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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

Knox's Last Descendant

Apropos of the recent Knox centenary, the Boston 'Pilot' reminds its readers that the last lineal descendant of the Scottish 'Reformer' became a Catholic and is now a priest in the great Catholic University of Notre Dame (Indiana, U.S.A.). Time's whirling does occasionally bring in strange revenges.

'Idolaters'

There is one thing in which autocratic Russia sets—though in vain—a good example to constitutional Britain. It never entered the head of a Tsar to publicly proclaim Catholic worship, at his coronation, 'idolatrous and superstitious.' Tsar Nicholas has travelled even further along the pleasant paths of religious toleration—although there still remains a long road to cover. By imperial ukase he has decreed that 'henceforth Buddhists shall not be characterised as idolaters in official documents.' In England the kingly office is degraded by a 'relic of barbarism' in the shape of an oath by which the crowned head of the Empire is compelled, at the moment of his accession to power, to declare all adherents of the Catholic Faith—and them alone—idolaters. And yet we remember what whirlwinds of fiery rhetoric arose from scores of mostly 'yellow' pulpits and platforms throughout New Zealand at the suggestion that Catholics should be treated by King Edward VII. at his accession with as much consideration as he was expected to show to the Buddhists and the Mahomedans and the Hottentot pagans that live under his far-extending rule.

They manage these things better in Russia, likewise in Germany. In the Fatherland religious distrust of royalty has burned itself out sooner than in the British Isles. In Wurtemberg, for instance, no declaration of religion will be demanded by the Protestant majority from the Catholic Duke Philip, the next heir to the throne. Saxony is mostly Protestant, but its crowned heads are all Catholic, and no questions are asked as to the complexion of their religious belief. The Grand Duke of Baden is a Protestant, but his people, two-thirds of whom belong to the Ancient Faith, never dream of exacting from him any declaration of religious belief. Neither does it enter the head of any person in the Fatherland—at least outside lunatic asylums—to suppose that the constitution of the Empire

would be endangered unless the monarch were compelled, on his coronation day, to denounce as idolaters the great mass of all the people that bear the name of Christian. Among civilised nations Great Britain alone can claim this evil notoriety.

Race Suicide

There are some social problems that promise to give many a heart-ache to the statesmen of the future. One of these—race suicide, to wit—is already causing much dismay in England, France, the non-Catholic countries of northern Europe, the United States, and the States and Colonies of Australasia. Ontario, the great Protestant province of Canada, is fast treading the fatal path that is leading to the swift and sure extinction of the accedent descendants of the sturdy Puritan settlers of the United States. The Toronto correspondent of a London daily paper recently wrote as follows:—

'Sociologists are considerably perturbed over the revelations made by the annual report of the Registrar-General for Ontario for the year ended December 31, 1903, just published. It is quite evident that "race suicide," so emphatically condemned by President Roosevelt, is a common practice in this, the so-called banner province of the Dominion. The population is estimated at 2,198,692, but the births registered numbered only 48,712, or at the rate of 22.1 per 1000. This is far below the average of most European countries, and comes close to that of France, which is 21.9 per 1000.'

'The same correspondent,' says the Glasgow 'Observer' of May 5, 'completes his tale by contrasting Ontario with the (intensely Catholic) French-Canadian districts: "It is noticeable, however, that in the French-Canadian districts of the province there is no disposition to curtail the number of births, Nipissing, for instance, having the high birth-rate of 49.3 per 1000, while in a purely English-speaking district like Prince Edward County the rate was only 14.6." Despite the tide of immigration, the results of the variation in the birth-rate according to creed in Ontario are shown in a marked way in the schools, which are denominational, and for which separate statistics are kept. "Whilst the Protestant school population," says the Montreal 'True Witness,' 'has been steadily decreasing during the past decade, the Catholic school population has shown just as steady a rise. . . The inevitable result of this state of things must be that the Catholic people of the Dominion will be the future possessors of the Canadian heritage.' The same remark promises to hold good for the States and Colonies of Australasia.

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