

THE NEW ZEALAND TABLET

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

VOL. XXXIV.—No. 7

DUNEDIN: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1906.

PRICE 6D

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

Our Girls

'Parents,' says an American contemporary, 'if you neglect to teach your daughters domestic work; if you fail to impress upon them that when marriage calls a girl to a high and holy state of life and motherhood, if they are ignorant of household duties, their existence and the peace of home will be imperilled. A young girl contemplating marriage owes it as a duty to herself and to her husband and offspring, that she should understand the practical care of a home. Unfortunately there are too many young girls who give heedless thought to domestic work, and who could not boil water without supervision. There will be no domestic bliss, no peace, no harmony in married life when a woman is ignorant of household duties. Learn all you can from mother, girls. When the "old folks" sleep in the City of the Dead, and the home is broken up, if you have made preparation, the struggle for life will be easy.'

Our convent schools were probably the first to take serious and systematic steps towards restoring the shattered balance between the useful and the ornamental in the education of our girls. Some of them have steadily insisted on their pupils learning the useful arts of cookery, housewifery, etc., as well as sundry accomplishments, and snippets of a dozen sciences that (in accordance with the present tyrant fashion in education) are forced, against time, into their minds. 'Art is long and time is fleeting.' But time is too often set before art. And the system of getting so many 'ologies beneath the skin in a given time tends to produce a mental condition akin to that which gives rise to the monstrous diseased liver (foie gras) in the Strassburg goose. In mental as well as in bodily patulum, sufficient time must be given for the process of assimilation. Marriage is (or ought to be) the common lot of the convent-trained girl. For that reason we plead, with our American contemporary, for the turning-out of sweet domesticated maidens rather than incipient blue-stockings or brilliant executants, or smart sayers of airy nothings. Give us more Margaret Ropers, and we shall be satisfied with fewer girl 'virtuosas' and matriculated infant prodigies.

Moreover, men (or women, for that matter) do not live on angel-cake or oyster-patties alone. Neither is their raiment, in the main, a labyrinth of fancy needle-work and velvet bazaar-cushions. These be merely the

frills and trimmings of life. Therefore, sweet gentle-folk, a little more plain sewing, and plain darning, and unromantic everyday mending, and plain cookery are in order. It is, no doubt, very pretty to be able to cook a dainty dish to lay before a king. But the average house-father has no special relish, after a hard day's grind, for a plate of fluffy-looking kitchen stuff with a foreign name that would break his incisor teeth to pronounce. And in many cases he cannot well afford to invest fifty shillings in a cookery-school battery of implements to grill sixpenn'orth of chops. Sit modus in rebus—which, being interpreted, is an appeal for common-sense and moderation in things in general, including the training of our budding maidens in the art and craft of housewifery. The young gudewife may be able to charm her lord with the strains of Beethoven's Sonata in B. But what is she in the home of the worker or bourgeois if her cookery would kill the king of all the microbes? Brillart-Savarin lays it down as a maxim in his 'Physiologie du Gout' that a nation's happiness depends upon the food it eats. The happiness of a family does, to a greater extent than some people imagine. The fond little wife of a noted English author once said of him to Max O'Rell: 'He says it is all owing to the way I feed him that he is able to give such great thoughts to the world, and that as long as I look after his digestion, and believe in him, he'll write the books. Isn't he a dear?' And (said Max) so was she. The same witty French writer traces the melancholy of the British character to the deadly weight of roast beef and plum-pudding—this latter was formerly and very appropriately written 'plumb' (that is, leaden) pudding. Max may be right or wrong. But among mere men, and among many women, the kitchen is said to be the seat of much domestic infelicity—the chief laboratory of our national dyspepsia. And this, in turn, is the grand asset of our army of physicians and pill-vendors and clamorous quacks. May this friendly growl be a word to the wise.

A Marriage Fiction Dissected

A New Zealand contemporary has on its staff a writer who is, like one of Sheridan's noted characters, gifted with a free tongue and a bold invention. 'Marriage,' said he in the latest issue, 'was not solemnised in churches or as a religious rite until the time of Pope Innocent III. (A.D. 1198), and was not considered a Sacrament till 1442.'

No evidence is, of course, tendered. No references are given. The public are seriously asked to swallow, without sniffing at it, the uncorroborated statement of

BEATH & CO.

Best Value in CHRISTCHURCH for Mantles, Millinery, Dresses, Etc.