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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.

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., P.M.

LEO XIII., Pope

Current Topics

Our Cancer Patients

Two and a half centuries ago, when Bernini made his famous statue of the Nile in Rome, he represented it as a human figure with its head concealed by the fold of a mantle. For at that time, and till far on in our own day, the head or source of Egypt's wealth-bearing river had not yet been discovered. If some grotesque sculptor of our time were to personify cancer, he might aptly treat his subject as Bernini treated the Nile. For the source or origin of cancer still remains one of the unread riddles of medical science. Leprosy is a medical mystery, but (to use 'the genial showman's' term) cancer is 'mysterior.' Dr. Fell, a well-known New Zealand practitioner, has expressed the opinion that cancer is a disease of comparatively modern growth. No mention is made of it in the Bible. Hippocrates wrote four centuries before the Christian era. He was the most famous physician of that far-off time, and described many a human ill of his day; but he is silent about cancer, and if it existed at all at that remote period, it must have been comparatively rare. Dr. Snow, the English physician who has made cancer his subject, says, in an article before us, that it is not hereditary, but is due to 'the increased stress of our modern life.' And he adds that 'until society emerges into some calmer sea,' 'a progressive increase of cancer, duly proportioned to the growing severity of the struggle for existence, may be predicted as a matter of course.'

Whatever may be the value of Dr. Snow's theory as to the causation of cancer, there can be no doubt about the menacing rapidity of the spread of that fearful malady. Tuberculosis is the over-king of all the ills that flesh is heir too. Cancer comes next to it as a slayer of our kind. In New Zealand, the deaths from this noisome parasitical disease rose steadily from 307 in 1892 to 515 in 1901. This represents an increase during that period, from 4.78 to 6.62 deaths per 10,000 persons in the population, and from 4.75 to 6.75 per cent. of the total deaths in the Colony. In the British Isles the proportion of deaths from this dread scourge is even greater. A report recently published by the Registrar-General shows that cancer is steadily increasing in every country in the United Kingdom. In Ireland, in 1864—the first year in which the registration system was in force—the rate was 2.7 per 10,000 living. In 1871 it had risen to 3.2, in 1881 to 3.7, in 1891 to 4.6, and in 1901 it reached 6.5. In England (including Wales) in 1864 the rate was 3.9, in 1871 it was 4.2, in 1881 5.2, in 1891 6.9, and in 1900 it had risen to 8.8. In Scotland in 1864 the rate was 4.3, in 1871 it was 4.4, in 1881 5.2, in 1891 6.8, and 1900 8.0.

In reviewing the detailed figures presented in his report, the Registrar-General draws attention to certain main facts which they disclose—facts which, however, serve only, in a way, to emphasise the strange and painful mystery that still surrounds this fell disease. Here are the points to which the Registrar-General directs attention:—

- '1. That in many cases cancer occurs in the same family, grand-parents, parents, and other relatives of the person affected having suffered from that disease.
- '2. That frequently, where the member of a family is afflicted with cancer, other members of the family suffer from tuberculosis.
- '3. That in a number of instances where members of a family are afflicted with cancer, other members of the family suffer from lunacy, idiocy, and epilepsy.
- '4. That in some cases the disease has occurred in persons who have been in direct contact with cancer patients.
- '5. That the disease has manifested itself in individuals who have used the tobacco pipes of persons suffering from cancer of the lip.
- '6. That in some instances more than one case of cancer has occurred among different families living in the same house, or among successive occupants of the same house.
- '7. That in a few cases the disease has appeared in different houses in the same locality about the same time.'

Passing Storms

One night Old Sam Pepys woke up amidst the rush and clatter of a great wind. And he said to his wife: 'I pray God I hear not the death of some great person, this wind is so high.' Pepys gave voice to a superstition that is by no means dead, although it is within precisely a month of 200 years since the famous diary-writer passed over to the majority. If there were anything in the aged superstition, the past few weeks would have coined a big percentage of the 'great persons' of Europe and Australia. For the wind has been blowing furiously on and off till it slit its bellows. It left Mr. Lipton's 'Shamrock III,' like poor Tom Bowling, a 'sheer hulk' off Weymouth; it wrecked and foundered vessels in Marseilles harbor; and a few weeks ago it played red havoc over the British Isles, but especially in Ireland, uprooted valuable park trees by thousands, felled the forests, ripped houses into flying smithereens, sent people flying out of jerry-built tenements to the safer shelter of the more solidly-built police stations, and repeated most of the destructive antics associated with that epoch in Irish history, 'the night of the big wind' of 1839. Some of its reputed exploits remind us of a newspaper description of a cyclone in North Dakota, which is said to have 'turned a well inside out, a cellar upside down, moved a township line, changed the day of the week, blown a mortgage off a farm, and knocked the wind out of a stumping politician.'

Hancock's "BISMARCK" LAGER BEER.

NEW ZEALAND'S
NEW INDUSTRY.