

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

KRUGERANIA.

President Kruger is above all things a wily diplomatist, as was well shown when a deputation of Uitlanders waited upon him to hint that he was responsible for the decrease in value of mining shares. Oom Paul answered them in a parable about a pet monkey he once had. 'Years ago,' said the President, 'on a cold day, I and the monkey made a fire, in which the animal burnt his tail, and in revenge bit me. I said to him, "I made a fire to warm us both, but you burnt your tail in it. That was your own fault, and I don't see why you should be angry with me." When the anecdote was finished, the deputation concluded it was no place for them, and withdrew without a word. When Johannesburg was a mere mining camp, President Kruger was once riding there dressed as an ordinary burgher. He fell in with a German who did not know him, and the son of the Fatherland waxed eloquent on what he would do were he President. The Teuton was a diminutive individual, and was much surprised when his new acquaintance took off his coat and held it towards him, saying, 'Put this on.' 'It's too large,' replied the other, amused. 'I know that,' responded the other, 'I'm President Kruger; if you could fit my coat you might accomplish mighty deeds.' Oom Paul, as President of the South African Republic, which has a population of about double that of Dunedin, gets a greater salary than the whole of the New Zealand Ministers with their travelling expenses thrown in, besides which he is allowed between £2000 and £3000 for extras, and £300 a year additional for rent.

OLIVE SCHREINER.

Olive Schreiner, the literary champion of the Boers of the Transvaal, has not a drop of Dutch blood in her veins. Her father was a German missionary, her mother an Englishwoman. All her early life was spent at an inland station, and it was from this lonely place that she wrote *The Story of an African Farm*, which was rather a treatise on a woman's right to a career than a novel. Miss Schreiner married a man named Conwright, who took her name instead of giving her his. She is now known as Mrs. Conwright-Schreiner.

KRUGER AND RELIGIOUS EQUALITY.

A small deputation accompanied me to Pretoria (says Dr. Joseph H. Hentz in *The Menorah*) to interview President Kruger. He, however, would hear of nothing before he had gone through the usual preliminary discussion on the Bible. It cannot be denied that he has his Bible at his fingers' ends. After an hour's wrangling, during which he tried to prove from Genesis, Habakkuk, and John that the Boers are the descendants of Isaac and that we (the Jews) are the descendants of Ishmael, and that it would, therefore, be against the letter and the spirit of the Scriptures that these two should inherit the land together, we came down to the real point for which the deputation came. Of course, he maintained that he personally was in favour of religious equality, but in all such radical measures, involving the amending of the Grondwet, he must carry his burghers with him; he could not, therefore, promise anything; a favourite argument of his, but not true, because in the Proverbs of Paul we find, *vox populi, vox dei*.

One by one he began to repeat the stock arguments of the Boer against removing disabilities from Jews and Catholics. Naturally, we took him up at every point and exposed his fallacies. But he, nothing daunted, resorted to his trump card whenever driven into a corner, he lost his temper and began to shout. This time, however, he reckoned without his guests. We (Mr. Goldrich and myself) also began to shout, only much louder, and the three of us, wildly gesticulating on the President's stoop, was a sight not altogether devoid of the ludicrous to the passer-by, as well as to the philosophical Zaps, patrolling before the Presidency. The upshot of the whole discussion was the old to-be-expected Afrikaner motto, 'Wacht een beetje, alles zal recht komen'—Wait a little, all will come right! The warrant question we also submitted to him. He denounced such law as 'a devil's law,' and promised to have it repealed. Next week we were informed that the law when it says 'Christians' really includes Jews as well! No distinction, but what a difference!

A TRANSVAAL DICTIONARY.

The following explanation of the meaning of many of the names of things and places, which are referred to in the war news, will be of interest to our readers:—

Afrikaander Bond.—Cape political party, of Dutch and Cape-born British, with an anti-Rhodes and anti-jingo party.

Armoured Trains.—Each train consists of an engine and four eight-wheeled waggons, entirely armoured-plated with thick steel. Each wagon accommodates 60 men, and is provided with loopholes in such a way that all can fire at once.

Burgher.—Male adult citizen of Transvaal or Orange Free State, entitled to vote and fight.

Commando.—The summons to Boer burghers to assemble armed against enemies.

Dorps.—Boer towns.

Drifts.—Fords over the rivers into the Transvaal. The Transvaal Government closed them in order to prevent any road competition with the railway, but they were re-opened.

Imperial Light Horse.—New volunteer corps of 500 men raised by Johannesburg refugees in Natal.

Kopjes.—The stony hillsides where the Boer marksmen lie.

Laager.—The entrenchments of Boer commandos.

Staats Artillery.—A force of Dutch and Germans, armed with quick-firing guns by the Transvaal Government.

Taal.—The Dutch-French dialect of the Boers.

Veldt.—The treeless plains of the Transvaal plateau, where each makes a road for himself.

Vierkleur.—The old flag of the Transvaal—crimson, green, and white.

Volkeraads.—The Parliaments of the two republics.

'Volkstem.'—Official organ of Transvaal Government at Pretoria.

THE BOERS AND FREEMASONRY.

A 'past master' in Freemasonry draws the attention of a contemporary to touching incidents between 'brethren' in the last Boer war and at Majuba Hill. He also points out that not only are President Kruger and Piet Joubert enthusiastic Freemasons, but practically every educated Boer belongs to the Order. As most of the British officers also belong to the craft, it will be a real case of 'brothers' slaying 'brothers.' During the last Transvaal war an appeal was sent by the Grand Orient of the Netherlands to the M.W.G.M. the Prince of Wales, entreating him, as a 'brother,' to use his influence in favour of peace. The Prince replied that, as this was a political question, he could not intervene.

THE NAMES OF SOME SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNS.

The origin of the names of some of the towns in Cape Colony and Natal, which are at present so prominently attracting public attention, are of interest. Durban is named from Sir Benjamin Durban, who was Governor of the Cape in 1834. Grahamstown and Harismith are named respectively from military commanders—Colonel Graham and Colonel Sir Harry Smith. Caledon, Beaufort, Somerset, and Cradock are named from former Governors—the Earl of Caledon, Lord Charles Somerset, and Sir John Cradock (Lord Howden). The towns of Ladysmith, Port Elizabeth, and Lady Grey are called after the wives of Cape Governors. Kimberley is named after the Earl of Kimberley, who was Colonial Secretary from 1870 to 1874, when that town advanced from the position of a mushroom camp to that of a permanent mining centre.

THE WORD 'BOER.'

It has been asked when did the word 'Boer' assume its present form and spelling. Judging from *Hansard* down to the late fifties, it was printed with a small 'b,' and spelt 'boers.' Mr. Gladstone, when Secretary of State for the Colonies, and afterwards, frequently referred to the 'Dutch boers at the Cape.' In the glossary attached to Mr. McCall Theal's *History of the Boers*, this primitive form of word is not given. Boer is there defined as 'a Dutch word signifying a tiller of the ground.' In South Africa the word is now used as a proper name to denote anyone of European descent who uses ordinarily the broken Dutch language of the country.

WAR BALLOONS.

As balloons have already played a part in the South African war, the following particulars taken from an English exchange will be of interest:—Fifty vats, each containing a ton of materials for making gas for captive balloons, are being despatched with a number of balloons from Aldershot. It has been found that a height of 100 fathoms, at a horizontal distance of 600 fathoms from the enemy, enables the observers to secure the widest expanse of view. The war balloons having taken a stationary position, eight cameras and lenses spread round the balloon at equal distances will enable a complete view of the surrounding country and enemy's camp to be photographed, and subsequently examined. Lines of telegraph can be carried round through the air, from the ground, to a balloon several miles distant. The wire can be paid out as fast as the balloon travels, and if a captive balloon should break or soar away communication can be kept up with it for six miles, and the result of the observations telegraphed to the general commanding.

The word 'Nek,' which is continually figuring in the geographical details in the war telegrams, is the term generally used in South Africa to describe the lowest dip in the ground between two heights. Laing's Nek, for example, is the lowest point in the ridge joining Majuba to the hills extending to the Buffalo River.

Diocesan News.

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON.

(From our own correspondent.)

December 9.

St. Joseph's Choir is to give a sacred concert in aid of the organ fund on Sunday.

Lady Buckley left for Home on Thursday by the Gothio. She intends to reside in the Old Country.

The Rev. Fathers Mahoney and Claney, of the College, left on Thursday for a short holiday in Masterton.

The Ven. Archdeacon Devoy has been advised that the result of the examinations of the Catholic schools in Blenheim was highly satisfactory. As in the last few years the schools were examined by the Education Board's Inspector. Ninety-seven per cent of the scholars presented passed.

His Grace, Archbishop Redwood, returned to Wellington on Thursday, and will remain here until after Christmas. The Rev. Father Ainsworth, who has been conducting the missions with him, will return in a few days. He is, I hear, to spend a short holiday on the West Coast where his people reside.

The election expenses of a successful candidate generally take the better part of the first year's honorarium to liquidate but, if what I hear is correct, the junior member for this city has established a record which should stand for some time. He is reported to have declared that his total expenses were nine shillings!

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