

away horse:—"A minute afterwards the major came up, followed by an infirmay corporal and three or four men carrying a stretcher.—'Stand aside a little—let him get some air,' said the doctor, bending over poor Houlahou, 'this looks rather serious,' and taking the pencil and the hospital ticket which the corporal handed him, he went on: 'What's your name, my lad. . . . Corporal, give him some vinegar to sniff, to rouse him a little. Come, my lad, your name! H'm! he's dead—certainly dead! A fall I suppose?' 'Yes, sir, a fall.' 'Get his quartermaster to fill up the piper.' And five minutes later Houlahou left the quarters never to return. Not a prayer, not an adieu, no benediction, chaplains are eliminated from the regiments, and here, by order of our superiors, we must die like dogs.—What has the soldier done that he is made to breathe his last breath like one of the lower animals? Do you pretend that he has not got a soul? Then why require him to believe in the noblest furniture of the soul—duty, honour, sacrifice? You treat him like a machine, and you want him to act like a hero! Are not the physical sufferings of the wounded who are dying severe enough, without adding to them by isolation, abandonment—I was going to say contempt: . . . Did you ever see the great warriors of the old world, the chivalry of our old chronicles, hiding for a whole day behind a fringe of trees, motionless, in the mud, their weapons idle in their hands, and decimated by a rain of shells which comes no one knows whence? I think it requires more courage to wait for death than to go in search of it; at least, in the first place, it requires a peculiar kind of courage which participates more of religious abnegation than of military valour. I don't understand why it is, that at the time when you require from soldiers the virtue of martyrs, which religion alone can give, you suppress their chaplains. The idea of God keeps you company, when you are waiting for death in front of batteries which are mowing you down from a distance of five miles."—The combination of the religious and the military spirit, then, even in the army, would seem to be beneficial—of what the result of their separation, on which the powers that be are now determined, may prove we shall not improbably have an opportunity some time or another of judging.—Perhaps, indeed, we have already seen an earnest of such a result in the cruelties said to have been perpetrated the other day by the French forces at Hue.

ANNEXATION AND FEDERATION. THE Intercolonial Conference at Sydney has terminated, but, owing to the exclusion of reporters for the Press, the transactions that took place there remain in comparative obscurity. So much we learn, however, that resolutions in favour of annexations in New Guinea and the Pacific Islands were agreed to—that the French project of transporting to the Islands incorrigible criminals was warmly opposed, and that a certain plan of Intercolonial federation, although rather of a rudimentary kind, was adopted.—As to the question of annexation, it is one on which colonists who are desirous of seeing a great empire established in this hemisphere and united under the British crown, will find little to differ about.—If the undertaking could be successfully carried out, free from the danger of provoking hostility, and with all their rights assured to the native races, there could, we should say, be no dissentient voice from the advisability of prosecuting the plan with as little delay as possible.—In any case, there can be little difference as to the absolute desirableness of preventing the Islands from being made the ground on which the incurable scum of the French prisons shall be turned loose. These are a class of people distinguished only by their unspeakable vileness, but distinguished by that in a very high degree, and common humanity towards the natives of the Islands, as well as self-defence on the part of the colonies, demands that the most determined resistance possible may be made to their being sent out here.—Apart, however, from the presence of the *récidivistes* among them, it may be very fairly questioned as to whether the natives would not find themselves happier, and their interests better protected under French rule than under that of England.—Unfortunately contact with the Anglo-Saxon has not generally proved wholesome for the native tribes of other countries, but with him has come to them oppression or contagion, and, as a consequence, decay or destruction.—The Indians of Canada, for example, have fared much

more than those of the States, on whose territory the early settlers were Englishmen, leaving traditions that those who came after them inherited and acted on, and from Algeria we receive no tales of hardship such as those that occasionally come to our ears from India.—But even as it is, it is doubtful as to the advantage that the native races of the Pacific have derived from the neighbouring Anglo-Saxon settlements, and Queensland plantations, and expeditions in search of labourers might furnish some evidence in this connection that would tell forcibly against the humane influences of the higher race.—As to the hostility to be provoked by the annexation in question, it, perhaps, may not be very formidable.—M. Gabriel Charmes, indeed, in the article quoted by us a week or two ago, speaks of the horrors of a conflict between France and England, and of the general suffering that such an outbreak must entail.—But France has already as much on her hands as most probably it would be wise for her to

undertake in the present state of her affairs both at home and abroad. Madagascar and China will evidently give her full occupation abroad for some time, and at home the position she occupies, not only through her internal divisions, which bid fair to increase in bitterness rather than to diminish, but with regard to the other great Powers of Europe should make her hesitate in coming into conflict with England.—As a military power, again, France has sadly fallen away; her armies, as they are at present composed, are no longer worthy to represent those great legions whose name of old was synonymous with all that was martial and glorious. Her regiments, in a word, are not made up of soldiers but of raw recruits who have not had time to catch the spirit of the service, and whose hearts are absent from the calling forced upon them. But to this let us invoke the witness of a true French soldier, whose description of the army of his country as it now exists we find in the dragoon's letter from which we have already quoted. "To my mind," he writes, "to make military service obligatory on all is to debase it. There is no glory and no honour in paying a tax; it is a mere *corvée* (unpaid labour). Now, the very first day when soldiers look upon the service as a *corvée*, mere unremunerative labour, the day when they are no longer proud of their uniform, proud of their labours, of their sufferings, of their discipline, proud of being exceptional men, men who can practice virtues impossible to other mortals, from that day there will be no army. Now-a-days the ideal is pretty well suppressed everywhere as holding a useless place in life. But we soldiers cannot do without it any more than horses can do without oats. If our calling is not heroic it is ridiculous. There is no middle term. Will people who have only common sense risk their lives for the sake of wearing coloured cloth, or a thread of gold on their head-gear? Is it reasonable to undertake the hardest and the most dangerous of callings for a salary which a bus driver would refuse? Beyond our officers who have never been better, you see for yourself how many men in the regiment have a military vocation? And even if they had it time is wanting to make it apparent. It takes years to transform a peasant into a soldier. They leave their hearts at home, they see only the hard side of the life, and they think of the time of their return from the very first day of joining. They count the days and the hours of their four years of service, they mark off on their almanac each day as it passes. The non-commissioned officers, too, have their calendars like the rest. . . . Officers and soldiers form perforce two irreconcilable classes. What is there in common between the mob who come to pay their personal debt with a bad grace, and the high-spirited men who have entered the army from inclination? This disagreement explains our punctilious discipline, which smacks of the gaol, and which alone can keep in transient submission the successive waves of citizens, ever ready for revolution, who are continually passing through the ranks."—He, further, goes on to describe the joy with which the men who have served their terms give up their arms and uniforms. "They throw them on the ground like a despised livery, and put on their old blouses which they came in, with all the satisfaction of an elector asserting his rights as a citizen."—And this state of things is likely to become worse, for there is now on foot a project, and one which, since it also aims another blow at religion, will no doubt be carried into effect, to extend the conscription and reduce the terms of service from four years to three.—The enmity of France, then, is one that in a just cause England need not fear, for, however formidable she might be were she in her normal condition, and however favourably situated to wound England, as M. Charmes says, wherever she is vulnerable, in the hands of the revolution she has become stripped of her terrors and contemptible.—But is the annexation of the Pacific Islands a just cause? We think it is, so far as it is necessary to exclude the criminals who are capable of corrupting the very savages themselves, and who would extend their corruption upon us here, and become a plague spot to infect the hemisphere.—We think, moreover, that annexation, with the rights of the natives fully guaranteed, and their persons protected, would also be a just cause, and one conducing to the welfare, progress, and safety of these colonies.—But as for federation, even a closer scheme of it than that which seems now determined on, is the natural measure to which countries situated as these are tend, and, whatever may be the temporary hindrances arising from paltry intercolonial jealousies, such, for example, as that reported to be shown by New South Wales of Victoria, it must eventually obtain.—It is well, therefore to see that it is about to be initiated, though in a lesser degree.

BUT the *Saturday Review*, however great may be AN IMPORTANT his satisfaction with Count Soderini's pamphlet, ADMISSION. and who would not be satisfied and even flattered to find his own utterances re-echoed as he believed by the voice of high authority from a distance? still has something to which he finds himself called upon to object. He is a little taken a-back, in fact, to find that Count Soderini appears favourable to a measure of Home Rule.—"One passage, for instance," he says, about the privilege of autonomous Government for Ireland, reads almost as if the author were in favour of Home Rule, though we are