

# Convent of the Sacred Heart

ISLAND BAY, WELLINGTON.

## The Annual Spiritual Retreat for Ladies

Will Begin at 7 p.m. on SATURDAY, the 9th day of January, 1909, and will End on the Morning of THURSDAY, the 14th day of January.

The Retreat will be preached by the Rev. Father Forster, S.J.

By applying in time to the Reverend Mother Superior, Ladies wishing to make the Retreat can remain at the Convent, where they will find every accommodation.

### IN MEMORIAM

**BOLAND.**—Of your charity pray for the soul of Mary (May), who died at Darfield, December 26, 1907; aged twenty-six years. R.I.P.

To meet in heaven, how sweet the thought,  
When life's short years are past;  
No more to weep, no more to part,  
To meet dear Mary at last.

To meet in heaven, around the throne  
Of Him who died to save;  
Be this our hope, our anxious care,  
To meet beyond the grave.

—Inserted by her loving parents, brothers, and sisters.

### 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.



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1908.

## CHRISTMAS

In his *Meditations of a Parish Priest*, Joseph Roux quotes the much-worn saying: 'Time restores all things.' 'Wrong!' is his comment; 'time restores many things, but eternity restores all.' For many a year has Time—the friend of the good and the true—been busy in the work of restoring, to Reformed English-speaking peoples, the old and Catholic significance of the Christmas festival. Milton sang, indeed, of the month of the happy morn,

'Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,  
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,  
Our great redemption from above did bring.'

But in the middle of his life's course there swept on to triumph the bitter movement which penalised even the mildest effort to celebrate with social custom or religious rite that

'Most illustrious of the days of time,  
Day full of joy and benison to earth,  
When Thou was born, sweet Babe of Bethlehem!'

In 1644, when Milton was in his thirty-sixth year, the celebration of Christmas was forbidden by Act of Parliament; the legislature met on that sacred day; shops were, by express statutory provision, opened, markets held,

Christmas decorations abolished, the chiming of bells became an offence, and preaching and the holding of religious services were punishable by imprisonment and fine. And such innocent things as plum (formerly spelled 'plumb') puddings and the harmless, necessary mince-pie were condemned as whiffs of heathenry by the preachers of the day. The lovers of the old order maintained, as long as they dared, a passive—sometimes an active—resistance, and on the first 'illegal' Christmas day blood dyed the snow on the streets of Canterbury. In Scotland, rest and feasting and church-going on Christmas Day were penalised, women were compelled to work in public view, and, generally, no effort was spared to blot out the memory of this sacred anniversary from the minds of the people. The reaction set in with the Restoration. The Puritans, however, still raised a sullen protest, which manifested itself (among various other ways) by the nickname of 'Fooltide' which they flung at Yuletide or Christmas. The spiritual significance of the festival was, however, in great part gone. Charles Dickens stands forth as more than any other Protestant Englishman the new apostle of the kindly old-time Christmas social and domestic ceremonies. The revival of the festival in Great Britain was also promoted, in no small degree, by the action of the Prince Consort in introducing the Christmas tree into England in 1840. The Oxford Movement and the Catholic Revival worked independently upon the growing sentiment, and threw about the celebration of the festival the tender religious feeling which gave so genial a warmth to the old 'merrie Chrystemasse' of the pre-Reformation days. Christmas celebrations have long secured the force of custom in most Anglican churches; some of the Nonconformist denominations are following in a tentative way; and we may hope that in time a steadily growing number of our separated brethren will go and do likewise.

## Notes

### Spiritism

In our last issue we read the Riot Act to a series of recently published and sensational sermons by a Catholic preacher on the subject of spiritism. We are glad to note that, in its November issue, the *New York Catholic World* states that 'evidently a promiscuous diffusion' of this book 'might do as much harm as good.' And, adds our able and esteemed New York contemporary, books and sermons tending to put into the background the common belief of Catholics that spiritism is little else but deceit and delusion, may, perhaps, 'evoke a dangerous curiosity that may lead them to the mediums and the séance parlors.'

### Boys and 'Bacca

At Port Chalmers, and in two or three other places during the past few weeks, tobacco-smoking boys have been haled before the bench of justice and sternly cautioned 'not to do it again.' The lesson is well worth giving to a young nation that does not wish its future manhood to tread the path of physical degeneracy and unfitness that has robbed Great Britain of so appreciable a percentage of her powers of production and of national defence. In Holland boys smoke rather freely; and in some unwise parts of Mexico the cigarette has reached the position of being a prize-stimulus to proficiency in study. But Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes's eloquent warring ever stands, both for tropical and sub-tropical and other lands: that youthful indulgence in the reverie-breeding narcotic is one of the sure ways of blighting the flower of youth's early promise.

### A Non-Catholic Tribute

The *London Catholic Weekly* of November 6 quotes a kindly reference to Catholic missionaries, made by Sir Robert Hart (Inspector-General of Chinese Customs since 1863) at a Wesleyan Mission Exhibition at Leeds during the previous week. 'Although,' said he, 'many of you may not agree with me, I cannot omit on an occasion such as this to refer to the admirable work done by the Roman Catholic missionaries, among whom are to be found the most devoted and self-sacrificing of Christ's followers. The Roman Catholic missions have done great work both in spreading the knowledge of our God and our Saviour and more especially in their self-sacrifice in the cause of deserted children and afflicted adults. Their organisation as a society is far ahead of any other, and they are second to none in zeal and self-sacrifice personally. One strong point in their arrangement is in the fact that there is never a break in continuity, while there is perfect union in teaching and practice, and practical sympathy with their people in both the life of this world and the prepara-

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