

THE NEW ZEALAND TABLET

THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

VOL. XXXIII.—No. 52

DUNEDIN: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1905.

PRION 6D

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

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae 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

School Manners

A correspondent who lives in the vicinity of a large State school writes us: "Manners make the man and want of them the fellow." Why is not some effort made to instil the elements of good manners into those State school children and prevent or mitigate the exhibitions of larr'kinism that are so frequently made here? The complaint is no new one. It has frequently found a voice in the columns of the secular press. Some time ago, for instance, a writer in our local evening contemporary commented in part as follows upon a public and disgraceful exhibition made by well-fed young barbarians in a suburban school: 'We boast a good deal about our national system of education, but it seems to me a great pity that a little time is not devoted to instruction in manners as well as in the three R's.' 'Dock the "ologies,"' says another writer in another quarter, 'and substitute a little instruction in good manners and moral obligations.' Yet another writer before us adds his word of protest. 'We were told,' said he, 'that when the new (secular) system of education was introduced, as the masses became educated they would become refined. Alas! the contrary is the general experience. Anyone having the misfortune to live near a State school, or to pass by one when the scholars are leaving, can testify to the habitual rowdiness of their behaviour and the filthiness of their language.'

The 'N.Z. Tablet' has been combating for a generation the idea that the mere imparting of a knowledge of decimals, vulgar fractions, and such-like secular knowledge is the all-sufficient work of the school. One can, of course, hardly condemn the exuberant schoolboy because (to adapt slightly a well-known couplet)

'His manners have not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.'

But a certain accepted minimum is obviously required by the little men and maids at school if they are to be kept from coarse boorishness and untamed Gothicism. Our correspondent, however, must not expect that a stream, if left to itself, will rise above its source. His indignation makes him forget that the 'system'—which is not a system of education, but of bald instruction—is not in itself either intended or calculated to produce polite youths or mannerly maidens. For what, after

all, is the true and solid basis of good manners? 'Manners are the shadow of virtue,' says Sydney Smith. And the inculcation of either the substance or the shadow of true virtue forms no part of that glorification of Secularist training which so many of our fellow-colonists reverence as a sort of fetic. Wherever State school children preserve good manners, the credit will be due, not to the system, but to the private zeal of this or that teacher, and still more to good example in the home. Catholic schools recognise that training in religion and the formation of personal character are the foundation of all true education, and that little Bernard and Agnes must not neglect the ordinary amenities of our social life while storing their brain-cells with such necessities as the three R's and with such pretty bric-a-brac as 'the accomplishments.' We have seen a goodly number of inspectors' reports of Catholic schools, and we have noticed with pleasure that the verdict on 'manners' always sounded the top note of the register—'excellent.'

Home Rule

'Every civilised country,' says John Stuart Mill, 'is entitled to settle its internal affairs in its own way, and no country ought to interfere with its discretion; because one country, even with the best intentions, has no chance of properly understanding the internal affairs of another.' And Guizot, the great French Protestant statesman and historian, wrote: 'The special end and raison d'être of government should be that the people should have the constant direction and effectual control of their own government, and should be ruled, not according to abstract principles, but according to wants generated by their own special circumstances.' According to recent cable messages, some timorous English Liberals—of what we may call the 'increasing dose' school—are not prepared to accept to the full this sane principle of statecraft in regard to Ireland. But homoeopathic Liberalism of this kind makes no appeal to the mind of 'Honest John Morley.' He stands by the principles of 1886 and 1892 and finds in them 'no other intelligible application of the Gladstonian spirit.' 'What,' said he in his recent great speech at Forfar, 'is the principle at the root of the Liberal policy? It is the right of the Irish people to the management of their own domestic affairs. The successive plans, for which Mr. Gladstone and others of us were responsible, the successive plans by which, in 1886 and 1892, an attempt was made, failed to satisfy the country, but the principle (these are the important words), the principle