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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

Talking Peace

Pius X. keeps alive the old traditional position of the Pope as the world's peacemaker. For his fatherly interest in the cause of peace he has received the thanks of the two nations that are still locked in a death-struggle in the Distant East. Pope Gregory the Great was the first who rendered distinguished service to the world as arbitrator both in Italy and beyond its borders, and—as Haynes says in a recent work on political psychology—'he may be said to have inaugurated the tradition of the Papacy as an international tribunal, to which Leo XIII. so proudly referred in his letter to the Queen of Holland after the Hague Conference of 1899.'

The heavy naval and military defeats recently inflicted on Russia naturally make, of themselves, for peace. Another and important factor towards a cessation of the titanic struggle consists in the enormous difficulty which Russia must experience in feeding, over a single line of rails, an army sufficient to meet the exigencies of the military situation in Eastern Asia. It has been said that an army marches and fights on its stomach. 'Mr. Dooley' put this idea in his own quaint way some time ago. 'If,' said the philosopher of Archey Road, 'all thim Great Powers (as they say thimselves) was fr to attack us (the United States) I'll tell ye what I'd do. I'd blockade Armour an' Comp'ny (the great Chicago meat packers) an' the wheat elevators iv Minnysooty. Fr, Minnissey, I tell ye, th' hand that rocks th' scales in th' grocery store, is th' hand that rules th' wurruuld.' In the days of the Crimean war, Russia, so to speak, blockaded her wheat fields. Export from them ceased, the price of that prime necessary of European life rose by eighty per cent. in Great Britain, and there was hunger unappeased in many places besides the purlieus of Whitechapel. When the Northern and Southern States of America were arguing with bayonets and Minie rifle balls in the sixties, a wooden-walled steam-sloop of only 1010 tons—the 'Alabama,' to wit—stole out of Birkenhead with an English equipment and an English crew, became part of the Confederate fleet, and set to work raiding Federal Commerce somewhat in the fashion of the Russian 'Dnieper,' that is now prowling about the Eastern seas. Well, even that old wash-tub warship was able to cause a decided rise in the price of wheat. This gives a point to the rather disquieting opinions expressed by Sir Samuel Baker, Lord Charles Beresford, and others as to the grave peril that would

threaten England in the event of war with a naval Power. Such considerations ought to cool the heads of the jingoes. And there is thus much comfort in the contemplation of a year of scarcity: that a bad harvest in bellicose countries is regarded by military experts as the best guarantee of peace.

Railway Speed

A cable message from New York in last week's daily papers ran as follows.—

'The New York-Chicago express covered 912 miles in 17h 37min. including stops. The highest speed was three miles in 2min 8½sec.'

This works out at an average of a mile in just less than one minute and nine and a half seconds. It looks like the speed of the man with the seven-league boots when compared with the twenty-five miles an hour (stops included) attained by the Dunedin-Christchurch express. It is, perhaps, the highest long-distance speed attained since (to use Artemus Ward's expression) 'the iron hoss was foaled.' It is not, in point of time, a long hark-back to the days when the pack-horse was in almost universal use for the carriage of travellers and freight over the villainous roads that prevailed in Europe generally, and in England in particular. It is on record that the first carriage seen in England was built for Queen Elizabeth in 1568; that the first to ply for hire in 'famous London town' was in 1625; and that the first stage coach did not begin to lumber its bumpy way through England till 1659.

There are men still living who might remember the opening of England's first railways—the Stockton-Darlington line in 1825, and the Liverpool-Manchester five years later. Hood's rustic—like many of his supposed 'betters'—rose in mental revolt against this innovation, 'a-turnin' coches into smoaky keftils.' The yellow post-chaise, with its gaudy postilion, and the four-horse mail-coach of the time seemed 'the last word' in travelling comfort to many who felt that 'the world went very well then.' But things have moved fast and far since Stephenson discovered that there was sufficient cohesion between a smooth wheel and an edgerail. A modern express engine would scare out of their seven senses the good souls who saw Stephenson's engine drag a thirty-ton load at four miles an hour; the betting-fraternity who saw Cooper's locomotive easily beaten by a horse on the Baltimore-Ohio road in 1830; and the scared Dons of an English University who protested against the danger of 'hurling' people through space at the rate of twenty miles an hour. Only thirty years later, the

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