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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.

The New Zealand Tablet

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1925.

PATCHING THE PEACE CONFERENCE

HALF a dozen years ago the Great War ended, and the people who had been told that it was a war to end all wars began to breathe freely. In due time, those who told us that they were going to make the world safe for democracy gathered at Versailles to fulfil their pledges to the dead for whose deaths they were responsible, and to the living who still trusted them to some extent. These war-makers and peace-makers began by disqualifying God and by obliterating the Ten Commandments. They then proceeded to break their pledges to their enemies and to scrap the Fourteen Points which had been the basis of the Armistice. These things done, a game of grab commenced; and avarice and hatred dominated their councils so successfully that no sooner was the Versailles Conference over than it was plainly seen that it but sowed the seeds of ill-will and enmity all across disturbed Europe.

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Retribution came swiftly. The visitors who at Versailles had taken as their motto the old pagan phrase, *Vae Victis!*—"Woe to the Conquered"—found that they had built for their own confusion, and that their deliberations had produced nothing more stable or real than were the iris hues of the rainbows in the great fountains which played in the park outside the room wherein they were seated. Self-interest dictated that it must all be done over again. This time, they who had dictated to Germany, and enforced their terms by starving the women and children, were glad to borrow a suggestion from a German. The Catholic leader, Dr. Marx, proposed that all should meet as friends anxious to form an alliance of peace. Having found that it did not pay when they met as victors and vanquished, the late Allies agreed that it might be well to try what a conference on equal terms, in a friendly spirit, might accomplish. The Pope had warned them long ago that this was the only hope; but they did not want to hear any suggestions from the Vicar of Christ, so they scorned him as

they tore to pieces Wilson's Fourteen Points, which were an echo of the Pope's proposals for securing a lasting peace. After six years of failure and of bitter disillusionment, they met once more to endeavor to patch the former effort at peace-making. At Locarno, a beautiful little town on the shore of Lago Maggiore, amid the peace of the giant hills, and beside the tranquil waters of that lovely lake, the representatives of the late belligerent nations sat for ten days in calm discussion of ways and means. The people all round were deeply interested, and the world waited for the result. At length, one evening, from the lofty crag behind the shrine of the Madonna del Sasso, electric lamps flashed forth to all the shores of the Lake the magic word *Pax*. A new alliance had been made. Germany, Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, Poland, and Czecho-Slovakia had come to an agreement, the text of which is widespread in the daily papers these days. Suffice to say that the new agreement was a pact of peace, not a war-alliance like so many pacts that had preceded it. The German frontier was settled. Aggressive action on the part of any one of the signatories was to arouse the others against the aggressor. Germany, France, and Belgium, in particular, were to be guaranteed against attacks from one another. There was no talk of imposing terms. They met as friends who were honestly seeking for a basis of permanent friendship. And they all hoped that they had done something which would at least prepare the way for the complete restoration of peace and stability in Europe. The next step came on December 1, when, in London, the plenipotentiaries assembled for the signing of the document, which has the official title of The Treaty of Guarantees. After mutual expressions of good-will had been exchanged, the historical Treaty was signed, as between the President of the German Reich, the King of the Belgians, the President of the French Republic, the King of England, and the King of Italy. Finally, the imposing text of the Treaty, bound magnificently and sewn with blue and red ribbons, was sealed, signed, and set apart for a while to be admired by privileged visitors who had secured admission to the Foreign Office during the ceremony.

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And now? The history of modern Europe is strewn with the rags and tatters of broken treaties. Behind all the high-sounding phrases of diplomacy there lies the conviction, founded on too stubborn facts, that modern States recognise no higher law than self-interest; and that right is not might except on paper or in the mouths of politicians. On the morning before the sessions began at Locarno, Monsignor Bacciarini came over from Lugano to celebrate Mass and to invoke a blessing from God on the work of the delegates. There was, thus, an external sign of religion in connection with the proceedings; and it may be that this Italian prelate's supplication will bring blessings on the undertaking. When the plotters sat at Versailles we pointed out that their boycotting of Almighty God could not but have evil results: *Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders shall work in vain!*

Now, when the Locarno Treaty is acclaimed so jubilantly by the press, we ask ourselves what lasting peace can there be in a world where the seeds of war are still sown in the schools which banish God and religion from the hearts of the children; where self-interest dominates the home and the mart and the council; where the sanctions of religion, which alone are powerful enough to teach self-control and self-denial, are removed by the Governments. Treaties are "scraps of paper." What we want is that the rulers of every country should recognise, as did Washington, and as Mussolini does, that until the principles of Christianity are the motives of individual and social action, until Christ, the Prince of Peace, rules in the hearts of his children, the best peace that treaties can achieve will be but smothered war.

THE ULSTER BOUNDARY

The cables announced on last Saturday that an agreement had been reached in connection with the Boundary. The terms are: (1) The Boundary Commission is dropped; (2) Ireland is relieved of her share of the Public Debt, to which Article V of the Treaty bound her, but Britain's liabilities for malicious damage done since January 1919 are assumed. That all parties to the bargain seem pleased may be a good omen. What we regard as a better one is that the *Morning Post* and the *Northern Whig*, both always sincere in their hate of Catholic Ireland, join in a howl of rage and protest that the Sinn Féiners have won another victory. It is, we believe, the best thing that could happen that the Commission has gone out of existence, leaving the settlement of the problem to Irishmen. There ought never have been a problem, and there never would have been had not the old Parliamentary Party sold the pass and accepted the partition of Ireland by a foreign power. But the partition is there, and it is backed up by English funds which support the Orange army. As for the financial side of the settlement, while Ireland was liable to pay a share of the Public Debt, England was bound to allow her the amount extorted from her by admitted over-taxation after the Union. As this amount was in the neighborhood of £300,000,000, the release from the burden of the Public Debt is not the godsend it looks at first sight. Probably the Dail will ratify the agreement by a large majority, the Labor opposition notwithstanding. One may venture to hope that the friendly spirit of the conference may be a presage of an amicable settlement between North and South. We have no doubt that the Six Counties would quickly come in if English politicians ceased using the Orangemen as their tools.

The *Morning Post* says: "The Boundary question has been settled in the only possible way—i.e., by leaving it unsettled—but the British public would be appalled if it saw, arrayed in cold figures, the price it has been paying and is still paying for the questionable privilege of claiming a hitherto unfriendly neighbor as a dominion when the substance or even the pretence of allegiance had ceased to exist."