

their entrenched positions and hastily retreated. It is said that both President Kruger and President Steyn were on the field and vainly endeavored to rally their troops to resist the British. Had they succeeded the result would probably have been the capture by Lord Roberts of a large part of the army. As it was, the panic of the Boers and their remarkable mobility saved them from heavy loss, though the moral effect must have been damaging to their cause. On Saturday, Lord Roberts' forces, advancing toward Bloemfontein, encountered the enemy in a strong position at Dreifontein. The Boers fought stubbornly but were finally driven back, being turned out of two strong positions at the point of the bayonet by the Welsh and Essex troops. The extreme mobility of the Boers and the exhausted condition of General French's cavalry prevented the British flanking movement being completely successful. Lord Roberts' despatch states that 102 Boers were killed and 20 prisoners taken. The British casualty list is not given. After the fight at Dreifontein the Boers withdrew and the British forces advanced to Aasvogel, which is 25 miles, as the crow flies, from Bloemfontein, the Free State capital. At Dreifontein another instance of flagrant abuse of the white flag by the Boers occurred, resulting in the wounding of several British officers and men. General Roberts has accordingly warned Presidents Kruger and Steyn that if such abuse occur again he will be compelled to instruct his troops to disregard the white flag entirely. Some ten days ago a strong column was sent from Kimberley for the relief of Mafeking, which according to latest reports was in great straits. The relief column would be pretty sure to encounter opposition at the Vaal River, if not elsewhere, and there is much apprehension that the gallant defenders will not be able to hold out until help reaches them. A report from Boer sources that the siege of Mafeking has been raised is not credited. There seems to be good reason to conclude that the Boers of the Free State are becoming disheartened and desire peace. It is said that there is trouble among the Boer leaders and that General Joubert is not now commanding the forces in the field. Credence is generally given to a report that Messrs. Kruger and Steyn have cabled peace proposals to Lord Salisbury. But as the terms proposed are said to involve the independence of the two republics they are likely to receive little attention.

There is no word from Lord Roberts concerning Monday's operations, but according to the statements of war correspondents, which appear to be trustworthy, the British army made a further advance toward Bloemfontein of 15 miles, bringing them within about that distance of the Free State Capital. The Boers, it is said, were entrenched along the Modder River, expecting the British to take that route, but Lord Roberts outwitted them by taking the Kaal Spruit route and his advance was therefore practically unopposed. Spenser Wilkinson, the military expert, believes that Lord Roberts will reach Bloemfontein, or the railway near there, on Wednesday or Thursday. Not much is known of General Buller's movements in Natal, but he is doubtless employing his forces to good advantage with a view to keeping a large force of the enemy busy in that quarter. There is no longer any doubt that the Boers are making advances toward peace. Concerning this the London Times says:

"President Kruger and President Steyn should have counted the cost before they made war. They played for a great stake and have lost. Until they are ready for unconditional surrender they may save themselves the trouble of sending communications to her majesty's government."

Editorial Notes

—A New York pastor is quoted as saying that the reason why they have so good prayer meetings in his church, is because he does so little talking himself.

—Just before Mr. Moody died he said to his sons: "I have always been an ambitious man, not ambitious to lay up wealth but to leave you work to do," and he urged them to continue the work of the schools in which he himself had been so deeply interested. It is certainly a most worthy ambition for a father to see his sons engaged successfully in some good and beneficent work—an infinitely higher ambition to realize than to leave them a fortune to spend.

—According to all reports the Indian famine is becoming more and more widespread in its area and more terrible in its effects. It is stated that 4,000,000 men are now employed upon relief works, and the number grows at the rate of 100,000 a week. The war in South Africa naturally absorbs the sympathies of the people of Great Britain, and turns into another channel a great deal of beneficence that would otherwise reach the famine sufferers. The Presbyterian Witness of Halifax, is receiving and forwarding contributions for the relief of the sufferers. The Halifax Herald has also opened a Famine Fund and reports a number of handsome subscriptions already received.

—Great was the enthusiasm of the people of London, on the occasion of the Queen's public visit to the metropolis on Thursday last. The multitudes that filled the streets and occupied every point of observation were immense, rivaling the crowds of the Jubilee celebration, while, as an expression of personal love and devotion to the sovereign the

demonstration was unprecedented. When the Queen passed, "nodding as if to many friends instead of bowing with royal restraint, there echoed under the roar of cheers many heartfelt expressions, such as 'God bless her,' 'God keep her,' 'My but this is a brave woman,' and scores like these. It was small wonder that now and again tears of joy rolled down the cheeks of the aged sovereign."

—It is announced that Professor McGiffert has decided to withdraw from the Presbyterian church, and thus deliver it from the agony of a heresy trial in his case. It is understood that Dr. McGiffert will apply for admission into the Congregational body. The Congregationalist newspaper expresses the opinion that the majority of Congregationalists would agree with the Presbytery of New York, in respect to its opinion of Dr. McGiffert's book, "A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age," and if called to take action upon it, would say that in important respects it does not represent the doctrines of Congregational churches. "But," it adds, "There is ample room in our denomination for scholars who are loyal disciples of Jesus Christ, though they may differ from one another in theological opinions. That Professor McGiffert is a sincere Christian of unblemished character, as well as an able scholar, seems beyond question."

—We have no doubt that the Rev. C. M. Sheldon, of Topeka, is worthy of all the good things which our Kansas correspondent says of him in his interesting letter in another column. But evidently Mr. Hutchinson is much too well balanced not to see that there is a good deal of moonshine about this idea of making the Topeka Capital a truly Christian daily paper for the space of one week. The United States must be badly off if it has not among its daily papers many more edifying instances of the influence of Christianity in the daily press than the six issues of the Topeka Capital under Mr. Sheldon's editorship will afford. We would give a thousand times more for such a daily paper as the old "Montreal Witness," whose flag for more than forty years has braved the battle and the breeze, as an instance of what a daily paper may be under Christian auspices, than any number of ephemeral exotics such as Mr. Sheldon's widely advertised experiment will produce.

—For the Convention year up to the first of March, the ranks of our Baptist ministry in these provinces had remained unbroken. Since then two honored brethren have been called away.—Rev. N. B. Dunn, of Pleasant Valley, Yarmouth Co., N. S., whose death occurred on March 3rd, and Rev. P. O. Reese, of Zealand Station, York Co., N. B., who died the following day. A brief notice of his death will be found in our obituary column. We had not the advantage of a personal acquaintance with either of our departed brethren. Mr. Reese was a man well advanced in years, and had been in the ministry about 27 years. He has come to the grave like a shock of corn fully ripe. Mr. Dunn was a comparatively young man, who has been taken away in the midst of a useful ministry. The circumstances attending his death make it peculiarly sad. As stated in a note from Rev. J. H. Saunders last week, Mr. Dunn had been in poor health for some weeks, and, in taking medicine in the night, took carbolic acid by mistake, causing his death in a few minutes. His wife and family, so sadly bereaved, will be the objects of deep sympathy. In subsequent issues we shall hope to present suitable obituary sketches of these beloved brethren.

—Facts are received from time to time, which go to show that Protestant teaching is finding a welcome here and there among the people of France, in communities which had heretofore been wholly under Roman Catholic influence. The New York Outlook gives some account of such an instance occurring at the village of Madranges, in the department of Correze, in Southern-Central France, long known as being ignorant of Protestantism, and strongly prejudiced against Evangelical teaching. The people of Madranges had had difficulty with their priest, and in vain had asked the bishop to transfer them to another parish. For eighteen months they were deprived of all religious services. But help came to them through the sexton, who was a good man and who had been reading the Bible for ten years. "He taught the catechism to the children, read prayers for funerals, and led a service on Christmas day. Then, becoming bolder, the people appealed to the Protestant pastor at Brives, for a few services. This minister was received with the ringing of the church-bell, firing of guns, and all possible demonstrations of joy. The interest has gone on increasing. Nearly the whole community attends the Protestant services. There are not less than four hundred decided proselytes, notwithstanding strong efforts or the Roman Catholic ecclesiastics to recover their lost influence and authority. All ages and classes have been filled with enthusiasm. Gospel hymns are sung in the fields and on the hillsides. The people buy copies of the Bible and read for themselves. This is much more than a revolt against ecclesiastical tyranny; it is a genuine seeking for salvation in Christ." And the case of Madranges, it is said, is typical. There are other villages and districts in France in similar condition.

Kansas Letter.

The good people of this city are just now all agog over the forthcoming "Sheldon Edition of the Capital." On

the 13th of March, Rev. C. M. Sheldon, author of "In His Steps, or What would Jesus do?" assumes entire control of our great Kansas morning paper for six days. He proposes to manage it and edit it with this motto before him—"What would Jesus do?" Public interest in the plan is very great. Postmaster Guthrie says the mail matter received for the "Capital" each day is equal to that of all the rest of the city. He calls for assistance. We all believe that Mr. Sheldon is able and conscientious. We would not, however, wish anyone to accept the "Sheldon Edition of the Capital" as an expression of the universal Christian conscience. The proposed key-note, even when followed most strictly, cannot be in very truth, "What would Jesus do?" but, "What Mr. Sheldon thinks Jesus would do"—which is a very different matter. No one of us can accept the judgment of even the wisest and best man and say, "This is what Jesus would do"; each must bring his judgment to God's Word, the source of all truth, and ask, "What do I believe Jesus would do?" But while Christian people are not all willing that this proposed Christian newspaper should be taken to represent their convictions, all are exceedingly curious to see what Mr. Sheldon will do. How will he present the news of the day? What will be his editorial comments on current events? Of course Mr. Sheldon will not presume to say, "I believe Jesus would express such and such opinions." We only expect him to discuss these matters from the standpoint of an honest Christian gentleman. How much (if any) will he allow to be printed about prize-fights? How many details of bloody battles? Will he admit the advertisements of secret societies, which now fill nearly a column of the "Capital"? Mr. Sheldon once asserted in the hearing of the writer that he did not believe Jesus would have anything at all to do with such societies. The sad part of the whole business is the use of the sacred name of our adorable Redeemer in so many money-making schemes. I do not for a moment believe the assertion, made by many, that Mr. Sheldon is in league with the "Capital" to make money. Those who know Mr. Sheldon have too much confidence in his Christian manhood to believe that. But if he is not making money out of it, many others are, and the proprietors of the "Capital" not the least. Let no one shed any tears over the sacrifices which our excellent daily is making on behalf of religion! The plan was hardly made public before letters were sent to the pastors of our city asking comments thereon to be published in the "Sunday Capital." And it got them too! Strange anomaly—that a paper should boom its Sunday edition by means of articles in praise of running the same paper during the week according to the motto, "What would Jesus do?" And now comes a good Christian brother with his stereopticon. He wishes to lecture in our churches on, "In His Steps, or What would Jesus do?" Admission, 15 cents. Does he suppose the Master would do things that way? But this phase of the subject is too revolting—let us leave it. Only as a cultured Christian lady observed the other day very sadly, "It makes the sinners grin, and the grinners sin."

Meanwhile our other excellent daily, "The Evening Journal," does not propose to be behind-hand in the good work of teaching religion, and, at the same time, putting money in its purse. Doubtless these excellent editors have in mind the saying of the philosopher, that "Those who attempt nothing, accomplish nothing, and are good for nothing." The "Journal" has secured Mr. E. W. Howe, of the Atchison "Globe," to write for it each day during the Sheldon week a lay sermon on how a preacher ought to carry on his work. Mr. Howe is one of our brightest and brainiest newspaper men and he will be sure to say many good things. The idea is that while Mr. Sheldon is showing the editors how to do their work, an editor should return the favor by instructing the preachers in the duties of their calling. Mr. Howe disclaims any intention of attacking Mr. Sheldon, he simply proposes to write on this subject from a layman's point of view.

Let me say that here in Topeka we all believe that Mr. Sheldon is a noble man of God, that he has taken hold of this newspaper scheme with the honest purpose of accomplishing good thereby, and that he will do much during the week the paper is under his control to turn the thoughts of men to the blessed Christ. Whether the good to be accomplished out-weighs the objectionable features, and whether it is a plan with which Jesus, were he on earth, would have anything to do, are, of course, questions which each must answer for himself.

With reference to Mr. Howe's letters on the work of a minister we cannot afford to pass by with contempt the opinions of an intelligent layman on this subject—especially if he is a Christian man. Indeed even if he is not a Christian, he is sure to have a very lofty conception of that sacred calling. This has been deeply impressed on my mind of late by a re-reading of La Bruyere's essay on "The Pulpit" in his famous "Characters." This man, a scholar, a courtier, a keen observer, and withal a sincere, manly man, has left on record what is perhaps the weightiest single sentence ever penned by an uninspired writer on the subject of preaching. As it may be of interest to your ministerial readers, I append a translation, not very literal, but close enough to convey the thought. "It seems to me that a preacher ought, in each discourse; to make choice of a single truth, of capital importance, terrible or instructive, and then to discuss it exhaustively; to discard all fanciful divisions; not to deal with supposed cases (for I am sure the people of the world know the fundamental truths of religion and duty) and not to fear to press home searching questions upon men of sense and culture; to employ the long time generally used in polishing a discourse in making himself so thoroughly master of its material that the term of thought and the forms of expression will arise in the actual delivery of it and flow forth as from a fountain; to give himself up, after a proper amount of preparation, to his genius and the emotions which a great subject naturally inspires; that he should, in short, spare himself those prodigious feats of memory which seem more suitable for the winning of a wager than for the presentation of a matter of life and death, and which only spoil the gestures and disfigure the face; to throw, on the contrary, by a noble enthusiasm, persuasion into the mind and terror into the heart, and to affect his auditors with a fear for other than that such an elegant discourse should be too quickly concluded."

Topeka, Kansas, March 2. W. B. HUTCHINSON.