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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

A Volcanic Letter

Some people—Mrs. Caudle, the curtain-lecturer, for instance—are apt to gauge a man's strength of mind by his wind-power alone. Such admirers of spavined logic will find a thing of beauty and a joy for ever in a tornado of a letter addressed to our local evening contemporary by a Prohibitionist clergyman who wields the shepherd's crook for a little flock of believers somewhere in or about Dunedin. The good man's heart is perhaps in the right place. But his tongue has yet to learn some of the graces of the Vere de Veres, and his pen the elemental amenities of the 'Polite Letter-writer.' In his 'Aphorisms,' Lavater has well said that vociferation and calmness of character seldom meet in the same person. And the violence, vociferation, and general intemperateness and rancor of tongue of many clerical advocates of Prohibition have greatly contributed to what the 'Outlook' calls the recent 'decided set-back to the growth of the No-license sentiment.' No cause can be permanently benefited by the methods of the brawler.

On all the issues of the Local Option polls, the electors of New Zealand were free to form and hold their own opinions. And we, for our part, should be the last to suggest that any class of voters exercised their electoral rights in regard to these issues otherwise than in accordance with their honest convictions. But such sane tolerance does not appeal to the shepherd of souls whose volcanic outbreak sears a column of the 'Evening Star.' Once, through sheer inadvertence, Henry Flood referred to his enemy Grattan as his 'honorable friend.' The words brought Grattan in hot indignation to his feet. 'Whom does the honorable gentleman call his friend?' he angrily demanded. 'Not me, surely? I'd spit on him in a desert.' This is about the sort of temper with which this pastor animarum regards the advocates of continuance—who, until adequate positive evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, must, as a class, be deemed to have voted as honestly and as much in accordance with their lights as their reverend critic did. And yet, in his mind, they seem to be regarded as outside the covenanted mercies of heaven. They are a 'motley crowd,' 'squalid ranks,' etc.—down to the last man and woman. One half of them are (we are given to understand) 'outcasts, dwellers of drink-made slums, public-house bummers, the

tag-rag-and-bobtail of society, the drink-sodden, bleary-eyed, and red-nosed debauched—men and women constantly verging on alcoholic-insanity,' and others of such damaged reputation that the remaining half of the 'continuators' would be 'ashamed of their company'! We are not called upon to express here and now our views regarding the question of continuance. That we reserve for another issue. But the quotations given above represent a really pretty derangement of epitaphs to apply to more than 90,000 of the electors of New Zealand. Does it not all sound perilously like a suggestion to disfranchise them, and limit the right of voting—as was once the case—to 'the elect'?

A couplet in quaint old French sets forth the duties of the knight of chivalry in the following words:—

'Ung chevalier, n'en doutez pas,
Dought ferir hault, et parler bas.'

His honorable profession of arms demanded that he should strike high (not beneath the belt), and not speak with noisy tongue. An analogous obligation falls upon the clergy. They ought to be the 'preux chevaliers' of our day, the grand exemplars of true Christian chivalry. If they enter the lists against an abuse, let them by all means slash and pierce it with facts that smite like edge of blade or point of lance. Only, let them be sure of their facts, and not descend into the arena with no better weapons than addled eggs or the tongue of a Billingsgate fish-wife. The intemperate assertiveness of this enthusiastic Prohibitionist advocate is suggestive of Douglas Jerrold's definition of dogmatism—'puppyism come to its full growth.'

The Doom of Ascendancy

Long years ago, John O'Hagan, who had been a friend of the poet Thomas Davis in Trinity College, warned the ascendancy party in Ireland that their long monopoly of the public loaves and fishes was drawing to a close. And he told them

'That doomed among mankind—
Marked with the fatal mark, are they
Who will not know their place or day,
But cling to phantoms pass'd away,
And sow the barren wind.'

The heaviest blow yet received by the party of power and pelf in Ireland has been the throwing open of many public positions in the country to competitive examination. The marked superiority of the training in Catholic colleges and schools, and their overwhelming successes against their more richly endowed Protestant rivals in