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St. Helena and the Boer Prisoners. The sending of General Cronje and a large number of other Boer prisoners to St. Helena renews interest in that little island of the South Atlantic, chiefly notable as having been the scene of Napoleon Bonaparte's exile and death. Napoleon was sent to St. Helena in October, 1815, and his death occurred May 5, 1821. His body was buried on the island and remained there until 1840, when it was removed to France. St. Helena is situated in 15° 67' S. latitude, about 1,200 miles west of Africa and 2,000 miles east of South America. The island has an area of 47 square miles, and its population is said to number about 6,000. It has an excellent harbor at Jamestown, besides other inlets, all which are fortified. The island is of volcanic origin, much of its surface is rocky and a lofty ridge of calcareous rocks intersects the island from east to west. Diana's Peak is the highest point, and there are several others of a little less altitude. There are several large plains of which Longwood, where Napoleon resided, is the largest, having 1,500 acres. The soil is said to be good, but not much attention is devoted to its cultivation. The island was first discovered in 1502 by Juan de Nova Castella, a Spanish navigator in the service of the Portuguese. It afterwards passed into the hands of the Dutch and finally to the English. Since the opening of the Suez Canal, and the consequent diversion of the Indian trade to that route, St. Helena has become of much less importance commercially than it was formerly. Some of the Cape steamers have called there regularly, thus keeping up a mail service, but life on the island, though not unpleasant, is described as dull. On April 10th the arrival at St. Helena of the British ships 'Niobe' and 'Milwaukee' with the Boer prisoners was reported. The prisoners were reported to be quiet and well-behaved, and to be in good health with the exception of a few cases of measles. The Governor of the island has been notified of the desire of the military authorities that the prisoners be treated with every courtesy and consideration.

The Indian Famine. Terrible accounts continue to reach us of the widespread and awful suffering caused by the Indian Famine. Within British territory much has been done by the Government to mitigate the severity of the famine, the number of persons employed upon the "relief works" amounting now, it is said, to five and a quarter millions, and still the suffering in extent and intensity is terrible to contemplate. But in the native provinces, where both the system and the sympathy necessary to a well organized relief system are wanting, matters are much worse, and the result is that many starving refugees flock over into the British provinces in search of the means of subsistence. The Rev. James Smith, who has been for twenty years a missionary at Ahmednagar, and is now home in Ontario on furlough, has recently received from India letters, extracts from which respecting the famine are published in a Toronto paper. As an illustration of the effects of the famine, the following extract is quoted: "My correspondents in India, writing under date of March 10th, speak of a family now on the 'relief works,' who a few months ago owned 700 head of cattle. They were a family of seven, husband and wife, four children and an uncle. When the rains failed in June they left their village with their animals in search of fodder. Wherever they thought grass could be found they went; but the cattle died all the same. Then the wife lay down in her last sleep and three of their children followed. Only the men and one child survived to reach the works." This we are told is but one instance, and there are many others of the kind.

Motor Vehicles and Good Roads. One of the desirable changes which the not distant future will probably bring is an improved condition of the public highways. The introduction and common use of the bicycle has given thousands of men a vastly greater appreciation than they ever had before of the superiority of a smooth road over a rough one, and accordingly has given

great emphasis to the demand for good roads. With the introduction of motor bicycles and other automobiles, the demand for and the importance of solid and smooth roadways will be increased. These vehicles have already reached a state of development at which a speed of from twenty to forty miles an hour can easily be made on a good road, and it is said that a motor bicycle under favorable conditions has attained a speed of 60 miles an hour. It is easy to see that the automobile is likely to become in certain places an important rival of the railway, and that wherever there is a really good macadamized system of public highways, the people will be able, by means of automobile carriages and trucks, to enjoy to a great degree the privileges and advantages which are now only available to those living along the lines of railway. With the facilities for rapid communication which the new motor vehicles will afford there will be a mutual interest between the dwellers in the city and those in the country to promote good roads, and it is probable that public opinion will favor the application of public funds to the improvement of the existing highways, rather than to the bonusing of new lines of railway. It is interesting to observe in this connection, that the Ontario Government has recently decided to expend a million dollars on its public highways.

The War. The past week has been one of comparative quiet in South Africa so far as actual fighting is concerned, but it has without doubt been marked by activity in preparation for the struggle that is to come. Lord Roberts has completed the fortification of Bloemfontein so as to make the place defensible by a comparatively small British force. He is also gathering his forces at Bloemfontein and at other strategic points in the Free State. The railway between the Capetown and General Roberts' headquarters is worked to its fullest capacity in forwarding troops, horses, ammunition and other military equipments, so that only the bare necessities of life are obtainable at Bloemfontein. General Gatacre has been recalled to England and General Chermide appointed to the command of his division. The Boers continue to pursue their guerrilla methods in the Free State, but have not been so successful in cutting off detached bodies of the British as they were the previous week. Lord Roberts has evidently made his railway communication secure, but he has not deemed it wise to use up the strength of his cavalry in chasing the Boer commandos through the country. Evidently he is husbanding his resources for the effective blow he means to deliver later. His great need now is understood to be a sufficiency of good remounts for his cavalry. Horses in considerable numbers are reaching Capetown, but after a long sea voyage the animals must have two or three weeks at least before they are fit for active service. If Lord Roberts had had a sufficient number of good horses at command at the time when his rapid movements and successes culminating in the taking of Bloemfontein had struck the Boers with panic, it is quite possible that he would have been able to bring the war to a speedy end, but the worn-out and almost useless condition of the British cavalry has given the Boers a great advantage, enabling them to win some minor successes and encouraging them to resist to the utmost. Two reports adverse to the British cause, received during the week from Boer sources, appear to be without foundation. One is a statement that a battle had been fought at Merkatfontein in which 600 British had been killed and 800 taken prisoners. There is no confirmation of this report and it must be either a pure invention or else an exaggerated echo of the Reddersburg affair. The other report referred to is that of the death of Colonel Baden-Powell, the heroic defender of Mafeking. This is less improbable, but as there is no confirmation of it, it is in all probability untrue. So far as is known at present writing Mafeking still holds out, unrelieved and in hard straits. Despatches received during the week show that Colonel Plumer had reached the vicinity of Mafeking on March 31 with a reconnoitring party, but being attacked by a strong body of the enemy was obliged to withdraw northward with considerable loss. In Natal some artillery skirmishing between General Buller's forces and the enemy in the neighborhood of Elandslaagte is reported, but no real engagement seems to have occurred. The

most serious fighting reported during the week has been at Wepener, in the southeast corner of the Orange State, where a part of General Brabant's colonial division, under the command of Col. Dalgety, was attacked and isolated by a considerable force of the enemy. The colonials have had hard fighting and considerable loss, but had held out bravely until Saturday, and there is an unconfirmed report from Capetown, dated Sunday, that General Brabant had inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Boers at Wepener, capturing guns and taking prisoners.

The Paris Exposition.

The great Paris Exposition was opened on Saturday last, amid ceremonies which a press correspondent describes as "a peculiar mixture of sumptuous splendor in the Salle Des Fetes and widespread confusion and unreadiness elsewhere." Nothing, it is said, could have excelled the picturesque stage setting in the beautiful building in which the inauguration ceremonies were held, the gorgeous uniforms of the diplomats and soldiers, the splendid orchestra and chorus, and the magnificent effect produced by the grand staircase, up which President Loubet proceeded to view the exposition, lined with some 200 picked men of the Republican Guards, in all the splendor of their uniforms and glittering armor. "The spectacle that met President Loubet's eyes, when, amid the resounding strains of the Marsellaise he stepped to the front of the presidential dias on his entry to the Salle Des Fetes, was probably never seen before within the walls of any building. The vast circus was filled with a sea of human beings who overflowed the balconies jutting out from the sides. The decoration of the interior was certainly a triumph of artists' skill, with a handsome stained glass dome through which the rays of sunlight filtered down upon the concourse below, and a color scheme in mural painting with the strikingly executed frescoes of appropriate allegories in brilliant relief. The galleries and balconies were draped with red plush, and the hall was profusely adorned with trophies of tricolor flags, opening fanlike from shields bearing the letters "R. F." The group among the great assembly which was the most attractive was the body of foreign representatives in picturesque attire. Since Victoria's jubilee or the Czar's coronation, no such congress of strange and gorgeous national costumes has been seen. In a mass together were turbaned chiefs, Arab sheiks in flowing white robes and with faces muffled in linen cloths; Hungarian magnates in magnificent velvet dolmans trimmed with valuable furs, with green breeches and top-boots and wearing fur toques surmounted by waving aigrettes; Chinese and other Oriental embassy officials in characteristic silk garments; tall Cosacks in sumptuous cloaks and bandoliers slung across their chests from which emerged the polished brass cartridge cases, and trailing heavy sabres. All of these outlandish figures rubbed shoulders with the wearers of the not less splendid but better known European uniforms." The opening ceremonies included an address to President Loubet by M. Millerand, the Minister of Commerce, and an opening address by the President. In the course of his address President Loubet said: "In inviting the governments and the peoples to make with us a synthesis of human work, the French Republic has not only in mind to institute competition of visible marvels and to renew on the banks of the Seine the ancient renown of elegance and courteous hospitality. Our ambition is more lofty. It soars infinitely above the brilliance of transitory fetes and does not confine itself. Whatever patriotic satisfaction we may experience today in the gratification of our *amour propre*, France wishes to make a striking contribution to the bringing about of concord between peoples." In conclusion President Loubet said: "Gentlemen, this work of harmony, peace and progress, however ephemeral its outward show, will not have been in vain; the peaceful meeting of the governments of the world will not remain sterile. I am convinced that, thanks to the persevering affirmation of certain generous thoughts with which the expiring century has resounded, the twentieth century will witness a little more fraternity and less misery of all kinds, and that ere long, perhaps, we shall have accomplished an important step in the slow evolution of the work towards happiness and of man towards humanity."