

THE NEW ZEALAND TABLET

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

VOL. XXXIV.—No. 15

DUNEDIN: THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 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 Justitię 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

Enlarging the 'Tablet'

Within the next few weeks—when certain arrangements in our printing department are completed—the 'N.Z. Tablet' will be enlarged to forty pages. We shall take advantage of the increased space thus afforded us to introduce one or two fresh departments in our reading matter that have long been in our mind's eye.

Conceited Fledgelings

'Our Glorious System of National Education' does not seem to be as successful in eliminating ignorance as its admirers suppose. It has left quite enough of it to go around. And this mental rawness renders itself too often intolerable by its pride, its dead-sureness, the airs that it puts on, and the off-hand manner in which it disposes of high and deep questions that are quite beyond its ken. Mental ripeness is habitually humble. It is mental greenness that is conceited. And its smatterings and half-knowledge that 'educate' so many young people 'cph their feet,' as Billings phrases it. Says the 'Otago Daily Times' in a recent issue.—

'There are thinking men who, taking a wide survey of the world to-day and noting carefully the tendencies of the time, are inclined to question whether the almost universal educational facilities provided for the children of the twentieth century are going to prove an unmixed blessing in days to come. Such men argue that, since a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, in a superficial age a generation fed upon snippets and brevities is apt to assume omniscience: he who knows a little about everything and knows nothing well is not able to recognise his own ignorance. The real student, on the other hand, the longer he lives is more painfully aware of his limitations. Thus the tendency of the age is for every realm of thought and action to be rudely and rashly invaded by boastful know-littles, to the serious detriment of true culture and learning.'

A coterie of those 'boastful know-littles' have recently been airing their mental superficiality and conceited omniscience in the columns of our local morning contemporary. Their subject was Darwinism and evolution. They assumed, with offensive dogmatism, that these theories are the proven facts of science. Their speculations postulated spontaneous generation, which science rejects. They ignore the verdict of Hartmann, Zoeckler, Fleischmann, and other foremost scientists of our day that 'Darwinism has been

weighed and found wanting.' The devout Pasteur and Meunier and others point to the trend of the philosophy of science in recognising the source of all things in the great Cause that is 'exterior to the earth' and 'anterior to the world.' But our local farthing-candle illuminators turn God out of His universe. And they endow with His self-existence and knowledge and power the Almighty Atom—the first speck of primordial matter. They cannot do without a God—of some kind. They did not dare to knock their wooden heads against the Seven Enigmas of Du Bois-Reymond: (1) the nature of matter and force; (2) the origin of motion; (3) the origin of life; (4) the apparently designed order of nature; (5) the origin of sensation and consciousness; (6) the origin of rational thought and speech; and (7) free-will. Here are riddles which it is the duty of our theorists to explain—if they can. No solution of them has ever yet been given; and to the first, second, and fifth (the 'transcendentals') 'none,' says Gerard, 'will ever be found.' Let theories be honestly advanced as theories—for what they are worth as theories. But the chief of sublimary abominations is the empty-pated and cocksure fledgeling who tries to force his crude guesses down the public throat as a dogmatic definition (so to speak) of science.

The French Persecution

Tennyson said in his lines to the late Queen Victoria:—

'And statesmen at her council met
'Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet.'

The opposite course has been followed by the forty or more French Ministries that have followed each other in a rapid phantasmagoria of shifting instability since the Republic was proclaimed in 1870. Lack of ability, as well as astonishing instability, have been the outstanding features of the Administrations that, during this period, have guided the fortunes of France. Lecky says that the charge brought by Lamartine, Cremieux, and other revolutionaries of 1848 against the Government of Louis Philippe 'was much less that it was guilty of any positive fault, than that it failed to give France the brilliancy and the prominence in Europe which were her due. She appeared, they contended, like a dowdy, ill-dressed figure in the concert of nations. Yet,' added Lecky, 'who can doubt that at that period the amount of brilliant talent in French public life was incomparably greater than at present?' And he 'suspects' that 'the most impartial judges

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