

Hard on Mr. Chamberlain.

The violent party in England, exasperated by the protraction of Boer resistance, says Goldwin Smith in the Weekly Sun, is calling on Lord Roberts to resort to iron measures of repression; in other words, to shoot prisoners of war, burn homesteads and turn the women and children out to die. Fortunately for British honor, and for Canadian honor herein bound up with it, Lord Roberts is not one of the gin-inspired heroes of the music halls, but a high-minded soldier, who may be trusted to observe the laws and humanities of war towards the gallant enemy who has done nothing to forfeit their protection. To guerrilla warfare England can hardly object, having herself acted in conjunction with the Spanish guerrillas through all the Peninsular campaigns. The prolongation by the Boers of a hopeless struggle is undoubtedly deplorable. But whose is the fault? More than once the Boers have allowed it to be seen that they were willing to treat. Probably if any shred of independence or any semblance of honorable terms had been offered them they would before now have laid down their arms. But Mr. Chamberlain has insisted on unconditional submission; that is, he has proclaimed war to the knife, which would have justified the enemy in destroying the mines and even in doing at Johannesburg or Pretoria what the Russians, amid the general applause of Europe, did at Moscow. He is an extremely able man, and now on the crest of the waves. But magnanimity and generosity are emotions little familiar to his mind. Even Sir Alfred Milner could find it in his heart to rebuke the Cape loyalists who called the Boers cowardly scoundrels, and tell them that the Boers are brave men fighting for a cause which, though wrong, to them seemed right. Mr. Chamberlain has not found it in his heart to utter a generous, chivalrous or conciliatory word.

The party of vengeance might take a lesson from the private soldiers, in whose letters, it is remarked, there is no abuse of the Boers. One private soldier writes:

"We have beaten the poor devils badly. But they are a plucky lot. As long as they were in our territory we were ready to endure any hardship to drive them out, and we were glad to get to Pretoria to show them that we could do it. But now we cannot help feeling a sort of sympathy with them, for they are fighting, as we should, for their independence, against desperate odds. We have taken away their mines, and you should see the lot who hope to profit by this. Why cannot we leave them alone in a country in which no sensible man would ever want to settle, for it is rocky, pestiferous and generally damnable? I do not know what they say now in England. We soldiers, of course, shall obey orders, but do not suppose that we like the job, and we are always saying that we should like some of the stay-at-home politicians to come out here and take the contract off our hands."

If the soldier's wish could be fulfilled and stay-at-home politicians could be sent to the front, there would be pretty nearly an end of war.

Famine threatens the people of South Africa. Agricultural pursuits have been practically abandoned during the last eight months, and now the food supply is at a low ebb both in the Transvaal and in the Orange River Colony. Crops have been left ungathered, and there is very little grain in the land to sow for next season, so seeds must be imported against next planting time.

Discovery of a New Tribe in West Africa.

From the Chronicle of the London Missionary Society we quote the following interesting particular:

The agent of the Basle Missionary Society which has several stations among the Bakoko people in the South Cameroons, has recently undertaken a journey which has brought him into contact with the Bati, a tribe hitherto unknown, living in the interior. After a toilsome march of four days through principal forest and treacherous swamp he reached the tribe, and was hospitably received by the chief.

The Bati are an intelligent, vigorous, handsome tribe, with remarkably bright eyes, and noses less flat and broad than most other tribes, and as they gathered round him in numbers as soon as his arrival was made known by means of a drum, he had a good opportunity of studying their faces. Both men and women wear their hair long and skilfully plaited. Leaf aprons form the only dress for women, while men wear either European shawls or native ones made from the bark of trees, and very durable.

Many of the women paint the body all over with white clay or powdered red wood which gives them a very ugly, even uncanny appearance; and by way of ornament, those of rank among them wear round the neck a massive brass collar weighing about five pounds, of native manufacture.

In former years the tribe dwelt further inland, but, like all other tribes, they have been moving nearer the coast—a fact to be borne in mind for future operations. Various paintings, rudely executed, were found on the walls of the chief's hut, and as for music, the chief is very fond of his guitar, which he plays with remarkable precision.

In response to his inquiry about their worship, the visitor was taken to the sanctuary of their fetish, which consists of two large animal figures, leopard and serpent, rudely carved out of the trunk of a tree. On a stated day in the year the fetish is carried into the village and presented to the assembled people, whereupon the ceremony of initiating their young men into the mysteries of their worship takes place, the sign being an incision of the skin visible for life, to which certain privileges are attached.

In the evening the stranger was invited to witness a dance, which was entertaining enough for a while, but he was sorely grieved to see that spirits were surreptitiously handed round. Before the people dispersed he gave them a Gospel address; and, though he found the return march most exhausting, he felt amply compensated for what he had undergone by the value of his discovery.

Ditched The Bishop.

"I remember once driving across the country with Bishop —" writes Cyrus Townsend Brady of "A Missionary in the Great West," in the August Ladies' Home Journal, "while discussing the nature of the soul. That is, the Bishop was discussing; I was only prompted by a question now and then. We were on the rear seat of a wagon, with the driver in the front seat. It was a very dark night. In the middle of the Bishop's exposition the wagon took a wild plunge, there was a crash, and over we went into the muddy ditch. 'I beg your pardon, gents,' said the driver, who had retained control of the horses, as we scrambled to our feet, 'I was so interested in hearing the little man discuss my immortal soul, which I hardly ever knowed that I had one before, that I clean forgot where we was, and drove you plump into the ditch.'"

Ninety Million Involved.

"A Bystander," (Golden Smith) in the Weekly Sun draws a dark picture of the outlook in our great Eastern Empire. He says:

From India the tidings are terrible. It is now said that the visitation extends, in different degrees of intensity, over ninety millions of people, a human area larger than that of our continent. Disease, as usual, stalks in the track of famine, and the descriptions of death, emaciation and despair are heart-rending. "When I look," says an eye-witness, "on the scenes through which I have passed and think of the sum-total of human misery and the despair I have seen on the people's faces and the ruin this famine has brought on their homes and on their fields and on their families, I feel it is hopeless to attempt to put into words the agony of India." The Indian government is doing all that its limited resources will permit, but is overpowered by the magnitude of the disaster. Appeals have been made in Parliament and in the press to the British Government for aid, which is refused on the ground that the financial affairs of India must be kept distinct from those of Great Britain, though aid from India Princes for the South African war is not refused but welcomed with applause. Even when the famine shall have passed away the future will be full of despair. Almost all the cattle in the afflicted districts have perished, and the village communities, which are the units of Hindoo peasant life, have been broken up. It is difficult to see how agricultural organization and industry are to be restored. To make the brimming cup of calamity overflow comes the interruption of the Indian trade with China.

An article in the Alte Glaube, on Family Worship, says, twenty years ago a teacher in Thuringia found that of forty pupils only three came from homes where family worship was observed. These were children of a nobleman, a pastor and a teacher. The writer of this article, himself a teacher, finds the same state of things in the present day. "Even grace before meat has become seldom. Frequently in village parishes only the minister's family, sometimes also that of the teacher, observes household worship. A blessing is invoked oftener, but by the mother or the children, rarely by the men." "What a decline of religious life!" he exclaims. And that in Thuringia, where the family life of Luther was so long imitated. "Family religion has gone for the most part down to zero, if not lower." The cause is the widespread rationalism, criticism of the Bible, and lack of devotion among the clergy. Certain books are recommended as aids to those who are trying to restore family worship to the homes of Germany.

When Captain Towse, of the Gordon Highlanders, who had both eyes shot out at the battle of Mount Thaba, went to Windsor to receive the Victoria Cross at the hands of Her Majesty, the Queen was so overcome with emotion that she burst into tears, and was unable for a few seconds to speak. The blind officer, though led into the room by his wife, walked forward a few paces alone, and saluted as he reached the Queen. Captain Towse is showing the most magnificent courage in facing his terrible misfortune, and is already able to make use of the blind alphabet in reading.

Preparations for the celebration of the Union between the Free and United Presbyterian churches in the end of October are in an advanced state in Scotland.