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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

An 'Evangelist' in the Pulpit.

There is a time for everything, says a wise man, a time to laugh and a time to pray; but surely no one with any sense of reverence and propriety would pretend that the appropriate time for laughing is during public worship when preaching or hearing the Word of God. Yet that seems to be the idea with which one 'Evangelist' Geil, who has been engaged by some Protestant churches in Australia to carry on extensive missions in all the large centres, seems to be imbued. Mr. Geil has just been conducting a huge 'simultaneous mission' in Melbourne, and it is claimed that his ministrations have been attended with phenomenal success. If the reports of his utterances which have come under our notice are fair specimens of his style we would not be at all surprised to learn that his meetings have been largely attended and greatly enjoyed by that very considerable section of the public who always appreciate a good comic 'show,' but that the work of God could be promoted in any real and genuine way by the methods adopted by this up-to-date 'Evangelist' from Yankee-land, it is very difficult to believe. Judging from the reports of his meetings Mr. Geil seems to entertain peculiar ideas of humor in dealing with sacred subjects; and however much his inanities may 'tickle the ears of the groundlings' for the time, they must most assuredly 'make the judicious grieve.' We give a few samples of Mr. Geil's utterances, taken from reports appearing in the daily papers and quoted by our contemporary the Melbourne *Advocate*. They are interesting in view of his probable early descent on New Zealand, as showing precisely what manner of man he is.

Even the secular papers seem to have looked upon the 'Evangelist' as little better than a showman, for they publish his addresses under such headings as 'Disquisition on Blankets,' 'Jonah in a New Light,' etc. At an early stage in the 'sermon' on Jonah, the preacher expresses the desire of his 'natural man' to 'knock that fellow as flat as a pancake,' and later on he comes to a story which he describes as 'a bald-headed, long-whiskered lie.' When Jonah appears on the scene the comic element in Mr. Geil is allowed full play. According to this 'Evangelist,' God said to Jonah: 'You go north-east'; and Jonah said: 'No, I won't; I'll go south-east and pay my own fare.' Then Jonah, in the choice language of the reverend gentleman, 'stretched himself on his spinal column; and I reckon that he snored like a North River fog-horn.' When the storm came on, and Jonah was awakened, he 'guessed his ticket was all right.' The throwing overboard of 'friend Jonah,' as Mr. Geil familiarly terms him, is described in the following terms: 'One got him by the head, and one by the right foot, and another by the left foot, and they gave him a swing, and he went over head first into the water.' Then the whale is brought on, and he too is put in as entertaining a light as possible for 'If ever a whale wriggled his tail and flopped his fin and headed for shore it was that particular monster that swallowed Jonah.' And finally, according to Mr. Geil, when the prophet ended his journey and reached the shore, 'he shouted "north-east," and rushed off as fast as he could leg it.'

This is the sort of thing which is expected to bring a blessing to multitudes hungering for the bread of life. Even in the mouth of Mark Twain or Mr. Dooley such stuff would be received with disrelish and disappointment; on the lips of a man professing to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ it simply excites disgust. Such a type of 'Evangelist' is entirely foreign alike to Catholic tradition and Catholic ideal, and we are wholly of Cowper's mind when he wrote:

I seek divine simplicity in him
Who handles things divine, and all besides,
Though learn'd with labor, and though much admired
By curious eyes and judgments ill-informed,
To me is odious—as the nasal twang
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
Mised by custom, strain celestial themes
Through the pressed nostril spectacle bestrid.

Equal to the Occasion.

There is a certain type of people of the 'would-be' sort who affect to despise the 'ignorant Irish' and who think it a clever and smart thing to make rude and contemptuous remarks about the Irish and their way of life. So far does their ill-mannered ignorance carry them that they do not hesitate at times to work off their alleged funnyisms on Irishmen themselves and then they are generally sorry for it. They get taught a lesson. An instance of this sort occurred the other day in San Francisco when a journalist of some reputation but little manners was completely 'flattened out' by a quick-witted Irish lady. Here is the story as given in a New York daily of recent date:

Mr. A—— B——, while out in San Francisco visited the new house of an old friend, a gentleman of Irish extraction. The hostess evidently took great pride in the house, the furnishings of which were new and beautiful, and gave evidence of much taste and refinement. Mr. B——, who has an eye for the beautiful, gave unstinted praise to everything he saw.

'But,' he said, 'I am sorry to see that your house, beautiful as it is, lacks one ornament which no Irish house should be without.'

'What is that?' she asked, unsuspectingly.

'A pig,' replied Mr. B——, with a satisfied chuckle.

The hostess' eyes sparkled. 'It did,' she said indignantly, 'but you have supplied the want.'

It was a hard knock but it was richly deserved. There is one newspaper man in America who will speak and write more respectfully of the Irish for the rest of his natural life.

Another little story, illustrating in much the same way the Irish readiness of retort in cases of ignorant rudeness, is also going the rounds of the Press just now. The incident is described in a Philadelphia paper, which declares that Archbishop Ryan was recently about to take a train for Boston at the Broad street station, when a young man accosted him, saying:—'Your face is familiar, where in hell have I seen you?' 'I really don't know,' replied the Archbishop, blandly; 'what part of hell do you come from?'

This story is not without an element of improbability, but it is worth telling as furnishing a good specimen of quick and happy retort.