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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

History Epitomised

'The most successful legislators,' says Disraeli in 'Contarini Fleming,' 'are those who have consulted the genius of the people.' The neglect of this sane principle of statecraft epitomises Irish history and Irish discontent from the days of Strongbow to the present hour. And Disraeli and his party have been, in recent times, the worst sinners against 'the genius of the people' whom they tried to rule.

Sounding Brass

'An outstanding feature of the R.C. Church,' says a writer in the N.Z. 'Outlook' (Presbyterian-Methodist-Congregationalist), 'is the thoroughness of the way in which they secure the education of their children. We know how in this Colony they have taken the education of their children into their own hands, at their own expense, rather than hand them over to the free, but secular, schools.' We add the following comment, borrowed from a discourse by the Rev. Dr. Lorimer, a New York Baptist preacher: 'If Protestant Churches were as interested in the education of their children as the Catholic Church is, there would be no religious problem in our country.' This outspoken declaration holds as good for New Zealand as it does for home-land of Uncle Sam. Instead of teaching children the way to life—and leading them thither—your average Bible-in-schools cleric sprains his arm welting the political tomtom and dislocates his tongue beseeching electors to throw his chief duty as a Christian minister upon the reluctant shoulders of overburdened State officials. For noise he is a miniature Niagara. For spiritual effort or personal sacrifice, for the little ones he has no more snap or energy than a pound of putty. The good man persists in reminding us of his resemblance to a kettle-drum: sound galore, but empty of effort. The self-congratulation of that party at the supposed success of their political drumming reminds one of a caustic 'wisdom' of Mark Twain's: 'Noise proves nothing. Often a hen which has laid merely an egg cackles as if she had laid an asteroid.'

Bible-in-Schools Threats

The law has neither heart nor soul. Yet it allows every dog one bite. In an analogous way, we suppose, the world will allow every journalist (ourselves included) the privilege of rashness of utterance once in a lifetime without spiking his head upon the city gates.

Our friend the 'Outlook' has lately been exercising this prerogative far beyond all title to immunity. It recently perpetrated a whole series of blazing indiscretions of statement against 'Papists' and 'Popery.' For some of these we got upon its trail, and (so far as they are concerned) the 'Outlook's' present lodgings are up a tree. All this is, in part, 'along of' certain fabulous charges against the Catholic Hierarchy of New Zealand and Victoria in regard to 'bargains' with political parties. Our readers will in due course be in a position to judge of the matter for themselves. Our Bishops are (so we are informed) up to the eyebrows in the evil-smelling game of party politics. And we are given to understand, by implication, that the parson holds severely aloof therefrom—that he is, so to speak, an aureoled bottle of eau-de-cologne placed upon a spotless pedestal outside the glue factory of our parliamentary life—an odor of unpolitical sweetness to all New Zealand. And yet, somehow, Bible-in-schools clergy (whose press exponent the 'Outlook' is) have contrived to make sufficiently clear the measures which they mean to adopt in order to influence political parties and to bring spaniel candidates to heel. In Victoria their brethren of the Scripture Instruction Campaign Council have also, like Ah Sin, taken a hand in the game which (as we suppose we must assume) they 'do not understand.' They are trying to force through the State Parliament a measure that was introduced by Mr. Watt, is styled The Scripture Instruction in State Schools Bill, and was down for its second reading on Wednesday of the present week.

In order to induce, cajole, or intimidate members to support the Bill, three official circulars (as we learn from the 'Age' of August 8) were sent out by the Scripture Instruction Campaign Council. The first was forwarded to Members of the Legislative Assembly, to all Protestant organisations, and to the local secretaries of the Bible-in-schools movement. The second was sent to the local secretaries, 'to the heads of Protestant organisations, and the friends of the Bible-in-schools movement.' It requests all 'Campaigners' to urge 'influential electors' to 'persuade' (mark the word) Members to vote for Mr. Watt's Bill. The circular then runs on as follows:—

'From what can be gathered in Melbourne, it appears that some of the Members (even those in whose electorates there was a majority on the plain second question) are anything but settled in their minds as to the way they intend to vote. In other words, they ignore the fact that their constituents have told them unmistakably by their answer to this second question that they wish the Bible lessons introduced into the

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