

## FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

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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 Justitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.*

LEO XIII, P.M.

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., Pope.

## The New Zealand Tablet

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 1925.

## HOME LIFE.

THOSE who remember their Dickens will recall how "Mrs Jellyby" spent her days and nights in writing hundreds of letters to public bodies and wealthy individuals, requesting funds to educate the natives of Borrioboola-Gha, while her own children roamed the streets in rags and dirt, and her own home, by reason of her neglect of her duties as a wife and mother, was a dismal den of apathy and disorder. And the reader will remember also how "Mrs Pardiggle," a fierce, uncompromising social worker, contrived to devote her own life and those of her five infants to such projects as Civilising the Tockahoopo Indians, the Great National Smithers Testimonial, the Superannuated Widows, and the Infant Bonds of Joy; in addition to all of which this estimable lady occupied her spare time with the duties of School Lady, Visiting Lady, Reading Lady, Distributing Lady, Linen Box Committee Lady, and General Committee Lady. Unfortunately, "Mrs Jellyby" and "Mrs Pardiggle" are not confined to the pages of a novel. They walk abroad in real streets, neglect real homes and real children, and make real pests of themselves to society at large. Neither are their particular sins to be attributed solely to members of the fair sex, for the world contains a vast number of people of both sexes who, in order to dance in the dazzling glare of the spot light, throw themselves into public activities, and neglect the stringent obligations to their families which Heaven has thrust upon them. A public spirit is highly commendable when it does not interfere with home duties; but when our fervor for public projects bids us shirk our domestic duties it becomes for us a thing of evil cloaked in the mantle of sham benevolence.

The world is never at a loss for a weapon with which to attack the home, and it would indeed be difficult to find in the negative order a more insidious means of making parents neglectful of home than by mounting their vanity and love of display upon the pretence of promoting some public good. And it sometimes happens that these misguided people spend much time and substance in forming associations to mitigate the evils which were caused in the first place by their own neglect of the responsibilities they assumed when they commenced to found their families. Father Cashin, for many years chaplain at Sing Sing prison, recently told the plain truth to some of these well-meaning folk who had deceived themselves into the belief that aggressive public philanthropy could cover domestic neglect. He was invited by the wife of a prominent banker to meet some other people whose intention it was to lend a helping hand to convicts. "I had," he said, "what seemed to be . . . a brutal message for the woman. I had seen her hastily dismiss her children who had come into the room to talk with her. She had impatiently sent them to the moving pictures with a governess, saying that she had to discuss important matters with me. I told her that she should give her personal attention to those children and not disturb herself about other people's erring offspring. I made it plain that 70 or 80 per cent. of the criminals had come from unsympathetic homes, and that there was no greater preventative for wrongdoing than a great desire on the part of parents to understand their children, to pay attention to them, and become their confidants. Social work, like charity, should begin at home, I told her. Her husband vigorously applauded my sentiments, and told me later that she had been so shocked and unnerved by what I said in the presence of her pleasant callers that she had taken to bed for three weeks, but he said he didn't mind, and the way he shook my hand convinced me that he felt I had rendered his family a service. Whenever I speak to people about my work at Sing Sing I stress the need for more amicable relationship in the home. It is not surprising that children, after they get old enough to select their own friends, do little more than eat and sleep at home. If they get in some minor scrapes they know they can not get sympathy at home. They go where they will get a comforting pat on the back and where they will not be nagged by the hour. It is, perhaps, a far cry from answering the endless questions of a child to the clanging of the big gates of Sing Sing. And yet I have seen how closely the two are related. Only seldom do we get boys from homes where there was understanding. I do not refer to wealthy homes. Even the poorest parent can give what the richer one often neglects to provide—the whole-hearted effort to make the boy feel that his parents are his best friends. . . ."

Father Vincent McNab, O.P., in a pungent article in the *Catholic Times*, tells how he saw wealthy women consigning their babies

to the arms of a nurse while they themselves fondled a pug dog. First of all, he says, we ought to be thankful that the child was not where the dog was—on his mother's icy bosom. A nurse's embrace was not the best thing for poor, forlorn little Dives; but it was infinitely better than the dog shelter. There are some who affect to believe that the pressing family evils of the day can be removed by such external remedies as better housing and better economic conditions for the masses of the people; but as the want of these things is in large measure due to lack of religion in the industrial and commercial worlds, they are not so much the causes of evil as the effects of evil. In any case they do not apply to the people we are discussing at the moment, as the latter are usually in easy circumstances; and the fact that affluence has not induced them to recognise their duties as parents makes us rather sceptical of the idea that morals will grow from loaves and fishes supplied in sufficient abundance or from brick and mortar tastefully arranged. What is needed is a better understanding of the serious nature of the responsibilities resting on parents. As Bishop Gordon says, great vigilance, wonderful patience, unflagging industry on the part of parents is required if the children are to grow up in virtue. To be a father or a mother is no easy task. The one charge, the one duty they have to look to, is the welfare of their child. This obligation overshadows every other. Even their own salvation depends in a very great measure on their laboring for the salvation of their children.

## PIUS XI AND LATIN LITERATURE.

Nowadays the patrons of classical studies are in many countries looked upon as impractical and as idealists. They are reminded by people with strong commercial instincts that the attention of youth should be directed to physical science in the hope of discovering cheaper methods of producing marketable articles. It is asserted that the ancient classics should, therefore, be banished from universities and high schools.

The lovers of Latin studies will derive much comfort from the action of his Holiness in establishing a special school of Latinity in the Eternal City. In the document just issued by Pius XI, he alludes to the cultured writings of the poets and orators of ancient Rome, as well as to the mastery of Latin acquired by many of the Fathers of the Church. The great orators of modern times, Bossuet and Segneri, are referred to as attributing their success to their deep study of Cicero's eloquent speeches. The Popes have never ceased to promote the study of the Latin tongue, the Holy Father instancing the notable example of Leo XIII, who was himself a most cultured writer of Latin and was an ardent promoter of lucid, ornate writing amongst the secular and regular clergy. Pius has already in two epistles urged the priests of the world to cultivate the study of Latin writing.

In his recent *motu proprio*, his Holiness states the practical steps he has taken. First, a special school for the higher study of Latin

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