

# The Catholic Register

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will effect the rest."—BALMEZ.

VOL. VIII.—No. 9.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 1900.

PRICE FIVE CENTS

## Current Topics.

### The Boer War.

The first stage of the Boer war may be said to have resulted in the consecutive defeat of three British generals by the Boers. The second stage ended disastrously for the Boers on Tuesday the 17th of February, when General Cronje, who is considered the ablest Boer commander, surrendered unconditionally with an army of from 8,000 to 14,000 men, many guns and large quantities of supplies. This far-reaching event is the result of the brilliant tactics of Gouvalva Roberts and Kitchener and the superb dash of General Cronje at the head of his mounted infantry. General Cronje was forced to retreat, and in his efforts to reach Bloemfontein fell a victim to the superiority in mobility and numbers on the part of the British.

For nine days the stout Boer general sustained one of the most furious bombardments from over fifty great guns and numerous small ones. Various attempts were made by weak Boer forces to relieve the surrounded army, but in vain. This decisive success places the Orange Free State at the mercy of the British, must demoralize the Boer plans of defence, will result in the relief of Johannesburg and Mafeking, greatly discourage the Boers of the Transvaal, and probably intimidate the Afrikaners throughout Cape Colony into complete submission. By a singular coincidence, the surrender of Cronje took place on the anniversary of Majuba Hill, in 1881, when Sir George Collyer fell into a Boer trap and was defeated with tremendous loss.

### The Canadian soldiers.

The Canadian have been in the thick of the fighting which led to Cronje's surrender. Last week we chronicled the heavy losses sustained by the contingent at the engagement on Sunday, 18th of February. There were nineteen killed and ninety wounded, according to the latest dispatches.

### The Canadians under Col. Smith-Dorrien.

They were again under fire, co-operating with General French and General Knox's brigade in the pursuit and surrounding of Cronje's army, and also in finally driving the Boers from the bed of the river Riet, under whose banks they are said to have sheltered themselves from the terrific bombardment by the British forces. Our men must have played a conspicuous part in the final stages of the drama, for Lord Roberts has reported that the surrender of Cronje was due to a dashing advance made by the Canadians, whilst Sir Alfred Milner cabled congratulations to Lord Minto on the splendid gallantry of the Canadians. It is a subject of pride and gratification to the people of Canada to receive such flattering accounts of the bravery and soldierly bearing of their citizen soldiers. This fact will do much to advertise Canada in Europe, and cause people of Great Britain to give more consideration than they have been in the habit of doing to a country that can furnish from its citizen ranks men who are fighting qualities the equal of the best regiments in the British army.

### The gallantry of the Canadian troops at Paardeburg.

resulted in the British forces gaining a point some 600 yards nearer the enemy and within about 80 yards of his trenches, which position was maintained till morning, when Cronje surrendered. The Canadians, however, suffered a further loss of eight men killed and thirty-one wounded. They were supported in their advance by the Gordon Highlanders and the 2nd Shropshires.

### If there is rejoicing throughout the British Empire to-day at the success which culminated in the surrender of the Boer army at Paardeburg, there is not wanting a distinct note of admiration for the bravery and endurance displayed by the Boer general, as well as for the skill and daring of his retreat. General Cronje has accomplished a feat which may be set down in history beside the best of similar deeds. It must be remembered that he had to retreat through an enemy's line for a distance of thirty-five miles, harassed by a superior and more quickly moving foe. That he succeeded in standing at bay for nine days within a narrow area, surrounded by seven deadly batteries, and in the face of an ever vigilant and powerful foe speaks wonders for his generalship. His position from the beginning, how-

ever, was recognized as well high deservator and the attempt to reach Bloemfontein hopeless. Doubtless, the hope of relief arriving impelled him to continue the struggle to such extremity.

### Effect of Cronje's Surrender.

No sooner was it realized that General Cronje would have to surrender, than forecasts of future operations began to appear in the press. The one question which singles itself out for consideration is the likelihood of peace as a result. It was rumored previous to the decisive event of Tuesday, that a section of the Boer leaders are in favor of suing for peace. There are various views to be taken of the motives which induced the Boers to appeal to the last resort. There are those who would look upon that act of the Boers as that of a people, desperate, and determined to fight to death for their independence. Another view is that they entered upon the war knowing their own excellent preparedness, and counting upon their initial superiority, expected to drive the British out of South Africa. A third view is that their object was by the stand they took against Great Britain and by a prolonged conflict to induce outside sympathy and intervention. They have failed in the second or third; either were their object or aim. The question is, will they remain steadfast to the first, if such was their purpose?

Undoubtedly a critical point in the war has been reached. With Kimberley relieved, with the Free State overrun by the enemy, with Cronje's army captured, with the sieges of Ladysmith and Mafeking weakened, with the Transvaal the scene of a general Boer offensive, pouring into South Africa—what will the Boers do?

### Mr. Stead on Joseph Chamberlain.

Mr. William Stead has issued a fresh pamphlet on the eve of the opening of Parliament, which has been distributed extensively among members of the House of Commons. The pamphlet, "Joseph Chamberlain: Conspirator, Statesman?" An examination of the evidence as to his complicity in the Jameson conspiracy, together with the newly-published letters of the Hawley Dorrer. Mr. Stead repeats in the most direct language the charge of public falsehood which he has previously brought against Mr. Chamberlain. "Mr. Chamberlain," he writes, "when stating that he held the South African Committee, all he knew was stating that which was false. In my pamphlet, 'Are We in the Right?' I quoted a passage from the Report of the South African Committee, and stated: 'This, in plain English, was a lie, and Mr. Chamberlain, who signed the Report, knew it to be so.'"

"In the House of Commons, on Wednesday, Oct. 25, Mr. MacNeill said he wished to ask the leader of the House a question, of which he had given him notice: 'What course the right honorable gentleman, as leader of the House, intended to take with regard to the publication and circulation of a pamphlet by Mr. W. T. Stead, entitled 'Are We in the Right?' in which the Colonial Secretary was charged with deliberate falsehood in this House. Mr. Balfour: 'I have not read the pamphlet to which the honorable member refers. If he is correct in describing it, it appears to be a somewhat scurrilous document, which I think need not disturb the honorable member at all.' That, I suppose," continues Mr. Stead, "was the official response of the Cabinet to the challenge which I addressed to the Colonial Secretary in the plainest words to be found in the English language. We may take it, therefore that the Government do not intend to disturb themselves about the impeachment of the honor of the Colonial Secretary."

### The British America.

This, the oldest institution of its class in Western Canada, is again to the front with a profitable balance-sheet for the business year ending December 31st, 1899. The annual meeting of the shareholders of the British America Association Company was held at the head office Toronto, on Friday the 23rd instant, when the statements submitted showed a considerable advance in net earnings over those of last year. This improvement applies to both the fire and marine branches—the former showing marked gains, while the latter gives a fair margin in favor of the shareholders. Half-yearly dividends at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum were paid, and the amount of the handsome sum of \$52,500. After writing off an amount to cover depreciations in securities, etc., \$7,000 were added to the Reserve Fund, which now totals \$277,837.04. The increased business of the company warrants an enlargement of its capital, and the directors propose the issue of \$250,000 additional stock, which will be allotted to shareholders at a premium of 15 per cent. The annual report, which we publish in this week's *Catholic Register*, is, from beginning to end, very satisfactory, and affords evidence of steady progress, which must be gratifying to the directors and officers of the British America, as well as to those whose funds are invested in that pioneer of assurance companies in the Dominion.

### DAVITT AND O'BRIEN.

#### Their Views of Irish Reunion.

Although Messrs. Michael Davitt and William O'Brien are not members of Parliament there are probably no Irishmen living for whose opinions the Irish people at home and abroad have greater respect or in whom they place more implicit confidence. The desire to hear how these two veteran statesmen regard the reunion of the Irish party has been gratified. A recent demonstration of the United Irish League in Mallow, County Cork, afforded Messrs. Davitt and O'Brien a fitting opportunity to express their opinions on the latest developments in Irish Parliamentary affairs.

#### MR. DAVITT.

In his address, which was listened to with rapt attention said in part: "You have probably all heard of the reunion of the Irish Parliamentary factions. It is not of course any new bonanza to what gentlemen coming together again and agreeing to behave themselves and to cease abusing each other in the House of Commons and elsewhere, but it is easy to magnify it of importance of this kind of thing to the good of the country. Let us wait a little and see what these gentlemen are willing or capable of doing at Westminster for Ireland before we throw our cautions in the air over the reunion which they agreed to. It was not love of unity in Ireland, nor the desire to get together in England in South Africa. But the work of the United Irish League which induced many of the members of the Irish party to resolve upon reunion in their ranks. So far so good, in as far as it will assist in promoting a goal and an effective unity here in Ireland among all earnest and honest Nationalists."

"This is the union which is essential and imperatively necessary if we are ever to win the demands which are put forward in your resolutions. Unity among the Irishmen here at home will compel unity among your representatives, because it will give you the power to collect men who will stand by their pledges and to reject them if they betray their promise or trust. No parliamentary reform, no matter how united or how able, can ever win any substantial reform for Ireland unless the people themselves band together in a powerful organization and compel English statesmen to surrender to the justice and reason of our plans."

"Eighty-nine members as against 600 British members can accomplish nothing in Westminster unless they can speak and act for an organized Ireland. This is a lesson as old as the act of union. You might just as well appeal to the sense of justice of a jungle of tigers as to the sense of justice of the British House of Commons, if you have nothing but the righteousness of your case. The average English member here at home will not be troubled by the whole Irish race with all its Anglo-Saxon selfishness and pride, hates all our traditions, characteristics, and institutions, because we will not bow down before the English House of Commons, but the organized power of the whole Irish race working unitedly for the national government of Ireland to be won from England by their fitness of that combination of our cause, and the force or necessities of an empire which would not be a united nation of the world today as a friend or an ally."

#### MR. O'BRIEN.

Who, as is well known, was the founder of the United Irish League, spoke in great earnest when he said: "We have already obtained substantial and permanent unity in the country, and we have arrived at a time when there is a decidedly improved prospect of unity in the parliamentary party as well, but it is a time also when it is especially desirable not to lose our heads, not to form any real judgments, but to watch and wait and go steadily forward with the work of organizing the country. There never was a moment since the split of 1890 when I was not willing to face the consequences of any such declaration of bringing the members of the Irish party together again, so long as it was to be a real unity. That is to be the whole question—that we must have a real and genuine unity for Nationalist purposes, and not a nominal unity to all the country to sleep and to take the power out of the hands of the people at the general election."

"I would humbly advise the country neither to attach too little nor too much importance to what has been happening in Westminster. We are not to be in a hurry to pre-empt the question one way or the other. We ought to give the utmost sympathy and fair play to this new experiment, and we ought to be prepared to recognize promptly and generously every genuine sign of a new feeling among the members of Mr. Redmond's party. But I should only be deceiving you and raising false hopes in the country if I did not tell you that, in my humble judgment at least, what will happen in Parliament will depend very much upon what will happen in Ireland. It is the people who have made the peace, and it is the people who will have to keep the peace among our friends in Parliament."

"If there were not a strong and independent and impartial organization of the people to keep and control of personal questions that are still smouldering, everybody who is huddled the scenes, knows that the moment the general election was over the party would break to pieces like a rope of sand."

"The one grand point which I repeatly recommend to the consideration of the country is that the unity of the movement depends upon the people taking an interest in it and asserting themselves in a friendly but determined way as the masters of the situation, and I have no doubt upon my mind that the moment the rest of the country sets to work and establishes an active organization of this kind, whatever it may be called you have the whole secret of success. As you will have parliamentary unity as well as popular unity, and with the tremendous opportunities that are before us, there are no bounds to what may be again achieved by a really united party, backed by a united people."

#### The Persecuted Assumptionists.

A Rome correspondent of the *New York Freeman's Journal* thus sums up the good work of the Assumptionists:

Their apostolic labors have been principally exercised on behalf of the working classes and the very poor. Don Roscoe spoke in terms of praise of their institution at Arras, where they risked industrious citizens and good Christians of the 400 orphans and abandoned children under their charge. Then they have founded the Little Sisters of the Assumption, 14th census of all over France, in the United States, Ireland and all over England. These Little Sisters visit the sick in the most equal parts of large towns and nurse them back to health of body and soul gratuitously. To help these Little Sisters the Assumptionists have organized three associations: the *Lady Servants of the Poor*, the *Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Assumption* and the *Daughters of St. Monica*.

Every year from 12,000 to 16,000 poor Catholic fishermen are constrained by poverty to leave their homes and spend their lives on the water or in desolate parts of the coast of Ireland and Newfoundland. They might think themselves utterly abandoned by the world were it not that every now and then the good ship St. Peter and St. Paul comes from the great western town. The *Journal* have good reason to know those vessels. The Assumptionist fathers are on board with their chapel, pharmacy, infirmary and library for the use of wanderers on the face of the deep. They are good fathers, but they are wrecked on their holy mission, but another St. Peter and another St. Paul were immediately built to supply the place of the lost vessels.

Let me frankly confess before going further that in the account I have to give, I have been very bungling a magnificent article on the subject of the Assumptionists which has appeared in the current issue of the *Civiltà Cattolica*. Now that I come to the part of the Assumptionists' work which seems to me to be the most important, I shall tell what it is:

"We come now to another work to which they devote themselves with the greatest zeal and the happiest results—the work of the good press. To banish the bad press with the good press, to introduce reading matter clearly and frankly Catholic into the family, the workshop and into such places as are too frequently overrun by writings that calumniate and attack religion and public morals, is one of the most urgent necessities of the time, and is therefore the special aim of the fathers of the Assumption. God has blessed their effort to re-Christianize France through the instrumentality of a good press. The fruits have not yet begun to appear, but the progress is so rapid that a short list of wonders for the day of Catholic literature is to be taken into consideration more successfully with the corrupt that threatened to carry all before it."

"No Catholic newspaper in any part of the world has ever gained the circulation given by *La Croix* and *Le Petit*, which every week published 3,000,000 copies; add to these the 400 provincial editions of the *Croix* and the circulation of those papers reaches very close to 8,000,000. Then the Assumptionists print every week 50,000 copies of *Contemporaires*, and besides these they issue the scientific review, *Coex*; the review *Questions Actuelles*; the *Noël*, for children; the *Mois Piétreque*, for the cultured; the *Franciscain* Demagogue the *Civiltà Cattolica*, the *Contemporaires* for workmen; the *Bulletin des Missions*, the *Echos d'Orient*; the *Edios de N. D. de France*, the *Petit Bleu*; and all these publications with others besides are scattered broadcast all over France. Nor is that all. The country people, the laboring men, are enabled to go to the church on Sundays have the church brought to them by the Assumptionists in the shape of books, pamphlets and tracts to the number of several millions of copies."

THEY CLEANSE THE SYSTEM THOROUGHLY.—*Parrot's Vegetable Pills* clear the stomach and bowels of bilious matter, cause the excretory vessels to throw off impurities from the blood into the bowels, and thus purify the system. They are a safe and reliable remedy for the cure of the system. They do this without pain or inconvenience to the patient, and speedily realize their good offices as soon as they begin to take effect. They have strong recommendation from all kinds of people.

That man ought to practice what he preaches if he preaches the right thing.

### The Fisherman's Ring.

(Home Correspondent, Fall Mail Gazette.)  
This ring takes its name especially from the name of the stone which represents St. Peter in a lost drawing in his fishing net. Its origin is unknown but there are documents proving that the first to use it as an official seal was the French Pope Clement VI., 1295. However, it is certain that the Pope used it occasionally before on solemn occasions. Since the time of Callistus III (1455) it has been the seal for the Papal bulls, among which those of Leo X. (Motto) to Henry VIII. of England and the Council of Trent are remarkable. While the great seal of England is kept by the Lord Chancellor and the seals of State in Italy are confided to the Guardasigilli, there is no special official to look after this Papal seal ring which when the Pope does not wear it, is given to his master of the robes, together with the other effects of His Holiness. It has been confided to the Cardinal Secretary of Briefs—who has the office of compiling official documents—only during the short absence of the Pontiff from Rome. The last time it was used was when Pius VII., in 1782, went to Vienna.

If proof be needed for the statement that the Pope wears the Fisherman's Ring, history furnishes many. In 1798 the Pontifical Republicans invading the city of Rome demanded that Pius VI. should all be laid. Not satisfied Commissioner Haller one day went to the Pontiff while he was dining and said, "I have come for your treasure."

"But I have nothing left!"  
"You have on your fingers two precious rings. Give them to me."  
"I can give you one which is mine but the other (the Fisherman's Ring) must pass to my successor."  
"Deliver it to me at once or I shall use force!"

Pius VI. to avoid violence handed over the ring which was however returned to him the next day, it having been found that its only value consisted in its traditions.

Pius VII. when suddenly kidnapped in the middle of the night by General Radetzki this celebrated ring on his finger. The pope's successor, Pius VIII., who is a hind his Republican predecessor, claimed the jewel which, however, the Pope broke into two pieces before giving to him. These pieces were kept in Paris until Louis XVIII. returned them to Rome.

Besides the "Fisherman's ring," there are three other seals used by the Holy See. The most important is one in the form of pincers to make the impression on lead seals of the Papal bulls. This seal is kept by the Cardinal Vice-Chancellor. Of the other two are the documents, for which red ink is used, and was introduced by Leo XIII., and the other simply has the coat of arms of the reigning Pontiff, and is used for his private correspondence.

### The True Gentleman.

Cardinal Newman in his book entitled "The Idea of a University," has given what is probably the most complete description of the qualities that constitute a perfect gentleman. It is worth while to recommend the following definition to those who are anxious to be gentlemen. He who are proud of the fact that their father or grandfather kept out of jail while accumulating a large fortune by evading the laws. In fact, all Americans, whatever their station or influence, are in a position to do so. It is therefore in these present words: "A gentleman is one who are proud of the fact that their father or grandfather kept out of jail while accumulating a large fortune by evading the laws. In fact, all Americans, whatever their station or influence, are in a position to do so. It is therefore in these present words: "A gentleman is one who are proud of the fact that their father or grandfather kept out of jail while accumulating a large fortune by evading the laws. 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