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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

Our Pioneers

One by one our pioneers keep dropping off, and their passing reminds us that we are still, so to speak, a nation in its teens—sturdy and self-reliant and proud of our first long breeks, but still in our teens. John Plimmer, who passed last week to the Land of the Hereafter, had reached man's estate, was married, and had a family when he landed in Wellington in 1841. He found part of the site of our capital a wild waste of swamp and marsh covered with phormium (flax) and stunted tree scrub; part was a thick tangle of typical New Zealand jungle; and the only signs of the future Empire City were sundry raupo (bulrush) huts that gave shelter to a few disconsolate settlers on the foreshore. Only two years before—in 1839—the site of the New Zealand capital had been suggested by the noted Dicky Barrett, whaler, fighter, and Pakeha Maori. Barrett (says Reeves in 'The Long White Cloud') was headman of the Taranaki whaling-station. He 'helped the Ngatiawa to repulse a noteworthy raid by the Waikato tribe. Afterwards, when the Ngatiawa decided to abandon their much-harried land, Barrett moved with them to Cook's Strait, here, in 1839, the Wakefields found him looking jovial, round, and ruddy, dressed in a straw hat, white jacket, and blue dungaree trousers, and married to a chief's daughter—a handsome and stately woman. It was Dicky Barrett who directed Colonel Wakefield to what is now Wellington, and who, in consequence, may be recorded as the guide who pointed out to the pioneer of the New Zealand Company the future capital of the Colony.'

They trod a hard rough track, those sturdy, patient pioneers that tamed the forest and made the field and smoothed the roads for the generation that now inherits the ripe fruit of their labor. How aptly Joaquin Miller tells of the grinding toil and the golden hope and the frequent fate of the pioneers when he sings of the Arab Sheik who

'Once sorrowed so for thirsting man,
He led before the caravan
And, digging wells, he, thirsting, died.'
'He died of thirst! the wells remain!
Oh, hardy, patient, Pioneer,
God's angels, what a triumph here
'To know no well is digged, in vain!'

Here is how the Poet of the Sierras tells of the hope that buoyed the Pioneers, as it did the Arab Sheik, in their life-long toil:—

'Some far-on day when we are dust
And all this vast vale teems with life,
Some brave souls, fainting in the strife,
May rest them here and speak us just.
'May say we few, through wilds of time,
Blazed out new tracks for worlds to come,
And mourned not but, bravely dumb,
So died, full trusting God and time.'

We in New Zealand have not far to look back to the rocks out of which we were hewn. It is but a short lifetime since the vastly greater part of our country was, for the white settler, a virgin soil. And vast progress has been made since the arrival of those hardy pioneers who are fast slipping from their moorings and putting out to Sea.

Kaiser and Bishop

Some months ago—it was, we think, about the first of August of last year—the Father of Lies appeared by his lawful attorney, an 'ex-priest' lecturer, and set afloat a fantastic tale about the Emperor of Germany and Dr. Benzler, the Catholic bishop of Metz. Stated in briefest terms, the story was to this effect: that Dr. Benzler had interdicted a Catholic cemetery because of the unauthorised burial of a non-Catholic therein, and that the Kaiser, in the course of a flaming personal interview, rib-roasted the 'proud prelate' for this high crime with words that smote like a rod of red-hot iron. The story seems to have been crawling around for nearly three months among the 'religious' gutter press before it was picked up out of the dirt by the 'Daily News,' which has a long nose and a keen scent for tit-bits of No-Popery romance. That was, we believe, in October. The portentous item of 'news' was at once sent tingling over the submarine wires to Australia and New Zealand. The story was, however, incomplete. Lucifer's first attorney had forgotten to give a verbatim report of the Kaiser's fiery castigation of Bishop Benzler. A Dresden gutter-paper, however, supplied the omission—perhaps to the best of the writer's ability, but he made a poor attorney after all, being possibly a novice at the game. The result was what Rabelais terms one of those 'filimfil stories and pleasant fooleries' that would have added to the gaiety of our dull, grey life, but for two reasons: that the insane tale has been taken in solemn and portentous earnest by sundry steel-clad idiots of the Order of Scissors-and-Paste; and that it has probably been bolted whole by the gobemouches who are prepared to accept any statement, however grotesque or impossible, so long as it flings the stigma of diabolism at the Church of the Ages.

For { COUGHS,
GOLDS,
BRONCHITIS,

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BONNINGTON'S CARRAGEEN IRISH MOSS