

## BLOEMFONTEIN DURING THE WAR.

**T**HE *Southern Cross* says that during the five months which elapsed from the beginning of the war to the entry of the British troops into Bloemfontein, the clergy and their families remained in that city. They were treated with much consideration by the authorities, and though it was necessary to practise very strict economy, they had not to encounter serious privations. The services in the cathedral were well attended. The Litany, in accordance with the late Bishop's instruction, given a few days before his death, was said daily at noon as a special intercession.

It was possible to undertake occasional itinerating work and to hold services at Winburg, Bultfontein, Bethulie, and Philippolis. Journeys to these places were often made in trains, crowded by armed burgers *en route* to the front, but the clergy always met with respect and kindness. At Jacobsdal two of the sisters from St. Michael's Home were of much use in the camp hospital, and at Bloemfontein and Harrismith the clergy were kept busy with the care of wounded prisoners.

On the occupation of Bloemfontein the British soldiers, from Lord Roberts downwards, showed great delight at being able again to worship within the walls of a Church, and great numbers have Sunday by Sunday attended the celebrations of the Holy Communion, as well as the other services. The offertories have been considerable, but in addition to this practical demonstration of thankfulness, Lord Roberts has, on behalf of himself and the army, expressed the generous intention of defraying the cost of lighting the Cathedral with the electric light.

A writer to the *Cape Argus* says that long after the traces of this war have passed away, a sad memorial will remain in Bloemfontein of the stay of the British army, in the shape of the rapidly-increasing number of graves in the cemetery behind the Cathedral. They form quite a small cemetery in themselves, and are laid in regular rows and companies. Most of the graves are unmarked, but here and there one sees evidence of a crude memorial, evidently placed there by the soldiers themselves as a last tribute to a departed comrade. These memorials are of the roughest and simplest description—a regimental badge, a name or initial only, worked in pebbles on the grave, or, at the best, a brief epitaph punched in tin or written in pencil on pieces of board or primitive crosses. These humble tokens doubtless possess supreme merit, as being genuine evidences of honor and regret, but it is only natural to believe that at some future time a more worthy and lasting memorial will mark

this the final resting-place of so many of Britain's sons who gave their lives for the Empire—for every branch of the Empire is represented in this "last sad muster"—Guardsmen, Infantrymen, Australians, and Cape Colonists lying side by side.

Another "object lesson" for those who "see so much virtue in the pious Boer, and so little in their own countrymen, would," the writer says, "be a visit to one of the Bloemfontein churches on any Sunday." Every Sunday since Lord Roberts arrived the different places of worship have been crowded with soldiers at every service. We have heard a great deal during the present war of the simple Boer peasant upheld by his religious faith in the righteousness of his cause and belief in the favor of the Almighty fighting against a profane and licentious soldiery. The Englishman does not make a parade of his religious feelings—the English soldier least of all. But they are there all the same, as anyone with eyes in his head and feeling in his heart can see for himself any Sunday in Bloemfontein. There can be no mistake about the feelings of the men. After the long, weary weeks of marching and fighting, they are eager to seize the chance of attending the Divine service in an English church once more, and they come in hundreds every time. The matter was, of course, particularly noticeable on Easter Sunday. At the Bloemfontein Cathedral every service was crowded, especially that held in the evening, when, notwithstanding a special service for soldiers already held in the afternoon, the Cathedral was densely packed to its very portals, many having to be content with standing room only.

It was a most moving sight, and surely the most rabid partisan of "brother Boer" must have been impressed at this Cathedral full of soldiers—officers and privates—Regulars, Volunteers, and Colonials, all in their war-worn, travel-stained khaki—reverent, attentive, and appreciative, entreating the blessing and protection of the "God of Battles"—"Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God."—*Gospel Missionary*.

ALL that I taught of art, everything that I have written, every greatness that there has been in any thought of mine, whatever I have done in my life, has simply been due to the fact that when I was a child my mother daily read with me a part of the Bible, and daily made me learn a part of it by heart.—*Ruskin*.

WHICH is the more honor to a man—to own a fault if he has committed one, or to deny it.