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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.

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., P.M.

LEO XIII., Pope.

Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

TIGERS AT PLAY.

LONDON has, within the past few weeks, afforded a rare field of observation for those who are interested in that curious study which has come to be known as the philosophy of crowds. It was an opportunity such as has rarely been presented since the days when Lord George Gordon's fanatics held possession of London in 1782, and when the 'Carmagnoles des Royalistes' was sung by packed mobs of human wild animals in the streets of Paris in 1793. The recent occasion in London scarcely warranted such an exhibition of the kinetic energy of a mob. Two thousand City Imperial Volunteers were returning from the war in South Africa. The gallant warriors did not, during any period of the campaign, happen to be in the vicinity of any serious fighting. They had but scant experience of

the perils that do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron,

and only nine men out of their total of 2000 dropped under Boer fire in the sundry small skirmishes that occasionally enlivened the monotony of their leisurely marches across the veldt. The sublime tomfooleries in which London engaged on Mafeking day have enriched local slang with a word—'to maffick'—which may yet, like another historic word—to boycott—receive the dignity of citizenship of the English tongue. But no single word appears to have been yet devised to express the hideous chaos that held possession of the streets of the world's commercial metropolis when its own particular Johnnies came marching home.

The London correspondent of the *Otago Daily Times* gives a lurid description of the 'utter chaos and anarchy' into which London was plunged on 'that discreditable day.' The city, he says, was 'delivered to the unrestrained licence and rowdiness of the lowest class of the population, with the result that more than 2000 people were injured, many very seriously, and several killed outright, while the final scenes were more than a foretaste of Pandemonium.' The principal thoroughfares were 'defiled' by a 'vast army of rowdies, male and female.' 'As the afternoon wore on, the crowd became wholly unmanageable. . . . Disorder and anarchy rode rampant. . . . The scene of desperate fighting and struggling and gasping humanity, the shouts of men and the shrieking of women made up a general experience one would be sorry to meet with a second time.' Military and police alike lost control of the mob, and narrowly escaped being forced into the Thames. This was the state of London when the sun was high. The horrors of the dusk and darkness are thus described:—

Throughout the whole of that Monday evening and well into the small hours of the next morning the main streets of London were paraded by vast mobs of drunken, hooting, yelling, blasphemous roughs and Hooligans, male and female, who insulted everyone they met, and often assaulted their victims as well. Numbers of respectable women who had to pass along the streets that evening were mauled and pulled about and kissed and slobbered by these ruffians, sometimes in full sight of knots of policemen, who seemingly were afraid to interfere, or, perhaps, had been instructed not

to do so, as it is the fashion to be gentle with those foul wretches for whom hanging is too good and who one of these days will wreck and pillage London itself unless they be taken in hand betimes and taught what a cat-o-nine-tails is for. . . . One of the saddest features to my mind in the obscene riot of last Monday was the large number of drunken women and girls who took active part in the worst excesses. Mere girls of 15 to 20, grossly intoxicated, were among the vilest of the noisy and foul-tongued crew. Their special delight was to thrust filthy peacocks' feathers into people's faces, or to bang passers-by with bladders tied on sticks. Their least harmful amusement was the dancing of furious cancons or some other indecent gambols. Many of these unsexed females were quite respectable in dress and appearance. That fact made their conduct seem all the more horrible and revolting.

The noisy and fickle mob had gone out to huzza their throats hoarse in welcome to the City Imperial Volunteers. In the snapping of a gun it turned its dangerous energies to riot and violence and uproar. Two hundred and fifty years before the same streets were lined by another closely-packed mob of enthusiastic sight-seers waiting to welcome other conquering heroes home. It was in 1650. And Cromwell and his Ironsides were marching through the vociferous streets on his return from his campaigns in Ireland. Oliver understood the weathercock populace of his day better than the London police authorities understand those of the present day. 'What a mighty crowd,' somebody remarked to him. 'Yes,' said the grim old Puritan; 'but if it were to see me hanged how many there would be!' The London mob is still the same old mob of Cromwell's days, but bigger and more massive and with more of the devil in it, and more dangerous. 'Where it comes from,' says Dickens in his *Barnaby Rudge*, 'or whither it goes, few men can tell. Assembling and dispersing with equal suddenness, it is as difficult to follow to its various sources as the sea itself. Nor does the parallel stop here; for the ocean is not more fickle and uncertain, more terrible when roused, more unreasonable, or more cruel.'

TOWARDS the close of 1898 a 'Non-Treating A NON-TREATING Club' was formed in Chicago. It started

with one member—a remarkably live one, by the way: one Mr. Monett, the founder of the association. In three months it had drawn into its net a membership of 60,000 men. It was not a total abstinence, nor even what is commonly called a temperance, movement. Its card of membership contains the pithy injunction: 'When you want a drink, take it, and don't imagine you will offend anyone by not asking eight or ten to join you.' Members pledged themselves simply to avoidance of the pernicious habit of treating—in colonial, 'shouting.' Well, one act of the flattery of imitation is worth a dozen morganatic compliments. A club or association on similar lines has been started in Australia. It is sorely needed across the water. Customs of this kind are described in the Old Law as the plague of wise men and the idol of fools. Members of the new association—to which we wish God-speed—will probably have to stand for some time the odium of the idolators of the old treating custom, and an abundant pelting with that variety of 'chaff' which hits as hard and cuts as deep as sparrow-shot. But the movement deserves attention as an upstanding fight against a grave social abuse.

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