

FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

Leader—Lost Ideals, p. 29. Notes—American Wit; The Ten Best Books; Lending Books; Table Manners, p. 30. Topics—Faithful Servants; Potter Punctured; The Sinking of the "Lusitania"; Ireland; Taxation on Betting, pp. 18-19. Complete Story, p. 11. How Prejudice Sticks at Nothing, p. 15; Beatification of Sister Teresa, p. 17; Pope Leo's Encyclical: Lecture by Rev. Brother Fergus, p. 21; Mussolini and the Catholic Popular Party, p. 35.

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.

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, JULY 12, 1923.

LOST IDEALS



HOMO HOMINI LUPUS. Life has become a game of grab. Success, respectability, worth have come to mean the possession of money, however acquired. The beast of prey in man is loose. Honesty is little more than a name. The average young man is loose in his talk and loose generally, and he has no conception that he ought to feel degraded. The young girl whose heart is

a sanctuary, whose soul is pure, whose words and actions are modesty itself is a *rara avis* among the "flappers" of various ages whose sole gospel is, "Have a good time." We know something of the manner in which our own boys and girls are stained by the plague, but we have had it from magistrates whose duty brings them daily into contact with the awful reality that the loss of virtue means less to many girls nowadays than the loss of a railway ticket. And if we turn from individuals to families we find an analogical state of affairs existing. The sordid and shameful details of the divorce courts prove that only too abundantly. And in keeping with the decadence of individual and family life goes as a matter of course the corruption of public life, which is all the worse inasmuch as it precludes all hope of saving legislation and true reform.

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We have lost our ideals. Nothing proves this more clearly than the undeniable fact that chastity has become a matter of indifference to many a girl of to-day. It may be that girls are as men make them, but the real evil of the case is seen when we look ahead to the time when a generation of corrupted females will be the mothers of to-morrow. The children that will yet be theirs would rather never be born than own such mothers, and it were probably better for humanity that they never should be born. Thus, while fool-politicians and quacks talk nonsense about Eugenics they never even dream of introducing their theories into the sphere of morality where they really matter, for certainly a delicate mother or even a weak-minded mother is preferable as a parent to an immoral, debauched mother. And it is because people like Hanans and Parrs have been allowed to drive God from the souls of the youth of New Zealand that the grand Christian ideal of womanhood no longer has any reverence here except among a minority. In fact, woman is becoming here what she was in pagan times, a plaything or a slave of man and an object of contempt

among her children. It was Christianity that set woman on her throne in the home, giving her the crown of virtue and the sceptre of pure love. The Sacrament of Matrimony was her royal charter and its indissolubility was her safeguard. The Church put before her the model of Mary, the Mother of God, and told her to win respect and affection and loyalty by imitating Mary's virtues. All the chivalry of the Middle Ages, all the poetry of the Troubadours, all the romance of true knighthood was based on the virtue and worth of the girl who ennobled herself in the eyes of men by lifting herself close to Mary. And all the sordidness and all the filth of modern life is due to the fact that Governments have robbed life of its Christian ideals and lowered womanhood again to the degraded pagan level from which religion had raised her. Again, take the child which in every healthy state is the natural complement to the wife. Pagan vices have been brought back by schools which banished God, and women have been taught that childbearing is not their duty. The modern gospel of selfishness has eaten its way even into the conception of motherhood. Politicians regard the child as a chattel of the State, as a slave, as a subject for amateurish experiments. They would tear the child from its mother's arms; they would drag it apart from Christ who calls it to Him; they treat the children like young animals in a pen, and almost compel the parents to send them to schools which are designed to make them animals. The little children, whom we must resemble if we would enter Heaven, the children whose wee bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, are regarded by the parents as a nuisance and by the State as something to be drilled and scrubbed and licked into shape until fit to be forced to go away to be shot in some war which is no concern of the victim's. All this is a consequence of the fact that we have allowed "men below the average in manners and education" to tell us that religion must have no place in the schools and to make State-idolatry a substitute for the worship of God. We have lost our ideals. If we had kept them, think you we would be content to be ruled by a number of men without manners or education, often elected because of their pledges to bigots.

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It is the same story wherever we look. Our daily papers had no scruple in exciting hatred by telling lies. No sane man would trust the word of most of our politicians. We are constantly hearing stories that prove clearly that justice is disappearing from commercial life. Promotion depends on wire-pulling and on secret influence more than on merit. In the streets and in the trains one is constantly reminded by what one cannot help hearing that pagan lewdness and ribaldry are the fine flowers of the minds of the young people. One doubts if Sodom and Gomorrah could have reached a lower depth of infamy than this British Dominion of New Zealand has sunk to. It is sad to contemplate, but it is only what one must expect from the existing state of affairs in the country. If we are satisfied to have pagans govern us, if we are satisfied to have ill-mannered and uneducated men impose godless schools on us we must pay the penalty. If we want to reform there is only one way. It was Christianity that lifted the world out of the mire of pagan vices and gave it its ideals. We have got into the mire and lost our ideals, and Christianity alone can lift us up and restore what we have lost. If only all the people who realise this got together and made up their minds to work for a reformation, to spend their money and give their time for the cause, the reform would come quickly. But, alas, of most New Zealanders it was written:

They revelled beneath the stars,
They slept beneath the sun,
They lived a life of going-to-do,
And died with nothing done.

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Holy Communion without works of charity is like a sacrifice without thanksgiving.—Abbe Gerbet.