

# THE NEW ZEALAND TABLET

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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 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.

## Current Topics

### Anti-Shouting

There are two kinds of invitations that seem to be looked upon as commands that must be obeyed. The first is an invitation to dine at the royal table. The other is an invitation to 'have a taste' or 'take a nip' or 'name yer pizen' at the bar of a public-house. Schiller says of obedience that it is a master-key which opens every door. But the door which is most frequently opened by obedience to this tyrant drinking custom is the one over whose lintel are inscribed those words of wild despair: 'All hope abandon ye who enter here.' And yet this wretched treating or (in colonial) 'shouting' habit has grown with the strangling grasp of parasitic ivy around our social life. Some years ago—so the story runneth—a French visitor, who was in a state of baptismal innocence as to colonial drinking customs, asked a New Zealand squatter: 'What moost I say eef a man ask me to dreenk?' 'Oh,' said the squatter, 'just you say, "All right," or "Don't care 'f I do"—and just sail in.' 'But eef I no want to dreenk, what moost I say?' The squatter cudgelled his brains for a few moments. Then he replied: 'Well, Frenchy, you've fairly flooted me this time. Never knew a man to refuse.'

And yet it is necessary for every man, and especially for every young man, to know when to say 'No,' and to stick to his 'No,' when the wine sparkleth in the glass. One who is a John Littlejohn among our Suspendiary Magistrates well described the custom of treating as 'a foolish, stupid habit, and one of the curses of the country.' And he expressed regret that some legislation could not be devised to stamp it out of the country. For this reason we welcome (as we have likewise often urged) the appearance of a League having for its object to form a healthy revolt in public opinion against the pernicious habit of treating. The new League is being formed in Wellington. A circular issued in connection with it has the following remarks in connection with 'shouting':—

'The practice has so grown upon the community that it is a matter of every-day observation to see a man go into a hotel or club to get one drink, which he feels he wants or would like, but he meets incidentally three or four other men he knows, and custom dictates that one shall probably "shout" for all the others, each of whom in turn, not wishing to be outdone in courtesy or to appear mean, will make a similar offer, and the re-

sult frequently is that all these men have consumed enough to make them lazy and unfit for much work for the rest of the day, and have spent three or four times as much money as there was any need for spending, as well as wasted their time. I am only instancing a moderate and not an extreme view, and the further evils of the system will appear to every intelligent man.'

The pledge runs as follows:—

'I agree to become a member of the New Zealand Anti-shouting League, and do hereby pledge my word in the interests of society that I will, within New Zealand, neither drink intoxicating liquor at the expense of another person, nor pay for such liquor for another unless I be at the time either the bona fide guest or host of that other person, and I further promise to use my best endeavor to induce at least three other persons to join the League.'

This treating habit seems to have the vitality of a microbe. At any rate it has lived long, and it will probably die hard. Ages ago the Catholic Church in the British Isles pitted her strength against the 'bid-ales'—a custom which is said to survive in some parts of Yorkshire to the present day. She left the custom in check, but she never succeeded in killing it 'fatally dead.' One curious canon of that olden time ran as follows: 'He who forces another to get drunk, out of hospitality, must do penance as a murderer of souls.' 'These canons,' says a recent writer, 'are sufficiently severe, when you consider that you had not to wait for the constable to catch you in your cups, but (as it was a matter of confession) your conscience had to be the constable.' But they serve to show that even in far-past ages the Church anticipated the movement which zealous and far-seeing persons are now organising against the grave evils of the 'treating' habit.

Anti-treating Leagues have a heavy contract before them. But we hope that they will bear in mind the good old philosophy of 'pegging away.' There was a time when duelling and the swilling of portentous doses of alcohol were so rooted in the marrow of 'high' society in the British Isles that they seemed to be 'proof and bulwark against sense.' But they were killed out at last by religion, right reason, and the dramatists' bombardment of destructive ridicule that smote like the fall of a lyddite shell. People are, in many respects, not at all squeamish in our day. But the coarse-grained whiskey-swiller who would prove himself a 'gentleman' after the fashion of the 'three-bottle man' of the Georgian period, would now be kicked out of decent society; and the well-dressed bully who would pump pellets of lead into the vitals of a neighbor at twelve paces, would get as short a shrift at the hands