



THEIR PROUD RECORD.

WHAT THE OBLATE FATHERS ARE DOING IN SOUTH AFRICAN MISSIONARY WORK—FAITHFUL TO THE OLD FLAG THEY LEAVE THEIR PARISHES TO CARE FOR THE WOUNDED, THE SICK AND DISTRESSED.

At the present time all eyes are turned towards South Africa. Everybody follows with concern and anxiety the sudden turn of a war which, it seems, will be long and terrible. The Boers are very numerous, brave, well disciplined, furnished with the best of arms, have great confidence in themselves and in divine Providence, which, they say, will never fail them, because they are fighting for justice, their rights and independence.

The theatre of war is precisely the parts of South Africa confided by the Holy See to the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate. For 48 years they have labored with extraordinary devotedness, zeal and perseverance in an arid and ungrateful soil. The work was hard and laborious. For a long time they sowed in tears without reaping much fruit from their labors. The good seed, however, was not without fruit, and for the past 25 or 30 years in many places it has produced a most abundant harvest. In 1851 the first Oblate Bishop was consecrated. Rt. Rev. Bishop J. F. Allard, O. M. I., with a few Oblate Fathers were the only Catholic priests in those vast regions of Natal, Transvaal, Orange Free State, Bechuanaland, Zululand and Basutoland, and only a handful of Catholics scattered over those immense territories. Now, there are five Vicariates, with over 80 Oblate Fathers, a very flourishing monastery of Trappist Fathers, Christian and Marist Brothers, Nazareth, Mercy, Ursuline, and Kermaria Nuns. Of late years the numbers of conversions among both the white and black populations have been very remarkable; Catholic institutions have become very prosperous in all the principal centres of population. Let us give a few names of the institutions: At Johannesburg there is the largest and best equipped hospital in South Africa, a large boarding school for young ladies, under the direction of the Sisters of the Holy Family; near by a home for old men and women and an orphanage, under the charge of the Sisters of Nazareth; besides these, the Ursuline Nuns and the Marist Brothers teach more than 500 children in their schools.

At Bloemfontein the Sisters of the Holy Family have another boarding school, and day schools, having a large number of pupils. The same good works are carried out at Kimberley, where there is also a school for the negroes; the schools of the Christian Brothers are well attended. In the same city the Sisters of Nazareth have an orphanage for children, and a home for the old men and women. At Mafeking the Sisters of Mercy, and at Taungs the Sisters of Kermaria have also schools. At Newcastle, which has just been occupied by the Boers, without

striking a blow, the Dominican nuns possess a large boarding school for young ladies. Lady-smith and Estcourt, the headquarters of the British, have each an hospital and school, under the direction of the Augustinian Sisters. Pietermaritzburg is not behind the other cities for institutions; there is a college, under the direction of the Oblate Fathers, boarding school and orphanage, day schools for white children, Indians and Kaffirs, under the charge of the Sisters of the Holy Family, and a sanatorium under the care of the Augustinian Sisters. At Durban is another sanatorium, an asylum for old persons and for orphans, a boarding school for young ladies in a beautiful position, besides large and flourishing schools for Indian and Kaffir children.

These details are sufficient to show the progress that the Catholic religion has made in these countries whose inhabitants a few years ago were either pagans, infidels or heretics. But, alas! what will now become of those grand establishments? They will undoubtedly experience the fatal consequences of the war. In the cities already occupied by the troops some wards are entirely solitary on account of the emigration; but the hospitals are filled with sick and wounded; the schools are transformed into ambulances, and teachers into nurses and Sisters of Charity.

Many of the Oblate Fathers have been obliged to abandon the ordinary works of the sacred ministry and to devote themselves to the service of the soldiers to follow the armies as military chaplains. We find the Oblate Fathers in both armies, because in both there are Catholic soldiers. Rev. Father George Ogle, O. M. I., is with the British at Mafeking; Rev. Father Michael Morley, O. M. I., and the other Fathers of the residence at Kimberley, give their care to the soldiers at and around Kimberley; Rev. Father William Murray, O. M. I., and Rev. Father James Saby, O. M. I., perform the same duties to those at Ladysmith. Rev. Father Leon Marchal, O. M. I., of Johannesburg, is chaplain to a regiment of 2,000 Irishmen, who have taken the part of the Boers; Rev. Father Stephen Hammer, O. M. I., of the same city, is chaplain to a corps of 3,000 German volunteers.

The Oblate Fathers, on the battlefield, in the camp, amongst the soldiers as on their missions, will reap an abundant harvest of souls for Heaven. Father William Murray, O. M. I., at Ladysmith, has already administered the sacrament to 900 men, many of whom had not approached the sacraments of Penance since they had made their first Communion. Almighty God does all things for the salvation of souls; it is to be hoped that he permits the horrors of this war in order to bring many souls to everlasting life. May He spare our institutions which we have established with much labor and many sacrifices. May we ask our readers to offer a prayer for this intention?

PETITES ANNALES, O. M. I.
December, 1899.

Extract from a letter of Rt. Rev. Bishop Ch. Jolivet, O. M. I.: "The Boers are already masters of a part of Natal. From the beginning the British abandoned to them Newcastle, where they are now established.

The Dominican nuns were obliged to fly thence in a hurry, leaving their beautiful establishments to the mercy of the Boers. The nuns left with many of their boarders, who were unable to return to their parents. For a few days they stopped at Dundee, whence 30 nuns and 30 boarders were obliged to seek refuge here at Maritzburg. They have rented a house into which they are all crowded together. A month ago they had one of the finest boarding schools in South Africa; now it is in ruins, and the nuns are in a sad state of poverty. At Ladysmith and at Estcourt the Sisters are still holding their own. The Sisters of the Holy Family at Maritzburg and at Durban are undisturbed and performing their various good works. Our missionaries and our French and German sisters are still respected. Father Wm. Murray, O. M. I., is gone as a military chaplain to the Irish regiment."

† CHARLES, O. M. I., Vic. Apos.

"Bishop of Belline."

Extract from a letter of Rev. Father Marchal, O. M. I.: "The Boers are brave, well armed, good horsemen and good marksmen. They are fighting for their independence and are determined to fight to the last man. The hardships of war are nothing for these hardy farmers. They know the country and can become invincible in guerilla warfare. They are already, with Free Staters, 60,000 strong, and will be 100,000 after the first victory. A regiment of 3,000 German volunteers, most of them artillerymen, have just started for the front. Rev. Father E. Hammer, O. M. I., is their chaplain. I am starting as military chaplain with 2,000 Irishmen, with their green flag. The corps Franco-Belge guard Johannesburg. The numerous Dutch railroad navvies are all going to the front. I had a flourishing parish, 400 Catholics near the church and 1000 in the district. All are either going to the war or to places of safety. Yesterday I had only 30 men and three women at mass. The Catholics who are going to fight have obeyed my instructions and have received the sacraments. During my absence my Kaffir servant will take care of my house and garden till my return. If you learn that I have been killed on the field of honor and in the performance of my sacred ministry, I presume you will be proud of me, and not forget to pray for the repose of my soul."

"LEON MARCHAL, O. M. I."

DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION PRACTICABLE.

The Gasket.

Speaking of denominational education reminds us that The New World of Chicago, recently put the matter in a practical light that ought at least to make non-Catholics in the United States and in those of the provinces of Canada where Catholic grievances exist look at it. It says:

When narrow-minded people in this country speak of the Catholic position on the education question as something absolutely unjustifiable and entirely outrageous, they would do well to remember that, of the

three great Protestant nations in the world to-day, two concede this demand to their Catholic subjects, more or less fully, while the United States is the only one of the three which absolutely denies it. This, in itself, is a sufficient answer to the argument so commonly used that the thing is wholly impracticable, and for this reason alone, the claim cannot be entertained for a moment. It is no more impracticable here than it is in England or in Germany, and both of these nations have found a way of conceding it.

It is not very easy to feel profound sympathy for the reverend gentlemen whose woes are thus told by The Catholic Record, of Indianapolis; for they are simply being made to swallow the bitter draught they have been doing their best to force down the throats of Catholics at home:

"The Japanese government has adopted the American system of purely secular or godless education, and has withdrawn sanctions and privileges hitherto extended to schools in which any religion is taught. The Protestant missionaries find themselves in a peculiar dilemma in consequence of the law, for though in America they have always been the advocates and upholders of purely secular education, in Japan they have given religious instruction in their schools, and if they now make secular schools of them they will lose the support of the home boards, which refuse to appropriate funds for schools in heathen lands which do not teach the doctrines of their denominations, and without this support their schools, it is said, are sure to languish and die for lack of native attendance."

Will not our valued contemporary The Presbyterian Witness, which holds the thought of denominational schools in Nova Scotia in such holy abhorrence, publish a ringing article addressed to its co-religionists in Japan, convincing them of the abomination they are endeavouring to maintain in that country? For surely mere longitude cannot affect the moral character of denominational teaching, though it is a singular fact that that character is affected by the days of the week, denominationalism being, in our contemporary's opinion, a most excellent thing when you put on your Sunday clothes.

THE CONVERSION OF DR. DE COSTA.

Catholic Register.

The New York Criterion, a clever and well-written paper of no particular religious complexion, except that it is non-Catholic, has the following to say in connection with Dr. DeCosta's conversion to the Catholic faith.

"Dr. DeCosta's change from Protestantism to Roman Catholicism was not unexpected by those who knew how deep was his resentment against the sanction of the 'Higher Criticism' implied in the admission of Dr. Briggs to the Episcopal priesthood. Like all such protests to the extremes it does not at all help the matter for the mass of Protestants who do not care to go over to Rome, because another Protestant is curious about the human amanuensis of

different bits of the Bible. What he has to say of the general sapping of belief of the vast number of people having no connection (or a barely formal one) with any Church is, however, significant."

It is significant and is so considered. That a gentleman of Dr. DeCosta's eminent ability, high position in the church he has abandoned, and acknowledged standing in social and literary circles, should leave all to obey the dictates of conscience leading him into the bosom of the Catholic Church, is sufficient to furnish food for thought to people interested in religious matters.

There is much to be learnt by non-Catholics from the fact itself, but more still from the masterly "apologia," written and published by Dr. DeCosta, who it would seem, is determined not to do things by halves, but as far as possible to be a light unto many of his brethren who, as he erstwhile was, are wandering in the darkness of doubt and uncertainty. In that remarkable document, the author states his conviction that the Catholic Church is the True Church, because she alone of all religious bodies professing Christianity, is capable of defending the truths of revelation and the written word of God against the violent attacks of unbelief, and of guiding and guarding her children against the pitfalls of error.

We may with profit, perhaps, to our readers, recall one notable passage which occurs in Dr. DeCosta's statement of his reasons for becoming a Catholic, because it demolishes the absurd contention that converts to the Catholic faith relinquish their free will. It reads as follows:

"It is time for candid non-Catholics to address themselves to the subject of infallibility, and learn that the notion that it interferes with individual liberty is as true as that the mariner's compass renders the sailor an abject slave. Without instruments and guidance, the sailor would be as free as the ancient Sidonian in his ivory galley with purple sails, without even an astrolabe to take the height of the polar star, dead-reckoning and guessing his way, gazing with strained, uncertain eye over the pathless sea and perilous shore. The freedom that the devout Catholic loses is the freedom to lose his way in storm, and night, and fog."

At the last meeting of St. Mary's court, Catholic Order of Foresters, officers were elected as follows: Chief Ranger, T. Jobin; V. C. R., P. Shea; T. T. D. Deagan; R. S. F. W. Russell; F. S. P. Marrin; trustees, G. Germain, R. Murphy and J. Malenfant.

The Redemptorist Fathers of Brandon have issued, as Information for their parishioners, a neat Calendar and Directory for 1900, which gives the date of the visits to each of the 12 missions served from Brandon, the various feasts, fasts, confession days, etc., during the year.

A Physician is not always on hand. Guard yourself against sudden coughs and colds by keeping a bottle of Pain-Killer in the house. Avoid substitutes, there is but one Pain-Killer, Perry Davis'. 25c. and 50c.