

are England's best friends; not nations which are her jealous rivals.

The year 1900 is not leap year. The actual length of the astronomical year is a little less than $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, and a leap year in every four years makes an error of about three days in four hundred years. To rectify this error, the closing years of the centuries are not counted as leap years unless the number of the century is exactly divisible by four. This rule, called the Gregorian rule, has been adopted in all Christian countries. The Gregorian calendar, so called after Pope Gregory, by whom it was authorized in 1582, was not introduced in England till 1752, when eleven days were suppressed to correct the error.

Recent investigation in Egypt have brought to light papyri that seem to establish the exact date of the birth of Christ. It is now generally agreed that the Christian era, as adopted in the sixth century, was placed some years too late; and 4 B. C. is usually given as the date of our Saviour's birth. We know, historically, however, that a census was held throughout the Roman empire every fourteen years; and the papyri show conclusively that the census cycle can be placed back as far as A. D. 20; and that probably the first of these censuses was held under Cæsar Augustus some twenty-eight or thirty years earlier. This places the actual birth of our Saviour at about B. C. 10.

Disturbances in Venezuela continue. The successful revolution which unseated President Andrade and placed General Castro in power has been immediately followed by another revolution in favor of a third leader, Hernandez, whose cause Castro, before he usurped the government, had promised to support.

St. Malo has decided to erect on its famous ramparts a monument to Jacques Cartier, the discoverer of Canada.

The timber wolf is said to have made its appearance in some parts of the Province of New Brunswick.

Trinidad has rejected the proposed reciprocity treaty with the United States, and is looking towards improved trade arrangements with Canada.

The only Canadian name in the list of New Year's honors for 1900 is that of the lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia, who becomes a K. C. M. G., and will henceforth be known as Sir Malachy Daly.

Unequaled is the bravery of the British soldier. The Boers fight behind boulders and rocks and seldom attack. The British soldier takes the open and charges at the

foe. He is always aggressive, and, though he knows that in similar assaults his comrades have fallen by the hundred, he never flinches, but makes straight for the enemy until he is called back or is wounded or dead. While the privates move with precision and courage, the officers are with them. It was a general who headed the fatal charge of the Black Watch. He fell at the front and close to the Boer line. There is not much boasting about the bravery of the British forces. They simply do their work and say nothing. Yet, look at the two sorties from Ladysmith, which were effected for the purpose of dynamiting the enemy's guns. The men climbed straight into the enemy's camp, blew up their guns, and returned, in one instance bayoneting their way back. The old courage pervades the army, and it is sure to tell.—*Exchange*.

Julian Ralph, the war correspondent of the London *Daily Mail*, writing from De Aar, gives a vivid description of the country in that part of Cape Colony, which is of special interest to us, since the Canadian regiment is in the region described:

We are on the edge of the Karroo desert. It is a tract which looks like a rubbish-shooting ground of imperial size. It is everywhere rolling and framed by great hills, except where the billows of baked and stony earth take the form of kopjes (called coppies) or small hills. The entire country is about equally spotted with small stones and little dry tufts of vegetation, mainly sage brush. These are so bare and dry that they look like roots. The barren watercourses torture little trees to grow beside them, and these also are so bare and dead-looking that they might as well be trees turned bottom upward. In every direction the view is unobstructed for miles, yet you see nothing but the same brown desert with the hot air dancing over it. There are occasional little herds of goats tended by negro children, but they never show until you are close upon them. The Karroo might be a heaven for snakes, lizards and beetles; but I saw none—nor any living thing, except a few goats, a few stately ostriches, a few negroes in rags or blankets, and one small black-and-white bird that would pass for an undersized magpie at home. Silence, solitude, desolation—multiply these by six figures and you have the Karroo. It is not without beauty, and not without a future. Everywhere, in everything, its colors are wondrous. Close at hand, the hills are almost brick-red, a little further away others are dove-colored, while the farthest ones are of varying shades of purple. Tufts and splotches of vivid green appear wherever there is, or has recently been, water, and even the stones and shrubs are full of color. In some places the water is thirty feet below the surface; in others 1500 to 2000 feet—but there is always water, and once it bathes the surface it acts like a magician's wand. Wherever there is a railway station it is an oasis of green, with willow and eucalyptus trees, flowers and vegetables.

The month of December has been marked by serious reverses to our troops in South Africa. The news of