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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

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A hideous Calumny.

TRUTH, according to Mark Twain, is stranger than fiction—to some people. But the ingenuity of all the fiction-monging tribe of Ananias never devised a more heartless tale

than the moss-grown calumny that the Jewish people, or any of them, have been guilty of murder in connection with the rites of their religion. It is one of those hideous calumnies that

Have no possible foundation,
But merely in th' imagination.

And yet for over four centuries the Jewish people—our spiritual ancestors—have been made time and again to suffer atrociously owing to the spread of this evil tale by men on whose minds the principles of the Gospel had as little real hold as they had on those of the Kalmuk Tartars. No fewer than seven Popes have issued strong condemnations of this cruel outrage on truth and justice. And yet—if we can believe the cable-demon—an unfortunate man of Hebrew race (Hulsner) was condemned to death on such a charge a few days ago at Polna, in Bohemia. The probabilities are that he was condemned merely for the crime of murder. On the occasion of his arrest on the charge of ritual murder we, in our issue of September 28, 1899, and on subsequent dates, dealt editorially and at considerable length with the sickening story of the 'blood accusation' and showed its utter folly and mendacity. We believe we were the first Christian paper to do this tardy act of editorial justice to the members of that ancient faith. Our efforts in the cause of truth received the compliment of quotation and of grateful recognition from the *Jewish Chronicle* in the following November. On September 29 a refutation of the infamous charge appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* in the form of a letter from the Rev. Mr. Chodowski, of Dunedin, and later on the *London Tablet* and *Weekly Register* dealt with the sad story of wild credulity, on the lines of the N.Z. TABLET, in their issues of November 25, 1899. For over three centuries the Catholic Church has likewise been made the butt of calumnies almost as gross and heartless. We naturally resent this. And a sense of truth and elementary fair play should incline us to strongly repel likewise the gross libel that has been so recently revived against that old and God-given religion of which we know ours to be the prophetic fulfilment.

English-Speaking Catholics.

THERE is the sound and feeling of a triumphant march in the record of the progress in English-speaking countries as summed up by Bishop Spalding in his recent great sermon on 'Education and the Future of

Religion.' 'A hundred years ago,' says he, 'those who spoke English did not count at all in the Catholic Church. They were few, poor, ignorant. Their fathers had held to the old faith at the cost of all the earthly things that men most seek and cherish. In England they were a handful, forgotten and forgetting. In Ireland they were ground by the penal laws, a system of tyranny the best adapted of any ever contrived by the ingenuity of oppressors to degrade and dehumanise a people. In America they were a small body confined to a few

counties in Maryland and Pennsylvania, without education, without influence, without consideration. It would have been deemed as improbable that the worship of Jupiter should revive among us as that the Catholic religion should flourish.

'What a marvellous transformation,' he continues, 'has taken place in the last 50 years, for it is scarcely longer than this since the Catholic revival in the English-speaking world began. More than one-fifth of the bishops who govern dioceses are now found in the British Empire and in the United States. The Catholics who speak English are 20,000,000 or more. In the last half century they have built probably as many churches, schools, convents, and institutions of charity as the 200,000,000 Catholics besides. There have doubtless been losses, but in the midst of struggle and battle loss is inevitable. Has there, then, been no falling away from the faith, no decay of spiritual life among the Catholics of other nations? Are not our losses in America to be attributed largely to the indifference or ignorance of many of those who have come to us from countries that are called Catholic? The root of the evil lies elsewhere than in our own country. Nevertheless, the history of the Church in the English-speaking world during the nineteenth century is one of real and great progress; and there is good reason to think that we shall continue to advance, since both priests and people are animated by the spirit of confidence, of courage, of generous zeal and devoted loyalty to the faith.'

Those Tourists Again.

Rows of figures are usually as dull and uninteresting in an editorial article as rows of telegraph poles are in a flat and dreary landscape. But the following figures—a tag to a note in our issue of last week—may be welcomed by the eyes of those who, like us, take an interest in the encouragement and expansion of the tourist traffic in this 'Switzerland of the Southern Hemisphere.' According to official data published last year, as many as 2,300,000 foreign tourists visited Switzerland—the Playground of Europe,' as it is called—in 1898. The invading army of sight-seers left no less a sum than 125,000,000 francs (about £5,000,000)—or at the modest rate of over £2 per head—to be divided among 1700 hotels and boarding-houses, and spent about 25,000,000 francs (some £1,000,000) in encouraging certain small but important industries of the country by purchasing *ricordi* or *souvenirs* such as brackets, jewellery, paper-knives, and sundry other knick-knacks and gimcracks of all sorts and sizes, which the hardy natives manufacture in the winter-time in the snow-bound *chalets* that are perched on breezy heights or grassy ledges among the mountains. The extent to which the little republic depends upon the roving foreigner may be estimated by the following facts: that the total population of the country in 1898 was only 600,000 greater than the number of foreign visitors, and that the total revenue of the Confederation in 1898 fell short of the amount paid by tourists by the handsome sum of 30,000,000 francs, or about £1,200,000 sterling. Swiss hotels are now models of their class, and few are as in the days when Longfellow wrote in his *Hyperion* of the 'Raven' Hostelry:—

Beware of the 'Raven' of Zurich!
'Tis a bird of omen ill,
With a noisy and an unclean nest,
And a very, very long bill.

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