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THE MORNING GUARDIAN

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1901.

A SOUTH AFRICAN REPUTATION

South Africa has been said to be the grave of military reputations, but the reverse of this is true of Major General French who has made his reputation there. French was at first destined for the navy. He joined H. M. S. Britannia and served as a Naval Cadet in 1886. Eight years later he joined the army and was gazetted to the 8th Hussars from which he was shortly after transferred to the 19th Hussars. His first active service was in the Sudan in 1884-5. This was of undoubted value. In the intervening time down to the outbreak of the Boer war he spent much of his time with his regiment in India. He was appointed to the 1st Cavalry Brigade in 1899 and was sent to South Africa in the autumn of that year. Within 24 hours after landing he was in touch with the enemy and on October 21 he commanded at Elandslaagte.

But though, says the London Times, General French possessed the true qualities of a great cavalry leader, the eye for a country, the mind that will make its decision in two seconds, and once made will not falter to right or left, yet he did not drop into South Africa a ready-made soldier. He had much to learn. His first lesson was to adapt cavalry trained entirely for shock tactics to undertake dismounted duties—in a word, to make a cavalry regiment at a pinch cover the ground that would be assigned to three battalions. He received his first rude lesson at Lombard's Kop, on October 30. But he was a man who could profit by experience. Almost by a miracle he was allowed to escape from the investment of Ladysmith, to be sent to Colesberg where through three trying months, he learned the great lessons in modern cavalry tactics and adapted them with such ability that when the crucial moment came he was a master of the capabilities of mounted troops in the face of modern rifle-fire. The successful relief of Kimberley was the first result, the heading off of Cronje at Paardeberg the next, and he went steadily onward. Although there has been no third or fourth theatrical coup to bring the name of one General who will take a risk in war, whenever the consequences balance, into further prominence, yet there have been few successful movements in South Africa on a large scale to the success of which Sir J. French has not materially contributed. And even at the eleventh hour he was selected by Lord Kitchener for the most important and delicate task of reducing the Cape Colony rebellion.

General French's reputation, continues The Times, has not only been made during the war, but it has also been maintained, and the man who in two short months of campaigning could throw aside all the cramped and unpractical theories of a life of training and adapt his command to the entirely new conditions of a new country and new power in firearms, as he did at Colesberg, is a man of sufficient calibre to be entrusted with the training in peace of our most important army corps. That he has proved himself capable of commanding it in war no one will deny.

It turns out that Li Hung Chang's death was hastened by trouble with the Russian ambassador, who did not want the terms of the latest Russo-Chinese treaty communicated to the other powers. Li Hung Chang had done this and the Russian minister angrily upbraided him, whereupon the Chinese statesman became angry and broke a blood vessel. Such is the latest story. If true it seems

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to improve the common impression that Li Hung Chang had gained much of his enormous wealth in Russian bribes. It is said he died the wealthiest man in the world, not even excepting the American multi-millionaires. Great as he was, those who desire to see China reformed politically and socially will hardly regret that the astute and wily old man has been gathered to his fathers. He was a Chinese Tory of the old school, opposed to all reforms and changes. Such favor as he had for Russia was probably because he thought Russian dominance in Chinese affairs would result in fewer changes than would come from British, German, French or Japanese control. In appropriating to his own use millions of money raised by taxation he only followed the immemorial usage of those in high office in his own country. It would be unfair to judge him by the standards of Christian civilization.

Rev. Canon Gore, the newly appointed High Church, pro-Boer Bishop of Worcester, was born in 1853. He is nephew of the Earl of Arran and a Fellow of Trinity College. He is an author of some note, and perhaps best known as the editor of Lux Mundi.

The Naval Inquiry into the conduct of Admiral Schley is ended, but it will probably be some time before the Court of three Admirals renders its judgement. In the meantime the opinion prevails that the Court will vindicate Admiral Schley.

Solomon in his day classed "the way of a ship in the midst of the sea" as among the things that were wonderful. But had he seen the modern steamship of many thousand tons burthen, ploughing through the waves at railway speed and exchanging messages by wireless telegraphy through the air with another steamer 60 or 70 miles distant, his wonder would have been increased and he might have confessed that there was, after all, something new under the sun.

The Law

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Charlottetown, May 1, 1901 d&w

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