

THE NEW ZEALAND TABLET

THIRTY-FIRST YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

VOL. XXXI.—No. 27.

DUNEDIN: THURSDAY, JULY 2, 1903.

PRICE 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

'A Scientific 'Oss'

The most dogmatic of all beliefs is unbelief. Witness, for instance, the amusing and amazing positiveness of some writers in our daily papers who have lately been proclaiming as a 'scientific' and indubitable fact, that there can be and is a code of morality independent of religion and of all reference to the will of an over-ruling Creator. In our issue of June 11 we pointed out that without God there can be no morality; that without Him any code of ethics has neither foundation nor coping-stone, neither root nor sanction; that, having no dependence on any person or thing, it could rely solely on caprice; and that we might take or leave what we like, according to our passions. We showed, by abundant references to the raging dissensions among the half-dozen or more contradictory, absurd, anarchical, and mutually destructive theories of the new materialism that the writers referred to above are unacquainted with the literature of the subject on which they presume to dogmatise with such enthusiastic positiveness. They remind us of a story told some years ago by Canon McColl. 'A friend of mine,' said the Canon, 'once shared the box-seat with the driver of a stage-coach in Yorkshire. Being a lover of horses, he talked with the coachman about his team, admiring one horse in particular. "Ah," said the coachman, "but that 'oss ain't as good as 'e looks; 'e's a scientific 'oss." "A scientific horse!" exclaimed my friend; "what on earth do you mean by that?" "I means," replied Jehu, "a 'oss as thinks 'e knows a deal more nor 'e does." Conceit is the fume of little minds. Your true scientist is gifted with the inborn modesty which is about the best setting for either learning or virtue. According to Busch's gossip book, 'Bismarck und Seine Leute,' the Iron Chancellor gave frank expression to the practical results that would follow an attempt to set up a code of morality that should not have the will of God for its ultimate sanction: 'Take away,' said he, 'my connection with and relationship to God, and I should pack up to-morrow and return to sow oats at Varzin.' He meant, of course, wild oats.

Some 'Higher Critics'

The 'scientific 'oss' recalls to our mind by an easy association of ideas an incident in the life of the illustrious American, Benjamin Franklin. During, and for a short period after, the American War of Independence, he represented his country at the French Court. His fame as a scientist and philosopher had preceded him, and he was made welcome at the reunions of the learned world of Paris. Some of the 'higher critics' of the day pin-pricked him with ridicule for his defence of the

Bible, and he determined to find out how many of the scoffers were merely 'scientific 'osses.' One day he noticed one of the learned bodies that he had come across a beautiful story of ancient pastoral life, and that he would like the society's opinion of it. At the next gathering of critics, Franklin read to the expectant scholars a manuscript copy of the Book of Ruth. They were enraptured with it, and clamored that it should be printed. 'It is printed already,' Franklin replied, 'and is a part of the Bible.' On another occasion the great American statesman and philosopher exposed a different coterie of 'scientific 'osses.' He copied and read to an assembly of freethinking wits a curious and venerable 'ancient poem.' This gathering of 'higher critics' greeted the relic of literary antiquity with profuse admiration. Volleyed superlatives were sandwiched between eager inquiries as to its authorship and the place and mode of its discovery. And then the philosophic tormentor informed his conceited dupes that the 'ancient poem' was the third chapter of the prophecy of Habacuc—the beautiful prayer of the seer 'for ignorances.'

Edward Clodd, Grant Allen, and other voluble and dogmatic retailers of the kind of 'popular science' which is unscientific romance, are not alone not original investigators themselves, but they are unacquainted with the A B C of scientific methods. And in the same way a goodly percentage of the common or garden variety of 'higher critics' have, perhaps, scarcely a nodding acquaintance with the Book which they presume (at second or third hand) to tear to pieces. The true scientist is a builder-up. At each step he makes sure that his work is well and solidly laid. Your shallow critic, who traffics at second or third hand in other men's findings or fancies, has not the constructive faculty. He is a mere anarchist, a puller-down, and commonly fastens upon (as the pair of worthies mentioned above do) and exaggerates the most extreme forms of the shifting theories of the moment and proclaims them, not as theories, but as proven and dead-sure facts of science which it would be a Kishineff atrocity to question or deny.

White Savages at War

On reading the official report of General Miles on the conduct of American soldier-savages in the Philippines, one is tempted to ask, in the language of Truthful James:

'Is our civilisation a failure?
Or is the Caucasian played out?'

The orgies of savagery carried on systematically by 'Glenn's Brigade' and other military brutes are on a par with the Kishineff atrocities and the Bulgarian horrors that roused Great Britain to such magnificent indignation over five-and-twenty years ago. They con-

Hancock's "BISMARCK" LAGER BEER.

NEW ZEALAND'S
NEW INDUSTRY.