

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXI.

{ THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
VOLUME L.

Vol. XV.

ST JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1899.

No. 48.

Lord Salisbury's Bereavement

The death of Lady Salisbury, wife of the British Prime Minister, occurred on Monday, the 20th inst. The blow must be a heavy one to Lord Salisbury, and there will be a very general and genuine feeling of sympathy with him in his affliction, for it was well known that the mutual affection between the great statesman and his wife was very strong and that the love which had made them willing at the outset to face poverty and parental displeasure had endured pure and strong through all the more than forty years of their married life. In 1837 the present Marquis of Salisbury was Robert Cecil, a young man of 27, just returned from a two years residence in Australia. As a younger son of a famous house he had small expectations as to patrimony, but he might reasonably hope to better his financial prospects by marriage, and accordingly when Robert Cecil fell in love with and proposed to marry the daughter of Sir Edward Alderson, a baron of the Exchequer Court—a lady whose financial prospects were no better than his own, the match was strenuously opposed by the then Lord Salisbury. In spite, however, of the opposition of the Marquis and the fact that he refused his son an allowance, the future Prime Minister wedded the lady of his choice, and they entered upon married life under such conditions as their slender income made practicable. Their chief dependence during the early years was his pen. Cecil wrote for the Times, the Chronicle, and other papers and reviews, his wife doing her share nobly, assisting her husband in his work by acting as his amanuensis, while the cares of a growing family rested upon her. After some years Cecil's eldest brother died unexpectedly, and he became Marquis of Cranbourne. Soon afterwards he was made Secretary of State, and the struggle with poverty was over. In the later as well as in the earlier years of their married life, Lady Salisbury was a true helper and counsellor to her husband, and he ever gratefully and lovingly acknowledged the strength and inspiration which she ministered. Lady Salisbury was the mother of several sons, one of whom is in South Africa, with Baden-Powell in the beleaguered fortress of Mafeking. The happy experience of Lord Salisbury's wedded life and the struggles it involved, doubtless had their benignant influence upon the man. They gave him a larger fitness for the great duties which he had been called upon to discharge, and because of them the heart of the nation is the more strongly moved in sympathy for him in the day of his sorrow.

How They Fought at Glencoe.

From letters of war correspondents recently published in London and New York papers, giving detailed accounts of the battles of Elands-laagte and Glencoe, the first serious engagements of the present war, it is evident that the British soldier today, with all the improved equipment with which modern military science has furnished him, is still as brave, as steady in discipline, as ready and as able to face and to overcome tremendous odds on the battlefield as were the men who in other days won prestige for British arms. Last week some account was given of the way in which the heights held by the Boers at Elands-laagte were stormed and carried by the British. Before us is a letter from the correspondent of the London Times, which shows that the regiments led by General Symons at Glencoe against a well-nigh impregnable position of the Boers showed a discipline and a courage no less steady and invincible. The price which was paid for victory was heavy indeed. General Symons himself, and scores of his brave men, fell in the fight, but the result must have convinced the Boers that their ideas of the fighting qualities of the British soldier required radical revision. Talana Hill, on which the Boers were posted in great numbers, rises 300 feet, and the distance to the top is more than a mile. Part way up the hill was a homestead and broken woods. Above the woods the ground was rough and rocky, the ascent steep, and half way up a thick stone wall ran round the hill as the fringe of a wide terrace of open

ground. Above the terrace the ascent is almost perpendicular, and at the end of this was the Boer position, on the flat top so characteristic of African hills. Altogether the position seemed impregnable, even if held by a small body against large forces, and Gen. Symons must have had extraordinary confidence in his men when he ordered 2,000 of them to take it in the teeth of a terrible and well-sustained fire from superior numbers of skilled riflemen. His confidence was fully justified. The men had to go through eight hours of fighting without breakfast. The wood was the first cover available, and in the rush for this position the Dublin Fusiliers led the way, though afterward the three regiments were practically side by side. The advance of the infantry was covered by a vigorous cannonade, but the appearance of our men in the open was a signal for a storm of rifle fire from the Boers. Though our losses at this stage were extraordinarily small in the wood, which for some time marked the limit of the advance they were considerable, and here at 9.30, Gen. Symons, who had galloped to tell the men that the hill must be taken, fell mortally wounded. Throughout the morning he had exposed himself perhaps unnecessarily. His position was always marked by a red flag carried by his orderly. By 10 o'clock our men, creeping up inch by inch and taking advantage of every available cover, had gained the shelter of the stone wall, but for a long time further advance seemed impossible. As soon as a man became visible the Boers poured a deadly fire in his direction, while, whatever their losses from our artillery fire, they rarely afforded a mark for the rifle. After about 12 o'clock, however, a lull in their fire afforded our men an opportunity for scaling the wall and dashing across the open ground beyond. Then the almost sheer ascent of the last portion of the hill began. Here our losses were greatest, the Rifles losing most heavily. Col. Gunning, who was always in front of his men, was shot through the head. Near the top of the hill Captain Pechell, who had only arrived two days before from the Soudan, also fell. Out of 17 officers the battalion lost five killed and seven wounded. As our men neared the top of the hill our guns were compelled to slacken their fire, and the Boers, of course, were enabled to strengthen their rifle fire accordingly. The last portion of the ascent was rushed with their bayonets, but the Boers did not await the charge, a few who stood ground to near the end being seen flying precipitately across the top of the hill when our men reached the crest. About 30 dead and wounded were lying on the ground, and cases of ammunition and Mauser rifles strewn about showed the hurry of the fight. Boer ponies were galloping about, and one of the humorous sights of the day was to see the Dublin Fusiliers gaily riding back these captive steeds."

Wireless Telegraphy.

Among recent inventions that of wireless telegraphy is perhaps the most wonderful and promises most largely in the way of practical advantage. The limits of its application are not yet determined, but experiments have fully demonstrated its practical utility at considerable distances. It seems likely to come into very general use and to be of great value as a means of communication between vessels at sea and also between vessels and the shore. It would seem that its use might be of great service in war. A short time ago it was stated that it was to be employed in the British interest in South Africa, but we have seen no mention of its actually having been thus employed as yet. Whether or not wireless telegraphy can be made practicable for very long distances is a question yet to be settled. It is stated that the famous electrician, Nikola Tesla, has spent the summer in the high altitudes of Colorado, for the purpose of testing the possibilities of the wireless system, and that he is much more than satisfied with the results of his experiments. However the statement that he has perfected a machine by which he expects to send messages to Paris next year may well be taken with a grain of salt.

The Manitoba Election.

In Manitoba a Provincial Election campaign is in progress. The voting is to take place on December 7. Premier Greenway continues at the

head of the Government party, and the Opposition is led by Mr. Hugh J. Macdonald, son of Sir John, who for so many years was the great chieftain of the Conservative party in the Dominion. Mr. Macdonald is, like his father, a man of those strong attractive personal qualities, so important to successful political leadership, but he has not heretofore felt attracted by political life and therefore his administrative abilities has not been tested. It is said that he is accepting the leadership of his party in the Province out of friendship to Sir Charles Tupper, who is now with Mr. Macdonald giving active assistance in the canvass. The Greenway Government was strongly supported in the last House in which there were thirty Liberals, with two independents, out of a total of thirty-eight members. The position of the Government on the school question has been generally satisfactory to a large majority of the people and still counts, no doubt, for something in its favor, though it is not probable that a Conservative government would undertake to reverse that policy. It is said that Mr. Greenway has promised, if sustained, to introduce a prohibitory liquor law for the Province. There is some discussion in reference to the political status of immigrants. Mr. Macdonald, it is said, takes the ground that they should not be permitted to vote until they are able to speak English. It would appear, however, that the contest is being carried on quite as much on Dominion as on local issues, and the result will have a general interest as an indication of the comparative strength of the two great political parties in the whole country.

The War in South Africa

The news received from South Africa during the week indicates the probability of a prolonged and terrible struggle. General Methuen has been moving northward apparently with a view to the relief of Kimberley, and is now reported to be in heliographic communication with the beleaguered town. He has, however, met the enemy in sufficient force to make his progress slow and difficult. Two important battles have been fought in which the Boers were worsted, but not without inflicting considerable loss upon General Methuen's army, and of course seriously retarding his advance. The first of these engagements occurred in the vicinity of Belmont in northern Cape Colony, on Thursday. General Methuen's force numbered 7,000, and the Boers, 5,000 strong, held an exceedingly strong position on a series of hills extending a dozen miles. They were strongly entrenched, their cannon well posted and excellently served. The Boers held their ground with their customary stubborn courage, but were unable to stand against the attack of the British battalions and were routed from their final position by the irresistible bayonet charge of the British. There does not appear to be any reliable statement as to the losses suffered in the battle. The British loss was considerable and the Boer loss no doubt still heavier, some estimates placing it as high as 150 killed and 500 wounded. Over 30 Boers were taken prisoners. Treacherous use of the white flag by the Boers is again reported. On Saturday Gen. Methuen again met the Boers about ten miles farther north and defeated them after quite a severe engagement. The news from Natal during the week has been meagre and the situation has caused anxiety. The Boers have appeared in force south of the Tugela river, Estcourt has been isolated and the expected advance of the British forces to the relief of Ladysmith has not taken place. Gen. White has been holding on at Ladysmith, but under what conditions is not generally known, while from Pretoria there have been intimations that the Boers are confident of their ability to take the place. But the latest received despatches are more reassuring as to the condition of affairs in Natal. Connection has been established with Estcourt. General Buller is now at Pietermaritzburg, and it may reasonably be concluded that the advance for the relief of Ladysmith will not be longer delayed. One of the disturbing features of the news from South Africa has reference to the Dutch residents of Cape Colony, who are said to be showing a strong disposition at several points to make common cause with the Boers. However one or two important successes won by the British arms will probably do much to check such a tendency.