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**Autor:** Boissier, Léopold

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## PREFACE

The past year was one of special significance for the Red Cross since it marked the centenary of the Battle of Solferino of which the distressing sight inspired the generous idea of Henry Dunant to which our movement owes its birth. The ceremonies organised for the commemoration of this event have proved, in a most impressive manner, that his ideal has spread throughout the world and is a source of boundless enthusiasm and goodwill.

The relations between peoples, however, have not shown the very great progress which the founder of the Red Cross would have wished them to achieve. Despite some real or apparent improvement, it could be seen from the world situation in 1959 that the Red Cross continues to be as necessary for humanity as it was a century ago.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is well aware of the instability of conquest achieved through suffering. Its assistance is constantly sought in behalf of persons in most varied parts of the world who place their hope in its aid.

It is often faced with problems of a most distressing nature. This report shows the efforts made during the past year to cope with these situations in every case where it was possible to take action in conformity with the humanitarian principles and traditions to which it has adhered for nearly a century.

LEOPOLD BOISSIER,  
*President*

