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PRIME 6D

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

A Savage Proposal

For the third time during the past two years a proposal has been put forward in grim earnest by responsible parties in the United States to kill off the weaklings and the 'unfit' among our juvenile population. The first two of these murderous proposals for the slaughter of the innocents emanated from universities. Professor Powers, of Cornell, couches the idea in language of brutal frankness. 'Kill off the feeble-minded,' he says, 'and those who are a burden to the rest of society as you would kill off so many rattlesnakes, not because we hate them, but because they are troublesome to have around you.' Such proposals suggest to one's mind the amazed and indignant queries of Truthful James:

'Is our civilisation a failure?
Or is the Caucasian played out?'

Quite recently a Bill was introduced into the Michigan Legislature for the electrocution of idiot children, which led the New York 'Freeman' to remark concerning the member who introduced the measure that he ought to thank heaven that such a law did not exist when he was a child. 'Innocent blood,' says Deuteronomy (xix., 10), 'may not be shed in the midst of the land which the Lord thy God will give thee to possess, lest thou be guilty of the blood.' But blood-guiltiness weighs lightly on the conscience of the new paganism which lifts its brazen face and advocates a return to the old barbarism from which Christianity has rescued our race. The ancient cattle-raising Troglodytes or cave-dwellers of Southern Egypt used to carefully strangle off their worn-out and decrepit and sickly fellow-citizens. They carried out the execution in a solemn manner, with the aid of a cow's tail. Some of the Indian tribes did the business more expeditiously—with a bang of a knotty club. Some of our American friends, and a whole school of the medical fraternity, are pining for the revival, in principle at least, of the good old rule, the simple plan of the savage's lightning cure for the physically defective. In the ideal neo-pagan republic of the future the lethal chamber will be equally used to quell puny infants and straying dogs, and the licensed assassin will replace the children's nurse and the Sister of Mercy. And then the devil's millennium will be at hand.

That Veto

It has been said that most people follow their consciences as a man follows a wheelbarrow, pushing it be-

fore him the way he wants it to go. A similar method of dealing with facts will sufficiently account for many 'fairy tales of a far-off land' that appeared in the columns of the secular press regarding the recent Conclave. Like the credulous savans satirised by Butler in 'The Elephant and the Moon,' some of the Rome correspondents of the time

'Resolved to give truth no regard,
But what was for their turn, to vouch,
And either find or make it such;
That 'twas more noble to create
Things like truth, out of strong conceit,
Than, with vexatious pains and doubt,
To find or think t' have found her out.'

It was manifestly much easier to let the creative faculties of the imagination run riot in the invention of 'snappy' and sensational paragraphs than, 'with vexatious pains and doubt,' to endeavor to penetrate to the truth of the matters that were involved in such elaborate secrecy as the proceedings of the Conclave.

One of the most persistent of all the tit-bits of Conclave history that were cabled to the ends of the earth was the story of the veto which is alleged to have been pronounced against Cardinal Rampolla on behalf of the Emperor of Austria. The various contradictory and mutually destructive versions of the alleged incident served to surround it with a halo of doubt and suspicion, and though the foundation statement of the story has been generally accepted as true, yet it seems by no means certain that the veto was, in point of fact, pronounced. The London 'Tablet,' of August 22, has the following interesting editorial note in point:—

'If there is one thing about which the man in the street is sure at this moment it is that either Cardinal Kopp or Cardinal Gruscha pronounced a veto in the name of Austria against the election of Cardinal Rampolla. Correspondents have sent graphic descriptions of the thrilling effect which the announcement of the veto had upon the assembled Cardinals, and we have had almost 'verbatim' reports of the dignified protest which fell from the lips of Cardinal Rampolla. And yet, on the strength of a communication received from a prelate who was present at the Conclave and during the whole of the sittings, we are able to say that neither of the Cardinals named ever said one word about a veto on behalf of Austria or any other Power. If any attempt had been made in any quarter to revive the veto it would assuredly have been repudiated in the name of the Holy See.'



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