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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

Rain-making

Doctors have played many and various parts in the drama of life. But the role of rain-maker is, we think, new to the profession among peoples of Caucasian stock, although it is a well-established function of medicine-men among the dusky tribes of Central and South Africa and the 'Noble Red Man' of North America. In drought-parched countries efforts have been made to refresh the thirsty earth by sending up charges of dynamite on kites and exploding them at high altitudes. But the results have been by no means satisfactory. And now (as stated elsewhere in our columns) a Melbourne doctor steps forth as a cloud-compelling Jupiter and claims the power of opening the cataracts of heaven by sending into the atmosphere a few columns of a new gas, the composition of which he keeps a dark secret. And he and his backers claim that, whether the wind blow east or west, whether it blow north or south, whether the sky be blue or grey, he can make the rain fall upon the just and the unjust alike. It is stated that he has time and again given bush-land and open country a refreshing shower bath—none of your niggardly low-pressure sprinklings, too, but the sort of tropical down-pour that would go to the heart of the opium-eating De Quincey, who could tolerate dripping clouds only when they rained cats and dogs. The Melbourne medico's method of rain-making has at least the slender merit of novelty. That alone would secure it a goodly share of public attention at a moment when the country is just reviving from the effects of one of the deadliest droughts in all its history. When the first winnowing-machine was invented in Scotland, in 1737, a number of pious Puritans regarded it as a sinful evasion of the Divine will to create an artificial wind—an argument which, by the way, told with equal force against the village blacksmith's bellows. If Providence has placed it within man's power to bring down rain artificially, the success of such experiments is a consummation devoutly to be wished. But alack! If the Melbourne medico is reported aright, his 'explanations' of the rationale of his method not alone fail to explain, but they bring to our mind uneasy reminiscences of the defunct Kiely motor, and suggest that rain-making schemes still remain a weary disappointment, like the toil

'Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up.'

A Mighty Growth

The American Government is—to use Kinglake's phrase—'odiously statistical' in some things. But it has thus far developed no curiosity to sort out its subjects according to their religious beliefs. Hence there are, unfortunately, no official religious statistics for the

United States based on an actual count of heads. But year by year estimates or approximations of religious status are published. Some of these—as published, for instance in Hoffman's and Sadler's Directories—are more or less incomplete parochial and diocesan returns. Others are the work of skilled official and non-official statisticians and are based upon the census returns. To the last mentioned class belong the figures published a few weeks ago in—of all places—the columns of the London 'Daily News' as evidence of the advance of the Catholic Church in the land of the Stars and Stripes.

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Thirteen years ago there appeared in the 'Missionary Review' (a Protestant publication) a notable article of a similar kind in which a non-Catholic writer (Dr. Ellenwood) recorded the rapid growth of the Catholic Church in the American Republic. He described the 'Romanism' of the great Republic as 'a strong-stranded, hard-twisted agency which no one can ignore.' According to the figures of the 'Daily News,' Catholics are more numerous than the combined membership of all other creeds in no fewer than fourteen States of the Union, including several of the Eastern States that were long the strongholds and head-centres of American Puritanism. Thus, in New Mexico, Catholics are 96 per cent. of all professing Christians; in Montana 85 per cent.; in Arizona 74 per cent.; in Nevada 72 per cent.; in Massachusetts 71 per cent.; in Rhode Island 69 per cent.; in Louisiana 65 per cent.; in New York State (with 2,174,300 Catholics) 58 per cent.; in California 55 per cent.; in Colorado 54 per cent.; in Connecticut 53 per cent.; in Minnesota 53 per cent.; and in Michigan 51 per cent. The total Catholic population of these fourteen States is set down at 5,253,300. The 'Daily News' also gives the interesting information that in the 125 largest cities of the Union, having an aggregate population of 14,110,000 souls, there are no fewer than 3,644,000 Catholics—a number which exceeds the combined membership of all the Protestant denominations resident therein. No other religious body approaches the Catholics in numerical strength in the United States. And the Church there is fast advancing to the fulfilment of the prophecy published in the 'Edinburgh Review' for April, 1890, that it is 'one of the most powerful and most democratic religious communities which the world has ever seen, and one which is fated to leave a lasting mark on the history of Christendom.'

The Nancy Case

Some of our readers are still 'onaisy in their minds' over the result of the appeal by the middle-aged 'orphan,' Marie Lecoanet, in her case against the Good Shepherd nuns who till lately conducted a Home for fallen women and incorrigible girls at Nancy, France. The Lecoanet woman became an inmate of the institution in 1871, left in 1877, returned again some months

Hancock's "BISMARCK" LAGER BEER.

NEW ZEALANDS
NEW INDUSTRY