

THE BOER WAR.

NOTES AND POINTS OF INTEREST TO CATHOLIC READERS.

PROMISES THAT WERE NOT KEPT.

At the beginning of the Anglo-Boer war (writes a Paris correspondent) a committee was formed in France, with a great flourish of trumpets, to aid the Boers with men and money. A few thousand francs were collected, and some 30 or 40 French volunteers were shipped off to South Africa. They did not fare as well as they expected, and those who are not dead are now prisoners at St. Helena, with the exception of three or four who could manage to pay their fare back to France. The French prisoners at St. Helena are free to leave on condition of going back to France at their own expense. Most of the poor devils who went over had no money, and they are now writing to the French papers complaining bitterly of the French-Boer Independence Committee, who got as much advertisement as they could out of the sending of the French volunteers, but who, now that no glory or political end is to be achieved by going to the expense of bringing them back, conveniently forget them on the rock of St. Helena. The caustic comments of a number of papers may, however, refresh the deficient memory of the committee.

SHOT BY A DEAD MAN.

Mr. A. G. Hales tells a queer story of Spion Kop. He says:—'So our dead lay and grinned at those other dead, and the fierce sun dried flesh and blood on Britain and Boer, for both remained unburied for a while; and so it came to pass that a Boer commando retook those lines where those who died for us were lying, and as they marched amongst our dead, they saw a sergeant lying at full length shot through the brain, yet even in death the man looked like some fighting machine suddenly gone out of order. His rifle was pressed against his shoulder, his left hand grasped the barrel on the under side, the forefingers of the right hand pressed the trigger lightly, the barrel rested out upon a rock, and his death-dulled eye still glared along the sights. A Boer soldier with rude hands grasped the rifle by the barrel and tried to jerk it from the dead man's grip, but as he pulled he brought the rifle in a line with his own breast, and the unyielding finger on the trigger did the rest, the rifle spoke from the dead man's hand, the bullet passing through the Boer's heart laid him beside the Briton.'

BISHOP BRINDLE'S OPINION OF SOME ENGLISH GENERALS.

Bishop Brindle, D.S.O., delivered a lecture recently at Wigan in the course of which he referred to the various generals in command in South Africa. Speaking of General Buller, he said he was the coolest man in danger he had ever known. He kept his brain perfectly clear, and he knew exactly what he had to do, and he did his best. He was not the man to spare men if necessity arose for sacrifice, but he never uselessly sacrificed a man throughout his career. There might have been a useless sacrifice at Spion Kop, but it was not General Buller's fault. He believed that if General Buller's orders had been carried out in the first instance he would have beaten his way through and saved the rest. General Buller's tenacity of purpose was nearest akin to that of a bulldog, and when he had set his mind upon a thing he would carry it out or die. He did not credit any of the stories which in any way reflected adversely upon General Buller, whom he knew intimately on the field and in his home life. He also gave a close description of Lord Kitchener, whom he described as having a determined face which was inscrutable, with eyes that penetrated one. He did not agree that Kitchener was hard; he had a tender heart, only he was too proud to show it. He certainly said to his officers that he had a certain task to perform, and he wanted it done in such a way, if they were not the men to do it like that he must get someone else. Anyone who had men under him would naturally insist upon the same thing. He paid a high tribute to his exceptional skill as an organiser. And the War Office documents he presented proved his true sense of justice to everyone under him, in whatever capacity he served. Another man he was acquainted with was General Gatacre, who was an untiring worker, who would never wilfully lose his men, and from his knowledge of him he (Bishop Brindle) would wait until the full account of the Stormberg disaster was published before he condemned any action on his part. The Bishop next vividly described the battle of Omdurman, and referred to the impressive memorial service in which he played such a prominent part in front of Gordon's Palace. Again he testified to the intensity of feeling which Lord Kitchener could display. On this occasion the conqueror of the Soudan stood with his hands to his face, whilst the tears streamed through his fingers.

MAFEKING NUNS AT WINDSOR.

Some time ago we were informed by cable that two of the Sisters who had been through the siege of Mafeking had been received by the Queen at Windsor. The following account of their reception is from the London Tablet:—

The keenness of the Queen's sympathy with those who have suffered by wounds and bereavement in the war with the South African Republics has been unfailingly evinced by visits to the wounded, and messages of inquiry and condolence to the relatives of those who have fallen. Her Majesty has been assiduous in the expression of her interest in all that has been done, and the latest illustration of this is the visit paid to her at Windsor by two of the nuns who showed such indefatigable devotion in nursing the sick and wounded at Mafeking. In accordance with a gracious Royal command Mother Superior Teresa and Sister Evangelist went to Windsor, where they were met by a Royal carriage and driven to the Castle. There after luncheon they were granted an interview with her Majesty, who was accompanied by the Princess Beatrice and her children. The Queen manifested the deepest interest in the work of mercy in which they had been engaged for the seven

months of the siege. The Sisters appear to have been particularly pleased that her Majesty thanked them for what they had done for her soldiers, gave them her best wishes for the future, and seemed to be greatly interested in the fact that they were Irish nuns. After leaving the Queen the nuns were shown over the Castle by some of the ladies of the Court. We understand that Mother Superior Teresa and Sister Evangelist will sail for South Africa immediately.

The Sisters settled in Mafeking three years ago, being a foundation from the convent in Sturabane in Ireland. Their convent, the erection of which cost nearly £3000, was only completed about three months before the siege began. When war appeared to be inevitable Bishop Gaughran gave the Sisters permission to leave Mafeking if they wished, but they bravely elected to stay in case they might be of service in attending to the sick and wounded. Their convent was shelled repeatedly, and almost completely wrecked, and for some time the Sisters were obliged to live in bomb-proof underground shelters. Not only did they nurse the wounded by day and night, but they occupied their spare moments in making and mending for the soldiers. Their work, as our readers will know from what has appeared from time to time in our columns, was highly commended by General Baden-Powell, who gave them a letter of introduction to his mother when they started for England. Although the Sisters suffered considerably from want of food and sickness, they all passed through the siege safely.

As an example of the way in which the services of the nuns were appreciated, we may quote the following testimony given by Mr. Neilly, the war correspondent of the *Pull Gazette* at Mafeking, which appears in his book *Besieged with B.P.*, under the heading 'Honor the nuns'—'I must say a specially good word for the Irish Sisters of Mercy, who were shelled out of their convent and driven underground to suffer with the rest. Three bands of the same Order worked with Florence Nightingale in the Crimea. They were within sight of their shell-battered wreck all the time, and had much to remind them of the terrible time they had there while the enemy poured his projectiles towards the building. They were not idle during the siege. They nursed by night and by day, and when not engaged in this work of mercy they were making and mending in their "dug-out" for the troops. They made hundreds of haversacks, powder-bags, and all sorts and conditions of things. I frequently called in to inquire how they were bearing their share of our load of trouble, and always found them in a sunshiny, cheery mood. They never once grumbled during the siege. It was refreshing to go in and have a chat with them. They never spoke of big guns, or slandered their friends, or backbit, or said what they would not do if they did not get adequate compensation for the damage done to their convent by the guns. If the people of Britain have a desire to mark their appreciation of services done during the siege, they may meetly do something for these good ladies, who left their homes and friends to spend a life in showing light in the dark corners of the earth, and cheering the needy, and generally giving help where help is needed. They had almost finished their convent building, and, I believe, are still in debt over it. Now they have to begin all over again.'

THE FLOWERY KINGDOM.

BITS OF CHINA OLD AND NEW.

THE DEATH ROLL.

The Dowager-Countess of Denbigh has been furnishing some of the English papers with details of the sufferings of many missionaries, Sisters, and native Christians in China. An English Sister of Charity at Ningpo writes of news being received from Peking of the death of eight missionaries; two were massacred, and several burned in their churches. Sister Jaurias, who is close upon 80 years of age and had spent 15 years in China, being the life and soul of the establishment in which she resided, died after the entrance of the Allied troops. An explosion killed 70 people, amongst them all the little ones in the Crèche. At Kinchiou all the Christians were massacred. Some of the women and children were stripped, tied to trees, and killed with pitchforks. Mgr. Favier, writing from Peking to M. Boscat, says: 'Sixty days of siege. . . . I think we have fifteen or twenty thousand martyrs, for hardly any apostatized. We must say "forward" and not lose heart. I never felt more courage.'

A MARY-BISHOP.

Everyone who esteems self-sacrifice cannot help admiring the heroism of Bishop Hammer, Vicar-Apostolic of Southern Mongolia, who has laid down his life for the faith. Bishop Hammer had reached the age of 60. He was one of the first missionaries who visited Mongolia. Thirty-five years ago he began work there amongst the poor, and his labors were so fruitful that in the course of some time he was created a bishop. A missionary now staying at Scheut, near Brussels—one of the 15 White Fathers of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception who escaped from Mongolia—has given a moving account of the Bishop's noble but at the same time terrible death. When Christian converts were being massacred around him, he called his missionaries together, and, addressing them, said they must seek safety in flight. As for himself, he was an old man: his days were numbered, and he wished to remain with the native Christians to the end. The missionaries begged him to go with them, but he remained firm in his resolution. A few days afterwards the Boxers broke into his residence and seized him as he was about to say Mass. They took him to the market-place, where hundreds of Christians had already been murdered. There his hands and feet were chopped off; his body