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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiæ causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.
Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.
April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope.

Current Topics

A Conspiracy of Silence.

There is a Celtic proverb which saith: 'Melodious is the closed mouth.' All over New Zealand the mouth of the secular press is humming an inaudible melody about the fierce and searching proscription which French Freemasonry has, with the criminal co-operation of the War Office, been for years past putting into operation against Catholic officers in the Army of the Third Republic. The facts of this great national scandal were set forth in our issue of last week. But, so far as we are aware, no whisper, not a breath regarding it has been permitted to appear in the secular press of New Zealand. How is it that the papers—which 'tore round' like wounded sperms in the fury of their last 'flurry'—over the Dreyfus case—are as tame and silent and undemonstrative as door-mats in the face of what is, perhaps, the greatest and most far-reaching scandal in military history. Artemus Ward once said to a meeting of his fellow-citizens of Baldinsville: 'We should be weak in the knees, unsound in the heart, milk-white in the liver, and soft in the head, if we stood quietly by and saw the Glorious Govymnt smashed to peeces.' Our secular papers split their cheeks with shrieking over the wrongs, real or supposed, of one Dreyfus; now, with 20,000 Dreyfuses before them, they look hard at their boot-tips, turn chivalrously to the right about, and serenely march away. What is the matter? Weakness of knee? Unsoundness of heart? Whiteness of liver? Softness of the head? Or is it that persecution and espionage are meritorious when practised against Catholic officers? Or that French Freemasonry must be protected at all costs against the indignation of honest men in New Zealand?

The last-mentioned question has been suggested to us by an editorial paragraph in the Liverpool 'Catholic Times.' It is scoring the apologetic reticences of the English secular press, which, however, had sufficient saving grace to make at least some passing mention (though of the pook-pook order) to the degrading system of espionage practised by uniformed Freemasons beyond the Strait of Dover. 'Are the Paris correspondents Freemasons?' asked our English contemporary. 'When we put this question we refer to the Paris correspondents of the great English dailies. We do not know whether they are or are not Freemasons, but

this much we do know—that they have left the British public in ignorance of the iniquitous anti-religious practices of the French War Office. We defy any one to gather from their reports an adequate idea of the unjust and corrupt policy conducted by General Andre and his subordinates. Even the "Times" which is usually so informative on foreign affairs, does not enable its readers to form anything like a proper conception of the dimensions of the scandal. The correspondents write around the subject, but avoid its heart—the documentary proofs. They have all sorts of apologies for the Government and champion it in the attempted defence that it is not guilty because the Catholics were equally black. The correspondents may not be Freemasons, but they are evidently pliable as wax in the hands of the French Ministers who are the obedient servants of the Grand Orient. If it had been a Catholic Government that was in power the correspondents would not only bring out all the documents and explain all the malpractices, but would wax eloquent in increasing the gravity of the offences by suggestions and innuendoes.'

A Word to the Unwise.

Full many a time and oft we are made by Catholic correspondents here and those throughout New Zealand to feel that, to some extent, we have during all those long years been engaged in the useless and interminable labor of digging holes to bury heaps of earth—or, to cast the thought in Cowper's more poetic phrase, in

'The toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up.'

We can fairly claim that a special feature of our work has consisted in the dynamiting of calumnies against our religion, its ministers, and its institutions. In our efforts to cope with the tribe of Ananias we have put ourselves into communication with the civil, military, or ecclesiastical authorities of almost every civilised country under the sun, and with results which, we venture to hope, have met with the approval of our readers, whom it is our duty, as well as a labor of love to serve. Yet each passing month brings us a number of more or less urgent appeals from various parts of New Zealand for statement of the 'real facts' of sundry cases of calumny or misrepresentation that have already been fully dealt with in our news or editorial columns. It is needless to say that such appeals come to us from the Catholics who welcome to their homes the books and

For { COUGHS,
COLDs,
BRONCHITIS. }

Take

BONNINGTON'S CARRAGEEN IRISH MOSS