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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

Reaping the Whirlwind

It seems that there is some weeping and gnashing of teeth in Victoria over the decadence of good morals in that State. So much, at least, we gather from a cable message which appeared in the New Zealand secular papers a few days ago. It runs as follows:—

'The State Governor (Sir G. Clarke), speaking at the diocesan festival, declared that there was too much gambling and drinking in Victoria, and also other evils, which seemed to indicate that elementary perceptions of right and wrong had been lost.'

Just so. Victoria sowed the wind in 1872. She is now reaping the whirlwind. She was the first of the Australasian colonies where effect was given to the fad of hard secularism which has seized the legislative mind under the Southern Cross and has not yet quite run its evil course. The secular—or, rather, Secularist and Godless system, took effect in Victoria in 1872. Queensland and New Zealand followed in 1876, South Australia (with an inoperative saving clause) two years later, New South Wales in 1879, and Western Australia a few years ago. In practically every case the godless system was aimed chiefly at the Catholic Church. Its framers fancied they held in their hands a weapon that would turn the Church of Rome inside out. Mr. Stephens, the Victorian Attorney-General, was brutally frank in his utterances on the subject. The chief object of the secular system of public instruction was (he said) to 'purge the colony of clericalism' and to lead the young generation by sure and gradual steps to 'worship in common at the shrine of one neutral-tinted deity, sanctioned by the State Department.' Sir Henry Parkes was more dramatic and his cry a more frankly no-Popery one. Holding aloft his draft Bill on Public Instruction at a public meeting, he declared: 'I hold in my hand what will be death to the calling of the priesthood of the Church of Rome.' The result of the passing of the Secular Instruction Bills was the closing of practically every Protestant primary school in Australasia. Since that time practically every Protestant child has been dragged up in schools from which the Almighty was excluded as if He were an undesirable immigrant or the bubonic plague. This paganising of our schools has wrought red ruin to Protestantism throughout Australasia, and on every side we hear from pulpit, and from

platforms of assemblies, conferences, and synods, helpless and hopeless plaints of empty churches, growing materialism, increased juvenile crime, and a general state of lowered moral tone. But, thanks to the zeal and energy of our bishops and clergy and the enthusiasm of our laity, the number and efficiency of our Catholic schools have been steadily on the increase, and the great secularist weapon that was to have dealt a death-blow to the Church in these lands has broken like a rotten stick in the hands of her enemies.

'Moral Karakter' not Required

John Billings once wrote to his friend Elias a good deal of varied and curious information regarding the conditions of military service during the great American Civil War. In one part of his 'friendly letter' he said: 'Moral Karakter aint required, the government furnishes that and rashuns.' The American Government seems to have been acting upon this principle in the matter of appointments to the public service in its new eastern possessions. The Philippine Islands correspondent of the Boston 'Transcript' recently instanced the case of a degraded ex-parson 'who recently swindled hundreds of people out of their savings by pretending to get gold out of salt water.' This estimable worthy is now 'teaching English and morals to the "niggers" of Ilocos Norte.' But it appears that the enterprising ex-parson is only a fair average sample of the rascaldom that (as we have shown from time to time) is charged with the administration of those hapless islands. 'We have,' says the same correspondent, 'one of the biggest assortments of scoundrels right here in these islands that is gathered on the face of the earth.' 'And,' says the New York 'Freeman,' 'they are all Americans, out there, we suppose, to take the place of the friars in making good Americans of the Filipinos.'

'Pope of the Gondoliers'

Venice feels widowed for the loss of its great-hearted patriarch. There is grief in the queen city of the Adriatic because the gentle 'Pope of the gondoliers' is now the Prisoner of the Vatican and his kindly face shall never be seen again upon the pale green waters of its canals. The heart of Pius X., too, is in his beloved Venice and with the poverty-stricken poor who hunger for bread in its rickety tenements and under the eaves of its moss-grown and half-deserted palaces. At the Conclave (says an Italian writer in the 'Contemporary' for September) he 'yielded slowly, painfully, conscientiously, to the repeated entreaties of (Cardinals) Agliardi, Satolli,



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