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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

A Brutal Display

Here is a paragraph which we take from last Friday's Christchurch correspondence in the 'Otago Daily Times':—

'The Boxing Association is apparently not indifferent to the brutality of the display given under its auspices at the Theatre Royal the other evening, but it is distinctly unfortunate that the council of the Association did not make it quite clear at its meeting last night that it had determined to discountenance such exhibitions by every means in its power. While some of the members of the council expressed themselves as opposed to brutality, no attempt was made to devise any means of preventing a repetition of the same sort of thing henceforth. The council might well have further considered the letter from one of its vice-presidents, in which he expressed his extreme disappointment at last week's display, and suggested that the remedy lay with the Association in the alteration of its rules.'

The paragraph just quoted is a fresh reminder that there is at least a modicum of truth in the sweeping words which Marion Crawford put into the mouth of one of the characters in 'Doctor Claudius': 'Were it not for the tremendous power of modern law, there is not the slightest doubt that the mass of Londoners or New Yorkers would flock to-day to see a gladiatorial show, or to watch a pack of lions tearing, limb from limb, a dozen unarmed convicts.' Prize-fighting is one of the old gladiatorial games. It was one of the combats of the arena, and was held in honor of Pollux, who is alleged to have been the world's champion in his time, and to have become a god through his skill at fisticuffs. The prize-ring and the 'glove-fight to a finish' are with us still. They are fragments of the old gladiatorial atrocities of pagan times that have clung to our civilisation to this day. We have never wholly shuffled off the spirit of the Coliseum. The second revival of prize-fighting in England during the past thirty-five years, under the aegis of nobility and royalty, is a thing that, in the interests of civilisation and humanity, is greatly to be deplored. In England and America, as in Christchurch, exhibition boxing bouts often produce—and sometimes are deliberately arranged to produce—the maximum of barbarity. Some years ago the London 'Saturday Review,' in dealing editorially with the death of the hireling Crook, wrote as follows from the fulness of its knowledge: 'We cannot help recalling how we were attacked in the so-called sporting papers some two years

ago for insisting that a glove-fight to a finish—and that is practically what a contest of twenty rounds means—was more barbarous, more cruel, and more dangerous than the old-fashioned fight with bare knuckles. In the prize-fight, if a man is knocked down, he has to get on his feet again and resume the contest in ten seconds, and this difference makes the fighting with gloves far severer than the fighting with fists of fifty years ago. Furthermore, we showed that a blow with a four-ounce glove was just as heavy and just as punishing as a blow with the naked fist, but judges ignorant of the art are easily cozened into believing that a glove-fight under the present rules is a harmless athletic display. Perhaps,' added the 'Saturday Review,' referring to the death of Crook in a twenty-round glove-fight, 'they will now come tardily to their senses, and prohibit a form of sport more degrading to humanity than the Spanish bull-fight.'

Uncle Sam tolerates the roasting of negroes to death over slow fires. Yet he utters a virtuous national protest against the horrors of Kishineff. Britishers enjoy the spectacle of two half-naked brutes pounding the foolish brains out of each other. But they stand aghast at the cruel, but far less inhuman, incidents of the Spanish bull fight. But that is the world's way. People are very prone to

'Compound for sins they are inclined to,
But damning those they have no mind to.'

Railers may say that people are not made virtuous by Act of Parliament. It is not the direct function of the law to teach virtue. One of its chief duties is to prevent crime. And inhumanity in every shape is a crime. The suppression by law of brutal exhibitions such as that which took place in Christchurch would remove a stumbling-block from the path of many a weakling and give common Christian feeling and habits of humanity a chance to acquire the force of custom.

Some Sharp Guesses

The last illness and death of Leo XIII. set newspaperdom probing the future for his successor. But all the world knows how wide their guesses went of the mark. Every Cardinal whom they sent into the Conclave a Pope came out of it a Cardinal. In this, as in most such cases, the popular voice and the predictions of the newspaper prophets turned out to be alike at fault. Cardinal Sarto's name was mentioned, so far as we are aware, by only two newspapers. One of these was the 'New York Herald'; the other an American Catholic exchange. Both, previous to the death of Leo



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