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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

The Late Cecil Rhodes.

The death of the Right Hon. Cecil Rhodes, recorded in recent cables, has removed a well-known figure and one which, for good or ill, has bulked very largely in the history of British South Africa. The main facts in his career are sufficiently well known and need only be very briefly referred to here. Mr. Rhodes, who was the son of an English clergyman, originally went to South Africa for the benefit of his health, and his business capacity, perseverance, and audacity soon brought him to the front. His first great success was the amalgamation of all the Kimberley diamond interests into the now famous De Beers Consolidated Mines, and the system he adopted for the distribution of his Company's treasures—a system of colossal bargains—made him complete master of the market and enabled him to amass a huge fortune. Having decided to enter politics he easily secured a seat in the Cape Parliament, and on the fall of the Sprigg Ministry in 1890, he became Prime Minister of Cape Colony. During his régime he succeeded, partly by bribery, partly by conquest, and partly by unscrupulous diplomacy, in securing for Britain the control and possession of Bechuanaland, Matabeleland, and Mashonaland, and thus realised his great dream of pushing the dominions of Great Britain to the banks of the Zambesi. He also projected a great and deservedly famous scheme for the connection of Capetown and Cairo by a railway and telegraph, and there are indications that the day is not very distant when this gigantic project will be actually carried out.

During the week the papers have been pouring out panegyrics on Mr. Rhodes and those which have come under our notice have certainly been sufficiently fulsome. Their general tenor is that a great Empire-builder has gone, that he cannot be replaced, that his death is, as Lord Milner put it, 'an irreparable loss.' All of which goes to show how almost impossible it is, at a time so closely following on his death, and at such a critical stage in the history of South Africa, to take a calm and dispassionate view of his worth and work. Undoubtedly he was a man of large ideas and a strong will and he was certainly anxious to secure a great future for the British race in South Africa. It is equally certain that he was not infallible and that it was not from purely philanthropic motives that he planned his great expansion schemes. His patriotism always had a disagreeably commercial smack about it. He was a man of large ideas, large projects, and—large notions of dividends and profits. He was Premier of Cape Colony it is true but he was also head of the Chartered Company of South Africa, and in all his great proposals there was always room for doubt as to how far he was fighting for England, and how far he was fighting for his own hand. Altogether, although he may, as his admirers declare, have done yeoman's service for England, he was, as the London *Spectator* sanely remarks, a Clive who needed a great deal of watching.

Rhodes and Parnell.

A rather curious and interesting episode in Mr. Rhodes's career occurred in 1888, when the 'Diamond King' made a handsome donation to the Irish party for the promotion of the

Home Rule movement. Mr. Rhodes, who was at that time getting £40,000 a year out of the South African diamond-fields, sent Mr. Parnell a cheque for £5000, and promised to send him another cheque of the same amount, on the understanding that Irishmen were not to be excluded from the Imperial Parliament in the next Home Rule Bill to be proposed. Various theories have been put forward as to Mr. Rhodes's motive in making this remarkable gift. According to Mr. Stead, it was given 'by way of rewarding the Irish chieftain for his refusal to accept Home Rule on the Colonial, as opposed to Home Rule on the American basis.' Another writer declares that 'what undoubtedly prompted him in this transaction was the expectation that the Irish Nationalist members in Parliament would consider themselves as under an obligation to him, the repayment of which he might demand whenever he needed political support.'

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The simple truth on the matter was clearly stated in Mr. Rhodes's letter to Mr. Parnell, in which he intimated that he made the contribution on the ground that he thought Home Rule in Ireland, on the lines he suggested, would open the way to the execution of his great scheme for the Federation of the Colonies. In this view Mr. Parnell concurred. 'It does not come so much within my province,' said the Irish leader writing to Mr. Rhodes, 'to express a full opinion on the larger question of Imperial Federation; but I agree with you that the continued Irish representation at Westminster will immensely facilitate such a step, while the contrary provision in the Bill of 1886 would have been a bar.' The idea in the minds of these two far-seeing men was probably something like this. They anticipated that the concession of Home Rule to Ireland would be followed by Home Rule to Scotland and Wales, and that that again would be followed by the grant of Home Rule to England. Then the Colonies would put in a claim, and eventually the House of Lords would be replaced by a sort of Federal Parliament, in which all the greater Colonies, as well as England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, would be represented. That was certainly Mr. Parnell's idea, and there can be little doubt that whenever Home Rule is granted some such form of Federalism as that just described will sooner or later follow.

Rhodes and the Boers.

During the earlier years of his career in South Africa no public man was in greater favor with the Boers or more deeply in their confidence than Mr. Rhodes. He thoroughly understood the Boer character and never had the slightest difficulty in getting into sympathetic touch with it. In this respect he was a complete contrast to Lord Milner, who has never taken the trouble to comprehend the Boers, and whose want of tact during the conference with Kruger at Bloemfontein undoubtedly helped to precipitate the war. 'How different,' remarked a Cape Minister, 'would Rhodes have handled the business in the days before the Raid had made him an impossible negotiator. Instead of bombarding the old man with a display of officialism, and seeking to wrest from him admissions by dint of academic argument, Rhodes would have said to his attachés, "Now, all you fellows, clear out," and then he would have sat down by the fire, lighting cigarettes, while the old man smoked his long pipe, and they would have talked over things for a