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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptorum 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

That Bible-Burning

There are two sound maxims that we recommend to the attention of the Methodist Conferences and to the individual enthusiasts among the non-Catholic clergy here and there who clapped the Pope on the griddle and started to grill him at the first faint (and false) hint that some Bibles had been burned by one Father Rougier in far-off Fiji. One maxim is this: 'To rule one's anger is well, to prevent it is better.' The other is couched in ruder and more homely phrase: 'Trust the man whom you can't phule with a mare's nest, unless he sees the old mare on it.' The Conferences got somewhat 'phuled' for their indiscreet haste. But it must be confessed that they made the most they could of their misinformation so far as hot-shot resolutions by their Conferences went, and—on the part of two or three enthusiastic clerics—waterspouts and tornados of whirling declamation against the irredeemable perversity and general chuckleheadedness of the Scarlet Woman.

From patience, prudent, clear experience springs,
And traces knowledge through the course of things.'

A little patience, a sane endeavor—which they would not hear of—to acquire a knowledge of the facts through the ordinary course, would have saved our hasty but, no doubt, well-meaning friends the humiliation of accepting as sacred Gospel-truth a vital misstatement of both the fact and the motive of the Bible-burning, and of wasting a vast deal of fiery declamation upon a matter which—to use an expressive reporter's phrase—has quite 'fizzled out.' It is now admitted that the Australian agitation was an artificial one. The fine fury which was reported to have given spasms to all Fiji and, in effect, set the Methodist natives whittling at their war-clubs was—as is shown elsewhere in our present issue—grievously exaggerated. The native gorge did not rise, as that of white clerics in Australia rose, over the honorable and customary cremation of a few battered and useless Testaments, and Fijians are now as unexcited about the 'affaire' as any door-mat, and probably enjoying a forty-rod laugh at the bare idea of the 'savagery' 'civil war' which (according to one of their officials, who delivered his dark prophecy in New Zealand) was to wipe out in flowing gore 'this insult to our common Protestantism.' It was altogether a fierce hurricane for so small a tea-cup. Now, the incident is closed. And we Catholics are left with the melancholy knowledge that when our Methodist fellow-citizens go afire, they get afire like Tom Sawyer, all over; and that when they lay and try charges against 'Rome,' their verdict is sometimes dictated by religious passion rather than by a just and common-sense regard for evidence and reason.

An Exploded Myth

A belated clerical comment has it that, whatever the facts of the Fiji Bible-cremation, the 'Romish' Church is at any rate, the enemy of the Holy Book. That is just as we expected. We persecute our opponents on one text, and they fly to another; we answer them on one charge, and forthwith they throw a handspring to another that is equally untrue. It is an evil and a bitter thing to have the Pope upon the liver. Our clerical critic could not well have alighted upon a statement that is more at daggers drawn with fact. Eight years ago the learned and distinguished Archbishop of Melbourne published a remarkable anthology of foremost Protestant historians and divines, from the sixteenth century to the present day, whose united testimony so completely dynamites this musty and moth-eaten legend that it can never do service in serious controversy again. We refer to his work, 'The Church and the Bible,' which inquirers can procure from the publisher, Verga, of Melbourne. We may apply to the 'fairy-tale of a far-off land' about the hostility of the Church to the Bible, the words which Macaulay wrote concerning the bankrupt legend of the 'Popish Plot': 'These stories are now altogether exploded. They have been abandoned by statesmen to aldermen, by aldermen to clergymen, by clergymen to old women, and by old women to Sir Harcourt Lees.' Poor old Sir Harcourt is now, we hope, in a better land. But in his day he was an Orange leader of extreme virulence and a standing miracle of gullibility in reference to all stories which attributed superhuman obliquity to the Church of Rome. Statesmen and aldermen have abandoned to uninformed clergymen the exploded legend that the Church is inimical to the Scriptures. It is high time that clergymen should abandon it to old women and Orange lodges and, generally to those who see nothing but sober history in Baron Munchausen and the adventures of Ali Pasha and the Forty Thieves.

The Cardinal's Words

Running amok—or slashing indiscriminately at people with daggers and long-pointed knives—is supposed to be peculiar to maniacal Malays who have been overdosed with opium or loaded beyond the Plimsoll mark with the vile hemp-spirit called bhang. Among Caucasians, clergymen and leader-writers most frequently run amok—of course in a strictly figurative sense and with weapons no more deadly than a raucous voice, a tip-tilted nib, or a barrel pen. Some of the New Zealand fraternity of the pen have lately broken loose among things and people in general, and have, among other exploits, been pounding with great severity at the place where they fancied they saw the outlines of Cardinal Moran's head. But the excited wights have been wasting their energy upon the unresisting air. In the course of a speech to the Hibernian Society the Cardinal took exception to the indiscreet and autocratic

Hancock's "BISMARCK" LAGER BEER.

NEW ZEALAND'S
NEW INDUSTRY