

THE NEW ZEALAND TABLET

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

VOL. XXXIV.—No. 5

DUNEDIN: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1906.

PRICE 6D

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

Joseph's Coat

Joseph Chamberlain's political coat is one of many colors. His opinions are not fast-dye ones; neither are they all of one piece. About four years ago—in November, 1901—he consoled an admiring audience (they needed much consolation then) with this cheering hope: 'I might die to-morrow, and this great Empire of our fathers would still remain.' Which led the London 'Speaker' to make the following metrical remarks:—

'Josephus states to an admiring train
That if he died, the Empire would remain.
Yes, if you die, it will survive you, Joe;
But if you live? That's what we want to know.'

Joseph still lives. He is now a witness to the rout of his party and the fall of its trusted leaders. And he talks of 'disruption.' Even his hopes have changed their hue.

Good to be Here

Our new year enters off in cape and fur upon the scene. As these lines are being penned, we of the South wear crape for a sickly summer that seems to have died in the midway of its career. We bewail the exasperating coolness from which there is a ready retreat. But there are worse things in life. One of these is to be held—as our Australian neighbors are—in the grip of a heat-wave and toasted with temperatures that are high enough for a convention of salamanders. Our cousins over the way opened their new year with one of those glows of tropical heat that sometimes drop in unexpected and uninvited upon the Southern States of the Commonwealth

'In lang, lang days o' simmer,
When the clear and cloudless sky
Refuses ae wee drap o' rain
To Nature parched and dry.'

Then came a lucid spell. People revelled in fresh breezes that came from the far-off bergs in the south, and were 'suffering a recovery' from temperatures that had soared to 124 in the shade. And then, lo! another tidal wave of heat broke from its moorings in the tropics and once more submerged our neighbors in a glowing atmosphere fit only for a coolie. And this time in Victoria, as during the previous visitation in New South Wales, there have been keener sufferings (including loss of life) than those that arise from unpleasantly high temperatures. For vast areas have been de-

vastated by fires that recall the agony through which Victoria passed on the day known in its history as black Thursday. On that wild day almost the whole colony was ablaze. Ashes from the burning forests and fields fell thick on the decks of vessels sixty miles out to sea; the smoke impeded navigation; and many of the scared inhabitants fancied that the world's last day had come.

Through the thick blue haze the people look out over the smoking grasslands—waiting patiently the time when the welcome rain patters upon the hot earth, and

'The genial night, wi' balmy breath,
Gars verdure spring anew,
An' ilka blade o' grass
Keeps its ain drap o' dew.'

Meantime, newspaper philosophers are patching the sufferers' grief with proverbs. Meteorologists and weather-prophets (they are not necessarily the same thing) tell them, for their comfort, that those recurrent heat-waves are due to antarctic depressions; and that they usually advance in a rotary spiral, varying in width from a hundred to several hundred miles. It is fortunate that these sultry spells are not usually either frequent or of long duration. For the narratives of some of the exploring expeditions—such as, for instance, that of Sturt—give a terrible picture of the physical prostration, and worse, that a thorough-going heat-wave is capable of producing, especially in the uninhabited interior. The dryness of some of our legislators' dreary periods is the thing that kills. But the dryness of the Australian heat is its saving quality. And that, too, is what takes the sting out of the winter cold of Canada, 'the Lady of the Snow,' so that it shall not 'bite so nigh' as the low temperatures that are moist and clammy.

Capping and Rowdyism

Chesterfield had no patience with the men—and they are to be found a-plenty—who reserve their best manners for 'les jours de gala'—great occasions. University students in English-speaking countries reverse the principle: they reserve their worst possible manners for gala-days, and especially for capping ceremonies. Why this should be so we cannot say. It seems 'like-wise passing strange to us that the London 'Times' and some of its New Zealand echoes should have a benignant smile for students' horse-play under their own noses, so to speak, and throw a series of epileptic fits when they hear of a bit of a rumpus at a capping ceremony as far away as Dublin is.

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