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

Fergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Peligionis 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

Derailed Logic

An esteemed religious weekly points out, in a recent issue, some deplorable instances of the ignorance of religious subjects displayed by certain pupils attending the State schools of New Zealand. It concluded therefrom that the Protestant version of the Bible should be taught by State officials, at the public expense, as a part of the curriculum of our State schools.

Now, that conclusion is obviously not (as logicians say) contained in the premisses. It reminds us of a contention of Artemus Ward's. The Genial Showman had never seen a toothless man beating the big drum in an orchestra or band. He therefore concluded, somewhat rashly, that a man without teeth could not 'wett' a drum at all. But up in Oregon he found that his logic and his experience were at loggerheads. 'I met a man in Oregon,' said Artemus, 'who hadn't any teeth—not a tooth in his head; yet that man could play on the bass drum better than any man I ever met.' We commend the experience to our valued contemporary. It has come across a series of cases in which the family and the (non-Catholic) Churches have failed to do the work of religious instruction. It rather hastily concludes that they could not have performed that duty, and that it therefore becomes the business of the Government to take it up. But we, with the lessons of long and direct experience before us, come to a quite different conclusion. It is this: The direct and obvious remedy is for the Churches that are at fault to wake up and do their duty—to the children by organised and sustained religious instruction, and to the negligent parents by arousing them to a sense of their tremendous responsibilities. A country clergyman once waited on Henry Ward Beecher and asked him for a recipe for dealing with the bucolics who slept during his (the visitor's) sermons. 'When I first came to New Plymouth church,' Ward Beecher replied, 'I thought about this problem, and I will tell you the course I decided upon. I gave the sexton strict orders that if he saw any person asleep in my congregation, he should go straight to the pulpit and wake up the minister.' The moral of this story is on the surface. What the Bible-in-schools clergy need is, first, waking up, and then a tonic to brace up their spiritual systems. Like pastor, like people. The people sleep at their post of duty, just because their pastors set them the example of nid-nid-nodding. And, in any case, it

is no part of the Civil Government to turn house-mother and to put on the white choker and teach either denominational or pan-denominational Protestantism, or to degrade Christianity to the level of a mere system of ethics.

A Grateful Country

Our Home files record the passing of another gallant fellow that took part in the wild Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. The British and Colonial Public put Thomas Atkins and Paddy Atkins and Sandy Atkins on a pedestal and dance and sing around them—when the band begins to play and there's something harder than atmosphere in the air. But they commonly look the other way when Johnny comes marching home—sometimes on a wooden leg. The latest Light Brigader passed out, like so many of his comrades, in poverty. Old Pugsley, in 'A Comedy of Lieutenants,' summed up the customary rewards of the linesman's bravery in these words: 'Two bullets in my head, sir, one in my neck, three months in the hospital, and a penny a day.' That was in Wellington's wars. Thomas Patrick Alexander Atkins's lot is not even yet a much happier one.

The Compensation Question

Local Option, with compensation, has long been on the statute-book of Victoria—we mean the Victoria that is our neighbor across the Tasman Sea. In New Zealand feeling on such subjects reaches high temperatures. The question of compensation vs. non-compensation, when it arises here (as it often does in the newspaper press), is commonly discussed with literary road-metal and with personalities that are as 'high' as the eggs that have been 'held over' since 1901. In Victoria, people are disposed to take these things more quietly, to deal with them more upon their merits, and to 'argy them out as sich.' A deputation recently waited upon the State Premier in Melbourne, urging, among other things, 'a time-limit in lieu of the present monetary compensation' which is given to hotel-keepers whose licenses are cancelled as the result of Local Option. It was stated that the League of the Cross would be represented upon the deputation. The Archbishop of Melbourne thereupon wrote to the local secular press: 'Individual members of the League may hold and express any views they please on the question of a time limit, but they do not thereby commit the League to any particular line of policy. For my part, I am strongly of opinion that when the State encourages a man to invest his money and devote his life to the management of a hotel, and profits by