

ROSSBOTHAM'S COMMERCIAL COLLEGE.

Established 1892.

Principal: T. J. Rossbotham, I.P.S. (honors)—the only teacher holding the I.P.S. teacher's certificate in Otago.
49 DOWLING STREET, DUNEDIN.

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We Teach: Shorthand, Typing, Book-keeping, Accountancy, Etc. Individual Tuition. Term commences at any time.

The most successful Commercial College in Dunedin, our pupils obtaining the highest positions as shorthand and typists in all the leading offices in Dunedin.

EDITOR'S NOTICES.

Send news **WHILE IT IS FRESH**. Stale reports will not be inserted.

Communications should reach this Office **BY TUESDAY MORNING**. Only the briefest paragraphs have a chance of insertion if received by Tuesday night's mails.

ADDRESS matter intended for publication 'Editor, TABLET, Dunedin,' and not by name to any member of the Staff.

ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS are thrown into the waste-paper basket.

Write legibly, **ESPECIALLY NAMES** of persons and places. Reports of **MARRIAGES** and **DEATHS** are not selected or compiled at this Office. To secure insertion they must be verified by our local agent or correspondent, or by the clergyman of the district, or by some subscriber whose handwriting is well known at this office. Such reports must in every case be accompanied by the customary death or marriage announcement, for which a charge of 2s. 6d. is made.

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.

THE NEW ZEALAND TABLET

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 1908.

'NOT YET UNDERSTOOD'



THE modern world has produced few more acute critics of men and things than Russell Lowell. He noticed in his day the tendency to debilitate journalism by making it to an undue extent a record of chit-chat, fantastic trifling, and mere gossip and 'nugæ canoræ'. 'We cover the continent', wrote he, 'with a cobweb of telegraphs to inform us of such inspiring facts as that a horse belonging to Mr. Smith ran away on Wednesday, seriously damaging a valuable carry-all; that a son of Mr. Brown swallowed a hickory nut on Thursday; and that a gravel bank caved in on Friday. This is the kind of news we compass the globe to catch press from Bungtown centre'. But beyond this exaggeration of trivialities, there is another feature of modern secular journalism to which we have more than once made regretful reference—the tendency to nose and snuffle about for titbits to tickle the jaded palate of readers, and the extent to which the daily press is in our time made a record of crime. Throughout the British Empire, it is true, the criminal is not placed 'in excelsis' to the same extent as is done by journals under the Stars and Stripes.

Still, even under the triple cross of St. George, St. Patrick, and St. Andrew, the criminal is enthroned (as the 'Daily Chronicle' put it some years ago) as the 'hero-in-chief' of the newspaper. The 'Chronicle' set out some twelve or fourteen years ago, under Mr. Maslingham, to dethrone him, and to depend less than its contemporaries for its circulation on the baser side of life—'scabrous divorce cases, vulgar scandal, and the great betting madness'. The effort was well meant. But it seems to have achieved but little. In the matter of enthroning the criminal, most daily papers are tarred with the same brush—although there is, of course, a difference in the number of coats. And the upshot of the matter is, that, for youth of both sexes, a steady course of daily paper is (as a great Englishman has said) 'a liberal education in depravity and crime'.

In these days of omnivorous reading, the Catholic newspaper is, humanly speaking, an indispensable branch of the Church's work. It furnishes the readiest means of instilling the antidote to the poison that may lurk in the secular organ, of expounding and defending Catholic truth and Catholic interests. In the course of an audience recently accorded to a Catholic journalist, the Holy Father said:—

'Ah, the press! Its importance is not yet understood. Neither the faithful nor the clergy make use of it as they should. Sometimes people will tell you that the press is an innovation, and that souls used to be saved without newspapers in other times. In other times! In other times! It is easily said, but do they not remember the poison of the bad press was not spread everywhere, and that, therefore, the antidote of the good press was not equally necessary. We are no longer in those other times—we are in the times of to-day, and to-day it is a fact that the Christian people is deceived, poisoned, destroyed by bad newspapers. In vain will you build churches, give missions, found schools. All your works, all your efforts, will be destroyed if you are not able to wield the defensive and offensive weapon of a loyal and sincere Catholic press.'

The persecution in France has left the Catholic leaders in that country with one remorseful memory—the memory of their neglect of the potent weapon which a bold, able, and aggressive Catholic newspaper might have been to them in their day of need. On a recent occasion this revised sense of the power and place of the Catholic paper in the work of the Church found expression in the following remarks by M. Bandon, President of the St. Vincent de Paul Society:—

'In my opinion, the great importance of the press is not sufficiently understood by the faithful. We are thinking about building churches, founding congregations, multiplying asylums for the orphans and the poor—all of them necessary. But we forget that besides all these needs there is one which by the force of things surpasses all the rest; that is, the diffusion of the Catholic press. If the Catholic newspaper is not sufficiently supported, encouraged, raised to the position it ought to occupy, the churches, if they be not burned, will be deserted, the congregations will be multiplied only to be driven out, and the charitable institutions and the schools themselves will be taken away from the religion that founded them. . . . If the Catholics put at the head of all their works that of the press, as is being done in Germany, if they devoted two or three millions of francs to it every year, it is safe to say that everything would change at once, and that the faith would spring up again in hundreds of thousands of intelligencies.'

Unless the clergy had the science of angels and the voice of the last trumpet, they could not overtake the harm that is done in homes by the exclusive perusal of secular news-sheets, and by the false conceptions regarding Catholic faith and practice that from time to time are printed—not necessarily with any intent to mislead—in their columns. The Catholic paper is the priest in the household. And we trust that the day is near at hand when it will be as intimately and as formally a part of the Church's many-sided activities as her churches, schools, and institutes of charity. Meantime,