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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.

'KEYHOLE CATHOLICS.'

'THE same Catholics,' says the *S.H. Review*, 'who fight for front seats at some theatrical show are quite content to just barely enter within the doors of the church to hear Mass.'

Nay, they are sometimes content with remaining outside. The *Catholic Universe* calls them "keyhole Catholics," a mighty good name for them, and the editor says they rarely amount to much. "Always the last in and the first out," says he, "they often regard the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as an ordeal to be avoided. If they would get up nearer to the altar and the priest, the experiment might reveal beauties in our divine faith that they have little dreamed of. Move up, gentlemen, and take your religion at short range."

THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI.

THE Governor of Fiji, Sir G. T. M. O'Brien, K.C.M.G.—we give him his whole vanguard and rearguard of verbal prefixes and suffixes—has been mightily flailed and blanket-

tossed by a section of the New Zealand Press. The head and front of Sir G. T. M.'s offending consisted of remarks made by him in opposition to federation with New Zealand, in the course of an address delivered to a mixed gathering of brown men and whites at the opening of a hospital at Wainibokasi. Briefly, Fiji's Governor told his hearers that the New Zealanders had their own interests chiefly in their minds' eye in proposing this federation; that 'white men have always taken the land from colored owners'; that only 'a fragment' of the land of New Zealand has been left to its original owners; and that, in the event of the proposed federation coming to pass, the same fate might ultimately befall the native land-owners of Fiji. He advised the dusky portion of his audience to 'keep very quiet and to give no sort of trouble,' whatever the issue of the federation movement might be. His advice was timely. His statements of historical facts are scarcely disputable. His prophecy is of highly probable fulfilment.

Now the New Zealand Government has rightly or wrongly set its heart upon having Fiji among its cluster of attendant satellites. And the little speech at Wainibokasi has made it—in 'Mr. Dooley's' phrase—"mad in iv'ry vein av its body." It has reprinted Governor O'Brien's speech and distributed it all over the Colony, without note or comment: its anger too full for utterance. Some of the newspapers cudgel the ruler of Fiji for having, in his capacity of Governor of a colony, dared to bray politics at all. But the good souls forget that Fiji is a Crown colony, that the Governor is an active and actual ruler, that he is President of the Legislative Council, and takes, and is entitled to take, as active a part in the Little Peddlington politics of his tiny dominion as Mr. Seddon does in those of the Greater Peddlington of New Zealand. Others kick Governor O'Brien severely for the alleged sublime folly of his political utterances. Federation with New Zealand would conceivably benefit both Fiji and Moa-land. But we fail to find any conspicuous folly in Sir G. O'Brien's speech. And in any case, why should a politician banished to that lone Pacific isle be deprived of the right to *desipere in loco*—to make

a fool of himself on occasion—a right of which bountiful advantage is taken among our own Parliamentarians, both in the House and out of it?

DAVITT AND THE BOERS.

'LONG journeys, long lies.' So runs the Spanish proverb. This may account for the conspicuous skill acquired by the Rome and Pretoria correspondents of the *London Standard* and *Daily Mail*. Among newspaper correspondents they stand in a circle apart for the skill which they have acquired in the feat of archery known as drawing the long bow. One of this promising pair cabled to London a story which represented the founder of the Land League as being 'disillusioned' and filled to the chin with disappointment and disgust at the Boer army and its leaders. There was nothing from first to last in his letters to the *Dublin Freeman* to indicate that his first impressions of Oom Paul and his men had undergone a change, and the Pretoria correspondents' statements were promptly contradicted by him in a letter which appeared in the columns of the *Standard*. The story, however, was flashed over the cables to the ends of the earth.

A revised version of it appeared in last Monday's issue of one of the leading New Zealand daily papers. It practically charges the Irish labor leader with being a fibster and hypocrite. There are corners in the field of politics for which our eyes are not focussed to those of the distinguished Irish politician and writer. But we know that thus far he has never given even his enemies just cause to charge him with either double-dealing or the moral cowardice that rushes for temporary safety behind the shelter of a lie. We have no hesitation in expressing our strong conviction that the imaginative Pretorian has been again seized with a spasm of horror for what Kinglake terms 'profane facts,' and that he has been once more at his old trade of evolving 'news' out of his inner consciousness. The editor of the *Chicago New World* claims special knowledge of the inner working of the canard. And he states that the story was 'deliberately concocted to order by the correspondents of the *Standard* at Pretoria, and then transmitted by the *Standard* or the Associated Press to the leading papers of this country, for the purpose of discounting in advance the effect of Mr. Davitt's history of the Boer war and its causes on American public opinion.'

THEY WANT BAKSHEESH.

'HE who serves queens may expect baksheesh.' Thus speaks Darkush in Disraeli's *Tancred*. The Irish Orange fraternity stipulated—and still stipulate—for baksheesh as a condition previous to service. The upset price which they set upon their strictly and expressly conditional allegiance in A.D. 1800 was a distinctly high one. It was expressed in a Protestant ascendancy manifesto which they adopted as the chief plank in their political platform. The term 'Protestant ascendancy' was in the manifesto explained to mean: 'A Protestant king of Ireland; a Protestant Parliament; a Protestant hierarchy; Protestant electors and Government; the benches of justice, the army and the revenue, through all their branches and details, Protestant; and this supported by a connection with the Protestant realm of Great Britain.' So long as this strict, searching, and perpetual monopoly of place and power and shekels was assured against Catholics and Dissen-

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