

EVENTS OF THE WEEK.

THE BOER WAR. British military critics say that the plan of campaign heretofore pursued in attempting to relieve Ladysmith and Kimberly from the siege of the Boers was not good military strategy and are heartily in sympathy with the plan of Roberts in marching into the interior and attacking Orange Free State from the south, in this way getting at the main body of the Boer army with the least resistance, on either flank the Boer forces being occupied, both at Ladysmith and Kimberly, with nothing to impede his advance toward the center, and accomplishing the relief of Kimberly and Ladysmith by cutting off the communications of the besiegers, thereby reducing them to starvation or withdrawal.

It was probably with this object in view that General Roberts concentrated the force under his immediate command and with the aid of the reinforcements in an effort to crush the army of General Cronje, without in any way interfering with the plans of Methuen at Kimberly and Buller at Ladysmith. The army of General Cronje, who was beating a retreat from Magersfontein, was overtaken by General Kelly-Kenny at the Modder river near Paardeberg. Here General Kelly-Kenny was joined by the brigade of General French and the combined forces made an attack, but met with stubborn resistance. An unsuccessful attempt was made by General Smith Dorein to charge the Boer laager, full of ammunition and stores.

On Tuesday the 20th inst., an armistice was requested by General Cronje to give him a chance to bury his dead. General Kitchener replied that only unconditional surrender would terminate hostilities. The English forces were then massed, completely surrounding the army of Cronje which occupied a position about a mile square in the bed of the Modder river. General Roberts interrupted and repulsed the Boer reinforcements attempting to relieve Cronje while a heavy artillery fire from fifty field pieces, under the command of General Kitchener, with a range of 2,000 yards, was directed upon the plucky burghers and the latest dispatches received from General Roberts indicate that it has been kept up intermittently ever since, but Cronje declines to surrender. One cannot help but admire the courage of this Boer warrior, although it does almost border upon the fanatical.

The London Daily News, in speaking of the desperate fight he has been making says: "Englishmen feel something like pride in Cronje, even as a foe. In a position covering only a square mile, hemmed in on all sides, circled

with a chain of fire, from rifle, Maxim and Howitzer, played on by deadly lydite, bursting in its own sickly light, his hastily built trenches enfladed by a stream of lead sweeping down the river from the north bank, General Cronje still elects to fight. It is a magnificent courage."

The opinion is gaining ground that there is in Cronje's conduct another exhibition of the Boer strategy that has been so superbly displayed throughout the war. It is thought by many that he is making a play for time to enable his artillery to escape and cross the Vaal river to prevent its falling into the hands of the British when the final capitulation takes place. A like reason probably prompted the request for an armistice. His resistance cannot last much longer as communications are cut off and a lack of ammunition and starvation threaten him.

In the meantime Buller is slowly advancing toward Ladysmith, meeting with only so much resistance as is necessary to enable the burghers to remove their ammunition and supplies so that by the time he reaches Ladysmith it is quite probable that he will find it relieved by the voluntary withdrawal of the besiegers.

The evident success of Roberts in his plan of campaign is just what was needed in London to relieve the crisis that threatened the ministry because of their responsibility for what had thus far been an unsuccessful war. His brilliant management of affairs has had the effect of restoring confidence in British arms and will mean the sustaining of the Chamberlain ministry, which repeated reverses in South Africa had almost brought to the point of an enforced retirement.

PUERTO RICO. The bill regulating commerce with Puerto Rico, in which it is proposed to levy a tariff upon the products imported from that country, has been under discussion the past week. The bill is of no little importance, as it establishes a precedent relative to the legal status of the islands. It was proposed by the ways and means committee contrary to the recommendations of the president, who suggested in his message to congress the removal of all trade restrictions with Puerto Rico, or in other words free trade.

Mr. McCall (rep.) of Massachusetts, took issue with his colleagues and, as the leader of the opposition, made a strong speech against the bill, basing his argument upon constitutional grounds. He took the position that the authority of congress in the premises was derived from the provision of the constitution, "Congress shall have power to levy and collect taxes, duties and imposts . . . but duties and imposts shall be uniform

throughout the United States," thereby prescribing the manner in which the imposts shall be collected. The present bill violated the rule of uniformity and was therefore unconstitutional. He cited the decision of Marshall, in the case of the District of Columbia, and a later dictum of the supreme court in the case of the Territory of California, where it was held, in both cases, that the rule of uniformity applied to territories. He also raised the moral question that the passage of the bill would be a breach of faith with the people of Puerto Rico, to whom we had given the assurance that the island was to become a part of the United States and entitled to the liberties and privileges of the several states.

Grosvenor (rep.) of Ohio, was the leading champion of the bill and argued mainly from the humanitarian standpoint, alleging the necessity of raising revenue in order to restore the depressed industries of the islands. He also stated that the president differed with the majority of the committee, not upon the constitutionality of the bill, but only upon the question of expediency; that the president believed that congress had the right of taxing the colonies, but that he did not think it wise to make use of the power at this time, and upon this theory he would sign any measure congress might recommend.

An argument that is used quite effectively, it seems, with the wavering republicans who are strict partisans, is that if the bill is not passed as recommended the democrats will claim that it was because of their opposition that the republicans were forced to change their policy of insular government.

In regard to the treaty, Prof. E. G. Bourne, of Yale University, makes an interesting observation in the New York Evening Post. He suggests that if the islands are a part of the United States, then a tax on articles exported would be unconstitutional because a violation of the rule of uniformity. If they are not a part of the United States a tax on articles imported from this country would be a tax on exports from the United States, which is forbidden by the constitution.

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE. The Democratic National Committee met at Washington during the latter part of last week and decided upon Kansas City as the place of holding the next national convention. Milwaukee, it seems, had the pledges of a majority of the committee, but the personal preference of Mr. Bryan for Kansas City decided the controversy in favor of the latter. Henry Clay Caldwell, United States circuit judge, was apparently the preference of a majority of the committee for the vice presidency. Judge Caldwell holds his present position by appointment from