

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

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae 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.



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1921.

IRELAND

IT would be idle for an Irishman to pretend that the news from Dublin, via London, of course, is not a source of grave anxiety during this blessed season of Yuletide, when amid hymns of peace the sword still hangs over Ireland. The uncertainty is the worst of it. We frankly confess that for the first time since 1916 we feel that we are groping in the dark and that the accounts that reach us perplex us a little. While saying so much, we wish to make it very clear that we have every reason to doubt the source of the news issued to us through the Press Association: experience has taught us to put but little faith in Irish news that comes through London; and taking it as it is, it is puzzling, unless we permit ourselves to read it all in the light of a suspicion that once more the British press is trying to create an atmosphere and that we are not getting the truth.

If we accept the cables at their face value, they convey to us one single item of news that is disturbing: that there is a division in the Sinn Fein forces. Our view is that whether the Irish people accept or reject the terms is for them to decide. If they reject, it is our business to back them to the end, no matter what it be; if they accept, we ought to be pleased that they find the terms satisfactory and honorable. But if we are to believe that Dail Eireann is evenly divided on the question, and that there has been rather much heat in the discussions, we must regard the news as serious, and we are left in the dark as to what is to be the final issue. A united Ireland for or against would be what the history of the past five years ought to lead us to expect. A united Ireland, facing even war with England, we could support with as much hope as we have had all through the organised frightfulness under Greenwood and Macpherson, but if the unity that won through those years of terror no longer remains the position is certainly not hopeful. However, we must remember that it is more than possible that the papers are not giving us the truth, and the Dail Eireann may be as united as ever once the personal views of its members are expressed and the matter decided one way or other by a majority vote: there should be no great reason to fear that those who worked so loyally together under the terror will not close up their ranks when the hour for discussion has ended. Once more, we say that we cannot bring ourselves to believe that all the difference concerns the form of the oath of allegiance, and we certainly think it is inexplicable that after the Bishops had condemned the partition at their October meeting the question of a united Ireland should (if we believe our cables) have had no part at all in the discussions. We do not believe that this is the case; and we suspect the rest of the story. Partition, not the form of the oath, is the

real blemish in the agreement: maintenance of an artificial boundary set up by England is not self-determination, whatever else it is, and we are unable to think that de Valera could swallow that and quarrel over the terminology of the oath. The Bishops were right when they said that the partition of Ireland would be the root of future troubles, and it is our opinion that the Irish leaders ought to reject any terms which would maintain that unnatural division and thus preserve the political British scheme specially devised for the weakening of the Irish people. England made the Carsonia trouble and England ought to be made heal it. The Orangemen have been backed by England in their terrible slaughter of Catholics during the past year and right up to the present month, and we have little doubt that in the future, if England ever becomes solvent and strong again, Carsonia would be made a pretext for breaking the treaty and once more employing frightfulness for the purpose of bringing Ireland under the economic domination of the stronger partner and plunderer. Now, if we are to believe the cables there has not been a word about this difficulty, and we find it hard to think that such is the case.

It also seems that there are some members of the Dail who denounce de Valera and Collins with candid impartiality, saying that both the one and the other have betrayed the cause of the Republic. For acceptance we have heroes like McKeown, Mulcahy, and Collins, and against it are de Valera, Sean Ua Ceallaigh, Brugha, and Stack. Again, the overseas Sinn Feiners, especially those of the United States, are strong for a Republic or nothing, and probably it is their views that Boland voices when he accuses both parties of being unfaithful. The English, Scottish, and American friends of Sinn Fein would have the Dail tear up the terms and defy Lloyd George to do his worst, and with them are Miss MacSwiney and others who have been much in America and are responsible for persuading our supporters there that Ireland would never yield unless the Republic were established. We note that Frank Walsh assures the American people that England would never dare undertake a war of extermination. We are not quite sure that England is sure that it would pay her to do so, but we have no doubt at all that if Lloyd George thought he could succeed, the wholesale butchery of every woman and child in Ireland would not deter him. But the question is what would America do. Frank Walsh says that if war is to be waged in earnest the Irish in America must take it up in their millions; they must send not only guns and money but battalions. Would they do that? Would they put a million armed men in the field against England? If they would they are quite right to urge the Irish people not to yield until every iota of Ireland's rights is won; but unless they are ready for that campaign they ought to leave the decision to the men and women and children on whom the sword would fall. The same thing applies to us here: we have no right to denounce men like Collins, who have taken the field and who know their business far better than some of our windy patriots. We have no patience with people who go round denouncing every one who does not agree with their inspired opinions, and our advice to one and all is to sit tight and await the decision of Ireland with what patience we can command. When it comes, the test of our patriotism will be our readiness to back the majority decision whether it be according to our own views or not. In a word, therefore, doubt the cables as much as you like; go on hoping and praying; and don't have too much talk. It is hardly worth while calling attention to the efforts of our dailies to discredit the Sinn Fein Parliament by quoting the remarks made on the discussions by well-meaning maniacs such as the *Morning Post*. We may safely say that Sinn Feiners will never tolerate fifty men attacking one in their Parliament, as half a hundred bold Britons attacked little Mr. Devlin not long ago. And we cannot see de Valera with his hand to his nose, making the corner-boy gesture of Lord Limavaddy. People who live in glass houses ought to cultivate their memories.