

THE BOER WAR.

NOTES AND POINTS OF INTEREST TO CATHOLIC READERS.

THE TACTICS OF THE BOERS.

Colonel A Court gives the following summary of the novel and bewildering difficulties experienced at the front by commanders whose tasks are even now very imperfectly comprehended:—'The Boer invariably does the exact opposite of what common sense and military experience lead you to expect he is likely to do. He places his riflemen in trees and watercourses and some of his trenches in the strangest places. He drags his 6in guns with treble spans of oxen to the tops of hills 2000 feet above the surrounding country, and secretes his quick-firers in the lowest dongas. If you expect him to attack he is sure to be going away; and if all reports agree that he is on the trek he will probably attack you. He will let you go away when you get into a mess without the hammering you deserve, in perfect accord with the maxims of Dogberry. He will make a fortress out of a hole in the open country and defend it to the death; and he will spend thousands on the forts round his capital, and not defend them for 24 hours. He is the most extraordinary mixture of bravery and prudence, of openness and cunning, of good faith and duplicity, of shrewd sense and credulity; and from day to day you can never tell which of his many qualities he is about to present to you.

GENERAL BOTHA.

In his home, it is said by one who knows him, General Botha is a model husband and father, his wife is a cultured lady of charming appearance and demeanor, his children are well brought up and receiving the best of education, both in the language of their country and English. Nothing more charming could be imagined than the home life of the Botha family, and Lord Roberts, since going to Pretoria, has taken many opportunities to express the pleasure of himself and his esteemed consort at meeting the family of the plucky Commandant-General of the burgher army—a feeling which was freely reciprocated.

TROUBLE EVERYWHERE.

A Lancashire Liberal candidate gave me (says a London writer) an amusing account of his misfortunes during and after the election. While it was proceeding he was received in the streets with cries of 'Pro-Boer!' After it was over he took a holiday in a famous Flemish town, where he was hooted as an Englishman by small boys wearing caps adorned with the device 'Spion Kop!'

THE STATE OF JOHANNESBURG.

Letters received from Mr. George Hutchison, member for Patea, written from Johannesburg on November 19, give some curious glimpses of the position of affairs in that city and in the Transvaal generally, at the date mentioned. A few extracts may be of public interest. He says:—

Although the military headquarters have been removed from Pretoria to Johannesburg, civilians know next to nothing of what is taking place. It seems rather an incredible story to tell, but a fact nevertheless, that we rush greedily for the London *Times* to get news of the war movements in South Africa—some of them happening probably within a few miles of us. The one thing patent is that the war has assumed a new and more perplexing phase in the pin-pricks that are being inflicted by numerous bands of roving Boers, all well mounted and living on the country with plenty of everything, with one exception, that is ammunition, which I learn is becoming short. One result of this state of things is that the Mauser in many instances is being discarded and the old-fashioned Martini-Henry is taking its place, because there are neglected stores of the suitable sort of cartridges being fossicked out.

There are constant raids made on the railway communications, and terrible disorder on all the routes into this part of the Transvaal. One consequence is that, excepting a few influential individuals, no refugees have yet been permitted to return to Johannesburg. Naturally there is much discontent. The embargo on ladies is particularly felt; indeed, so far as I can ascertain, Mrs. H. is the only one that has got through. I wish it were otherwise, although, through the abounding kindness of male friends who have gathered around us, she and the lassies were never in better form or enjoyed themselves more. But so far as one can see the whole country is at least six months farther off settlement than would have been believed possible five months ago. Still there is a little movement in the town. The few men with money who have got here are settling the local labor partially at work, taking down hoardings and clearing off the accumulation of dust from shop windows, and such like. Beyond keeping them clear of water, and in readiness for working at the earliest possible moment, the mines are at a standstill. When the refugees return, and for months thereafter, there will most likely be a considerable amount of distress, as the newcomers, having spent their savings, will compete with one another for daily bread. I daresay a whole twelvemonth will elapse before business is restored, and even twice that time before it is in a healthy state.

Speaking at the celebration of the centenary of Mount Gambier, South Australia, the Chief Justice (Sir Samuel Way) said: 'Whilst mentioning the literature of this part of the country they ought not to pass over the Rev. Julian E. Woods. His history of Australian exploration was still the best and most exhaustive work upon the subject, and there was no book written in Australia which contained better or more melodious prose than his *Geological Observations in South Australia*, which was published in 1862. He had met many of the fine old men of the colonies, but he had never met a more attractive conversationalist than the late Father Woods.'

People We Hear About.

Henri de Blowitz, the Paris correspondent of the London *Times*, although of Jewish stock, is a devout Catholic, and strenuously denies the recent rumor of his defection.

The Duke of Norfolk was unanimously selected at a preliminary meeting of the Westminster City Councillors to be the first Mayor of Westminster.

Mr A. W. a'Beckett, the new president of the Institute of Journalists, is a Catholic. He is a contributor to the well-known paper, *Punch*, the editor of which is also a Catholic.

Sir Cornelius Alfred Maloney, K.C.M.G. (Governor of the Windward Islands), has been appointed Governor of Trinidad and Tobago, in succession to Sir Hubert E. H. Jerningham, K.C.M.G. Both these distinguished servants of the State are Catholics.

The death is announced of Mr. W. F. Wakeman, Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, Ireland. He was a friend and pupil of the late Dr. Petrie, and almost the sole survivor of a famous band of antiquaries who included amongst its members Sir William Wilde and Bishops Reeves and Graves.

Miss Bessie Macdonald, a Chicago girl, who has just been married in Paris to Baron Rudolph de Hirsch, a nephew of the late Baron Hirsch, was once in the Carl Rosa Opera Company and also a leading soprano in the Grand Opera Company at Chicago. When she was only a child she was passionately fond of music, and her training was completed by the best masters in Paris. It was here she met the Baron's sister, and a close friendship was formed between them. Miss Macdonald is a Catholic.

It is officially announced that Mr Charles Wilson, editor of the *New Zealand Mail*, and an ex-M.H.R. for Wellington Suburbs, has been appointed librarian in the General Assembly Library. Mr Wilson is a Yorkshire man. After spending some time on the Continent he came out to New Zealand, and was for some years a master at the Wanganui College. Later on he drifted into journalism, and edited newspapers in various parts of the North Island. About ten years ago he became editor of the *New Zealand Mail*. He is a well-known authority on books, and some very able reviews from his pen have appeared from time to time in the *Mail*. He possesses one of the best private libraries in Wellington, and as he is well read and a genuine lover of books he should find himself in congenial surroundings in the Parliamentary Library.

Once when Sir Charles Warren was a Captain of Sappers, he was in command of a small detachment in the South of England. One morning a man was arraigned before him on a charge of refusing to obey orders, the offender being a man who had rather a good opinion of himself, owing to the fact that he had once been a volunteer officer. 'I see,' observed Warren sternly, 'that you refused to sweep out a barrack-room when ordered to do so by Sergeant Jones. What have you got to say?' 'Really, sir,' stammered the accused, 'you don't seem to be aware that I have held her Majesty's Commission.' 'I wasn't,' answered the other, 'but that need not prevent you holding her Majesty's broom-handle when ordered to do so by your superior.'

A prominent Catholic baronet sends *M.A.P.* the following note of criticism and of interesting statistics:—I must really take exception (he writes) to a recent letter from a lady correspondent of *M.A.P.*, commenting on the so-called 'curious fact' that 'distinguished converts to Rome marry very seldom into Roman Catholic families,' and quoting the late Lord Bute as 'in this, as so many other matters, the exception that proves the rule.' Pray let me point out that the 'rule' is, in fact, exactly the contrary of what the fair writer in *M.A.P.* implies, and that nearly every distinguished convert in this country has married into an old Catholic family, unless he happened to be already married when he 'went over.' It will suffice to name the following instances to show that Lord Bute was rather an illustration of the rule than an exception to it. The Earls of Abingdon, Denbigh, and Granard (all converts), married respectively Miss Townley, of Townley; Miss Berkeley, of Spetchley; and the Hon. Frances Mary Petre. Viscount Encombe married the Hon. Mary Fraser, of Lovat; Lord Braye, Miss Walmeley; the tenth Lord Beaumont, the daughter and heiress of Sir Charles Tempest; Lord Ralph Kerr, Lady Anne Howard; Sir Henry Bellingham, Lady Constance Noel; Lady Flora Hastings, the Duke of Norfolk; Mr. James Hope Scott, Q.C., Lady Victoria Howard; and Mr. Scott-Murray, of Danesfield, the Hon. Amelia Fraser, of Lovat.

Many years ago he who is now Lord Roberts commanded a native regiment in India. The men were excellent fighting material, but the laws of *meum* and *tuum* were not strictly recognised. Still the line had to be drawn somewhere, and when a sergeant complained that his watch had been stolen it was felt that something must be done. At evening parade Major 'Bobs' harangued the regiment, and, understanding the native character, he adopted tactics that, in poker parlance, would be called 'bluffing.' Thus, before dismissing the men, he confidently announced that the thief was known to him personally, and that, unless the missing property was restored before *reville*, he would bring him to trial by court-martial. When at 'office hour' next morning the sergeant reported that his property had been restored, Bobs felt pleased with himself, but his elation was destined to be short-lived for a rude awakening was in store for him. While walking through the lines later in the day he chanced to hear a couple of his men discussing the affair and, thinking that he might discover the identity of the culprit, the amateur Sherlock Holmes softly approached the speakers. 'What a wonderful man the Sahib is,' said one in accents of admiration. 'He actually knew who stole the watch and made him replace it.' 'My brother,' answered the other in tones of contempt, 'of course the Sahib knew who stole the watch, because he took it himself.'

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