

PRINCESS THEATRE.

POLLARD'S OPERA COMPANY.

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, 28th and 29th MAY,
LA PERICHOLE; OR, THE STREET SINGER.

FRIDAY, 30th MAY, and Following Nights,
FLORODORA.

Miss ALICE EDGAR As LADY HOLYWOOD
Miss Connie Beattie as Dolores.

NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS.

PRINCE OF WALES' BIRTHDAY, 3rd JUNE, 1902.

EXCURSION FARES.

HOLIDAY EXCURSION TICKETS will be issued from ANY STATION TO ANY STATION on the Hurunui-Bluff Section from 30th May to 3rd June, and will be available for return up to and including Tuesday, 24th June.

The Return Fares will be:

FIRST CLASS.	SECOND CLASS.
2d per Mile	1d per Mile

The Minimum being 4s and 2s respectively.

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'To promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.'

LEO XIII. to the NZ TABLET.

THURSDAY, MAY 29, 1902.

THE MORAL ASPECT OF CRANIOTOMY.

IN a letter which appeared in the public Press regarding the much-discussed medical case the following sentence occurs:—'I might add that this instrument, which I have never used during the course of twenty years' practice, is employed in destroying the life of the child in order to render birth possible, or, if the child is dead, to reduce the size of the head.' From the foregoing sentence it is evident that the operation of craniotomy is still practised by some medical men, who consider it a morally lawful operation. But is it morally lawful? In other words is it morally lawful for a doctor to kill by craniotomy, or by any other form of operation, a living child in order

to render birth possible, and save the life of the mother; or is it lawful for the father or mother to counsel or consent to have such an operation performed? From what has been said, and more so from what has been left unsaid, in the local discussion which has arisen on the subject, we are led to believe that the general public consider it quite lawful to kill the child to save the mother. We have no hesitation in saying that herein they are mistaken. The operation of craniotomy is never lawful, and, therefore, the doctor who performs it and the father who counsels it and the mother who consents to it are guilty of grievous moral wrong, are guilty of an act which the Catholic Church has ever looked on as murder pure and simple. The reason of this is obvious. The unborn child from the moment of conception has got a human soul, and is a human being. This proposition is proved by both medical and sacred science. The unborn child, therefore, as truly as the born child, possesses all the rights of a human being, which rights are inalienable, and must not be interfered with, on the contrary, in strict justice they must be respected by other human beings. The first and chief right of every human being is the right to live—to live in this world for that term of years which God, who gave the life, has assigned to it.

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Let us see how the right of every human being to live is established and protected by God's positive law. Having finished the work of Creation God gave man dominion over all the brute creation; they were made for man, therefore man may lawfully use them for his benefit and pleasure, and when the brute has ministered to man's use it has attained its end. Man was created for an altogether different end. He was created to the image and likeness of God, for the honor and service of God, and not of other men. In this respect all men are equal, and have equal rights. They have the same essence, the same nature, the same destiny. Hence, when the Creator speaks of the life and destiny of man He uses language different to that which He uses when speaking of the brute creation: 'Who-soever,' He says, 'shall shed a man's blood, his blood shall be shed, for man is made to the image of God' (Gen. ix., 6). 'At the hand of every man will I require the life of man.' And the great precept, 'Thou shalt not kill' is as deeply engraven on the human heart as it once was on the table of stone. The person, therefore, who deprives another human being of life, takes away from him what is his inalienable natural right, he also grievously violates God's right; and let us make no mistake these rights belong to, they are the property of the unborn child as certainly as they are of the full-grown man. The reason given by God against taking away the life of man proves this, 'For man is made to the image of God' applies to the unborn child as truly as it does to the father or mother of that infant, or to the doctor who counsels that the life of this innocent human being, who has never injured any man, should be sacrificed on the altar of expediency. We are fully aware that specious arguments are made use of to justify the doctor in taking the life of the child when from some reason or other the mother's life is in grave danger. It is said that there are exceptions to the general commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill.' One of these exceptions is, That it is lawful to deprive a man of life in necessary self-defence. That is, were a man to make an attack upon the life of another, which attack could not be repelled without causing death to the aggressor, it would be lawful for the man attacked to kill such a person in self-defence. This proposition is true when no other means short of death are at hand whereby the attack can be repelled. In such a case the person who makes the attack loses any right which he has to his own life. It is he also who violates God's right to a human life, and it is he who will have to answer to God for it. But can this argument be justly extended to the case in point? Can it be said that the unborn babe is an unjust aggressor on the life of the mother; and, therefore, can it be said that it is lawful for a doctor to take away the life of this human being; and for the parents to consent to have it taken away in order that the life of the mother may be saved thereby?

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We shall answer this question in the words of the Archbishop of Melbourne. In a most useful and important pamphlet written by him recently on this and kindred sub-

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