

THE NEW ZEALAND TABLET

TWENTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

VOL. XXVIII.—No. 41.

DUNEDIN: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1900.

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

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

FROM time to time we have been under the unpleasant necessity of applying the cat-o'-nine-tails to the epidermis of the cable-ASSOCIATION demon. Scarcely a month passes but the varlet is guilty of some grave misrepresentation of Catholic incident or principle, and so dreadfully persistent has been the lying of this son of Ananias that the N.Z. TABLET has time and again pointed out the urgent need of forming an association of Catholic journalists, partly for the purpose of meeting and nailing his calumnies, but likewise with the wider and fuller scope of jointly arranging for receiving authoritative correspondence from the headquarters of Catholic Christianity, and from Dublin, London, and elsewhere, and of engaging under the most favorable conditions the services of the best available talent for special articles on subjects of vital interest to the Catholic body at large.

Some weeks ago—on the occasion of the gracious presentation made to him—the editor of this paper made the following remarks: 'In countries of mixed religions, such as these, the Catholic Church was, more than any other, made the target of all sorts of mis-representations and calumnies. This forced a special function upon the Catholic newspaper: to refute slander, to wipe away from the fair face of their Mother Church the mud which is flung upon it, frequently, no doubt, more from ignorance than from mere wantonness or conscious malice. A Catholic editor might be, like himself, by natural temperament and acquired habit, a man of peace, but higher interests at times demanded that he should become, so to speak, a mild type of the fighting editor—that he should represent in his person the Church militant, and, going down to battle, like another David, with the simple, well-rounded weapon of truth, brain the Goliath of calumny. Perseverance in such a course of action by a well-equipped Catholic Press would hasten the coming of that good time when attacks and misrepresentations of that kind would become rare, and when Catholics could afford to treat them with more indifference than in the present circumstances was prudent or even possible. From time to time they had the fact unpleasantly forced upon their notice—by cable messages and otherwise—that the main channels of intelligence were in the hands of associations that are hostile to the Catholic Church. Evil reports were flashed over the electric wires and were at the ends of the earth while truth—slow-footed but sure—was drawing on its boots and rubbing the sleep out of its eyes. At present the running of a calumny to earth was usually a slow process, sometimes a costly one. And so it would remain until they were wise enough to learn a lesson from their non-Catholic friends and form a league of Catholic journalism—or at least of English-speaking Catholic journalism—somewhat on the lines of the Protestant Press Association and the Protestant Press Agency, which were formed for the specific purpose of furnishing the newspaper Press with correspondence of Protestant interest. That was one way in which Catholics could more effectually than at present protect themselves against the recklessness of the cable-rigger, the back-wounding pen of the hostile Press

writer, and the indiscriminate scissors-and-paste of the thoughtless or malicious hack journalist.'

We trust that we are now at length on a fair way to the formation of such an association as that which was projected by the editor of this paper. The suggestion was favorably entertained by the Catholic newspapers of Australasia. Two meetings of the representatives of nine out of the ten Catholic weeklies of these colonies was held at St. Mary's, Sydney, during Congress week, and, as a result of their deliberations, the following circular has been issued to the whole Catholic Press of Australasia—

'At a meeting of the representatives of the Catholic newspapers of Australasia held at St. Mary's, Sydney, on Saturday, September 15, 1900, His Grace the Archbishop of Adelaide being in the chair—the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

'1. That a Catholic Press Association be formed for the purposes of (a) obtaining occasionally news from London on important Catholic matters, (b) circulating the same to all affiliated journals, (c) promoting the common interests of Catholic journalism in Australasia by such other means as may be hereafter determined.

'2. That agencies be formed in London and Adelaide for the purpose of giving effect to the above resolution.

'3. That the entrance fee to the Association be fixed at £—, and that the expenses of carrying out the before-mentioned objects be borne by the affiliated newspapers in equal proportions.

'4. That the Adelaide agency consist of the directors of the *Southern Cross*.

'5. That the Rev. H. W. Cleary, editor of the N. Z. TABLET, be empowered to make inquiries regarding the working, expenses, etc., of the Association, and to make provisional arrangements, and to submit the information thus obtained and the provisional arrangements thus made to the Catholic newspapers of Australasia.

'The Most Reverend Chairman announced, amidst applause, that at a meeting of the hierarchy held on the previous evening at St. Mary's the assembled prelates cordially endorsed a resolution passed at a preliminary meeting of the representatives of the Catholic newspapers of Australasia, requesting the aid of the hierarchy and clergy in extending the circulation of Catholic newspapers in every Catholic home.'

All this is a good beginning. We wish the projected Association a speedy entrance into active existence, a vast extension of its energies, a long career, and a full and overflowing measure of success in the cause of truth and justice.

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