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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

The Weather

The weather last week was far from being, as it usually is, a dry subject for conversation. The sustained downpour turned the landscape grey and slushy for days together over a wide area of the Colony. The chief trouble about the rainfall, even in New Zealand, is the same as that about wealth—its unequal distribution. In the North Island it ranges from forty to fifty inches annually; in the South, from thirty to forty. But in 1898 Hokitika was sprayed with as many as 128 inches—which was an intolerable deal of sack. But there are greater rain-griefs in this world of ours. At Santiago de Cuba some time ago a tropical current poured down at the rate of four inches an hour. And has not Sierra Leone a record of 312 inches in one year? According to Mulhall, Cherrapungi, in South Western Assam, had an average rainfall of 493 inches for fifteen years, and in 1861 its record soared (or floated) up to 905 inches. It is a comfort, in the circumstances to know that it is the wettest bit of 'dry' land on the face of the earth. To De Quincey it would be a sort of Eden, for he loved rain when it rained cats and dogs. To Disraeli's Liberator Hatton it would be a waterlogged Gehenna, for he was a water-hater, and was 'always against washing' because (said he) 'it takes the marrow out of a man.'

The Catholic Newspaper

There are, alack! well-to-do householders who study economy in providing good reading for their children's minds, just as they would in the matter of boots and pinafores and Tam-o'-Shanter caps—driving hard bargains with heaven as they would with the draper, the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker. And there are those who apparently regard a Catholic paper as a sort of luxury, and look upon an invitation to become subscribers much in the same way as if they were expected to smoke half-crown cigars or to wash down their daily dinner with long draughts of Steinberg or Marcobrunner. Others, too, regard the necessity—real or imaginary—of subscribing to their local news-sheet as an all-sufficient reason for barring and bolting the Catholic paper out of their homes.

To all such, and to Catholics in general, we commend the following weighty utterance of the Fathers of

the recent Australian Plenary Council: 'Towards that section of the press which is Catholic in purpose and in management all Catholics owe a duty of support and encouragement. The publication of a newspaper is an undertaking of no small responsibility and expense; and its success depends entirely on the help provided by its readers. It is to be feared that many of our people do not realise their responsibility in this matter. They do not take the interest they should take in the welfare of the Church; and so they are content with the small quantity of news about the Church they get in the secular papers. This is not as it should be. Those who can afford to subscribe to a Catholic paper should do so. Some indeed are so heedless in this matter as to spend their money in the support of periodicals that are positively hostile to religion, and a danger to Christian morality; and they seem to think it no harm to bring into their homes, and under the eyes of their young children, pages that must plant in unsuspecting minds the seeds of indifference to the truth of Catholic faith and to the sanctity of Christian virtue. Such carelessness is criminal, and would be readily condemned as such if it were question of the adulteration of the bodily food of their children. But since it is a question of poisoning the mind instead of the body, they are so blind to the spiritual welfare as not to see the harm for which they are responsible.'

Qui potest capere, capiat! Which may be rendered: Whom the cap fits, he most gracefully wears it.

Some time ago a Protestant reader wrote as follows to the Liverpool 'Catholic Times': 'I find great help to truth in reading Catholic papers because: (1) I get the Catholic position first-hand; (2) the news and statements are reliable regarding Catholicism, and (3) not garbled or "faked up" to humbug the readers; (4) it smoothes difficulties and removes prejudice; (5) I can read the other side of the questions that concern us; (6) I am helping a good cause by (7) helping to spread light and increase knowledge.'

The bearing of these observations lies in the application.

Butchers' Bills

Somebody has said that the Rothschilds are the arbiters of war and peace in Europe. The ebullition of war-feeling is like champagne—a costly luxury, with a nagging after-headache in every bottle. Many countries—Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, for instance—keep vast war-funds hoarded up in yellow ingots.