

THE BOER WAR.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

One of the Catholic chaplains at the front who left his tent for a moment to speak to an officer found, on returning, that a shell had burst in the middle of the tent, shattering everything within reach.

THE ONLY NON-COMBATANTS.

Mr. Charles Williams, writing in the *Morning Post* on Mr. Bennet Burleigh's advice to rely on Buller, says: "If there is any man alive has faith in Buller it is the present writer, who stayed with him in the Bayuda Desert when all other non-combatants, except Bishop Brindle, had sought safety."

NO MISTAKING THE NAME.

The First South Lancashire Regiment, which carried the main Boer position at Onderbroek Mount, was under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel McCarthy-O'Leary. This officer is a younger brother of the late Mr. D. C. McCarthy-O'Leary, formerly well known in Benalla, in the North-eastern district of Victoria, where he was a member of the legal profession.

WE LIVE AND LEARN.

A remarkable feature of the war (says the *Westminster*) is the manner in which the Roman Catholic aristocracy, which up to a few years ago kept so much in the background, have come forward. The Duke of Norfolk has volunteered for service with his corps. Lord Gerard is acting as one of Sir Redvers Buller's A.D.C.'s, whilst Lord Denbigh and others are actively to the fore. And these are the sons and grandsons of the men whom the Duke of Wellington and most of the English aristocracy deemed so dreadfully dangerous that until an Irish demagogue forced their hands they could not consent to admit them to a seat in the Legislature, and when, 'volens volens' they had to do so, prophesied the results as only less terrible than civil war. Truly we live and learn.

THE NORTH CORKS.

The men of the districts in North Cork, South Tipperary, and East Limerick, from which the North Corks are recruited, are (says the London *Daily Telegraph*) born fighters. They are of magnificent physique, nimble wit, and indomitable courage. In this region some of the old Irish factions still linger. The 'Three-Year-Olds' and 'Two-Year-Olds,' the 'Canavats' and 'Shanavats,' now and then provoke one another by 'twirling' their shillelaghs, and break one another's heads when they have spoiled for a fight too long. As the fine fellows who have gone to the front were moving off a few days ago in the train some of the crowd called to them: 'Good luck to ye, boys. Ye are going to have a fight, anyhow: but what side are ye to be on?' 'What's that to do with you?' was the answer. 'We are going to see fair play, anyway.' In seeing 'fair play' no soldier of the Queen will give a better account of themselves than these North Cork 'boys.'

THE FINEST INFANTRY IN THE WORLD.

Mr. Winton Churchill, the war correspondent, writing from Spearman's Camp, on January 23 to the London *Morning Post*, says—'the infantry were patiently holding the captured position on a spur at the edge of the plateau all day yesterday under a harassing bombardment by the Boer artillery. The Irish regiment was exposed to an annoying cross-fire from Creusot and Maxim shell guns. The casualties were however, slight—about a dozen up to noon. The demeanour of the troops under this fire, which they have now borne passively for three days, has been most admirable. The quality of the private soldier is wonderful. During the morning I visited the Irish infantry remaining half-an-hour, in which time 11 shells, and two discharged from a Maxim shell gun, exploded in the reluctant angle where the sheltering soldiers were smoking and playing cards or sleeping utterly unmoved. They are still the finest infantry in the world—cheery, dignified, and magnificent.'

BUGLER BUNN OF THE DUBLIN FUSILIERS.

A Home exchange of February 17 says that the Queen has commanded Bugler Bunn of the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers, to proceed to Osborne, her Majesty being desirous of seeing the lad and receiving his photograph. Bunn received the Queen's command by telegraph through Lieutenant-General Sir Baker-Russell, Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth where the bugler has been staying since his discharge from Netley Hospital, attached to a militia battalion stationed in the town. Bunn was the first on the British side to be wounded at the crossing of the Tugela River. He insisted on rushing on with the firing line when his regiment tried to force the passage of the Tugela, though many in the regiment tried to keep him back. When Princess Henry of Battenberg and Princess Christian visited Netley recently and asked the lad what he would like the Queen to do for him Bunn replied—'I hope her Majesty will send me back to the front.' Subsequently the lad said—I am to have a medal and three bars, because I have been in three engagements, and I shall be very proud of it. Father has only two bars to his medal. Sergeant Drom, the lad's father, is at the front with his regiment the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

CHRISTMAS AT MAFEKING.

Reuter's correspondent at Mafeking gives the following account of how Christmas was observed by the Catholics of the beleaguered town—

Christmas Eve was celebrated by the Roman Catholics in Mafeking with a Midnight Mass. The whole town was enveloped in Stygian darkness, and I could only find my road by the aid of flashes of sheet lightning reflected from an oncoming storm. The scene was indeed impressive. At the far end of the room six great tapers

gleamed through the darkness. The windows had been covered with the veils of the nuns, lest the enemy, seeing the light, should be tempted to open fire. Around the altar the black-robed figures of the kneeling Sisters contrasted strangely with the white silken vestments of the priest, Father Ogle, who officiated, and with the hangings of the altar itself. Behind the nuns a motley group, mostly of men, and numbering some forty, was gathered. Most of us were booted and spurred, and if one had looked into the passage outside the chapel he might have found the rifles and bandoliers of the war-hippers ready for use at any moment. As the Mass commenced over and again vivid flashes of lightning illuminated the whole room, piercing the veiling of the windows, hailstones rattled on the roof, and gusts of wind rushed through the passages, causing the tapers to flicker. A few who had the opportunity made confession and communicated. Then the priest gave us his blessing, and we went out into the early morning.

A DRUMMER BOY.

B. Fitzgerald, a drummer-lad in the Inniskilling Fusiliers, writes to his mother:—'Well, mother, it is a mystery to me how I am alive to-day. On the day of the battle (Colenso) I had many a narrow shave. I was knocked over twice by the bursting of cannon balls at my side. My helmet was knocked off by a piece of shell, but I came out of it without a scratch. I risked my life that day. I went for reinforcements, and I dressed the wounds of fellows in the firing line while the shot and shell were flying. I was near being taken prisoner, only the Boer who had me was a decent sort of chap. He was able to speak English, and we had a few words together. The colonel told me he could not express in words what he thought of me for my coolness under fire, and the way I assisted him in every possible manner that day in the carrying out of his orders. I stuck with him everywhere. Even if I get nothing, it is all right to know that the colonel and all the officers think me a brave lad. I will die contented on the battlefield as long as I have done honor to the good old name of Fitzgerald, and kept up the credit of the drummer-boys of our army. Although I am only a drummer-lad I have shown them that the good old Irish blood is in my veins. When the battle was over I went down to the Tugela, and I could have drunk it dry—I was so thirsty! I had given my own water bottle to a poor chap who was dying, and he said, "God bless you!" It was an awful sight to see the men dying on the field, some praying, and others saying a few farewell words to chums. One poor fellow said to me, "Tell my mother I am dying like a soldier." Everybody died bravely fighting. Out of 15 in my tent, only six of us came out of the battle safely.' A second letter from Fitzgerald is as follows:—'Just a few lines to let you know how I am getting on. I have been promoted corporal. The general said I was too young to be made sergeant. I may be able to distinguish myself again some time during the war. I cannot make it out—it did not seem as if I was on a battlefield all that day.'

ALLEGED PILLAGE OF THE NEWCASTLE CONVENT.

We have received a long letter from a correspondent (says the *Catholic Times*) in which he dwells upon the hostility of the Boers towards the Catholic religion, and repeats the charge made in the letter from Mr. Ford which we published last week to the effect that they pillaged and desecrated the convent at Newcastle. He quotes the following passage from a letter of the Dominican nun, Sister Mary Reginald, who is now at Pietermaritzburg:—'After having looted our convent and destroyed everything sacred therein, the Boers vented all their rage on the chapel, breaking statues and crucifixes, and then trampling them under foot. It is awful to think of the fiendish desecration they carried on in the House of God, and this is but the literal truth.' In fairness to those who are thus accused, we stated last week that Father Hammer, who entered Newcastle as chaplain with the Boer forces, in mentioning the abandonment, says nothing of any pillaging, and that Father Baulby, who is also with the Boer forces, says in the *Pettus Annals* that 'the Government and all its officials have been kindness and courtesy itself to the priests and religious.' The same charge was made against the Boers in a letter from a German Dominican nun at Pietermaritzburg published by our contemporary, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*. Thereupon Father Tresch, O.M.I., a Transvaal Missionary, now in Germany, wrote as follows to the paper: 'Yesterday I read with real astonishment, that is to say in an unbelieving spirit, the article in your paper under the heading "Sufferings of the Dominican Nuns in South Africa," but was pleased to see that you questioned some of the statements. Permit me therefore to give you some information. The Sister in question says in her letter, "One evening late, about eleven o'clock, the order came suddenly that all the Sisters must be off in half-an-hour." Certainly, but by whom was the order given? By the Boers? No, but by the Rev. Father Ford, the chaplain to the Sisters, who is an Englishman. I am personally well acquainted with Father Ford and the Sisters at Newcastle, and last April I visited the convent. The Sisters left through fear, at the order of their chaplain. Had they remained in the convent, they would, as you intimate, have remained quite undisturbed. We have a number of convents in South Africa, and nowhere has a single convent suffered anything so far at the hands of the Boers during the war. In the Transvaal the Government has sought the services of the Sisters as nurses, and these services have been gratefully accepted. The Boers are waging war, but not persecuting women. Of that I can assure you on my word of honour. As to what is said to have taken place in the convent chapel naturally I can know nothing, but, as you remark, proofs are wanting to sustain the charges made.'

WAS SIR ALFRED MILNER WARNED?

A well-informed correspondent has sent to the *Manchester Guardian* the following statement as to what took place between General Buller and Sir Alfred Milner. The accuracy of the state-

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