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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.

AMERICAN
PAPERS, PLEASE
NOTE.

MERCHANT or peasant, duke's son or cook's son, with a clean record, would almost as soon think of casting his skin as of discarding his honest family name. But an *alias* is the favourite resort by which the burglar, the forger, and the magsman seek to elude the pursuit of the detectives and the unfriendly clasp of the regulation handcuffs. This is the resort recently adopted by a notorious religious imposter who some time ago disturbed the peace of these colonies. Thanks to the successful exposure of the facts of his unsavory career, he has found his name—in Bobbie Burns' phrase—"a galling load" too great to bear, and some time ago tore it off and flung it, at least temporarily, aside. We request our exchanges beyond the Pacific to keep a bright lookout for any combination of alleged 'ex-nun' and 'ex-priest' that, under the name of Whitley, may be touring the United States or Canada and endeavoring to raise bawbees by stirring up the lower depths of the cesspool of sectarian passion for the sort of people who like that sort of thing.

A MUSTY
LEGEND.

EVEN Johnnie Raw is capable of improvement, and Hodge the ploughman has been known to learn. But it is not easy to have patience with men of supposed education who repeat in the closing year of the nineteenth century the old and oft-exploded calumny that indulgences are a pardon of sins, past, present, or to come. And yet this is precisely what a certain Mr. Morant has done in the November issue of the *Nineteenth Century*. Mr. Morant evidently belongs to that diminishing class of writers of inconspicuous cerebral development who from time to time inform the British public that priests habitually travel about with 'missals' under their arms and are given to the celebration of 'evening Mass'; that our bishops wear thurifers on their heads and acolytes on their feet; that rosary beads are 'sometimes used by Catholics in confession, when a bead is told off for every sin confessed'; that Catholics believe the Pope to be infallible in every statement uttered by him in ordinary conversation on all sorts of subjects from the weather to the differential calculus; and other such tit-bits of rare and curious knowledge. For the enlightenment and edification of the British public Mr. Morant makes the following statement in the *Nineteenth Century* regarding Joseph Mayer, who played with such dignity and pathos the part of the Christ in the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau:— 'Wishing to confer some mark of favor upon so eminent a disciple his Holiness has bestowed upon him (Mayer) a pardon, not only for all his own sins, past, present, and future, but also, with a truly lavish generosity, for those of all his children.'

This foolish statement has been copied into the weekly religious or brimstone columns of some of our daily papers. For Catholics and educated Protestants it is needless to state that Mr. Morant's story is wholly untrue and calumnious. The Pope neither did nor could grant such a pardon. The

imaginative writer in the *Nineteenth Century* is probably attempting to describe the customary papal blessing, with plenary indulgence at the hour of death, which the Holy Father frequently bestows upon devout Catholics, sometimes *proprio motu*, but far more frequently in response to a request or *supplica*. And this is not a 'pardon' for any sin, past, present, or future: it is merely a remission of the temporal punishment which is often due to sin after its guilt and eternal punishment have been remitted in the Sacrament of Penance. And every Catholic knows that this, or any other indulgence, can benefit only those who are truly penitent. It is pleasant to find Mr. Labouchere, of *Truth*, pulling the ears of the editor of the *Nineteenth Century* and correctly explaining to him what an indulgence is and what it is not. Some years ago the *Cape Mercury* 'explained' editorially to its readers that an indulgence of three hundred days means 'three hundred days out of purgatory!' The learned editor, by the way, did not provide for the return of the 'patient' when the furlough was over. In the *South African Magazine* Dr. Koble had this brief but pregnant comment on the theological acumen of the editor of the *Mercury*: 'If our Protestant friend were to see a fifty-horse power engine, he should look inside it for the fifty horses.'

The most accurate account of the doctrine of indulgences that we have met with in Protestant literature is contained in Dr. Lee's *Glossary of Liturgical and Ecclesiastical Terms* (p. 161). For the sake of its fairness it deserves the honor of quotation at our hands. 'Technically,' says this well-known Anglican divine, 'an indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment which often remains due to sin after its guilt has been forgiven. Now mortal or deadly sin consists in its being an act of rebellion against God. The forgiveness of this guilt must, on God Almighty's part, be an act of free grace, because it is a kind of infinite evil, for which no creature can ever adequately atone. But, even when this guilt has been forgiven, there still remains a debt of temporal punishment. The justice of God requires that every sinner shall himself pay that portion of the debt which he is able to pay, even when that which he is unable to pay has been forgiven. This is evident from Holy Scripture. Hence the Church, in executing her office of remitting sins, having always borne in mind the temporal punishment due to them, exercises her authority by granting what are termed "indulgences" suitable to times, states, and circumstances. These are either partial or complete. Partial indulgences have reference to the duration of canonical penance, common in the Primitive Church. Complete or plenary indulgences are those in which the whole of the temporal punishment due to sin is remitted. In order that the indulgences of Holy Church may be advantageously received, the faithful seeking them must be in a state of perfect charity towards God, and of detachment from sin.'

MILITARY EX-
PERTS AND
WEAPONS OF
WAR.

ONE result of the Anglo-Boer war is this: it has compelled us to revise certain dogmatic expert judgments as to the effect of modern weapons of war. Future wars may be rendered briefer or more difficult by their sheer costliness. But who will now maintain—as some noted military experts did some time ago—that armed struggles between nation and nation would be rendered

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