

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS FOR SOUTH AFRICA.

The following Catholic chaplains are serving with the British forces in South Africa: The Rev. E. Ryan from Aldershot, the Rev. E. M. Morgan from Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the Rev. L. J. Matthews from Alexandria.

NEWS FROM THE FRONT BY A CORRESPONDENT WHO WAS NOT THERE.

The war correspondent of the Sydney *Freeman's Journal*, who has not been nearer South Africa than Circular Quay, has sent the following graphic and luminous items of war news to his journal:—

I was surprised to find on landing at Natal that 'the Irish were loyal at the Cape.' This is the first time in our history that the Irish were loyal. During the Peninsula War, where our own army list gives the Irish at 75 per cent. of the whole army—from Irish Wellington at their head to Irish Paddy overwhelmingly predominating in the ranks—they were not to be relied on. And with such traitors to England blotting the pages of our history as Wellington, Wolsley, Roberts, De Vaux, Freuche, Sir Binden Blood, Outram, the Beresfords, the Napiers, Kitchener, Sir George Brown, and hundreds of other officers and thousands of that rank and file whose wild 'Faugh-a-Ballagh' was more effective than the bayonets of other troops, I tell you it was astounding to find the Irish loyal at the Cape.

I find the Boers are strongly posted on an inaccessible mountain nearly two feet high. Their position was considered unassailable, but they were finally dislodged by a New South Wales J.P., who threatened to commit the whole lot for contempt of court.

Saturday, November 4.—Ladysmith was attacked this morning by some armed ruffians in red coats. She beat them off with an umbrella, and reported the matter to the Boer police. Constable Kruger has got a clue.

Sunday, 5.—The Irish are still loyal at the Cape.

Monday, 6.—The English attacked an outlying village with great determination. After five hours' severe fighting the English commander ordered his troops to fall back.

Later.—The village hasn't capitulated.

Later still.—The village isn't likely to capitulate.

Tuesday, 7.—A Boer army of 12,000 (twelve thousand) attacked the British position this morning early. The British force available was only 3000 (three thousand). There was desperate fighting on both sides. The Boer loss was about 15,000 men killed and wounded and 5000 prisoners, while the British loss was one man killed and two frightened to death.

Wednesday, 8.—The Boers were in a strongly-fortified position this morning on the veldt. They had strengthened the position by driving stakes of wood 39 feet high all round their camp, and covering them from bottom to top with barbed wire and broken bottles. Early in the morning the British infantry were served out with 13 rounds each of American axes. These were fired at the stakes at 2000 yards range and the whole lot were cut down, and the British marched triumphantly into the enemy's camp. It was noticed all through this battle that the firing of the British was altogether superior to the firing of the Boers. In fact the only man on the side of the Boers who could hit anything with a rifle was an Irishman. He hit every time—with the butt end. The Boer losses were very heavy; the only casualty on the British side was one man kicked by a donkey.

It is reported that the Irish are still loyal at the Cape.

THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA.

As the war in South Africa is likely to affect the Catholic missions there, the following account of these will be of interest to our readers at the present juncture:—

The Transvaal was formerly part of the Natal Vicariate, but on the 15th of March it was declared a separate prefecture. The mission, which is conducted by the Oblate Fathers, embraces the

territory of the Boer Republic. The first priest to visit the Transvaal was Father Houdewanger. On his arrival at Potchefstroom in 1868 he was warned by the Government officials not to celebrate Mass under peril of being expelled. His remonstrances were answered by the threat being carried into effect. He received twelve hours' notice, and a field-cornet was instructed to see him out of the country.

This obnoxious regulation was repealed in the following year through the efforts of the Catholic residents and owing to the visit of the Governor of Kuilmaine, a Catholic, who wished to be present at Mass. Since then there has been considerable progress. There are churches with resident priests at Pretoria, Johannesburg, Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp, Barberton, Vleischfontein, and Lydenburg. The Marist Brothers have a college with five or six hundred pupils at Johannesburg, and there are in the same town three convent schools under the direction of the Sisters of the Holy Family. The Oblate Fathers conduct a college at Pretoria, and both there and in connection with the other missions there are convent schools, whilst at Vleischfontein there is an industrial school for natives.

The Transvaal Government gives no aid to Catholic schools of any description, but there is little of that active hostility to the Church which was shown in England not so many years ago. The Sisters, who have the care of the hospitals at Johannesburg and Klerksdorp, have found good friends amongst Boers and Uitlanders alike. The Orange Free State is also a Vicariate, and the Vicar-Apostolic is the Right Rev. Dr. Gaughran, O.M.I., so well known in England. It will be remembered by our readers (says the *Catholic Times*) that on his visit to this country some years ago we published an interview with him in these columns. He then spoke with gratification of the missionary prospects in the Free State, and the condition of the missions, colleges, convents, and schools as a proof that his hopes had been largely realised. But war could not fail to have a most disturbing effect not only in the Transvaal and the Free State, but throughout South Africa. Many of the priests in the country districts would have to leave their missions; native converts would again fall under the influence of their pagan associates; and, generally speaking, the work of the missions would be thrown back ten or twenty years.

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