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The Climate of South Africa. The present war in South Africa, in the perils and fortunes of which so considerable a number of our Canadian volunteers are now sharing, has given us a new and lively interest in all that pertains to that country. Its climatic conditions are very different from those of Canada. Its position in the southern hemisphere reverses the order of the seasons as compared with our northern land. Its summer months are our winter months. Accordingly it is now autumn in South Africa and the winter lies just ahead. There is, however, less distinction climatically between autumn and winter, spring and summer, than with us. South Africa lies considerably nearer the tropics than does Canada, Capetown being in 35° south latitude and Pretoria about ten degrees nearer the equator. The coast lands have abundant moisture and the summers are very warm. In the interior portion of the country the rainfall is less, and the much higher altitude tempers the heat so that the nights are cold even in summer. The level strip of coast land is generally narrow. Twenty-five miles north of East London, which is situated between Port Elizabeth and Durban, the land is 1,500 feet or more above sea level. North of this are the Anatolia mountains, attaining a height of 7,000 feet. The country between these and the Stormberg range has an altitude of about 4,000 feet, and north of the Stormberg is the great plateau stretching beyond Bloemfontein having a somewhat greater altitude. North of Bloemfontein the altitude increases, reaching about 4,500 feet at Kroonstadt, 4,750 at the Transvaal border, and 5,700 at Johannesburg. From that point northward the altitude decreases and at Pretoria it is a little less than at Kroonstadt. The interior of South Africa—except in a few places where malaria may be encountered—is considered to have one of the most healthy climates in the world, and especially so in respect to pulmonary diseases. The least healthy portion of the year is that which follows the rainy season—the drying season—preceding the dry season of winter. The cold nights in contrast to the warm days, and the dampness, are trying for the unacclimated, and both men and animals suffer with pneumonia. At this season men must be both well clothed and well fed, and in the necessity of thus providing for the comfort and health of his troops is doubtless to be found a part of the reason for the delay in Lord Roberts' advance upon Pretoria. The winter of South Africa is of course very different from a Canadian winter. It is a time of cloudless skies, bright, warm days and cold nights, with some frost, a time of constant drought in the highlands of the interior, when all vegetation withers and the face of the veldt or open country becomes of the color of brown paper. For those who have sufficient protection from the cold of the nights, the climate of the winter season is said to be extremely healthful. The continued drought is of course monotonous and the dust storms are the one positively disagreeable feature.

Flogging in English Schools. The introduction into the British Parliament of the "Youthful Offenders" bill by which it was proposed to substitute corporal punishment for imprisonment in the case of minor offences has given occasion for certain remarks and reminiscences respecting the retention of corporal punishment in the English schools of the rank of Eton, Rugby, Harrow, etc. In his speech upon the Bill in the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury made a remark to the effect that if the record of the members of the House of Lords was investigated it would be found that they had been as boys repeatedly subjected to corporal punishment.

He expressed the opinion that those floggings had "left no traces of contamination" and the hope that the poor might not be excluded from the benefits of this method of discipline which had for centuries been so freely accorded to the sons of the rich. There can be few public men more clearly entitled to discuss the subject in the light of personal experience than the Prime Minister, for it is recorded that while a student at Eton, Lord Salisbury received eighteen several floggings. Gladstone, it is related, escaped a flogging at Eton because the head master permitted himself to be led into an argument with the statesman that was to be, and Gladstone succeeded in creating so much doubt in the master's mind as to the justice of the punishment he was about to inflict that he concluded to let the matter drop. It is estimated that one thousand members of the present Parliament was educated at such schools as Eton, Harrow and Rugby, and probably the experience of most of them in regard to floggings is more akin to Lord Salisbury's than to Mr. Gladstone's. A contributor to the New York Tribune, writing upon this subject over the signature of "Ex-Attache" gives us a leaf from his own notebook as follows: "As a matter of personal experience I may mention that when I left school I had to my record no less than sixteen floggings inflicted in the space of four years. This involved the expenditure of ninety-six pickled birches, at half a crown a piece, all of which were carefully charged as 'extras' in the school bills sent to my parents. Each punishment consisted of twelve strokes on the bare flesh, a new birch being used for every two blows, received kneeling, with one of the big sixth form boys holding me down with his right hand pressed on the back of my neck. The birches were long, thin and tough, having been kept in brine for several months, and the punishment they inflicted when wielded by our head master—a gigantic divine over six feet high and powerful in proportion—was quite enough to make one wince, every stroke lacerating the skin and leaving scars which, however, as the Prime Minister justly remarked in the House of Lords, 'are neither disgraceful nor contaminating.'" It is related that on one occasion thirty boys, of whom the present Prime Minister of England was one, received a flogging to which they were not justly entitled, owing to the blunder of the head master who mistook a list of that number of candidates for confirmation for the punishment bill which was sent up to him every day. He would listen to no protests on the part of the boys, but soundly flogged them all.

Lord Roberts' Despatch. A sensation of no ordinary character was caused by the publication by the Imperial Government on Tuesday last of a despatch from Lord Roberts which was written on February 13 and which had therefore been for some five weeks in the hands of the War Department in London. The despatch embodies reports from Generals Buller and Warren, with remarks by General Roberts upon the movement to relieve Ladysmith, which issued in the unsuccessful operations at Spion Kop. It would appear that all three generals agree in thinking that the position gained, and held so bravely for a day, might have been, and should have been, held permanently. General Warren seems to blame Colonel Thornycroft, who at the suggestion of General Buller had been placed in command on the hill and who, without consultation with his superior officers, decided to abandon the position. Buller in turn censures Warren for lack of the prompt action and the generalship necessary to support Thornycroft and hold the hill. Commenting upon the reports of

his subordinates, Lord Roberts severely censures Thornycroft for the assumption of undue authority and for action fatal to the success of the enterprise, at the same time praising him for his gallant fight. Lord Roberts also severely censures General Warren for his failure to meet the demands of a critical situation and to assure Thornycroft that the reinforcement necessary to hold the hill was at hand. But Lord Roberts goes further, and insists that General Buller himself must bear a part of the blame for the failure of his enterprise. Lord Roberts says: "The attempt to relieve Ladysmith was well devised and I agree with Buller in thinking it ought to have succeeded. That it failed may in some measure have been due to the difficulties of the ground and commanding positions held by the enemy and probably also to errors of judgment and want of administrative capacity on the part of Warren. But whatever faults Warren may have committed, the failure must also be attributed to the disinclination of the officer in supreme command to assert his authority and see that what he thought best was done and also to the unwarrantable and needless assumption of responsibility by a subordinate officer." The reason for the publication of Lord Roberts' despatch is not easy to understand. Presumably it was not intended for the public eye but for the information of the Government. It was naturally supposed when the despatch was published that it presaged the recall of General Warren, if not of General Buller also. But this seems not to be the case, and the only explanation given on the part of the Government is the remarkable one, under all related circumstances, that "the country was entitled to receive all the information that the Government could give." To the ordinary mind it would seem that the Government should wish at this time to do everything possible to strengthen the hands of the generals at the front, and the publication of Lord Roberts' despatch is certainly a remarkable method of achieving that end. If nobody is to be recalled, why should the incompetence of British commanders be paraded before the army, the nation and the world?

The War. The curtain is still kept pretty closely drawn across the stage of events in South Africa. Very little has been heard from Lord Roberts during the past week. Such glimpses, however, as the correspondents at the front are permitted to give us indicate that the moment for a general advance on the part of the British army, though supposed to be near, has not yet arrived, and that in the meantime the Boers are continuing to pursue their guerrilla tactics. At latest accounts Col. Dalgety, with a force of about 1,500 colonials, was still invested by the Boers at Wepener. He had been able to make an effective resistance, and his capture, though probably within the power of the enemy, would cost them a larger sacrifice of men than they are likely to make. Generals Rundle and Brabant have been fighting their way to the relief of Colonel Dalgety, the former from the south and the latter from the west. A despatch from Lord Roberts on Saturday states that Rundle had been fighting the Boers with some success on Friday near Dewet's Dorp, and that fighting was resumed on Saturday. At the same time General Brabant's relief force was reported to be at Bushman's Kop, 20 miles from Wepener, with a fairly open country before them. Saturday's despatches intimated that important developments were expected immediately, but no further news from that quarter has been received at this writing. The Boers must have a very considerable force in the vicinity of Wepener—which is near the eastern border of the Orange State—southeast of Bloemfontein. The officer in command was General Dewet, and an unconfirmed report, coming by way of Lorenzo Marques, says that he has been killed. The Boers are also showing much activity in the

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