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PRIOR 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

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

THE FIRST SOVEREIGN. The first year of the reign of the late Queen Victoria introduced the era of constitutional sovereigns. William IV., whom she succeeded, was the last English monarch who exercised actual personal rule. He claimed, and on occasion, exercised, the right to dismiss his Ministers—as one of his commoners might dismiss a cook or hodman—“when he pleased and because he pleased.” When “royal tarry-brecks”—as he was called in his sailor days by Robbie Burns—slipped away to the Other Side on June 20, 1837, the “finis” was put to the long history of personal government in England. The late Queen was the first constitutional sovereign that ever wore the crown of England. “And she was,” says Justin McCarthy in the recently-published latest volume of his *History of Our Own Times*, “on the whole, the best English sovereign that ever reigned.”

Her reign, according to the same distinguished Irish Nationalist historian, was “a reign productive of reform in political, in economical, and in social life. Especially we should say it has been successful in domestic reform and in domestic advancement. About the policy of some of our foreign wars, our annexations, our expansions of territory,” he continues, “the writer of this book has never hesitated to express his full and frank opinion. But the advance of political and social reform has been so clear and so beneficent as to give little or no chance to the most carping controversialist. No one could possibly say that Queen Victoria does not find a happier Britain now than she found when she came to the throne, hardly more more than a child, in 1837. Never once during her time has the strength of the monarchy been shaken, or even threatened. Many monarchies, even some republics, have gone down within that time. The French Republic of 1848 was upset by Louis Napoleon, and the Empire of Louis Napoleon went down on the battle-field of Sedan. A German Empire has been founded, although not exactly on the ruins of the Holy Roman Empire; and Austria has been driven outside the sphere of Germany. Italy has become one single kingdom, and Greece is at the present moment thrilling to complete what she not unnaturally thinks her national destiny. The Empire of Brazil is gone, and a sort of Republican Government works along its way in the place of the deposed sovereignty. But the monarchical system of Great Britain has not been seriously threatened in the slightest way since Queen Victoria came to the throne. Of course, nobody could suppose for a moment that all this was owing to any inspiration or any effort of the Queen herself. But it may be assumed, and it must be assumed, that the wisdom with which, as a constitutional sovereign, she discharged her duties, and acted in the end on the advice of her Ministers, has had much to do with the stability of the Empire and the rule. This,” adds Justin McCarthy in the closing paragraph of his work, “is the history of a time, and not of a sovereign, but it would be unjust even to the history of the time, not to give a word of praise to the steady, constitutional action of the sovereign.”

ONE KIND OF ‘LOYALTY.’ In the early years of her reign the head of the young Queen lay on a pillow bestrewn with carpet-tacks and full-grown nettles. She was a comparatively unknown maiden then—for she had been kept by the watchful care of a good mother far removed from the contamination of a court whose manners—as Justin McCarthy says in the first volume of his *History of Our Own Times*—“had a full flavor, to put it in the softest way, such as a decent taproom would hardly exhibit in a time like the present.” The first task of the sweet young royal maiden of eighteen summers was the arduous one of cleansing the Augean stable of the court. This was no easy task so long as the abode of royalty was cumbered with the presence of that brutal, profligate, foul-mouthed, and treacherous creature, the Duke of Cumberland, who—as we have shown elsewhere in this issue—had endeavored, by the aid of his following of armed Orangemen, to prevent her accession to the throne of England. As we have also stated elsewhere, the old ducal *roué* and his fellow-conspirators endeavored to raise a popular clamor against the young Princess—whom they deposed in advance—by persistently spreading the report that, if permitted to mount the throne, she would become a Papist and would thus destroy the Protestant succession. Cumberland and his dark-lantern associates escaped the fate which their treason merited—suspension on a gallows as high as that of Aman, or a safe and permanent lodging in Norfolk Island or Botany Bay. But the hollow echo of their party cry was heard long after the young Queen had ascended the throne; and the *London Times* went so far as to roughly warn its sovereign, in the course of a ponderous and evil-tempered leading article, that for her to turn Papist, to marry a Papist, “or in any manner to follow the footsteps of the Coburg family,” would involve an “immediate forfeiture of the British crown.”

The Irish people, as Disraeli admitted, are naturally inclined to be devotedly loyal. Irish Catholics welcomed with joyous acclamation the accession of the young Queen. Daniel O’Connell was at that time “the recognised leader and dictator of the whole Catholic and Nationalist population of Ireland.” When rumors of a renewal of the Cumberland conspiracy went flitting about, he declared in a public speech, amidst thunderous applause, that if it were necessary he could get “five hundred thousand brave Irishmen to defend the life, the honor, and the person of the beloved young lady by whom England’s throne is now ruled.” English Orangeism was dead and buried six feet deep when Queen Victoria began her long and happy reign. Irish Orangemen viewed her accession with sullen ill-humor. The attitude of the fraternity towards her ever since has been one of alternate professions of unbounded loyalty and of vigorous and undutiful abuse. Many of our readers can recall the angry outcry of the brethren against her Majesty during the Disestablishment agitation in Ireland in 1868 and 1869. Prominent Orangemen warned her that if she dared to exercise her constitutional right of signing the Disestablishment Bill she would have “no longer a claim to the throne.” And the great watchword of the brethren—the invention of the Rev. “Flaming” Flanagan—was this: that if the Disestablishment Bill received the royal assent they would “kick the Queen’s crown into the Boyne.” At Rochester, Kyneton, Melbourne, and in other places in these colonies the

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