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MOUNT COOK HERMITAGE.

THE season for ALPINE WORK commenced on 1st November. The Hotel is in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Ross, as before. Mr. Clark will act as guide up till the end of February. The huts have been provisioned to meet the wants of tourists and climbers.

HANMER SPRINGS.

The daily coaching season commenced on 1st November. For Invalids afflicted with RHEUMATISM, SKIN DISEASES, etc., the BATHS are ample, and are still in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Rogers.

The SANATORIUM has accommodation for visitors, and is in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Macdonald.

A new building for board and lodging at lower rates will be ready about the New Year.

There are other houses where ample accommodation and excellent rooms may be obtained.

For Coach and railway fares and time-table see *Railway Time-table and Tourist Guide*

S. WEETMAN,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

Complaints re irregular Delivery of Paper should be made without delay to the Manager.

All Communications with the Commercial Department of the 'N.Z. Tablet' Newspaper are to be addressed to John Murray, Secretary, to whom all Post Office Orders and Cheques are in all instances to be made payable.

Annual Subscription, 25s. booked; 22s. 6d. if paid in advance; shorter periods at proportional rates.

NOTICE.

All communications connected with the literary department, reports, correspondence, newspaper cuttings, etc., should be addressed to the Editor.

Correspondents are particularly requested to bear in mind that to insure publication in any particular issue of the paper communications must reach this Office not later than Tuesday morning.

Correspondents forwarding obituary and marriage notices are particularly requested to be as concise as possible.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OTAHUHU.—Communication contains neither signature nor address. Is therefore inadmissible. Correction indicated has since appeared in our news columns.

J.C.G.—Declined. The news you send is ancient history. Would have been welcome three weeks ago when it was fresh.

A CATHOLIC (Port Chalmers).—We cannot attend to your communication, as you have failed to enclose your name.

MARRIAGE.

DENNEHY—MAHAR.—At St. Joseph's Church, Lyttelton, on November 2, Francis, eldest son of Daniel Dennehy, of Charleston, West Coast, to Mary, eldest daughter of Daniel Mahar, of Lyttelton.

The New Zealand Tablet.

FIAT JUSTITIA.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1899.

A MENACE TO FAMILY AND STATE.



ONE of the most unpleasant signs of our times is the widespread onslaught upon the unity and sanctity of the married state. The campaign is carried on partly with the sanction of the law, as in the divorce courts; partly beside the law, and partly against it, through those evil agencies which minister to the Malthusian ideas that have received so great an impetus in our day, and which must lead surely and not slowly to moral decrepitude and national decay. The figures of the

statisticians show that the dry rot has already set in in these colonies, and especially in New Zealand, in an altogether alarming decrease of the birth-rate. In this connection the Archbishop of Melbourne has done a real service both to the State and to society by his recent public denunciation of a company that was formed in his cathedral city—not by vulgar charlatans, but by high-placed people with the thin veneer of social 'respectability' about them—for the purpose of winning dividends by systematising the practice of these pernicious principles regarding the duties and responsibilities of married life which involve one of the gravest violations of the moral law

If the civil law (said his Grace) will not at present reach such efforts, it should be extended, so as to effectively suppress the organisation, and to put a stop to the vile literature connected with it. And what the law may not be able to accomplish for the present, public opinion should effect. The welfare of the State and the moral cleanness of society, apart altogether from the religious aspect of the question, should unite men of every denomination in trying to cut out this threatening social cancer.

The Archbishop's timely warning bore good fruit. The attention of the law authorities was directed to the new danger that menaced the sanctity of family life in Victoria. The publicity given to the neo-pagan movement proved too much for its promoters, and so the company was wound up.

The structure of Christian civilisation rests upon the foundation of the family, and the family upon the firm rock of an indissoluble and holy marriage tie. Everything that threatens either the indissolubility or the sanctity of the married relation menaces also the stability of the State. It is an old lesson. But it is a lesson that statesmen have been slow to learn. There probably never was a more brilliant civilisation and a wider culture than that of the Hellenic race when it reached its apogee in the age of PERICLES. But Greek civilisation and power fell to pieces none the less. Its fall dated from the spread of ideas that are sufficiently common nowadays—the doubting or denial of the bases of ordered human existence. This it was that ruined the sturdy national morality of old Greek life; it ate into and severed the bonds which held citizen to citizen in the true relations of public and private relations and duties; above all, it sapped the foundations of domestic life and let loose a flood of unexampled immorality. And so Greece fell. The Roman Empire was built upon broader and deeper foundations than the Greek. 'The root from which their vast growth of empire sprang,' says LILLY, 'was that distinctively virile quality which they called virtue: devotion to the idea of law and to the claims of country: to truth, to justice, to endurance: in a word, to duty. This *prisca virtus* it was that made them by veritable right divine "lords of the human race." In the old Roman State the husband always possessed the legal right of repudiation. But in the wholesome days of the Republic this right, says LECKY, was 'never or very rarely exercised.' The marriage bond was theoretically and legally soluble. In practice it was one and indissoluble. But in the time of the Empire the old virile days of plain living and high thinking disappeared. 'Faith and reverence and justice,' said MARCUS AURELIUS, 'have fled from the earth to Olympus.' Divorce became rampant. 'The obligations of marriage,' says LECKY, 'were treated with extreme levity.' Such mighty leaders of the life and thought of the day as CICERO, MÆCENAS, PAULUS ÆMILIUS, etc., sought new nuptials without cause or on the flimsiest pretext or caprice. Says LECKY:

MARTIAL speaks of a woman who had already arrived at her tenth husband; JUVENAL, of a woman having eight husbands in five years. But the most extraordinary recorded instance of this kind is related by St. JEROME, who assures us that there existed at Rome a wife who was married to her twenty-third husband, she herself being in her twenty-first year. These are, no doubt, extreme cases; but it is unquestionable that the stability of married life was very seriously impaired.

The words of EURIPIDES expressed the feeling of the corrupted masses of his day: 'Virtue is but a word, a delusion of nocturnal dreams.' The Italian chronicler LIUTPRAND marks the sequel: In a few generations the name of Roman became a synonym for baseness, cowardice, avarice, debauchery, lying—a word that stood for every vice. And thus fell the vast fabric of the mighty Roman Empire whose sway was limited only by the bounds of the then known world.