

wrote to his wife, Catherine de Bora, an ex-nun: 'I write to inform you that I am in very good health. I devour my food like a Bohemian, and I drink like a Teuton, for which God be praised. Amen.' (*Luther's Letters*, de Wette edition V., 487.) In a letter dated March 18, 1535, he bemoans that he has no longer the physical strength to keep his head clear in a beer-drinking bout with jolly company as in student days: 'And yet,' he adds with a profound sigh, 'the beer was good, the young lady was beautiful, and the company consisted of young persons' (*Luther's Letters*, Ender's edition XXXIX., 353). This letter is signed 'Doctor plenus' (A well filled Doctor). Who does not recognise in all this a more than distinct family likeness to a type of German with which the war has made us painfully familiar?

### In Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia, which bulks so largely in our later war cables, is a land redolent of the earliest memories, the cradle of the human race, and the theatre of God's active, visible dealings with man. It was man's first dwelling-place after the flood. From the time God blessed Noah after the deluge there is no record that the Divine Voice was heard by man till He appeared to Abraham when he dwelt in Mesopotamia. Four hundred years after the covenant with Noah and his seed the word of the Lord came unto the son of Thare, descendant of Sem: 'Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house into a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation and I will bless thee . . . and in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' And Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken to him. Here was the plain of Shinar, where the Babel tower and kingdom were. The upper Tigris valley was separated from the Mesopotamia plain by a mountain range. The vast plain is intersected by the Sinjar running East and West, and mounds mark city sites on every side. Innumerable lines of embankment indicate a network of ancient canals which by irrigation diffused fertility where now are morasses or barrenness. Orfa, Abram's native city, and Haran, his resting place between Chaldaea and Palestine, are in Padan Aram, the northern portion of the country. Bethuel, Rebekah, and Laban lived in Padan Aram; and Balaam's abode was Pethor of Mesopotamia among the mountains of the East? The Mesopotamians aided the Ammonites with chariots against David. Men of Mesopotamia were among those who, on the Day of Pentecost, heard in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. Although the Garden of Eden was located in Mesopotamia, the country is, apart from the horrors of war, very little like a paradise now. It is a sandy waste, producing very little vegetation, supporting a few goats, sheep, and camels, and practically uninhabited except by roving tribes of half-savage Kurds. It is believed, however, that Mesopotamia can be reclaimed, and William Willcocks, who built the great dam at Assuan in Egypt, has prepared a plan for the irrigation of this historic province. As we have mentioned, hundreds of miles of the ancient canals can be easily identified, and it is said that the old canals can be restored at half the cost of constructing new ones. The greater part of the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris and of the area between these rivers is as rich as the valley of the Nile. In Willcocks' report he says: 'Of all the regions of the earth none is more favored by Nature for the production of cereals than the valley of the Tigris. Cotton, sugar-cane, Indian corn, and all the summer cereals, leguminous plants, Egyptian clover, opium, and tobacco will find themselves at home as they do in Egypt.' More than two thousand years ago Herodotus wrote of Mesopotamia: 'This is, of all lands with which we are acquainted, by far the best for the growth of corn.'

So much for Mesopotamia in general. Coming to particular localities, we now learn that the site of ancient Nineveh (or Ninive), so full of Biblical and

historic interest, is likely to be the scene of critical operations in the campaign. A cable in Friday's papers informs us that 'A considerable force of Turks on a ten-mile front attacked a Russian column advancing on Nineveh. The attackers were routed with heavy losses. Bagdad has been placed in a strong state of defence by the best German methods, but probably the fate of the town will be decided at Nineveh, the loss of which means the isolation of Bagdad.' Nineveh was once the famed metropolis of the great Assyrian empire, the residence of a long line of illustrious princes, and the largest and most populous city in the world. From the Scripture point of view it is chiefly interesting as having been the scene of the mission of Jonas (or Jonah), and the subject of a remarkable prediction by the prophet Nahum which was literally fulfilled. We learn from the book of Genesis that Assur, one of the sons of Sem, 'went forth' from the land of Shinar, and built Nineveh; but we hear nothing more of it in the sacred writings till Jonas, its inspired missionary, describes it as 'an exceeding great city of three days' journey' round (i.e., 60 miles, at 20 a day), with 120,000 children 'who knew not their right hand from their left,' which would make a population in all of 600,000 or even a million. The prophet Nahum describes it as a city with many strongholds and many gates with bars, her merchants as multiplied above the stars of heaven, her inhabitants and princes numerous as the locusts. The city was utterly destroyed for its sins, as prophesied by Nahum. The destruction was accomplished about the year 606 B.C. by the combined armies of Cyaxares, king of Persia and Media, and Nabopolassar, who was either king of Babylon or, as Layard thinks, the Assyrian governor of the city. Diodorus says there was a prophecy that Nineveh should not fall till the river became its enemy. The immediate cause of capture was the city wall's destruction by a sudden rise in the river. So Nahum (i. 8, ii. 6, 8) foretold 'with a flood that passeth by he will make an utter end of the place thereof'; 'the gates of the river are (shall be) opened, and the temple is (shall be) thrown down to the ground,' viz., by the inundation; 'and as for Ninive, her waters are like a great pool, but the men flee away.' There was a floodgate at the N.W. angle of the city, which was swept away; and the water pouring into the city 'threw down' the temple foundation platform of sun-dried bricks. Nineveh then totally disappears from history; it never rose again. Opposite to its site, on the west bank of the Tigris, is the modern city of Mosul, containing a mixed population of various Eastern peoples, amounting to 40,000.

### Palmerston North

(From our own correspondent.)

June 2.

A meeting of the St. Patrick's Day sports committee was held on Tuesday, May 30, when Mr. F. Comerford presided over a good attendance. The object of the meeting was to consider how to dispose of the surplus of the funds of the association, which amounts to about £25. After a general discussion, it was resolved to hand the amount over to the Rev. Father McManus to be used as he thinks fit, which no doubt will go towards the new schools. Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Kelly were elected members of the association.

The inter-society euchre tournament commenced on Wednesday evening, when the H.A.C.B. Society beat Orient by eight games.

On the Feast of the Ascension three Masses were celebrated here, and were all well attended. In the evening there was Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

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