant freedom of the Sovereign Pontiff, watched with jealous ill will even within his own palace.

They also showed the excellent spirit of our workers, who complied with them with the most scrupulous strictness, painfully holding back an enthusiasm ready to overflow.

The paintings that decorate the antechambers and the Sala Ducale, in which we await our Sovereign, beguile the impatience of waiting.

At last a thrill passes through the immense assembly, which falls to its knees. Preceded by his court, Leo XIII has just climbed the steps of his throne. Our eyes can behold him.

Presented by Cardinal Langénieux together with the whole movement, Count de Mun reads an address defining the meaning of the workers' pilgrimage.

"Three years ago," said the eminent orator, "the pilgrimage of the industrialists came to make at the feet of Your Holiness the commitment to bring back into the workshops and factories the reign of religion and of Christian morals. Today it is the workers themselves who come, humbly and as sons, to ask your fatherly goodness to bless the part they have been invited to take in the work of Christian regeneration for the world of manual labour. Under their banners, here are the representatives of the first workers' corporations, coming to life again at the call of Your Holiness. — The very tradition of the trade guilds teaches us that each time the social question has arisen, the Church has been able to solve it. That is why, prostrate at your feet, they are confident that your blessing will help them to obtain the legal protection that will favour the works of salvation undertaken on their behalf."

The Pope rises and replies with that magnificent address whose resonance has been immense in the religious, social and political world.

Those of us who, nearer to the throne, were able to hear the whole of it were deeply moved by this great eloquence, above all when they saw Leo XIII, himself keenly stirred, stress more slowly and forcefully certain passages of higher importance.

The Sovereign Pontiff first congratulated the workers on this solemn affirmation of their religious faith, and on the part they were taking in the work of Christian regeneration for the world of manual labour. He warned them against the seductions of the Masonic sects, and he affirmed that the solution of the social questions which touch them so closely lies solely in a return to Christian principles and to the teachings of the Catholic Church and of its head!

As the liberal Italian newspapers have admitted ³, in this address one feels vibrating a powerful note of sincere solicitude for the workers.

In a few rapid and masterly strokes, the Holy Father described the nobility of labour which, as he says in a sculptural phrase that every economist will envy him, “is raised to the height of human dignity and freedom.”

He reminds the fortunate and the powerful of the obligation that falls upon them to help their brothers of humbler condition, respecting in them their character as men and as Christians.

Finally these newspapers agree that the Pope’s opinions are in full accord with the latest conclusions of social science. “The praise given by the Holy Father to the great corporative associations,” they say, “which contributed so powerfully to the progress of the arts and crafts and procured for the workers themselves the greatest measure of prosperity and well-being, must be regarded as perfectly scientific.”

Such an address, delivered on the heights of the Vatican in reply to those eminent and so devoted men who went there to seek light

3. *La Riforma*, chiefly.

and consecration for their magnificent and generous efforts to resolve the terrible crisis marked by so many ruins and by excesses like those of nihilism, will not remain a dead letter.

The emotion it has aroused on every side is already proof of this: the papal word will mark a new starting point in this painful labour question, which is the question of life or death for our modern society. The work of men like de Mun and Harmel has received a divine consecration!

We felt this as we listened to the teachings of Leo XIII, and it will be one of the most august memories of our lives to have witnessed this great pontifical act.

To give the world a word that enlightens and guides it is a great deal. The Popes, however, know how to do still more. They are not pure philosophers, speculative doctors. They are of the active race of the Apostles, of the practical school of Jesus, who began by doing what he was going to teach. *Cœpit Jesus facere et docere.*⁴ And that is the ground on which the so-called reformers, the selfish sectarians who make the people their pedestal, have never been able to follow them.

This Pope, who had spoken to them with such interest “of their dignity as men and as Christians”, had begun by giving our workers, in his very Palace, in the words of Cardinal Langénieux, “a royal hospitality.” At the solemn audience he had wished the kindness of the employers to yield the first place to the plain workers. Mr Harmel himself, relegated to the last row, could only with great difficulty make his way up to the pontifical throne when he was called to it.

For their part, our workers could not say enough in praise of the perfect arrangements of the hospice, I should say the *hotel*, of Santa Marta, whose entirely new furniture was most comfortable.

4. Acts 1:1.

Inspired by the example of their Sovereign, the most distinguished members of the Roman aristocracy had placed themselves wholly at their service. They even waited on them at table. It is impossible to describe the delicate attentions the pilgrims received from them.

They were not allowed to spend the smallest tip on the servants. Their noble attendants insisted on taking this upon themselves, and the staff lost nothing by it.

A Roman prince ⁵ paid for the telegrams they wished to send to their families, and given their number and the surcharge for a foreign country, the sum he generously paid out was considerable.

One day our pilgrims, more touched than ever, saw Mgr Jacobini, a bishop and diplomat of the pontifical court, as well as the Most Eminent Cardinal Archbishop of Reims, put on the apron themselves and wait on them in their turn.

What must strike us in such acts, so greatly generous, is that they are not an innovation, a show staged for the occasion, but the continuation of a tradition that has never left Christian custom.

Without speaking of the convents, we priests have seen it put into practice in our seminaries. Everyone knows, in Aix itself, that the gentlemen of the country Catechism were not ashamed to put on the apron as well, to serve the poor children and their parents on the day of First Communion. But nowhere has this tradition remained more in honour than in Rome, where the members of the aristocracy, in certain associations, practise acts of charity and humility that are far more meritorious.

In serving our workers they did so without ostentation and as if quite naturally. Go and tell the deputies of the Left and the sectarians of Freemasonry to do as much. In their conventicles they wear, with ridiculous pomp, decorative aprons as the signs of their degrees; but they have a horror of that humble, evangelical apron which Jesus

5. Prince Lancellotti.

girded on the evening of the Last Supper, and which his Apostles and the princes of his Church still tie about their waists, with simplicity, piety and charity.

In the evening, either at the Vatican or at the circle of the *Via Testa spaccata*, our workers were served refreshments enlivened by a concert; and, what is better, they heard the most eloquent words of Cardinal Langénieux and of Mgr Jacobini; those of Mr Harmel, “the Good Father”, whom they acclaimed, and of our captivating Mr de Mun.

At one of these gatherings, where the workers were able to let all the feelings of their hearts, held back for too long, burst forth, they cheered Leo XIII and their beloved leaders at length. Then, electrified by the words of the great orator and at his invitation, they rose with one accord and swore inviolable fidelity to the teachings and to the person of the Sovereign Pontiff.

I wish I could portray the two eminent leaders of the workers’ movement, surrounded by that brilliant staff of devoted men from the French nobility, from large-scale industry, from wholesale trade and from the liberal professions, and tell of the Christian joy, I was going to say the artless and childlike joy, with which their great hearts overflowed amid these workers to whom they have devoted their lives, above all when they saw the encouragement and the consecration solemnly given by the Pope to their heroic efforts.

It is well known with what favour Count de Mun, who sometimes lives in Rome, is received at the Vatican. During this pilgrimage Mr Harmel too was the object of the most fatherly attention on the part of the Sovereign Pontiff. His Holiness held his hand in his own for a long time, and learned with the greatest joy that in France more than forty factories are already organised like that of Val-des-Bois. At the end of the private audiences the Holy Father had many silver medals brought in on a tray, and after touching them to bless them he gave

them to Mr Harmel and to the chief organisers of the pilgrimage for their families and friends.

But the act of devotedness that touched us most came once again from the heart of Leo XIII. At the solemn audience many had been unable to approach him. His Holiness therefore wished all the members of the pilgrimage to be presented to him at a new audience. The workers and the ladies were admitted to kiss his feet, the clergy kissed his hand, and all received from His Holiness a silver medal, a priceless keepsake!

After passing through a series of rooms amid the Noble Guards, when I reached the one where the Vicar of Jesus Christ was seated, I was keenly struck by the new aspect in which he revealed himself to us.

I had expected to see him on a throne; he was in a plain armchair, without a dais, his face so tired and so pale, in his white garment which seemed to heighten his pallor still more, that my emotion moved me to tears as I contemplated that noble countenance, in which so great an expression of suffering and kindness is joined to the radiance of a great intelligence.

We had seen the Pontiff, the King, the universal Doctor, in the majesty of his throne; now we saw the Servant of the servants of God, making himself all things to all men.

With wonderful presence of mind, he always answered with a word that was entirely to the point. I learned that the costume of the women of Arles had caught his attention and that he said: "Ah! St Trophimus!" The ancient vicariate of the Gauls never passes unnoticed at the Vatican.

Presented by Mr de Villechaize, who was kind enough to remember our titles and positions better than we ourselves could at that moment of emotion, I shall never forget the benevolent smile of Leo XIII, who blessed me together with all the souls entrusted to me, the dear boarding school of the Nativity of Our Lord which I have direc-

ted for so many years, the parish, my relatives and all who are dear to me; then with my veneration was mingled a deep feeling of gratitude towards this great and gentle Pontiff who, in spite of his weariness, was willing to receive the humblest of his children.

I have since learned from pilgrims who saw him, already restored and rested, on the day after these great audiences, that with his impressionable and nervous temperament Leo XIII recovered very quickly from the fatigues that seemed to lay him lowest. At the time of his election his health was more precarious than it is today. We had moreover noticed with joy his great liveliness and strength as he delivered his solemn address.

It is a general conviction that God will preserve this great Pope to his Church for a long time yet.

III

The palace and the museums of the Vatican. — The Rome of the Popes.
— The Moses of Michelangelo. — *Il divin Bambino*. — Farewells! —
The bell of the Vatican.

After the papal audiences, the whole Vatican was opened to the pilgrims, who spread through the halls, the rooms and the loggias of Raphael, the chapels and the museums.

This Palace is a world in itself. At first we were there as on a Sinai, and on coming down from the divine height we still remained in the most sublime spheres that the genius of the Arts has ever haunted, gazing at its most marvellous masterpieces.

I shall mention nothing, nor even tell my impressions; but in saluting the sweet and mighty Raphael, I shall count myself happy to have been able to appreciate his two manners; and I do not know whether, in spite of the absolutely perfect masterpieces in which the second manner asserts itself, we should not regret the deeply devout feeling and the calm and tender expression that mark the first.

When one visits the Pio-Clementine Museum and the others, the vastest in the world, filled with every kind of pagan image, and is aware of being in the dwelling of the head of Christendom, one understands all the breadth and loftiness of mind of those great Popes who, after the final victory of the Gospel over idolatry, did not hesitate to place in their Palace the pagan statues, in which one must no longer see the dangerous symbol of superstition and immorality, but, in monuments of historical interest, the most perfect expression of a beauty that comes from God. Even the busts and statues whose destruction the Roman Senate had ordered, such as those of Nero, have found an intelligent refuge there.

The Popes have shown themselves generous towards the persecutors. Paul III had the magnificent bronze statue of Marcus Aurelius placed in front of the Capitol. And whatever one's opinion may be of the Renaissance and its excesses, one must always admit that the Roman Pontiffs were, in the highest sense of the word, truly *liberal* Sovereigns. No other human power, however rich and mighty it may have been, has protected the arts with such constancy, generosity and magnificence. Without the age of Leo X there would have been no age of Louis XIV.

The anecdote that shows us Paul III jokingly refusing to rescue from hell his master of ceremonies, Messer Biagio, whom Michelangelo had painted there with ass's ears because he had ventured to express certain scruples about his paintings, proves in another way this breadth and loftiness of mind before the daring and the liberties of genius. Only long after Michelangelo's death did anyone dare to correct some of the nudities and to concede Messer Biagio a little of his point; but alas, without correcting his ass's ears. Genius and "hell are without remission!"

What have the Popes not done to embellish their capital, worthy, thanks to them, of being for ever the capital of the world? Beside countless and incomparable religious monuments, they have multi-

plied in the public squares obelisks, columns and above all those sumptuous fountains which alone would make Rome without equal.

The ancient Romans had brought great volumes of water over veritable triumphal arches. By having an aqueduct fourteen miles long built for the “Acqua Felice”, which a commanding Moses seems to make gush from the rock, Sixtus V equalled the much-admired works of Agrippa, who brought into the city the “Virgin water” that today gushes forth so abundantly and impetuously from the superb Trevi Fountain, built by Benedict XIV and faced with marble by Clement XIII.

On reaching this fountain our group, the ladies in front, hurried eagerly to drink of its waters, for our guide had assured them that all who drink of it will infallibly return to Rome!!..

At the great fountain in Piazza Navona there was a burst of merry laughter when he explained to us the attitude that Bernini’s mischief gave to the statue of one of the four great rivers that adorn it, raising its hand in fright, as if the bell tower of the church of Sant’Agnese opposite, which, it seems, is not quite vertical, were about to fall on its head.

Here, beside every monument, tradition hands down some witticism, some clever anecdote that depicts that great artistic past and the ways of this people of Rome, a people of spoilt children, who once lived so happily in plenty and merriment under the most fatherly kingship in the world.

Clearly the character of the present rule is quite different. Without speaking *of the taxes with which it crushes those it governs*, the Italian government, less tolerant than the Popes, has not dared to brave the witty sallies that the Romans used to write at the foot of two popular statues.

On the pretext of art it has imprisoned the unfortunate Marforio in the Capitoline Museum. Pasquino has been left alone; and to take

away his companion, as everyone well knew, was to reduce him to silence.

We do not understand this half-measure. To make Pasquino climb the Capitol, would that not be the height of modern art and politics? No one would have failed to see a symbol in it.

To replace the witty popular epigrams, Rome today has the caricatures, the coarseness and the blasphemies of the liberal press, which has honoured us with its insults.⁶

It was good to reveal this papal Rome to our workers.

The study of the capital of Christendom has something wholesome and strengthening about it. It is not so everywhere in France. The sculptures of our most glorious monuments were mutilated by the Revolution, when they were not destroyed. In the museums of Paris the debased arts, ceaselessly glorifying heresy and revolt, see nothing in the Church but the Inquisition, and vie with one another in abetting the great conspiracy of history against the truth, with a cynicism or a foolish and pompous self-importance whose only excuse lies in ignorance or in the perversion of the University's education.

Here the loftiest art is at the service of the great historical truth and of religion. Even the pagan traditions corroborate our Catholic dogmas.

You enter a church to venerate illustrious relics, and masterpieces surround and dazzle you from your very first steps. It is the church of San Pietro in Vincoli, for example, where you are moved and absorbed by the thought of gazing upon and kissing the chains of the Prince of the Apostles which set the world free; and just as you are about to enter the sacristy where they are kept, a giant of marble appears to you like a vision of Sinai, grandiose, mighty, commanding

6. We must recall, however, that the Pope and the rights of religion are defended with ardour and talent by the *Osservatore Romano*, *Le Moniteur de Rome*, *La Voce della Verità* and the *Squilla*, to which we are most grateful for the very warm welcome they gave our pilgrimage.

and divine. It is the Moses of Michelangelo! You stop involuntarily to admire it. The moments pass, for he remembers, this Moses, the order his sublime author gave him when he split his knee, and he speaks! He speaks to you with that irresistible eloquence of genius which can reach the very depths of the soul.

Certainly he is not out of place in such a spot. In spite of the stereotyped judgements of those who see in him something like a “chief of brigands,” and in spite of the Joanne guide, which, ever glad to publish a blasphemy against art as well as against religion, dares to speak of a “goat’s head”, what strikes you above all, as a stroke of genius by contrast in this conception, is, together with the originality, the strength and the fire of the workmanship, a calm of expression and a gentleness that are not free of mysticism.

The church of *Ara Coeli* is built where Augustus had raised an altar to the son of God, whose birth had been revealed to him by a tradition universal at that time. There too stood the ancient fortress of the Capitol. The Capuchins who serve it keep there the “*santisimo Bambino*”, a little statue of the child Jesus in wood from the Garden of Olives, greatly venerated in Rome, which during our very stay miraculously healed a sick man given up as hopeless.

One of our modern poets, belonging to that school, I was going to say to that chain gang of rhymesters condemned to the hard labour of the chiselled hemistich, pantheists and atheists, in whom the lack of faith often explains the lack of inspiration, has dared to regret that the Roman people, who once climbed the Capitol in the wake of the triumphators, now climb it to worship “a doll!”⁷

What soul subjugated by the outward successes of force can be unaware that the most marvellous triumphator of Rome is this “*divine Bambino*”, over whose cradle the Angels sang “glory to God,

7. “Although devout folk drag themselves up there
Whose idol is a doll....”

Sully Prudhomme. (Croquis italiens. *L’escalier de l’Ara-Cœli*.)

and peace to men.” His dominion, through the Gospel, has been of far more use to the world than that of the consuls, the Caesars and the other bloody triumphators.

This blasphemy of the poet is copied from Gibbon ⁸, who could not bear to see monks on the most illustrious Roman ruins. But these despised Franciscans, who practise the poverty of the Crib and whose Third Order Leo XIII wishes to spread in order to reform modern society, are they not an admirable school of practical philosophy, superior to all the sects of antiquity?

For anyone who knows how to look and reflect, a Capuchin friary on the site of the Capitol is a better guarantee of civilisation and of true progress for the world than a barracks of praetorians or a guard-house of lictors armed with rods and axes.

From the southern slope of the Capitoline Hill, the magnificent remains of the Roman Forum, with their columns standing or broken, recall, allowing for the difference in scale, those of the ancient theatre of Arles. The resemblance is striking, and our Provençals liked to point it out. Inhabitants of the Roman province par excellence, *Provincia romana*, strewn with ancient buildings, they did not feel at all out of place amid these astonishing monuments of Rome, the people of Arles above all, who see a smaller version of them every day before their eyes: “*Gallula Roma Arelas.*”

Amid so many fruitful emotions the days slipped by. On the morning of our departure, after having had the happiness of celebrating holy Mass at St Peter’s, I studied once more this basilica, which at each visit reveals a new infinity to you. I wished to climb up to the dome and to enter even the ball that crowns it, where on the previous day fourteen priests gathered together had sung the *Tu es Petrus* with a fervour full of faith.

8. *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

Coming down onto the outer gallery of the lantern, I let my eyes rest tenderly on the city and its monuments, on the Roman Campagna, on the Tiber, the Sabine mountains and distant Soracte crowned with heavy snow; I felt that this land was a fatherland, and I bade it a heartfelt farewell.

Shortly afterwards carriages took us in groups to the station, amid the most unmistakable marks of sympathy from the Roman people, on whom the French pilgrimage had made the very best impression.

This people loves the Sovereign Pontiff; it understands that in him lie both its greatness and its interest. The last municipal elections are striking proof of this, and we could give others. The guest of the Vatican is the soul of Rome. The guest of the Quirinal, for all the trouble he takes, manages at most to fill the place of a sub-prefect in the Eternal City.

On this subject I remember the telling remark of a barber: “The slightest peal of the bell of the Vatican, *Una squilla della campana del Vaticano*,” he told us, “is of more profit to us than all the din and fuss of the Italians!...”

He was right, this Roman barber, a better philosopher than Beaumarchais’s insolent reasoner, for the slightest peal of the bell of the Vatican resounds to the ends of the earth and has the power to shake the world.

This universal bell is about to ring out for the jubilee of Leo XIII. Countless pilgrims will answer its call, and we are happy to have been their forerunners; for we are returning with hearts overflowing with the holiest joys, more devoted to the Church, understanding better the ills of our unhappy country and filled with new strength to work at healing them.

We were about to return to France, and one of our joys in Rome had been to meet France often. We had seen her at the Villa Medici with our artists; but above all we had met her in the persons of those admirable men and women religious who bring to the capital of the

Christian world the tribute of their devotedness, and receive from it in exchange a supreme consecration for their French institute.

They are the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who in Rome teach our language to the sons of the Roman aristocracy; the Sisters of St Vincent de Paul, entrusted with the care of our workers at the hospice of Santa Marta; the Trappists of St Paul Outside the Walls, beginning at the peril of their lives the work of draining the Roman Campagna; and lastly the nuns of the Sacred Heart at Trinità dei Monti, in whose house we went to venerate the miraculous image of the *Mater admirabilis*.

For a moment we heard the hymns of the young orphan girls of their free boarding school, and we were astonished at the expression and the art with which these children of the people knew how to modulate their singing. Hearing them, one understood how artistic this Roman people is, and how much music there is in its sweet language.

Having left Rome on Thursday 20 October at two o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived in Marseilles the next day at about four o'clock in the evening.

At the very hotel where we had put up with a large group, we met two Eastern bishops, accompanied by a vicar general who administers an important diocese in Syria. The pilgrims who were arriving bowed before these venerable envoys, who were going to carry to the Head of Christendom the wishes and the homage of the faithful Churches of the East.

In their words there burst forth an ardent love for this Pontiff of Rome, in whom they recognise the only universal patriarch, the only legitimate successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ, whose rights and authority they affirm in the face of the schismatic populations.

Answering kindly the pilgrims who questioned them, they gave us the most interesting details about the Greek schism, the dogmatic

errors and the childish superstitions into which the unhappy populations separated from the centre of unity have fallen.

So happy an encounter was the fitting crown of a pilgrimage visibly blessed by God; for it made us see once more the catholicity of the Church, and understand still better what a hearth of divine warmth is found in this eternal Rome, whose influence shines out over all nations and outside of which everything dwindles and perishes.

In ending this simple account, how could we not express our deep gratitude to Messrs Harmel and de Mun, to all those distinguished and devoted men to whom we owe the organisation and the direction of such a pilgrimage; and particularly to the head of our southern contingent, Count de Villechaize.

It was a joy to all to learn that he had received from the Sovereign Pontiff a pontifical decoration which surprised no one but his modesty, for it was what everyone who knows his personal merit and his active zeal in the workers' movement had wished for.

A minor accident that befell him on our departure from Rome gave rise to a fresh outpouring of sympathy towards him.

Others, alas, at least after our return, have been more cruelly stricken. In this very place we had addressed well-deserved thanks to Count de Broves, head of the Union section. We must now change them into regrets full of bitterness, offering the expression of our condolences to Mrs and Miss de Broves.

Remembering the devotedness the much-lamented Count showed to all, and the lively faith that shone forth in him during our visits to the sanctuaries of Rome, could we doubt that this holy pilgrimage and the blessing of the Sovereign Pontiff were for him a supreme grace of preparation for the pilgrimage to heaven?

May those who so rightly mourn him, and whose delicate qualities of mind and heart we came to appreciate in Rome, find consolation in so holy a thought and in the memory of all the good he accomplished.

The success of this first pilgrimage of the workers' movement is an encouragement to it to multiply this form of popular demonstration of the Catholic faith.

Already, among the social works of our country, this movement, the only one that dares to set against the dark intrigues of the sect a clearly defined programme, a boldly unfurled flag, an authority always obeyed, was our best hope. Here it is, grown greater still in our eyes through the proof it has just given of the power of its organisation and of the excellent spirit that animates the workers who compose it; but above all through the high approval and the solemn blessing of the Sovereign Pontiff.

Could Catholics henceforth refuse it their most active support?

And so, more than ever, we dare to expect everything from its influence, to disabuse the masses of the people little by little, to make democracy Christian and to send a youthful life coursing through the regenerated social body.

We have just seen in Rome the victories of the Cross in the past; now the *Labarum* is the standard of the workers' movement; it will therefore have its share in the coming victories of the future.

