

# **THE NEW ZEALAND TABLET**

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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

### Strange Inconsistency

In his 'Jacques Bonhomme,' Max O'Rell (Paul Blouet) wrote as follows: 'Far from attempting to hide our faults, we, as a matter of fact, often make show of those we have not. The Frenchman is the braggart of vice. If you say to an Englishman: "I know you are a virtuous man," he will think you only give him his due. If you were to pay the same compliment to a Frenchman, he would resent it. Like the Anglomaniacs, represented in that charming American comedy by Mr. Bronson Howard, "The Henrietta," "each fellow," in France, "wants every other fellow to believe that he is a devil of a fellow, but he isn't." Profession and practice are almost as often Kilkenny cats as they are good yoke-fellows. Exaggeration of one's misdeeds was a common feature of the 'bloods' and would-be 'bloods' of the days of the second Charles and third George. In lodge-ridden France, history has been merely repeating itself. Nevertheless, those undue pretensions to vicious living are a strange freak of perverted vanity, for even hypocrisy is the unwilling tribute that vice pays to virtue. The Frenchman who 'has religion'—and, despite the evils of his time, his name is legion—does not wear it on his sleeve; and the country has not yet produced, and is not likely to produce, canting hypocrites of the type of Stiggins and Chadband, who have achieved what Taylor the water-poet calls

'The knowledge of the thriving art,  
A holy outside and a hollow heart.'

Beneath the no-creed professions of the careless Frenchman there often lies a sense of religion that comes to the surface under the stress of a colic on land or of a storm at sea. Even the open, shameless, and illegal penalising of the practice of the Catholic faith by State officials has not in every case availed to keep down the sense of religion in those who are responsible for the present Kulturkampf in France. President Loubet, for instance, had his infant son recently baptised. 'The conduct of M. Lalogue, an ex-deputy,' says a European exchange, 'affords another instance of this inconsistency. M. Lalogue is the gentleman who first brought into vogue "civil interments"—that is interments from which religious ceremonies are strictly excluded—and he even proposed that there should be a mimicry of the rite of baptism, champagne being used on each occasion instead of water. But, a child of his, aged eight months, died the

other day, and instead of making the funeral merely a civil function, he arranged for the intervention of the clergy. A priest accompanied the body to the cemetery and said the prayers prescribed by the Church at the grave. Again, M. Delmas, Ministerial Deputy for Correze, never neglects an opportunity for proving that he is animated by an anti-clerical spirit. His little daughter, however, lately made her first Communion very devoutly at the Catholic church in Auteuil. M. Delmas hopes, no doubt, that his radical committees will hear nothing of the ceremony. Some Frenchmen at least have no scruples on the subject of rigid adherence to principle.'

### The French Persecution

'Tyranny,' says Byron, 'is the worst of treasons.' The ruler who

'Neglects or violates his trust is more  
A brigand than the robber-chief.'

These descriptions are a skin-fit for the regime of tyranny and rampant illegality which Premier Combes has for some time been carrying on in lodge-ridden France. During the past few weeks the dwarf French politician who struts upon the stage in Bismarckian buskins, has made a halt in his campaign of persecution. He has been attacked in the Senate by—of all men under the sun—M Waldeck-Rousseau, the father of the Associations Bill. M. Waldeck-Rousseau's words fell upon Combes like the blows of the official flagellator. 'He pointed out,' says a report before us, 'that Combes has dispersed Congregations which were really authorised to remain, had refused, en bloc and without examination, applications for authorisation, had closed chapels and schools without reason, and driven the Sisters of Charity from their homes as though they were criminals, and generally had roused the utmost indignation, not merely among Catholics, but among all Frenchmen who are lovers of liberty.' The onslaught on Combes' illegal and 'cruel wantonness of power' created a profound impression at the time. It gave him pause for the moment. His own Commission, appointed to consider the secularisation of a great number of the female teaching Orders, had just given him a quiet check. Some of his followers have been getting limp and wobbly in their support of his war against religion, and the further campaign against the Orders has been postponed till after the recess. For a few weeks the bloodhounds will be off the track of monk and nun. And then the hunt and the view-hallo will probably go on once more.

### French Protestants

In his 'French and English' (p. 155) Hamerton, a Protestant writer, says: 'The French Protestants form



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