The Boer War: Natal

The Boers still besiege Ladysmith. They were repulsed last week in one specially severe engagement. Under cover of their guns they had advanced to positions on the ridges and kopjes (isolated hills) adjacent to those occupied by the British troops. British advices report Boer losses as amounting to the astonishing number of seven hundred in killed and wounded. The British losses are apparently unknown. The same advices say that before and since the Boers have not attempted more than a desultory shell fire. The return British fire of lyddite shells seems to have made much impression on them. The armored train, already such a prominent feature of warfare on the Cape-to-Cairo railway, has now made its appearance on the Durban-Ladysmith line. When the track is in good order, such a train is a fearful foe, but once derailed it becomes of little value. This was shown last week when the British walked into another Boer trap. A detachment of Dublin Fusiliers and Durban Light Infantry had left Estcourt (a hundred and fifty miles from the sea) to reconnoiter. As the detachment passed northwards the Boers did not show themselves, but, after the British were out of sight, destroyed the track and covered the spot with guns. As soon as the train left the track on the return, the Boers opened fire. The British replied with spirit, but were overwhelmed by numbers. The British acknowledge that their loss is from a hundred to a hundred and fifty in killed, wounded, and prisoners. Of the last named, sixty arrived in due time at Pretoria, three hundred and fifty miles away. Among them was Lieutenant Winston Churchill, a son of the late Lord Randolph Churchill. Lieutenant Churchill had shown signal gallantry during the engagement. Last week the Boers also captured the town of Weenen, south of Colenso, and concentrated several commands on Estcourt. They made at least one attempt to capture the last-named place, but were repulsed with considerable loss. General Clery, a veteran of the Zulu war, has now assumed command of the British forces south of Ladysmith. General Hildyard commands the advance guard of the relief column. The latter has been in the army more than thirty years. In 1882 he was with Lord Wolseley in the Egyptian campaign, serving as Quartermaster-General.

The Boer War: Cape Colony

Having occupied a number of additional places in northern Cape Colony last week, the Boers followed their custom in eastern Bechuanaland and in northern Natal; they proclaimed a part of Cape Colony Republican territory. In reply Sir Alfred Milner, Governor of Cape Colony and British High Commissioner, issued a proclamation declaring that the Boer proclamations annexing territory, impressing men, or seizing goods, are null and void and should not be obeyed. He promises fair compensation for actual injury resulting from loyal adherence to British allegiance. A British column for the relief of Kimberley is assembling at Orange River Station, nearly six hundred miles from Cape Town, and about eighty miles south of Kimberley. It is commanded by General Lord Methuen, who has already seen much African service, having been in the Egyptian, Ashanti, and Bechuanaland campaigns. The famous Coldstream Guards, the Grenadier Guards, and the Naval Brigade will form an important part of the expedition. The Naval Brigade carries searchlights from the cruiser Doris. These lights are to be worked under the direction of Colonel Ernest Rhodes, who expects to signal with them to his brother...
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Cecil in Kimberley and receive a reply, Kimberley having searchlights the rays of which are visible at a great distance. Thirty thousand men have now arrived in South Africa from England. Of these nearly half have been landed at Durban; a few have made port at East London, and the rest at Cape Town.

The German and Italian Parliaments

Last week was an eventful one for European legislative assemblies. The German, Italian, and French Parliaments opened their sessions of 1899-1900. In Germany the reassembling of the Reichstag apparently caused little ripple on the surface of political life. This was undoubtedly due to the feeling that, until the Emperor's return from England, there would be no pressure on Parliament to pass the penal servitude bill for the suppression of strikes [since rejected by an overwhelming majority], or a measure to double the navy or a resolution to ratify the Samoan agreement. Of greater importance to foreign nations, however, is the renewal of several commercial treaties. In this connection, as regards America, the Meat Inspection Bill, standing over from the Reichstag's last session, is in close relationship. The Italian Parliament was opened by King Humbert in person, accompanied by the Queen and royal family. In announcing the projected bills, including much-needed measures for the mitigation of taxation, his Majesty dealt especially with notable economic improvements in the Kingdom. It is a pleasure to chronicle any betterment in Italy's economic condition. Everything leads to the hope, as the King said, that it will continue, "and that by sedulous work, by the utilization of all our productive energies, and by the intelligent and assured protection of our agriculture and industries, we will be able to lay solid and durable foundations for the reforms of which so much has been said, but which have never been realized."

The French Senate has been sitting as a High Court for the judgment of prisoners in an alleged plot to overturn the Republic. Ten years have elapsed since the Procureur-Général of France rose in the Senate to demand the punishment of like conspirators. They were Boulanger, Dillon, and Rochefort, and the Procureur was M. Quesnay de Beaur epaire, who has since played such a ridiculous part in connection with the Dreyfus affair. It must be admitted that the position of the present Government is somewhat embarrassing. While it is in possession of overwhelming presumptive proof that last spring the Duke of Orleans, in conjunction with MM. Guérin and Déroulède, the leaders of the anti-Semitic and so-called "Patriotic" League, expected to overthrow the Government of the Republic, there is now such a fear of including forged evidence in the charges that a number of those imprisoned on the suspicion of treason have been liberated. During his examination by the Court last week, M. Déroulède entered upon a violent tirade against President Loubet. M. Fallières, President of the Senate, refused to listen, and demanded the withdrawal of the allegations. M. Déroulède refused, whereupon the President announced that the prisoner should be prosecuted under the law of 1881, punishing persons who insult the President of the Republic. The verdict of the Court condemned the prisoner to three months' special detention for the offense. This resolute attitude has been in general favorably received. On the first day of the autumn legislative session of the French Parliament, begun last week, M. Waldeck-Rousseau, the Premier, made a speech in which he rightly claimed that the Government's programme was inspired by the wish to constitute a society strong enough to insure respect for the opinion of every one, and to impose respect for republican institutions. "Our programme will be a rallying flag for all Republicans," said he. While the present Ministry truly constitutes "a Cabinet of Republican Defense," as its members style it, hard work will be necessary even temporarily to unite the several groups of Republicans among the six hundred members of the Chamber of Deputies. As one help towards the stability of republican institutions, we are glad that the Cabinet obtained from the Chamber a satisfactory vote of confidence. On Monday of this week the Chamber again sustained the Cabinet on two critical issues.