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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 Casualty List

The Christmas holidays have brought their usual lists of casualties among pleasure and sporting parties. The sail-boat that is 'as safe as your own house' and the gun that isn't loaded have proved themselves as deadly as ever. But 'twas ever thus. 'What misery,' said Sydney Smith of the holiday-makers of his day, 'human beings inflict on themselves under the name of pleasure!'

For Married Folk

Few married couples have, either by nature or acquired habit, the bump of benevolence as highly developed as that friend of Douglas Jerrold's who would hold an umbrella over a duck in a shower of rain. But they should at least try to have enough tact, and patience, and good-sense illumined by grace, not to outrage each other's feelings or aggravate each other's failings during the year that is now young. We recommend them to keep before their mind's eye the following quaint advice of Dr. Parr: 'Married people should study each other's weak points, as skaters look after the weak parts of the ice, in order to keep off them.'

In Russia

Artemus Ward says that revolutions are the only kind of exercise taken by the Central American. The Frank is fairly ready in resorting to the same kind of 'divarshun.' But it takes the less practised and slower-moving Russian more time to get under way. The events of the past twelve months—and especially of the past few weeks—tend, however, to show that his impetus when once he has got fairly in motion may yet be greater, and his impact against obstacles in his path more severe, than those of his lighter and more volatile friends west of the Rhine. Disraeli says that 'great revolutions, whatever may be their causes, are not lightly commenced, and are not concluded with precipitation.' That which shook France to the roots in 1789 was no sudden volcanic upheaval. Its coming had been long foreseen by those who had eyes to read the signs of the times. The present revolution that has got so far-spreading a grip on Russia is merely the natural and predicted outcome of causes that have long been at work in the realms of Muscovy. And if, too, is not likely to be 'concluded with precipitation.'

Under the autocratic and oppressive rule that prevails in Russia, discontent is the normal condition. The reform movement, so far as it has taken shape, has run on two lines—that of constitutional agitation and of revolution. The policy of driving discontent beneath the surface has strengthened the hands of the party of violence, who have been at work for half a century in one way or another in what Stepniak calls 'underground Russia.' The movement has received a fresh impetus from dissatisfaction with the war; exasperation at the monotony and gravity of defeat; the keen distress among the workers caused by industrial depression and the added burdens of the struggle in the Far East; the harsh rejection of, or trifling or temporising with, popular demands; the suppression of free speech and of the right of public meeting; the partial corruption of the army and navy; and, finally, the feeling that the Autocrat's difficulty was the revolutionary's opportunity. So far as we can trust the cable-messages, the revolutionary kettle seems, as we write, to be bubbling fiercely. Wellington remarked to some of his staff at Waterloo: 'Hard pounding this, gentlemen; let's see who will pound the longest.' The outcome of the 'hard pounding' in Russia will be watched with eager interest by the civilised world.

George IV., Bigamist

Speculation has long been probing with sharp guesses the relations that existed between George IV. and the fascinating Catholic lady, Mrs. Fitzherbert. But all controversy on the subject has been at last set at rest by the action of King Edward VII. General belief has now become a certainty, that she was the lawful wife of the last of the Georges. A sealed packet that long lay in Coutts's Bank has been, through the good offices of the King, given to the world in Mr. W. H. Wilkins's recently published work, 'Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV.' It contains, among other interesting documents, the duly witnessed certificate of the private marriage between the melodramatic and persistent George—then the handsome and not yet over-spoilt Prince of Wales—and the young Catholic widow of noble lineage, whose beauty and goodness had made her the idol of the highest circles of the time. The sequel is a sordid tale. The royal moon-calf got heavily involved in debt. In order to meet the clamor of his creditors and secure State grants, he acceded to the wishes of George III. and went through a form of marriage with a German Protestant Princess. Within a year they were separated—for ever. George IV. died at Windsor in 1830 as