

WANTED a Middle-aged Woman (Catholic), as House-keeper for a Working Man.—Address at *Tablet* Office.

IN MEMORIAM

FITZSIMONS.—In sad and loving Memory of Terence Fitzsimons, who departed this life at Wairio, on May 31, 1900.—R.I.P.

Rest, my husband, Terence, dear,  
Kind thoughts for you I keep;  
Although eleven years have passed away,  
My grief is just as deep.

The flowers we place upon his grave  
Will wither and decay,  
But the love for him who lies beneath  
Will never fade away.

Inserted by his loving wife and family.

CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART  
ISLAND BAY, WELLINGTON.

A Retreat for Ladies will be preached by a Redemptorist Father in July, 1911, beginning Monday evening, July 3, and ending Friday morning, July 7.

Ladies who wish to attend it may reside at the Convent during that time. No special invitation is required.

Particulars may be obtained by applying to the Mother Superior.

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.



THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 1911.

YOUTHFUL IMMORALITY



HE Society for the Protection of Women and Children is an institution which is certainly entitled to the gratitude of the community for the praiseworthy work which it is doing in a direction in which—as is now evident—so very much requires to be done. The criticisms to which some of the proposals just put forward by the Society have been and will be subjected, may be safely assumed to be made, in all cases, in a spirit of entire sympathy

with the general aims of the Society, and with the fullest recognition of the value of the services rendered by this disinterested and hard-working organisation. The tenth annual meeting of the Society was held in the Dunedin Town Hall on Thursday last, and the Committee had a distinctly gloomy and disquieting story to tell. The condition of things prevailing amongst a large section of the youth of the community—as disclosed in the annual report of the Society and hinted at in the remarks of the various speakers—may be described, without exaggeration, as one of rampant immorality. Mr. Duncan Wright (City Missioner) spoke of the revelations made in the Society's report as filling him with 'deep shame and humiliation.' Mr. H. D. Bedford said 'there is an alarming amount of immorality among our young people.' His Worship the Mayor (Mr. Burnett) said that the matter contained in the report 'had filled him with horror, dismay, and shame. He had little conception that such a state of things was surrounding us. If the cases mentioned in the report were fair indications of what was going on then these young people, who should be the most prosperous and healthy and

happy in the world, were in a very sad state.' And the president of the Society (the Rev. Canon Curzon-Siggers) made it perfectly clear that 'the low moral standard' which had been commented on as obtaining among the young people of the city was by no means confined to Dunedin. 'What was true,' he said, 'of Dunedin was true of the other centres, and it was unfortunately sadly true that Dunedin was no worse than other places.'

The remedies suggested by the president of the Society for this very grave condition of affairs—and endorsed, more or less, by subsequent speakers—were (1) the introduction of a curfew law into New Zealand, and (2) the compulsory sterilisation of 'degenerates.' With regard to the first, it is well known that the Curfew Act has been found to operate very successfully over wide areas in America; and, within its limits, such a measure would be a real benefit. If parents are indifferent to the welfare of their children, and will not keep them off the streets at night, some such means as the Curfew Bell must be adopted if the morals of our future men and women are to be safeguarded. A Curfew Act would 'contrive a double debt to pay': it would at the same time make for a closer home-life and save children from the contaminations of the recreation reserves and the street corners. The present call for a Curfew is the revival of a cry which has been raised more than once in recent years in the large cities of Australia; and which at one time got the length, in our own country, of the presentation of a formal petition to the late Mr. Seddon, praying for the introduction of such a measure. If the Society for the Protection of Women and Children were to push the proposal now, in a practical way, they would, we are satisfied, find that they had an overwhelming weight of public opinion behind them. On the whole, we are glad to think that the same can by no means be said regarding their second remedial proposal. The question of sterilisation is not at present within the range of practicality; and it is unnecessary, therefore, to discuss the suggestion in any detail. It will be sufficient to say, broadly, that the proposal is in distinct conflict with moral principles. Even if it were not so; and if the power proposed to be exercised were legitimate—which it is not—they would require to be both saints and sages who could safely be entrusted with such a power. Our New Zealand 'eugenists'—estimable as they are in many ways—can hardly be regarded as having qualified for this double category.

The true and lasting remedy for the condition of things under which the youth of the community are drifting to perdition, will, we venture to think, be found to run along educational lines. So far as the children are concerned, let the refining and restraining influences of religion be brought directly into play. In our State schools—as far as the system is concerned—the door is shut and bolted fast upon the Almighty. The child is taught to spend an active portion of the most impressionable period of his life independent, so to speak, of God—without instruction regarding the eternal truths, without prayer to God, without hope in Him, without love of Him, without fear of Him, without, in a word, reference to the Author of Life, or the Giver of all Good, or to any of the only restraints or moral sanctions which can effectually curb the spread of degrading vice among the rising generation. Children brought up with no better influences than such as are supplied by the State school system are in danger, while endowed with a smattering of elementary knowledge, of growing up devoid of any sense of that personal responsibility to an all-seeing Creator that furnishes the only possible foundation for a moral code. There are undoubtedly many schools where good influences are at work. But let it be borne in mind that this is not due to the system. It is owing to the fact that there are teachers who are better than the system, or that a few hard-wrought clergy try, with a modicum of success, to erect at least a feeble barrier between the system and its full and natural and calculable results. Our legislators have sown the wind. The crop is beginning to show. Should the system last so long, the third generation will reap the whirlwind. We are only in the springtime yet. It is only a question of waiting for the harvest. And it does not grow ripe in a day.

With regard to immorality amongst the grown-up portion of the community, the aim of those who are working for its removal should be the creation of a public opinion sufficiently strong to act as a deterrent; and this must necessarily be effected mainly by direct church influences. The atmosphere should be such that the man or woman who does not live a pure and clean life would be made to clearly understand that the doors of respectable homes would be closed to them. That such an atmosphere, and such a public opinion, are possible, Ireland is the standing witness. In Catholic Ireland, offenders against the moral code are so shunned, looked down on, and ostracised, that,