

FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

Leader—Modern Lawlessness, p. 25. Notes—Sermons that Bore; Benson's Historical Novels; Benson's Priests; John Bannister Tabb, p. 26. Topics—Our Danger; Sane Women; The Propagation of Catholic Principles; Faith and Freedom; False Progress, pp. 14-15. The American Commission on Conditions in Ireland, p. 7. Catholics in Palestine, p. 11. Catholic Congress at Cambridge, p. 11. Our Justification, p. 17. Capitalism: Its History, Doctrine, and its Evils, p. 18. The Course of Empire, p. 19. The Disarmament Conference, p. 37. Exposure of Anti-Irish Propaganda, p. 37.

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, OCTOBER 27, 1921.

MODERN LAWLESSNESS



MOST thinking people must have been struck by the prevailing lack of order and principle in current thought to-day. Reasoning from first principles has become a lost art, and one has but to scan the newspapers to be convinced of the confusion of mind and the disorder of ideas that are common in society. The apprehension of law is almost totally effaced and opportunism and expediency are the guiding motives of the classes as well as of the masses. It has long been a reproach of English schools of thought that Utilitarianism was their highest and noblest criterion, and it is apparent to-day that this taint has infected Anglo-Saxons as a whole. Anglo-Saxon ethics are purely and frankly Utilitarian; Anglo-Saxon politics are directed by sheer selfishness; even Anglican bishops are not free from the stain, as might be seen in the recent debate on a Bill for making Divorce easier. The ideal of law as a function of reason is gone, and the result is that debasement of the British Empire which enables it to endure the scorn of all who hate hypocrisy and lying and perfidy.

In politics particularly the plague is rife. The late Lord Salisbury once said that in English politics nobody acts on principles or reasons by them. What M. Leroy once said concerning French politicians is even truer about our own: "Contemporary politicians of all classes, from municipal councillors to Ministers, taken on the whole, and with few exceptions, are the vilest and the narrowest of sycophants and courtiers that humanity has ever known; their sole end basely to flatter and develop all popular prejudices, which for the rest they but vaguely share, never having consecrated one minute of their lives to reflection and observation." Principles, and tenets do not matter; the only thing that does matter to politicians is office and how to retain it. People have now forgotten that politics used formerly to be a branch of ethics, and that moral right and moral wrong, and not mere expediency, are the objects of the whole science of ethics; and if the

public have become so ignorant we think the politicians have become even more so, for as far as their actions are concerned they afford no evidence that most of them understand that there are any such things as Right and Wrong at all. Yet, it ought to be elementary in politics that the welfare of the State is based on deep underlying moral principles; and it is a clear sign of the universal decadence and ignorance of the Empire that our politicians are persons who fail to grasp the truth that the natural rights and duties of men are the necessary postulates of politics as far as it is a science. There is a system of rights and obligations founded on the natural law; and as the natural law is fixed and fundamental there is consequently an absolute order of right transcending and harmonising all private rights. There is an ultimate foundation for all human justice, conformity with which is the true criterion of conduct. That criterion is the moral and rational validity of positive law. It binds the conscience of the individual and also the conscience of the State, for says Green acutely: "The value of the institutions of civil life lies in their operation as giving reality to the capacities of will and reason," the possession of which, "is the condition of a moral life." The old Romans said that justice is the foundation of the State—*justitia fundamentum regni*;—and it is only when that rock is destroyed and men begin to build on other foundations, such as selfishness and greed, that politics become rotten and States totter towards ruin.

So far as we have gone, an educated, thinking pagan might go, guided only by the light of human reason. But we are not pagans, and at any rate those among us who have the benefit of the centuries of Christian teaching for their guide. Our knowledge of justice is widened and illuminated in the light of the Gospels and we know that for Right and Wrong we have an eternal sanction of which pagans did not dream, except in a few instances. We know that the natural law has its ultimate sanction from the Creator and we believe that the Creator will also be our Judge. To a pagan philosopher it was a shameful and degrading thing to put self-interest or any other interest before justice; but to us it means worse; for it is trafficking with eternal interests for the sake of those that pass like shadows. And if the ancient thinkers who went groping and halting towards the truth, would in the naked light of reason arise and condemn our lawless politicians of to-day, what shall we say of the condemnation they deserve in the light of Christianity? Magistrates from the Bench warn us that the godless schools are eating the Dominion up with corruption; our politicians reply that because a large number of noisy people want godless schools they shall have them, even if the Dominion does go to hell for it. Placemen, backed by a servile press, protect miscreants who have battered on the blood of the poor. Deceivers of the people in high places persuade men to die for a lie. An English Chancellor, not long ago notorious for his attacks on the Commonwealth, now openly declares that the law of England is more up-to-date than the law of God. This is what we have come to; to this our politicians have brought us. And talk about reformation and reconstruction is idle and futile as long as the people allow themselves to be bought and sold by men who are lawless men in that they are without principle.

Sacred Heart Girls' College, Christchurch

The following pupils of the Sacred Heart Girls' College, Ferry Road, Christchurch, were successful in passing Pitman's shorthand examinations held recently at the above centre:—Pitman's shorthand theoretical examination: Kathleen Mahoney (1st), Ena Gillespie, (2nd), Eileen Gartly (3rd), Doris Blyth, Rita Corbett, Violet Cotter, Nina Field, Kathleen Leahy, Sara McCartin, Madge O'Malley, Rima Pope, Olive Price, Melba Tulloch. Pitman's shorthand elementary examination: Margaret Fahey, Ena Jackson, Grace Smith.

Taylor & Son,

Catholic Undertakers and Monumental Sculptors
Telephone Address: 'TAYSON'

CEMETARY TRAM STOP
KARORI, WELLINGTON