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# THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WAR

An Open Letter  
to  
Dr. A. Conan Doyle

BY  
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# THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WAR.

*An Open Letter to Dr. A. Conan Doyle.*

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Sir,—After writing a history of the Boer War in which you described it as ended while it was in full play, you have thought fit to give to the world a statement of the general case for Great Britain against the Boers. You avow some diffidence as to your fitness for the task, and you well may. Military men have pronounced you incompetent to discuss operations of war; all men know how you have thought a war to be finished in the middle; and any careful reader of your History could see how little trouble you commonly took either to find facts or to weigh them. But in a country which is in large part content to take its sociology from Mr. Kipling, its morals from Mr. Chamberlain, and its code of statesmanship from Lord Milner, you may, I grant, fairly assume that the study of military causation is within the scope of the creator of Brigadier Gerard, and the imbroglia of a long political strife amenable to the methods which constructed Sherlock Holmes.

Nay more, unlike your co-educators, you may claim to have had some training in physical science, and so to have some potential insight into the laws of evidence. It is because you, thus ostensibly prepared to weigh testimony and to reason coherently, have nevertheless produced only a re-arrangement of the ordinary polemic of your party, that I think it worth while, in the name of good morals and right reason, to address to you personally a criticism of your performance. The anonymous war-mongering journalist who speaks of himself in the plural, like a king or a deity, is outside profitable discussion. We have no knowledge as to his acquaintance with the simplest principles of rational investigation, and can never be sure whether he is a mere mercenary or an ignoramus. You pass for a scientifically educated man; and though you are devoted to the ordinary British dialectic method of the bluff, you affect an engaging measure of candour, and claim to convince "any unprejudiced man" that you and your party are in the right. I propose to test your procedure.

## I.—BRITISH BEGINNINGS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

### **Our Title Deeds.**

To begin with, you seek to prejudice your hypothetical unprejudiced reader by telling him that "in all the vast collection of British States there is probably not one the title-deeds to which are more incontestable than to" Cape Colony. In effect, you are here saying, however ungrammatically, that we have a virtually

perfect title to rule over people whom, *by our own account*, we have bought like cattle—bought, too, from an arbitrary prince whom we had helped to restore to his throne, and whom many of these people had disowned. Where we take land from aborigines, you imply, our title is not so good. But if, say, Germany were to give six or more millions to Britain for New Zealand, her title would be better than our own now is, and the people of New Zealand would be exceptionally bound to give fealty to the Kaiser. I ask your unprejudiced reader to give heed to your moral premiss.

Whether we really “bought” the Cape from the Prince of Orange is all the while far from clear. Dutch students insist that there was no such agreement, that the sum paid by England was to indemnify the King of Sweden for his cession of the Island of Guadeloupe, and to pay for the construction of fortifications on the French frontier. Such are in fact the stipulations of the Convention of London, dated April 13, 1814, where there is no pretence that any part of the six millions is paid for the Dutch colonies; and there is explicit testimony that Lord Castlereagh told the Dutch Minister: “It is for us to judge what portion of your colonies we think it expedient *to keep*.” For it *was* a matter of keeping what we had re-taken possession of, without any pretence of purchase, in 1806; and our own historian, Professor Thorold Rogers, writes: “Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope were retained by the English after the war was over, contrary, I think, to good faith and justice.” So much for your preliminary facts on the one hand and your introductory ethics on the other.

### **Preliminary Misrepresentations.**

But the worst of it is that your special pleading is irrelevant. The question in hand is not the right of Britain to Cape Colony; and you have raised this merely to prejudice the real issue. You admit that the “title-deeds” covered only Cape Colony, but you proceed to insinuate that we relate to the *voor-trekkers* who went up country beyond the colony as the United States would have related to any Dutch New Yorkers who might, after the Revolution, have trekked westward and formed “new States fiercely anti-American and extremely anti-progressive.” You are indeed a judicial expositor for the unprejudiced. You are perfectly well aware that (1) the Orange Free State once actually invited Sir George Grey to become its President; (2) that it was one of the best-governed States in the world; and (3) that the Transvaal has made more educational progress in ten years than England ever made in thirty. You are further aware that the two Boer States set up manhood suffrage when England had not enfranchised her agricultural labourers; and that the Transvaal put no restrictions on enfranchisement until there came a flood of foreigners who avowed that if enfranchised they would not accept the first duties of Boer citizenship. You know all this, and, professing to write dispassionate history, you call the Boer Republics, by implication, fiercely anti-British and extremely anti-progressive from start to finish.

### Early British Rule.

In the same fashion, you affirm that the early British rule at the Cape was "mild, clean, honest, tactless, and inconsistent." (Either you have on this point read Theal, the standard historian, or you have not. If you have, you are aware that he expressly declares the British administration to have become "thoroughly corrupt" by the year 1800, and records that even Lord Charles Somerset at times made profits out of land grants, and on horse-dealing with the Government. If you have not read Theal, on what ground, in the name of history, do you come forward to instruct the world in this matter? You profess to have read Mr. Methuen's book. The first testimony is cited there, and the references for others are given. If you saw fit to raise the point at all, how did you excuse to yourself, not merely the suppression of the truth before you, but the explicit substitution of the contrary?)

Even where you stop short of positive invention, you stick at little in the way of prejudicing the ignorant reader. The system of rule which you call "tactless and inconsistent" included (though you are careful not to mention it) the arbitrary substitution of English for Dutch in all judicial proceedings, in defiance of the pledges formerly given to the contrary; and you do confess that when slavery was abolished, the Dutch at the Cape received only a portion of the compensation nominally allotted to them. In plain English, they were swindled. Such is the tyranny you gloss over as merely "tactless and inconsistent" when British are the doers and Dutchmen the sufferers—you who wax frantic over the fiscal grievances of millionaires at Johannesburg. Needless to say, you contrive to represent the Dutch as zealous for slavery, and the British as nobly magnanimous. You therefore take care to suppress the historic fact that in 1795 the British authorities promised the Dutch that Britain would maintain slavery, whereas the French, who also sought to secure the Cape, were pledged to suppress it.

By way of showing open-mindedness, you remark that "it is difficult to reach that height of philosophic detachment which enables the historian to deal absolutely impartially where his own country is a party to the quarrel. But at least we may allow that *there is a case for our adversary.*" You fully illustrate the difficulty; for your "at least" turns out to be an "at most." And I would like to remind your readers, unprejudiced or otherwise, that whereas you take national credit for every good official act ever done by this country, saying "we" did it, the good acts were mostly done in the teeth of the bitter and scurrilous resistance of the types of citizen to whom your party now appeal. Liberalism, in course of time, made some amends for "tactless and inconsistent" conduct by restoring Dutch law and the legal use of the Dutch language to Cape Colony. This policy was loudly denounced by the "loyalist" of that time; and now, forsooth, you credit the same species of empire-wrecker with just ground for indignation because the Transvaal did not grant to British immigrants as a privilege

what was restored to the Cape Dutch as a right, of which, with his approval, they had been dishonourably deprived!

### The Old Dutch Company.

A further sample of your historical method is your assertion that in the eighteenth century the Cape Dutch had grown so wedded to "that independence of control and that detachment from Europe which has been their most prominent characteristic," that "even the mild sway of the Dutch Company had caused them to revolt." Your object here is to set up the impression that the Dutch are hereditarily mutinous—a species of pseudo-scientific inference which comes easily to a writer of your habits. Now, the former practice of British politicians of your type was to vilify the Dutch East India Company; and Theal has been at pains to show the injustice of much of the criticism so passed. Yet even he sums up his *defence* of the Dutch Company, in his shorter work, thus:—

It governed South Africa with a view to its own interests; its method of paying its officials was bad; its system of taxation was worse; in the decline of its prosperity it tolerated many gross abuses.

Will you venture to assert—you who call the patient and constitutional protests of the Cape Dutch a "revolt"—that much worse can honestly be said of the regimen of Kruger?

So much for the preambling pages in which you prepare your unprejudiced reader by giving him what you seem to admit is a "superficial" knowledge of South African history down to the first annexation of the Transvaal. The question is, could you have given him any better knowledge? Are you not in reality as superficial as you require him to be? Or, to raise a question which more than once obtrudes itself on your better informed readers, are you capable of a moderately judicial procedure, even where the facts are fully before you, too plain to be missed? I am loth to charge on you what you fatuously charge on the great mass of the educated population of the Continent—a wish to "poison the mind of the world."—But I have read a good deal of unscrupulous polemic in my time; and I am bound to say that on the strength of what I will presume to be mere helter-skelter sentiment, hand-to-mouth investigation, and general incapacity for logical analysis, you reach results that wilful deceit could hardly advance upon.

## II.—THE TRANSVAAL QUESTION.

### British Motives.

When you come within sight of the present troubles, your one-sidedness becomes frankly farcical. You gravely make this affirmation: "It cannot be too often pointed out that in this [the first] annexation, the starting point of our troubles, Great Britain, however mistaken she may have been, had no possible selfish interest in view. There were no Rand mines in those days, nor was there anything in the country to tempt the most covetous." This sort of

thing is enough, I may tell you, to make most intelligent men on the continent consign your pamphlet to the waste-paper basket without more ado.

You set forth with the obvious decision to make out every British act nobly virtuous, and at very worst "mistaken"; while every Dutch act you either directly or indirectly set down to some fault of Dutch character. Any step taken by a few British officials, without the slightest deliberation on the part of the mass of the nation, you grandiosely define as the action of "Great Britain," your ingenuous object being to make the nation feel committed beforehand to self-defence. But do you really suppose that rational foreigners will believe you when you pretend that official "Great Britain" had no selfish interest in annexing the Transvaal? Have you the hardihood to argue that the act was an *unselfish* one? Was there *nothing* to be gained from it? Either the land-grabbers of your adoration were fools, or you are paying them a very unwelcome compliment.

To any reader who can reason, it is unnecessary to point out that when men have come to regard mere extent of territory as a main constituent of national greatness, their acquisitions of territory are in terms of their own ideal supremely valuable. Such is the avowed ideal of most of your party at the present moment. What else is the meaning of their parrot-phrase of "Little Englander"? And do you think your opponents are simple enough to be impressed by your honesty when you alternately proclaim the gospel of expansion as the salvation of the Empire, and pretend that you annex vast provinces in a spirit of self-sacrificing philanthropy? When we come to your treatment of the living question to which you thus lead up, we get taste enough of your logical quality, in all conscience. But do you not think that a closer semblance to common sense in your first chapter would have been, so to say, good business?

### The Outlanders.

As was to be expected, you drop even your bad pretence of impartiality when you come to the first item in the real dispute, to wit, the grievances of Outlanders at Johannesburg. Without disguise, without decency, you play the part of the hired special pleader, averring that now there is nothing but righteousness on the British side, and nothing but iniquity on that of the Boers. Your discerning readers, prepared by your previous tactic of mock fairness, will know better than to suppose you can be trustworthy when you give full play to passion.

Let us first consider your general case. You allege (a) "corruption" among the Boer officials, (b) exclusion of Outlanders from parliamentary and municipal franchise, (c) fiscal misgovernment, (d) backward sanitation, (e) corruption and violence among the police. Some of these grievances you divide and restate, so as to make them do duty under three heads. But they form your case.

To begin with, I note that while you cite any scrap of testimony

as all-sufficient to settle any point against the Boers, you do not make the slightest attempt to rebut the very striking and quite recent testimony of an Outlander who has fought on the British side in this war—I mean Captain March-Phillips—as to the hollowness of the whole parade of grievances. Captain March-Phillips says—and I have heard other Outlanders say the same thing—that he and his comrades used to read with roars of laughter the inflated accounts of their troubles given in English newspapers. Why do you not attempt to meet such evidence as this—you who find the most despicable and vacuous gossip a sufficient basis for the most sweeping generalisations against Transvaalers?

You ignore it, of course, because you cannot rebut it, and you know it will damage your cause even to quote it. Being under no such difficulty, and being concerned to put at least some of your readers in the way of knowing the facts you distort and suppress, I shall examine your statements on their merits. Far be it from your opponents to imitate in the slightest particular your tactic of bluster and evasion. To the grievances let us come.

### **The Argument from Grievances.**

Now, *even supposing your statement of grievances to be broadly true*, it is the very wretchedest justification for a great war that modern times have seen, with perhaps the exception of the case of the war waged by the United States against Spain. The ruck of the party to whom you appeal have always execrated the French Revolution, which began in a peaceful effort to right wrongs a millionfold worse than those you allege. Further, every wrong you charge has been zealously inflicted and maintained in *our own* political system by the party with which you have allied yourself; and the present Government contains men who for many years identified themselves with such measures. They refused every extension of franchise to classes whom they had no reason to fear; they keep hundreds of thousands disfranchised at this moment by an iniquitous law of registration; they maintain a system which heavily taxes the poor and spares the rich; and they have corruptly enriched by commutation of taxes the already rich classes which support them. If the principles you lay down were to be acted on in England, civil war would never cease.

### **Corruption and its Causes.**

One of the most dishonest of the many dishonest devices of your party is that of pretending that "corruption" is something peculiar to the late officials of the Transvaal. When this question was not on hand, it was normal to hear English Conservatives alleging that the Government of the United States was the most grossly corrupt in the world, excepting perhaps those of Turkey and Russia. Yet I am not aware that the maddest of your war-mongers ever proposed to invade any of these countries on such a pretext.

I will not go through the form of asking you to reflect that

what corruption there was at Pretoria was *largely the work of the Outlanders*. This is obvious to every man of intelligence who is not himself corrupted by interest or passion. Not even you dare explicitly say that the Free State was corruptly governed; and the men of the Free State are of the same kith and kin, creed and traditions, as the men of the Transvaal. If corruption arose only where there were gold mines, the presence of gold was as certainly the first cause of the corruption as it was of the immigration of gold seekers. And in that corruption the Outlanders were the agents. An honest enquirer would say that in the circumstances some corruption was a moral certainty; and would confess that corruption would occur in such circumstances in any race whatever. He would admit that corruption will be inevitable under British administration—nay, that *it began as soon as we occupied Pretoria*.

Finally, after the recent exposure of the financial methods by which our own agents procure and supply horses for the army, he would admit that in highly civilised Great Britain, with no gold-mining environment, there appears to prevail at all times a corruption such as Pretoria under the Boers could never parallel. As you know, it has been calculated that the country has been thus swindled out of some EIGHT MILLIONS STERLING in connection with this war alone. You may say that these revelations occurred since you wrote. But in a very early stage of the war there was a revelation of swindling in the matter of forage; and you can hardly be ignorant that, to say nothing of chronic scandals of a minor order, seventeen or eighteen years ago there were revelations of endless swindling in the matter of supplies for our army in Egypt. You are also aware that similar corruptions were exposed in the United States in connection with the Cuban War; that there have been revelations of far-reaching official corruption in Germany in the past few years; and that in France the corruption in connection with the Panama scheme was proved to be enormous. You are aware, in short, that official corruption has occurred chronically in *all* States, with perhaps the solitary exception of the Orange Free State, and yet you are not ashamed to point to the corruption *caused by Europeans* in the Transvaal as a reason why the independence of the Transvaal should be annihilated. All the while, myriads of Englishmen take "secret commissions."

So much for your general plea. Let us come to your specific pleas.

### **The Perils of the Franchise.**

1. To take the central grievance first. Like every man who has written and spoken on your side, you are careful to suppress—save by way of post-mortem suggestion—all mention of the first and last reason for the withholding of a franchise from the multitude of Outlanders in the Transvaal. You are perfectly well aware that before the gold-rush there was no trouble on the subject; you may or may not be aware that British explorers complimented President Kruger on the pains he took to treat the first incomers well. But

you never dream of acknowledging, till you are forced, that when they came with a rush his Government was put in a very grave perplexity. To begin with, numbers of those who demanded the franchise *avowed* that they would not accept the military duties of burghers; and even concerning those who did not avow this it was morally certain that in the event of strife between the Transvaal and the British Empire they would not defend the former against the latter. As you are aware, one of the leading Outlanders, Mr. Lionel Phillips, avowed in writing the general indifference of his fellow Outlanders on the matter of political rights. Those who did want the vote sought only their own interest; not one in a hundred cared a straw for the welfare of the Transvaal. I will not ask you what you would have had President Kruger do. But I would ask any reader who seriously claims to be capable of doing as he would be done by, whether President Kruger was not in a far worse dilemma than was ever faced by any of those English statesmen who, like Lord Salisbury, so long did their utmost to withhold the franchise from the working classes of this country, both in town and country, even as they now refuse Home Rule to Ireland because it is "disaffected."

### Insults by Outlanders.

It is a matter of history, though you, of course, take care never to mention it, that many of the Outlanders avowed their hope of one day seeing the British flag fly "again" over Pretoria. It is recorded by Mrs. Lionel Phillips that when President Kruger went by invitation to address a meeting of Outlanders, they greeted him by singing "Rule Britannia," and laughing at him when he called for silence. Again, when he went in person to receive Lord Loch at the station at Pretoria, the English crowd took the horses out of the carriage, one man jumping on the box and waving the Union Jack over the President's head. Then having drawn Lord Loch to his alighting-place, they left President Kruger in his horseless carriage. Lawless insolence could not go further; and no State in the world would grant its franchise to aliens who thus publicly insulted its chief ruler. In some countries they would have been fired upon by the State troops. But you, suppressing all mention of these insults, and vending a gross fable on the other side, think fit to taunt Kruger with having visited Johannesburg only thrice in nine years.

You have further the effrontery to charge on the Boers "despotic government in the matter of the Press and of the right of public meeting." I content myself with saying (*a*) that in no country in the world is such license of alien insult and sedition tolerated as was long permitted to the Outlander journal in Johannesburg; (*b*) that nowhere, as you very well know, would such meetings have been tolerated as there took place; and (*c*) that our own rule in India is a thousandfold less tolerant of the semblance of sedition than was the government of the Transvaal.

These, observe, are still subsidiary issues. The great question, on which posterity will pronounce, is, *Who forced the War?* and to that we have yet to come. In the meantime I go on with your grievances.

### Sanitation and Police.

I know little in the way of war-mongering rant that will compare with your two grievances: "Watercarts instead of pipes; *filthy buckets instead of drains.*" The latter clause, indeed, belongs to another category than rant. If you made any use of your eyes when you were in South Africa, you are aware that the bucket system is the universal sewage-method in the inland towns of *our own colonies*; and that so great are the difficulties of drain-sewage even at the coast that there are constant complaints against the drainage of Cape Town. What then was your purpose, or what is your excuse, for this allusion to "filthy buckets"? Do you set any limit either to the simplicity of your readers, or to your own misguidance of them?

What you say of "a corrupt and violent police" is no less grossly misleading. The whole outcry of the Outlander on this score resolves itself into citation of the Edgar case; and he who, after reading the details of that, pronounces it a just ground of international remonstrance, is not to be argued with. Even if it *were* a miscarriage of justice, it would be on a par with hundreds of episodes that occur among ourselves, where charges of violence against the police have been made a thousand times, and charges of corruption against them are privately current at all periods. But the Edgar case offers no good ground whatever for denunciation of the Transvaal system. And you are probably as well aware as I that while you allege "a high death-rate in what should have been a health resort," the Outlanders themselves constantly spoke of Johannesburg as the healthiest town in South Africa. Mrs. Lionel Phillips testifies that it was never visited by an epidemic.

### The Liquor Laws.

Perhaps your crowning stroke in this connection, however, is your categorical mention of "the liquor laws, *by which the Kaffirs were allowed to be habitually drunk.*" You will not be surprised at my calling this an impudent fable; you know as well as I that your words are rant. But when you speak of "laws *by which*" the Kaffirs were allowed to get drunk, you pass from rant to something worse. All men in South Africa know the enormous difficulty of preventing illicit traffic in liquor. In our own army there, it is visibly the constant preoccupation of the officers; and I have myself seen endless evidence of their difficulties. But as regards Johannesburg there is the express testimony of many Outlanders that strenuous attempts were made there to enforce the stringent Liquor Law of 1896. One American Outlander with whom I had many conversations, and who always maintained against me that the war was inevitable, emphatically assured me that the Liquor Law was

as well administered as it could be—that nothing short of the compound system could do better. So much for your false witness.

### British Liquor Laws.

It remains to note the fashion in which you play up to British hypocrisy. You are as well aware as the rest of us that in our own country all effectual legislation for the control of the liquor traffic is prevented by the political alliance between the Conservative party and the Drink Trade. Thus the political party which you have joined *does* wilfully facilitate the drink traffic, in the pecuniary interest of its most influential section; and you dare nevertheless to formulate against the late Transvaal Government the nakedly false charge of making "laws *by which* the Kaffirs were allowed to be habitually drunk." Is it wonderful that other nations call ours the champion hypocrite of the world? You prate of the discredit brought on England by pro-Boer accusations. Do you think they can do England half the harm done by your Tartufe airs and nefarious fictions?

I have done with your list of grievances. They are of a piece with the rest of your polemic—a tissue of the most reckless special pleading current in the war-mongering press.

### Boer and British Theology.

Of this you yourself seem to be conscious. After you have put the case as one-sidedly as ever a case was put, you allow yourself to reflect that such special pleading must discredit itself with intelligent men, and you observe that "it is a poor case which cannot bear to fairly state and honestly consider the case of its opponents." Well, yours is a poor case enough, and in the end, therefore, you neither fairly state nor honestly consider the case of the Boers. Before venturing even on that final pretence of stating the other side, you are careful to cite some reports which show that some of the Boers still hold the theological opinions which were normal in this country a generation ago. Some of them, as you show, believed some years since (you do not say how many years) that locusts were a divine plague to be prayed against, not to be fought by secular means. If you know anything of British culture-history you know that in the middle of the nineteenth century whole religious denominations in this country took that view of all pestilences, and denounced as impious those who thought otherwise. Rational clergymen were ostracised in England and Scotland for opposing the majority. Yet you are not ashamed to make the survival of such theology in a remote and pastoral population a reason for treating it as a hindrance to civilisation that must be swept away.

The worst of it is that you are fully aware of the essential identity of the Boer theology with what is *professed* among the insincere and dissembling multitude to which you appeal. What is the difference, pray, between popular British theology and that of the Boers? The "imperial" Parliament opens its every meeting

with prayer; and premier and monarch always profess to invoke "the blessing of Almighty God" on their acts. All alike claim to found their creed on the Hebrew Bible. The difference is that your party are in the main shameless humbugs in such matters, and the Boers as a rule are not. Such is the hypocrisy of many of your collaborators that they will in one breath deride the Boers for their creed, and in the next glorify Cromwell and their Puritan forefathers for acting on the very same beliefs. Nay, you yourself tell us, on your own part, that when the Boers invoked "the Lord as the final arbiter, Britain was ready, less obtrusively but no less heartily, to refer the quarrel to the same dread judge." So that in your theology the deity ignores plagues, but gives close judicial supervision to wars! You are indeed a pretty philosopher to criticise the ignorant Boer!

In the last-quoted sentence you virtually deny the notorious fact that on the British side the troops were prayed over, the flags blessed, and "the Lord invoked as the final arbiter" in ten thousand pulpits. And the effect of your polemic, to your shame be it said, is to teach a mindless multitude that they do well to make war on the Boer nation because some Boers avow exactly the opinions in which most Britons were solemnly brought up a generation ago. Standing aloof as I do from such theological views at home as well as abroad, I take this opportunity to testify that in my opinion you stain the cause of reason even more than you disgrace that of religion by your miserable appeals to the mere conceit of a crowd who are neither rational nor honestly religious, who have never thought out a single theological problem, and who are base enough to persecute in one decade fellow-citizens that courageously oppose theological dogmas, and in the next to make war on a remote community because it partly holds by such dogmas still.

### Boer Politics.

Perhaps you will here resort afresh to the interesting sophism implied in one of your sentences. "There was not a wrong," you say, in your slovenly style, "which had driven the Boer from Cape Colony which he did not now practise himself upon others—and a wrong may be excusable in 1835 which is monstrous in 1895." All wrongs done by England are of course excusable: "Cæsar doth never wrong but with just cause." And all wrongs done by Boers are, equally, of course, monstrous. Educated England, you may say, was excusable for believing collectively in prayer against rinderpest and cholera as late as 1865; while the Transvaal is an insufferable obstacle to civilisation because a minority of backveld Boers still thought so as late as 1895. So be it: carry your catch-penny sociology as far as you will. But I cannot let pass with mere derision your pretence that the Boers in the Transvaal were doing in 1895 what had been done to them in 1835. You are here, as so often before, utterly falsifying the whole ethic of the political issue. The Dutch who trekked out of Cape Colony did so because the incoming English had broken their solemn pledges to respect the

Dutch laws, and had officially robbed the Dutch to boot. The Cape had been Dutch to begin with: the English were the incomers. In the Transvaal, the Boers were on their own ground, and the incomers had neither more nor less right than an Englishman has who goes to make money for a few years in France or Germany. To say that the Boers were acting as the British had done at the Cape is sheer perversion. They were acting as France and Germany act by aliens at this moment.

The Dutch had been settled, as they hoped, for ever at the Cape. The Outlanders of Johannesburg, in nine cases out of ten, had not the remotest idea of settling in the Transvaal. Yet whereas the Boers, knowing this, hesitated to give them a vote which, *as you admit*, they might use to enforce "a policy abhorrent to the original owners of the land," you prate of unrighteousness and wrong! One of the parrot-cries of your party runs on the "hypocrisy" of the Boers; another on their "slimness." You have successfully shown that, in whatever respect they may excel us, we are their masters in the departments in question.

### Gold-Mining versus Civilisation.

After you have made your pleasing pretence that "it is a poor case which cannot afford to fairly state and honestly consider the case of its opponents," you represent the Boers as saying of the Outlanders: "if they stayed, let them be thankful that they were tolerated at all." Such is the final measure of your fairness and honesty. You then go on to say that "a policy of Thibet" cannot be tolerated "in a great tract of country which lies right across the main line of industrial progress."

I am not surprised to find you speaking of gold-mining as part of "the main line of industrial progress." That medieval delusion, long since exploded by economic science, is cherished by men from whom one might more reasonably expect economic knowledge than from you. Knowing that all gold-mining is transient, and that according to expert calculations the Witwatersrand mines may well be exhausted within twenty years, some of them yet talk of vicious Johannesburg as a kind of fortress of civilisation. The Boers, knowing as much, had tenfold reason for hesitating to enfranchise the multitude of hostile aliens whose cause you espouse.

But that is by the way; as is the answer to your assertion that the Johannesburgers were "far more highly educated and progressive than the Boers." If there were any Outlanders more highly educated than Smuts, Boer official and distinguished Oxford graduate, they are unfortunately unknown to fame; and as to "progressiveness," it happens that the labour laws of the Transvaal were all round considerably better than those of England are at this moment. Whether you knew this or not is of little importance: if you had known it you would have taken care not to mention it. With or without knowledge, you always contrive to put the case otherwise than "fairly and honestly."

### III.—THE PLEA FOR BRITISH AGGRESSION.

The essential point, however, is this. You here indicate plainly enough that in your opinion Britain was justified in *forcing* war on the Boers, as obstacles to "industrial progress." Unless you thought so, your reasoning was irrelevant. That, of course, it often is; but I am bound to assume that you are always driving at something; and this is your drift here. You go on to ask, concerning the Boers, "What is their right" to "hold down" the Outlanders "in a way which exists nowhere else upon earth"? Here, of course, you pass from misrepresentation to absurd untruth. You are perfectly aware that in our entire Indian Empire *nobody* has any franchise rights; also that there are no Parliaments in Russia and Turkey; also that in no country whatever are aliens allowed the franchise save on their becoming naturalised and undertaking to bear absolute allegiance to the State that enfranchises them.

All this romancing is in your ordinary spirit. But you further answer your own question in these words, "The right of conquest"—yet another untruth, for the Boers neither had nor pretended to have conquered the Outlanders—and you add: "*Then the same right may be justly invoked to reverse so intolerable a situation.*" That is to say, you allege that Britain had a clear right to conquer and annex the Transvaal because the Boers would not concede the whole of our demands as to franchise. Now let us see how you relate this claim to your further account of the origins of the war.

#### The Outlanders' Petition.

Coming to the question of the negotiations, you take care to parade the *ex parte* statement of the Outlanders' petition. You take care to say nothing as to how the 21,000 signatures to that veracious document were obtained; nothing of the abundant evidence as to the gross corruption employed. You cite a corruptly engineered petition as a valid testimony to corruption on the other side; and you reproduce its mention of the breaking-up of a meeting without a hint that the Outlander meetings were nakedly seditious. All the while, like the other "gentlemen" of your party, you placidly contemplate the breaking up of peace meetings in Great Britain.

#### British Disinterestedness.

By way, too, of express prelude to your chapter on "The Negotiations" you pen a paragraph which begins: "The British Government and the British people do not desire any direct authority in South Africa." This egregious assertion you justify by the further statement that "The Transvaal as a British province would have its own legislature, its own revenue, its own expenditure, and *its own tariff against the mother country.*" Tariff on what? What products have you the ingenuity to represent as likely to be protected in the Transvaal by a tariff against British competition? You either know perfectly well that there are none, or you have

never given a thought to the subject. Your flourish on this head is either an expression of folly on your own part or an attempt to trade on folly in others.

As against your theory of disinterestedness, let us now consider the essential financial facts.

1. Many Britons held shares in Transvaal gold mines.
2. They were vehemently assured that if the Boer system of government could be upset the profits of the mines would be greatly increased, (a) by lessened taxation, and (b) by forcing native labour into the mines.
3. Many Britons were similarly assured that British commerce with a British Transvaal would be greatly multiplied.

These facts are perfectly notorious. And they reduce your pretence of disinterestedness to the level of burlesque. But another clinching disproof of your own pretence lies in your own previous words. In the previous chapter you had averred that the Boer system lay "right across the main line of industrial progress." Now you allege that Britain had nothing to gain commercially from annexation. You doubtless know better than I how far a man may trade on the imbecility of Jingo readers. But is it prudent thus to assume that the rest of the nation, and the mass of European readers, can be duped by such coarse duplicity as this?

### **Conan versus Doyle.**

Another of your attempts to prove the disinterestedness of the Johannesburg capitalists is the statement that, in such a community, where the franchise is given, "The new-comer soon becomes as proud of his country and as jealous of her liberty as the old." Here again you badly overreach yourself; for on the previous page you had made the admission that, from the Boer point of view, "it was only a question of time before the newcomers would dominate the Raad and elect their own President, who might adopt a policy abhorrent to the original owners of the land"; and this view, you confess, was "tenable in theory." You can object only that the Boer position was "unjust and impossible in practice." That is not the point for the present. The point is that you can hardly write two pages without contradicting yourself.

In point of fact, all men knew that if the franchise were once given, the great majority of Outlander votes would be coerced by the capitalist interest, and the Government worked in that interest only. Let any man who knows Kimberley tell you how British institutions work there. Body and soul, the population is in the hands of the De Beers Company. Your friends the capitalists simply sought to duplicate the De Beers *régime* at Johannesburg.

### **Mr. Rhodes.**

But the impossibility of getting a decently judicial view on such matters from you is made evident by your treatment of Mr. Rhodes.

A writer in your position, if he retained any keen sense of self-respect and of literary honour, would at least go as far as some sections of the war press have gone, and pass an ostensibly impartial censure on Mr. Rhodes. But you honey your voice as soon as you approach him. You gingerly intimate that "The motives of his action are *obscure*—certainly we may say that they were *not sordid*, for he has always been a man *whose thoughts were large and whose habits were simple*." A Daniel come to judgment! The desire for extension of empire is to pass for large-thoughtedness with Mr. Rhodes, and for infamy when ascribed to Mr. Kruger! And Mr. Rhodes, forsooth, cannot be sordid because his habits are simple; while the considerably simpler habits of Mr. Kruger serve to make him the chosen target of the satire of the British snob, to whom you appeal, and on whose vote your party relies. All the while, Mr. Rhodes possesses the most palatial house in South Africa; and you call his habits simple because he is not always in it, but attends to business elsewhere. And all the while, too, you are aware that Mr. Rhodes deliberately deceived Sir Hercules Robinson in regard to the preparations for the Raid.

### The Plot for Annexation.

It is after such an exhibition of judicial method, fairness, competence, coherence, and veracity, that you reach the burning question of "The Negotiations." And here, after your preamble on British disinterestedness, you squarely affirm that "There *could be no question* of a plot for the annexation of the Transvaal. . . . One may examine the files of the press during all the months of negotiations and never find one *reputable* opinion in favour of such a course, nor did one *in society* ever meet an advocate of such a measure." I confess to some difficulty in meeting an assertion so worded. You yourself have just been undertaking to show that we had a perfect right to conquer the Transvaal: now you say no reputable person before the war suggested its conquest. Was it then disreputable to affirm an obvious right? As it happens, opinions in favour of annexation were repeatedly put forward, both during and before the negotiations, in journals and magazines which commonly pass for being as reputable as yourself. I have also seen the view urged in a novel by a popular author. I will not seek to put you in the delicate position of saying whether you do not admit that author to be reputable, and I will not make the still more delicate attempt to decide between your status and that of the periodicals I refer to. But I take leave to affirm, with emphasis, that before and during the negotiations the tone of many journalists and other writers was wholly in favour of annexation; and that in some sections of society (in which I cannot pretend to move) the view was quite familiar. I leave it to you to asperse such society as disreputable if you will; but I suggest, in your own interest, that you had better not. And on the general problem, I would advise you to consult Mr. Rider Haggard, who is surely a reputable writer, and very much on your own literary and intellectual plane.

In the meantime, a few dated citations from the leading British journal will serve to exhibit the value of your testimony:—

“The gibes and grumbings . . . have only served to remove the last lingering hesitation on the part of the people generally with regard to a resort in case of necessity to armed force, with the object of delivering the Outlanders from a monstrous condition of servitude.”—*Times*, Aug. 12, 1899.

“This country would have been entirely within its right in taking and acting upon its own view of the franchise law without more ado.” . . . “Our colonies are enthusiastic in their support, and will supply contingents of an exceedingly useful kind. . . . A struggle which this country has done everything to avoid will put an end for ever to the domination of the Boer oligarchy.”—*Times*, August 15, 1899.

“The regular troops at present in South Africa together with the irregular levies at the disposal of the military authorities, would be fully equal to cope with any force the Boers could put into the field.”—*Times*, August 16, 1899.

“When the reinforcements now under orders have reached South Africa, they will raise the number of our troops there to about 23,000 men, a force which ought to be at least sufficient to secure our colonial frontiers against incursion.”—*Times*, September 9, 1899.

“The despatch” (Mr. Chamberlain’s) “is not necessarily an ultimatum, but it is clearly the prelude to an ultimatum should the reply prove to be unfavourable.”—*Times*, September 14, 1899.

Finally, a week before the presentation of the Boer ultimatum, we have from the same organ the most explicit avowal of the aggressive purpose of the British Government:—

“Preparations are being steadily made . . . for placing such an army in the field as will ensure that when we take the offensive, our operations shall be rapid and decisive.”—*Times*, October 2, 1899.

I do not trouble you with citations from that extensive section of the press of your party which is popularly termed “yellow.” I leave it to those of your readers whose memories may fail them, to surmise how the *Daily Mail* expressed itself when the *Times* declaimed as above. But it may be well to put down once more in black on white the fact which you and your party either shiftily ignore or shamelessly deny, that in September of 1899 the bulk of the British public was avowedly bent on a war of aggression. When a mass meeting was held at Manchester on September 15th—three weeks before the issue of the Boer ultimatum—Mr. Morley and Mr. Courtney, the leading speakers, were shouted at for pleading against such a war. And when Mr. W. T. Stead issued a pamphlet dated September 21st, 1899, having just returned from the Hague, where the representatives of the Powers had been striving to preserve the peace of the world, he wrote: “I find my own country ringing from end to end with preparations for war.”

It is significant of the present state of political morals and intelligence among your party that in the face of all this your press should now dare to pretend that “we never sought war: it was they who invaded us.” Your party may indeed well wish to suppress the facts. But I take leave to press them on the attention of your “impartial” readers by way of preparation for a study of your account of the Negotiations.

#### IV.—THE NEGOTIATIONS.

It is characteristic of your method of proof that you cannot even begin a description of the negotiations without asserting that Sir Alfred Milner had the record "of an able clear-headed man, too just to be either guilty of or tolerant of injustice." Thus do you bring your pleading at every turn to the plane of claptrap. The whole political machinery of our country proceeds on the certainty that *no* man can be pronounced "too just to be either guilty of or tolerant of injustice." In every dispute between parties since party government began, each side has charged the other with injustice. Every leading statesman in our own day has been so impugned. It is only when they stand collectively in the relation of suzerainty to other races that Englishmen dream of pretending that any statesman is incapable of injustice. And you undertake, forsooth, to bestow that certificate in advance on a man who, before he went to South Africa, had never been in a position to govern either justly or unjustly!

Your chapter on the Negotiations is worthy of its preamble. It is the most chaotic section of a disorderly book; and no man could gather from it even a moderately clear notion of the course of events. You affect to take up the narrative and then drop it five times over, always interposing paragraphs of declamation in which you reiterate aspersions you have already made or introduce new aspersions, always covering the subject with a dust-cloud of passionate rhetoric. Once, on a holiday, I read a story of yours, entitled, "Rodney Stone." You had apparently planned that it should be an account of Rodney Stone's adventures. But you never reached them. You kept him describing other people's adventures till the book was finished, and you might as well have called the story "Conan Doyle." It would appear that your pen, and not your purpose, determines the construction of your narrative. The story of Rodney Stone has still to be written, and as far as you are concerned the same may be said of the history of the Transvaal dispute.

#### Synopsis of the Dispute.

What are the main facts? In the interests of your readers, I state them in chronological order.

1896, JANUARY 7.—Immediately after the Raid Mr. Chamberlain proposed to send a large force to the Cape "to provide for all eventualities," but was dissuaded by Sir Hercules Robinson. He then invited President Kruger to give Johannesburg complete Home Rule, and on Kruger's refusal sent a menacing letter which evoked protests from the Ministers of Natal and from the majority of the Cape Legislature.

AUGUST 12.—Mr. Chamberlain declared in the House that the British Government was pledged not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal.

**1897, MARCH.**—The two Boer Republics conclude a treaty of defensive alliance, leaving ultimate freedom of decision to each State.

**MAY.**—Immediately after Sir Alfred Milner's arrival at the Cape, the Transvaal Government proposes arbitration with regard to all points in dispute touching the Convention.

**JULY.**—The Raid Enquiry Committee report that Mr. Rhodes had "deceived the High Commissioner representing the Imperial Government," also his colleagues and subordinates. Speaking on the Report in the House, Mr. Chamberlain declares himself "perfectly convinced" that "there exists nothing which affects Mr. Rhodes' personal character as a man of honour."

**OCTOBER.**—Mr. Chamberlain refuses to arbitrate, affirming that "her Majesty's Government maintains the Preamble of the 1881 Convention"—that is, the Convention which had been expressly supplanted by that of 1884, in consideration of sacrifices of territory confessedly made to secure the abolition of "suzerainty."

**1898, FEBRUARY.**—Mr. Kruger re-elected for the fourth time, by a vast majority.

**APRIL.**—Mr. Rhodes re-instated as Managing Director of the Chartered Company.

**SEPTEMBER.**—Mr. Rhodes and his party defeated in the General Election for the Cape Parliament. The Dutch party in power, with an English premier, and two English and three Dutch colleagues in his Cabinet. One of their first acts is to vote an annual subsidy of £30,000 to the Royal Navy.

**DECEMBER.**—Mr. Chamberlain insists afresh that the Preamble of the 1881 Convention subsists. Sir A. Milner visits England.

**1899, JANUARY.**—The Cape Ministry protests to Sir A. Milner that the "South African League" is doing its worst to promote bad feeling. Sir William Butler similarly warns Mr. Chamberlain against the League's statements.

**MARCH.**—Sir A. Milner, again at his post, pretends that an anti-British movement has begun among the Dutch throughout South Africa. His whole proof is an anonymous and non-seditious letter in an obscure paper, published in the far north of the Colony. (In 1897 he had testified to the marked loyalty of the whole Cape population.)

**MAY.**—Milner, in a cablegram to Chamberlain, calls for a "striking proof" of the British Government's intention "not to be ousted from its position in South Africa," declaring that in the Transvaal thousands of British subjects are "kept permanently in the position of helots," and that "the case for intervention is overwhelming." Chamberlain formally replies, stating grievances, and declaring that Britain as the "paramount power" must now intervene, but suggests that Milner should meet Kruger. Milner replies, deprecating the British claim of "suzerainty" but insisting that the Transvaal's claim to be a "sovereign international State" (though accompanied by the full admission of the specified rights guaranteed

to Britain by the Convention of 1884) is "in the nature of a defiance." Next day, Mr. Goschen publicly testifies to the loyalty of the Cape Dutch.

JUNE 1.—Conference between Milner and Kruger at Bloemfontein. It lasts only five days. Describing the negotiations in a long despatch of June 14, Milner writes that in part of the discussion he had been thinking of "*the remote contingency of our being able to come to an amicable settlement.*" That is to say, he had gone into the Conference expecting it to fail. His demands had been: (1) A five years' residence to secure the franchise: the law to be retrospective; (2) *modification of the oath of naturalisation*; (3) a fair representation for the newly enfranchised.

Kruger proposed (1) two years' residence to secure naturalisation, five years' more to secure the *full* franchise; but all settled in the country before 1890 to receive the vote in 1901; (2) a larger representation for the Outlanders; (3) a property qualification for the franchise of £150, or occupation of a £50 house, or an income of £200; (4) the claimant to give proofs of having possessed civic rights elsewhere; (5) the oath to be similar to that used in the Orange Free State; (6) all these proposals to be subject to British acceptance of the principle of arbitration.

Milner pronounced the franchise proposals to be insufficient; and refused to agree to foreign arbitration. Kruger, however (June 5), suggested an African tribunal. On that the Conference ended. Kruger thereupon introduced in the Raad a Reform Bill, decreeing (1) a seven years' qualification for the franchise, dropping the fourth of the above-cited stipulations; (2) enfranchising at once all who had resided nine years, and requiring only five years more from those who had been two years in the country; (3) enfranchising all adult sons-of-aliens born in the State; and (4) increasing the representation of the gold fields by four members in each Volksraad.

[This Reform Bill (passed July 19) was not held acceptable by Lord Salisbury's Government. Already at the close of the Conference the Intelligence Department had issued its "Military Notes," telling how war should be waged in the Transvaal. At the same time Lord Wolseley laid before the English Government a plan for the invasion and conquest of *the two Republics.*]

JULY 18.—The Cape Government declare its conviction "that no ground whatever exists for active interference in the internal concerns" of the Transvaal.

JULY 20.—The Uitlander Council at Johannesburg telegraphs to declare its disappointment at the report that the British Government is inclined to accept the seven years' franchise.

JULY 27.—Mr. Chamberlain, in a despatch, admits that the new law is an improvement, but re-asserts the claim to "suzerainty" on the ground of the annulled Convention of 1881 and declines foreign arbitration, vaguely suggesting some "judicial authority."

AUGUST 1.—He proposes a new Joint Enquiry.

AUGUST 15.—The British Agent at Pretoria told the State Secretary there that "*the only chance for the South African Republic*

*Government was an immediate surrender to the Bloemfontein Minimum*"; and that "her Majesty's Government, who had given pledges to the Uitlanders, would be bound to assert their demands and, if necessary, to press them by force." (C. 9521, p. 45.)

AUGUST 19 and 21.—Kruger, explaining that he did not thereby refuse the proposed Joint Enquiry, offered a five years' franchise, with eight new seats in the Volksraad, making 10 seats out of 36, on condition that (1) the British Government should not further interfere; (2) the "suzerainty" claim should be tacitly dropped; and (3) arbitration should be conceded when the new law had been passed.

AUGUST 23.—Milner in a despatch admits that the new proposals are "as liberal as anything I was prepared to suggest," but argues that other claims must be met.

AUGUST 25.—The Uitlander Council and the South African League declare that the franchise reform will not suffice, and demand various "reforms," including "*disarmament of the Boer population and demolition of the forts.*"

AUGUST 26.—Mr. Chamberlain, in a speech to a garden-party at his house, said: "Mr. Kruger dribbles out reforms like water from a squeezed sponge; and he either accompanies his offers with conditions which he knows to be impossible, or he refuses to allow us to make a satisfactory investigation of the nature and character of these reforms. . . . *The sands are running down in the glass.* . . . The knot must be loosened, or else *we shall have to find other ways of untying it.*"

AUGUST 28.—He sends an ungracious message (which he afterwards professed to regard as a "qualified acceptance") construed by the Boers and everybody else as a refusal. It wantonly re-asserted the claim to suzerainty under the annulled Convention. On the same day the Cape Premier declared: "We feel that war would be wrong . . . it would be an offence against civilisation."

AUGUST 31.—Milner telegraphed to Chamberlain: "The purport of *all* representations made to me is to urge prompt and decided action. . . . *British South Africa is prepared for extreme measures; . . . there will be a strong reaction against the policy of her Majesty's Government if matters drag.*"

SEPTEMBER 2.—The Transvaal Government, regretting the refusal of its last offers, which were dependent on conditions, reverts to its former offer; but the Raad agrees to accept the proposed Joint Enquiry, provided this is not to be made a precedent for future intervention.

SEPTEMBER 7.—British troops being massed near the Transvaal frontiers, the Boer State Secretary asks for information as to the purpose. Milner replies: "I do not know what the State Secretary refers to," adding, however, that the troops "are here to protect British interests and to provide against eventualities." He makes no pretence that the Boers are arming.

SEPTEMBER 8.—The British Government decide to send 10,000 men to Natal. The Transvaal Government offers to revert to the Joint Enquiry. Mr. Chamberlain replies to their previous message,

that he would accept the previous proposals "taken by themselves"—that is, without the conditions annexed; and intimates that if this is not agreed to, H.M. Government "reserve to themselves the right to reconsider the situation *de novo*, and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement" [that is, to send an ultimatum].

SEPTEMBER 15.—Sir W. Hely Hutchinson, Governor of Natal, in a despatch to Mr. Chamberlain, proposes the invasion of the Transvaal, though the Natal Ministry object.

SEPTEMBER 16.—The Transvaal Government appeal to the British Government *to abide by its own proposal for a Joint Commission*, and decline to let their intermediate proposals stand without the conditions annexed.

SEPTEMBER 19.—Milner notifies President Steyn of intention to station British troops near borders of Free State, but calls upon that State to preserve strict neutrality. Steyn replies next day that his burghers are likely to take alarm; and puts responsibility on the British Government.

SEPTEMBER 20.—Mr. Hayes Fisher, Junior Lord of the Treasury, in a public speech, says: "The sand *has* run through the glass for Paul Kruger." . . . "The Government must now send a sufficient force to insure that when the final ultimatum is presented" the Boers will perhaps "listen to the voice of reason and not . . . invite us to inflict on them a crushing defeat and *take from them the country they so much cherish.*"

SEPTEMBER 22.—The mobilisation of an Army Corps for South Africa is announced.

SEPTEMBER 27.—The Free State Volksraad protest that "there exists no cause for war," but declare that if it be forced they will stand by their alliance with the Transvaal.

SEPTEMBER 28.—Announcement made that a large contingent of the corps will be *at once* sent to South Africa.

SEPTEMBER 30.—Transvaal State Secretary courteously appeals, through Milner, for an answer as to the British Government's decision.

OCTOBER 1.—Mr. Chamberlain replies: "The despatch is being prepared: *it will be some days before it is ready.*" Yet the Duke of Devonshire in a public speech declares that the apprehensions of the Boers are "absolutely unfounded."

OCTOBER 7.—The Royal Proclamation summons Parliament for October 17, calls out a part of the Reserves; and orders are given to mobilise a field force for South Africa.

OCTOBER 9.—President Steyn telegraphs to Milner a last appeal for a mutual agreement to withdraw forces.

The Transvaal Government presents its ultimatum to the British Agent at Pretoria.

OCTOBER 11.—The Boers invade Natal, whose Governor had four weeks before proposed to invade the Transvaal.

### More Falsifications.

Such is the true history of the diplomacy of the quarrel, from

the Raid to the outbreak of war, put into less space than you have devoted to a pastiche of declamation which suppresses the most essential truths, and either suggests or affirms a series of untruths. You assert (p. 49) that when Mr. Chamberlain made his speech about the sands running down, he and the British public had vainly "waited week after week for an answer." I have shown above that this is a shameful misrepresentation. Mr. Chamberlain's grossly provocative speech was made within a week of the receipt of President Kruger's most important and most conciliatory offer, to which Mr. Chamberlain had not yet replied. You yourself (p. 50) allege—erroneously of course—that Kruger's "new suggestions were put forward on August 12." Do you venture to pretend that an answer had been sent before August 26th?

Not satisfied with that perversion of the facts, you say (p. 51) that when the Transvaal Government returned their answer of September 2, "it was short and uncompromising. . . . The negotiations were at a deadlock. It was difficult to see how they could be re-opened." Every one of these statements is false. The reply was *not* uncompromising. The Raad had agreed to the proposal for a Joint Enquiry, *which Mr. Chamberlain had on Mr. Kruger's appeal agreed to leave open*. The negotiations could with perfect ease have been re-opened by reverting to the Joint Enquiry.

You actually have the folly to go on to say (p. 52) that "the British Government, however, was prepared to accept the five years' franchise as stated in the note of August 19, assuming at the same time that in the Raad each member might use his own language." I can hardly call this monstrous figment a lie: it seems too fatuous to be calculated prevarication. But the man who penned it is no more fit to write history than to command the fleet. The literal fact is, as I have stated, that the British Government *positively rejected the conditions attached to the Boer proposals*. Your ridiculous narrative makes out that the only final ground of dispute was the claim to let both languages be used in the Raad!

As if this were not enough you proceed to state that the Transvaal Government's reply of September 16 was "unbending and uncompromising," and "a complete rejection of all the British demands." Here it is hard to regard your utterance as one of mere folly. You have utterly perverted the facts. The Boer Government, finding their proposals rejected, appealed once more, as I have said, to the British Government to revert to *its own* proposal for a Joint Enquiry. It was in flat disregard of this appeal, and of its own declared program, that the British Government proceeded, as you admit, to break off negotiations, and to hatch its ultimatum.

### **The Boer Preparations.**

Thus to the very last you grossly misrepresent the real state of the negotiations, and then you plunge at a step into your treatment of the war as a fatality forced on by the Boers! Your crowning untruth—I can use no milder term, and I might fitly use a stronger—is your assertion that at the "deadlock" alleged, "*in view of*

*the arming of the burghers, the small garrison of Natal had been taking up positions to cover their frontier."* It lies recorded in our own Blue-book (Cd. 44, p. 22) that on September 19th the Natal Premier declared: "*The Boers have not been commandeered yet.*" On the same page of the same Blue-book is the avowal that the first news of the commandeering of the Boers was received by the Natal Governor on September 28th, whereas he himself, having learned the tenor of the British reply to the Transvaal, had on the 24th decided to move troops to Glencoe, *knowing that such a movement would be taken by the Boers as a declaration of war.*

### **The British Menaces.**

I have called this last perversion your crowning fiction in this connection. But perhaps I should reserve that title for your assertion that as late as September 8, while the forces in Africa had necessarily to be strengthened, "it was very necessary not to appear to threaten or to appeal to force." Not to appear to threaten! When our own agent at Pretoria had officially and explicitly threatened it on August 15th! When our War Office had in June issued its manual of instructions for war in South Africa! When Mr. Chamberlain (with your avowed approval) had virtually threatened it on August 26th!

### **Amateur Historical Method.**

So far as I am aware, you have thus far produced the most worthless, the most careless, the most faithless, history of an important international episode that has been published in our time. And for this performance, it appears, you have been elected an honorary member of the Nova Scotian Historical Society. Doubtless that Society's research has been as scrupulous as your own.

The details which I have given, and which confute your narrative at every essential point, have not been left buried in Blue-books. For that matter, it was your clear duty to ransack the Blue-books with the most anxious care. But every item in my synopsis had been already published in one or other of the many treatises which have dealt with the subject in the past few years. I have simply collocated them in a single view for the benefit of your readers. I can hardly doubt that you are practically without knowledge of many of the details you falsify. That is, however, no excuse for your conduct; and all the while you yourself show that you have no faith in your own record; for on the top of it you affirm that during the negotiations the Boers were zealously preparing for a war of aggression. If you believed *that* to be true, you were merely wasting time in your bogus history of the negotiations: a proved design of aggression by the Boers would of itself justify our planning to meet them. In reality you are but seeking to buttress a tottering structure of figments by a fresh figment. With that fresh figment I shall now proceed to deal on its merits.

## V.—THE ALLEGED DUTCH CONSPIRACY.

### More Loaded Dice.

In the first chapter of your book you commit one of your customary falsifications by stating (p. 16) that under the Sand River Convention "the Transvaal Republic came formally into existence," and again (p. 22) that in the Convention of 1884, "their style was altered from the Transvaal to the South African Republic, a change which was ominously suggestive of expansion in the future." It is necessary to explain to your sorely-tried readers that "the South African Republic" was the official title of the Transvaal State from 1852 onwards; that its constitution under that title was framed in 1864; that in the Convention of 1881 it is called "the Transvaal Territory," which was never its Boer title, the Boer signatories being at the same time styled "representatives of the Transvaal Burghers"; and that in the Convention of 1884 occur *both* the styles "Transvaal State" and "South African Republic."

Thus do you load your dice from the start. Had you so much as glanced into Theal's "History of South Africa" you might have read in the very index that the "South African Republic" had its independence guaranteed by the British Government in 1852. Your object is, of course, to insinuate that from 1884 onwards the Transvaal Government was bent on aggression. Yet even at this stage, in your heedless way, you unwittingly reveal that the spirit of aggression was really on the British side. "Can it be wondered at," you ask, after discussing the settlement of 1881, "that South Africa has been in a ferment ever since, and that the British Africander has yearned with an intensity of feeling unknown in England *for the hour of revenge?*" I ask your readers to note that avowal. And I ask them further to note how you forget and stultify your own words when in your fourth chapter you argue that "Majuba may have rankled in our memory, but was not allowed to influence our policy." By your own account it was in South Africa a motive of overwhelming strength; and at every stage in this dispute the push to strife has come from South Africa.

### The Claim of Suzerainty.

In this connection you discuss the claim to "suzerainty," saying that "the British" [you mean the Chamberlain] "contention is that it was not abrogated, and that the preamble [of 1881] held good for both treaties." Thus is the honour of the whole nation to be tarnished because you see fit to endorse the most rascally expedient of modern diplomacy—a device which Sir Edward Clarke in the House of Commons described as a breach of national faith; which even Sir Alfred Milner deprecated, and concerning which Lord Salisbury has indicated his view by officially avowing in the House of Lords that Mr. Kruger made "considerable territorial and other sacrifices" to have the claim of suzerainty cancelled in 1884.

After gratuitously saddling the nation with the chicanery of Mr.

Chamberlain you proceed to avow that "the discussion is a barren one." You do your leader injustice. His treacherous plea has been as fruitful as Milton's Sin, bringing forth sword and fire, war and abominable desolation, shameful passion, and immeasurable hatred. Give him his due!

### The Shibboleth of Paramouncy.

It is doubtless quite consistent on your part to explain later, with regard to the discontent of the Outlanders, that "every Briton knew that Great Britain claimed to be the paramount Power in South Africa"; but your readers are entitled to ask what the phrase means. You write as if a "paramount power" were a normal institution in every continent. What is it? Is there a paramount power in Europe, in Asia, in North or South America? The United States do indeed insist that no European power shall intervene in the affairs of American States. Does that make them a "paramount power"? If so, they are paramount over British North America. If not, Britain is not paramount in South Africa in any sense save that her colonies are the most powerful States there. The veto on foreign alliances with the Transvaal is the one semblance of "suzerainty" left by the Convention of 1884; and by the repeated admissions of Conservative statesmen—including Lord Derby, Mr. W. H. Smith, Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Balfour—that veto carries absolutely no right of interference in the internal affairs of the Transvaal.

### The Boer Armaments.

So much for your preliminary mystifications: we have always to see to those in dealing with you. Let us come to your main proposition (p. 48): "For three years the Transvaal had been arming to the teeth . . . *evidently* for a war with Great Britain, and not for a defensive war. It is not in a defensive war that a State (*sic*) provides sufficient rifles to arm every man of Dutch blood in the whole of South Africa." Your style mates your matter: you mean, not that the number of rifles would be excessive in any State, but that it was excessive in the case of the Transvaal.

On its merits, your argument is as usual utterly fallacious. If the Boers were to be duly armed in advance for a *defensive* war with England, they had need to provide rifles and ammunition far in excess of their numbers, simply because they had to *import* every weapon and every cartridge, and knew that in time of war they could import none, while England, having command of the sea, could supply her troops *ad infinitum*.

### British Aggression.

For the rest, I need not remind anyone save those who are simple enough to take you for a just historian, that while you swaggeringly affirm an "evident" design of the Boers against England the historic fact is that England *had* actually annexed the Transvaal in defiance of its own treaty pledges; that Mr. Rhodes and his

colleagues *had* engineered the Raid; and that Mr. Chamberlain, instead of repudiating Mr. Rhodes's treacherous act, had officially vouched for his perfect honour. Will you suggest the name of any civilised neighbour of England which would *not* have armed in self-defence under such circumstances?

### **The Case Surrendered.**

After all, you give away your own plea with your usual wisdom. "It is extraordinary," you exclaim, "that our authorities seem never to have contemplated the possibility of the Boers taking the initiative"! Is it extraordinary? On your premisses it certainly would be, but your premisses are got by putting as a fact a figment framed only after war had been forced on the Boers, and they had showed an unexpected power of resistance. The Natal Ministry knew infinitely better than you ever did or ever will the disposition of the Boers; and *they* were all along satisfied that the Boers would not move till they saw us moving against them. They turned out to be perfectly right. Not till our troops were advanced towards the frontier, *after* the Boers had been told that they would receive an ultimatum which was to be backed up by armed force, did they send *their* ultimatum; and not till three days later did they invade us.

### **No Evidence: Abuse Plaintiff.**

Every one of these facts is a matter of documentary demonstration. For your contention, on the other hand, there is not a scrap of evidence worthy of the name. You accordingly proceed in the fashion of your party to make out your point by sheer swagger. The Dutch design to pull down the British flag in South Africa, you say, "was openly advocated in the press, preached from the pulpit, and sustained upon the platform." For this wholesale assertion you offer not a citation, not a reference, not a name. At the same time you admit that the South African authorities who must have known of such a propaganda, had never any apprehension of a Boer attack.

The facts being all dead against you, you fall back on brazen asseveration. "The preparation for war, the ultimatum, the invasion, and the first shedding of blood, all came from the nation which the result has shown to be the weaker." If such pleas are to become current with posterity as the deliberate reasonings of the British people, we shall simply pass for a nation of knaves. As the chronological synopsis decisively shows, it was England that put the pressure, refused compromise, used the threats, visibly prepared to enforce them, took rapid steps to that end, and so drove the Boers in simple self-defence to send their ultimatum while the English ultimatum was being got ready to present at the bayonet's point. The meanness of the bullying policy is merely enhanced by the pretence that it was the small nation which played the bully.

### **Bogus Evidence.**

Instead of offering some semblance of proof for your vast assertions concerning *open* Dutch propaganda, you fall back on two

trivial rags of bogus proof of *secret designs*—rags out of which the infinitesimal virtue had been long ago wrung by the desperate clutches of your party's press.

First you take the testimony of Paul Botha, ex-member of the Free State Raad, who calls Messrs. Sauer and Merriman "Kruger's henchmen." Your deliberate adoption of this caitiff's scurrilities saves me some ceremony from this point forward. I noticed while in South Africa that the average loyalist, while professing to hold all Boers for liars, always gave a fatuous credence to a Boer who was agreeably deceiving him, or to a Boer who had turned renegade. You are attainted with this moral malady, or a worse.

Had you been guided by the instincts of a gentleman, to which you sometimes make reference, you would have realised that to call Messrs. Sauer and Merriman "Kruger's henchmen" is mere *canaille*; and had you preserved any sense of the value of evidence you would have seen that for Paul Botha to make such an infamous charge without offering a grain of proof was to put *his* character at once out of court. But to gratify your partisan malice you join your voice to Paul Botha's, basely aspersing as paid traitors men who have grown grey in loyal statesmanlike service to the British Empire. An impudent renegade Boer has become your ideal of a "straightforward" witness. I wonder what estimate will be placed on your own testimony henceforth by "impartial" readers outside of this country?

### Comic Opera Evidence.

After Paul Botha, you bring forward the other familiar puppet, Mr. Theophilus Schreiner. It is certainly hard on that muddle-headed gentleman to put him on the same platform with Paul Botha. But folly such as his is apt to get a man into trouble, and you parade his folly to the full. He narrates, with every circumstance of ineptitude, *eighteen years after the event*, a conversation which he professes to have had with Mr. Reitz at the time of the formation of the Afrikander Bond; and you quote him verbatim. The gist of the testimony is that Mr. Schreiner imputed certain anti-British objects to the Bond, and that Mr. Reitz significantly smiled. I can well believe that Mr. Reitz smiled at anything said by Mr. Theophilus Schreiner. If you had done nothing worse than cite this ridiculous report of an ancient conversation *not noted at the time*, a smile might have been your sufficient meed also.

### Dr. Doyle's Personal Research.

Keeping strictly to business, as is now meet, we come to your special and individual contribution to the Dutch conspiracy myth. You have made the most momentous assertions without one jot of relevant proof, and you have added to the offence of baseless assertion that of citation of obviously base and as obviously idle testimony. This you cap with a piece of burlesque—the comic opera evidence of Mr. Theophilus Schreiner. But you have a final stroke in store, worthy of your cause, of your context, and of your method.

You tell us that you found in a deserted Boer farmhouse a letter, dated June 25, 1899, of which you give us a copy, italicising the following words:—

“Dear Henry, the war are by us very much. How is it there by you. News is very scarce to write, but much to speak by ourselves.”

You say that this was written “when the British were anxious for and confident in a peaceful solution,” and you seriously point to it as “evidence of that great conspiracy, not of ambitions, for *there was no reason why they should not be openly discussed*, but of weapons, and of dates for using them, which was going on all the time.”

There is a sort of humiliation in having to expose such folly. You admit that the letter *does not* discuss ambitions when it easily might, and you infer that it has reference to a “conspiracy of weapons and of dates for using them”! This—with one more letter, in which one Snyman avows a month before the war that “on the stoep it is nothing but war, but in the Raad everything is peace”—this is your case!

### The Brief Rebuttal.

A sentence may make an end of it, for any who still need to have it answered for them. Weeks before June 25 the British War Office had issued its manual of directions for South African war; Lord Wolseley had urged his plan for the conquest of the two republics; Sir A. Milner had called for a “striking proof” of British supremacy; and the Bloemfontein Conference had come to nothing; and more than a month before the war began our agent at Pretoria had explicitly threatened war; Mr. Chamberlain had virtually threatened it in a public speech; Sir A. Milner had declared that “British South Africa is prepared for extreme measures”; and several of our newspapers had despatched their war correspondents. Your evidence is farcical; your alleged facts are falsities; your reasoning is refutable by a child.

### The British Conspiracy.

*Exit* the Dutch conspiracy. But the answer to your tissue of folly and fiction does not end with exposing its fraud. Your egregious reasoning not only puts in the shade the procedure in the case of Bardell versus Pickwick: you have contrived to eclipse the immortal action of the Wolf versus the Lamb. The final shame is that while the Dutch conspiracy is a British fiction, there was all the while a British conspiracy. It lies on the face of the chronological summary I have already given; but six paragraphs will formulate it.

1. Mr. Chamberlain actually proposed to follow up the Raid by forcible intervention, and was reluctantly dissuaded.

2. He and Sir Alfred Milner began the pretence of general Dutch disaffection at a time when Cape Colony had given the most signal marks of loyalty.

3. At a time when the Transvaal was altering its franchise at a rate never seen in English politics, they denounced President Kruger for the slowness of his action. The whole period from the Raid to the war was under four years. No English movement for extension of franchise ever succeeded in four times that period. And it is current doctrine with your party that *no* concessions should ever be made to "disloyal" agitation.

4. Mr. Chamberlain's most insolent provocation was offered on the inspiration of a disgraceful message from the Outlanders, calling for the disarmament of the Boers.

5. When there was no expectation whatever of a Boer attack, the War Office had published its plan of invasion; and when Mr. Chamberlain, refusing arbitration, rejected the most liberal proposals of Mr. Kruger, he also refused to go back to his own scheme of a Joint Enquiry, though he had agreed to leave that open.

6. Half-a-dozen speeches by representatives of Rand capitalism avow that control of Transvaal taxation and legislation will greatly increase their revenues; and Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson, in a despatch which alone will suffice to disgrace the nation with the historian of the future, urged in the middle of September, 1899, that a war with the Transvaal was desirable in the interests of Natal, since the former State had it in its power to injure the chief source of Natal revenue by favouring traffic on the Delagoa Bay line or that of the Free State and Cape Colony.

### The British Bluff.

The last argument of your party, when their policy is exposed, is to ask whether our Government can be supposed to have desired a war for which they were so ill-prepared. Let such arguments be reserved for fools: from intelligent men they can meet nothing but derision. The simple and sun-clear explanation of the Chamberlain-Milner-Rhodes policy, with all its duplicity and insolence and fatuity, is that the plotters *meant to invade and did not expect to be effectually resisted.*

It is indeed literally true that they "did not want war"—least of all such a war as they have had. They wanted a walk over; and, deceiving others, they were themselves deluded enough to believe that they would have one. That is the history of the negotiations in a nutshell; and when your unhappy pamphlet has gone the way of all rubbish, so will the history be written, to the shame of the nation of whose present majority you are the mouthpiece.

### VI.—THE ETHICS OF THE WAR.

As your case is substantially destroyed by a simple recital of the negotiations, a criticism of your book might there fitly leave it. Since its texture, however, is of a piece throughout, and its effect on every important issue is to mislead mischievously your ill-in-

formed readers, I propose to follow you to the end. Under the present head we have to consider four topics discussed by you:—

1. The British refusal to arbitrate;
2. The alleged Boer "annexations";
3. The Peace Negotiations;
4. The Prospect of Settlement.

These disposed of, it will remain to discuss only the conduct of the war, under the heads of (1) Farm-Burning, (2) Concentration Camps, and (3) Charges of Outrage on both sides.

### 1. *Refusal to Arbitrate.*

"That the British refused to arbitrate," you say (p. 65), "has been repeated *ad nauseam*, but the allegation will not bear investigation." Then you go on to show that the statement is perfectly true. Your case is that there are some subjects which can be settled by arbitration, and some which cannot. Concerning those which *can*, you say Britain was willing to arbitrate before a tribunal which, as you sketch it, would be *composed chiefly of British African officials*! We are now well prepared for what follows. Without shame, you avow (p. 65) that Britain refused to go to arbitration before outsiders because if she assented the Transvaal "became *ipso facto* an international State." Now, the sole treaty restriction on the Transvaal's action was with regard to foreign treaties. Whether Britain arbitrated or not on other issues, that restriction would subsist. Thus your plea is one more endorsement of iniquity. Had we accepted arbitration, the Transvaal would have remained on exactly her formal status under treaty. The simple truth is that the refusal to arbitrate was by way of backing up the fraudulent claim to "suzerainty." In pursuit of that lawless and lying claim, the British Government incurred the guilt of a horrible war; and in that guilt you are now as far implicated as words can carry you.

You cite Milner to the effect that "you cannot arbitrate on *broad questions of policy* any more than on questions of national honour." That is to say, we can never arbitrate on any question on which it would be worth while to fight; we can arbitrate only on trifles! *Solvuntur tabulae.*

### 2. *The Alleged Boer Annexations.*

In describing the first Boer invasion of our colonies, you assert (p. 73) that "every yard of British territory which was occupied was instantly annexed either by the Transvaal or by the Free State. *This is admitted and beyond dispute.*" I have to reply, first, that "this" is on the contrary an exploded fable. It has been disputed a score of times; and it is not true. While at Aliwal North, Cape Colony, in July of 1900, I obtained a copy of the proclamation that had been issued by Ollivier, the commander of the invading Free Staters. It said not a word of annexation, but simply proclaimed Free State martial law. My copy was stolen in course of post in England, doubtless by some sympathiser of yours; but the historical

fact is "beyond dispute" as I have told it. All that Sir A. Milner could do to discredit it was to cite some unauthorised Boer utterances, never confirmed by the Boer Governments, claiming to annex occupied territory.

### 3. *The Peace Negotiations.*

As usual you seek by such mystification to prejudice your readers against the Boer appeals for peace. Yet even here you stultify yourself. You cite Dr. Leyds as saying in January, 1900, that the Boers would "probably demand" certain cessions of coast territory in Natal, and of frontier territory in Cape Colony. This shows, you say, that they were not in "any moderate spirit." But had you not through a whole chapter been telling us that they wanted to *oust us from South Africa*? The very words you cite, uttered at the highest point of Boer success, point only "probably" to a demand for some slices of territory. Out of your own mouth are you confounded!

### 4. *The Prospect of Settlement.*

Had *we*, after victory, demanded both territory and indemnity from the Boers, there would have been some point in your citation from Dr. Leyds. But you go on to claim that his words justify us in annexing the whole of the Transvaal and the whole of the Free State. Your absurdity becomes as monotonous as your perversity. "Is there any sane man of any nation," you blatantly ask, who could possibly have taken any other view" than that of the necessity for annexation! If you think no sane man does, why, in the name of elementary commonsense, did you write your pamphlet? Was it to convert lunatics?

The answer to your folly is that the sanest men of every nation pronounce the policy of annexation insane. You throw off, with your *banal* facility, a paragraph of declamation about settling the question once for all. The answer is that your policy has made settlement well-nigh hopeless; and that as far as historical judgment can foresee it has determined the ultimate severance of South Africa from the British Empire.

### **Literary Statesmanship.**

You give us once for all the measure of your faculty for practical statesmanship when you write (p. 80):—

"Whatever the final terms of peace may prove to be, it is to be earnestly hoped that 40,000 male prisoners will not be returned, as a matter of right, without any guarantee for their future conduct. It is also much to be desired that the bastard taal language, which has no literature and is almost as intelligible to a Hollander as to an Englishman, will cease to be officially recognised."

If I were Dr. Leyds, I think I should say to you: "Fight it out, I beseech you, on that line. Your judgment is on a par with your accuracy. The taal is a good deal more intelligible to a Hollander than is the language of many districts of England to an educated

Londoner, to say nothing of the *taal* of two millions of east-end Londoners. But pray continue. Keep 40,000 men prisoners for life, or exact from them an oath which they regard as extorted by oath-breakers. Make their proscribed language the symbol and incarnation of their trampled nationality. So shall you settle South Africa!" In my own person I should say: If England is to be guided by you, she will not long have an empire to misrule!

### Fresh Falsifications.

Some of your readers, I fancy, will be glad to come quickly to the central issue. You narrate the negotiations between Lord Kitchener and General Botha, and you finally say: "Nothing has been refused the enemy, save only independence." Your own narrative gives the lie direct to your assertion. You actually print verbatim the article of the final offer which *refused amnesty to Botha's Colonial allies*. That was the main ground on which he could not accept the terms. No honourable soldier could possibly consent to sacrifice his allies, knowing that many of them were likely to be put to death, as a number of prisoners already had been. What is more, you quote the very sentence which shows that Lord Kitchener on his own part had *not* wished to ask of Botha what he, as a soldier, never would have consented to in Botha's place. These are Lord Kitchener's words, in his account of the first negotiations:

"Tenthly.—Amnesty to all at end of war. We spoke of Colonials who joined the Republics, and he [Botha] *seemed not averse to their being disfranchised.*"

Lord Kitchener, then, had suggested only their disfranchisement. And you have the effrontery to pretend that Botha's final decision was "not determined by any changes which Chamberlain *may have* (!) made in the terms." Doubtless there are fools who are capable of believing you, and proud you must be of their suffrages!

## VII.—THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

### 1. Farm Burning.

Your chapter on this head asserts or implies (1) that guerilla methods entail harsh measures, (2) that Lord Roberts prevented farm-burning and looting in the early stages of the war, (3) that our troops were blameless, and that "it was as much as his life was worth" for a soldier to capture a chicken on the march into the Free State, (4) that the Boers did unjustifiable things in Natal, (5) that when we began burning farms it was always because our troops had been fired at on farms of which the houses flew the white flag, (6) that nevertheless we *did* unjustifiably burn some 250 farm-houses, mostly belonging to men whom we had forced to take the oath of neutrality, but whom we did not protect as we ought to have done.

### Confessions and Professions.

It is refreshing to find you making a partially rational and candid admission. Had such a thing come earlier in your book it might have prejudiced some of us in your favour. I let it stand as the one redeeming passage in your treatise. But for the rest your sixth chapter is on your normal plane. Near the close, you assert that "the burning of houses ceased in the year 1900, and, save in very special instances, where there was an overwhelming military necessity, it has not been resorted to since." This is one more untruth. Letters from the front have been repeatedly published, testifying that systematic farm-burning took place in many districts after 1900. Your "overwhelming military necessity" is part of your habitual verbiage.

### Laws of War and Lawless Conquest.

The outstanding absurdity of your case here is your tacit assumption that we are entitled to demand observance of "the laws of war" from an enemy whose country we declare we are going to keep. You appear to think in all seriousness that we can demand compliance with international law from an enemy whose nationality we deny to be any longer in existence!

It is vain to seek to bring you to reason, but I have to point out to readers that when we negate the nationality of the Boers they are no longer amenable, as against us, to any international law. They will, doubtless, observe the usages of war for their own sakes, but to complain as you do of their resort to guerilla tactics is to relapse into imbecility.

There are *no* "laws of conquest." No nation ever admitted that there could be. Laws of war are conventions agreed upon between States who expect to *end a war by a treaty of peace between the combatants AS STATES*. If there is to be no Boer State, there are no laws of war for the Boers.

### The Guerilla Principle.

Your remarks on guerilla warfare, in connection with German practice in France, are merely ridiculous. The Germans shot guerillas because it was open to the French Government either to fight on regular lines or to surrender on terms which did *not* annihilate the French State. Between the German case and ours there is no parallel whatever. I need only remind your readers further that when Napoleon's generals in Spain denounced the guerilla tactics of the Spaniards, the Duke of Wellington expressly refused to admit that there could be any limit to the right of a people to defend *its national existence*. To quote, again, the words of a recent and distinguished English Imperialist, Sir John Seeley: "To the right of self-defence there is no limit." Your argument is a puerile sophism.

### The First Farm-Burning.

Next as to your facts. Out of your own mouth, once more, I confute you.

1. In your own history, "The Great Boer War," p. 202, you have put on record that long before Roberts's march through the Free State, farms had been burned by a flying expedition belonging to the division of Lord Methuen. Was that record false?

2. Your citation of Lord Roberts' early declaration against farm-burning is thus doubly idle. As to early looting, your language is beneath serious notice. No man from the front can read it without laughter.

3. But the critical reader will not be turned aside from the true issue by your rant concerning the impeccable propriety of the troops. I have here nothing to do with the conduct of the troops, or even with that of the commanders. It is the contemptible tactic of your party to try to turn the question of national policy into a question of the army's character. You thus lash up the passions of both fools and ruffians, hoping in the noise to evade the difficulty. Your device will not serve you here. We are considering the military policy *resulting from the policy of annexation*; and alike for chance individual wrongs and systematic devastation the guilt lies at the door of the British Government *and of the majority that backs them*. In that majority you have deliberately enrolled yourself.

### Boer Depredations.

You quote the characteristic letter in which Lord Roberts met the first Boer complaints by saying that "all wanton destruction or injury to peaceful inhabitants is contrary to British practice and tradition," and then, as you say, "carried the war into the enemy's country" by charging certain misdeeds on the Boers. Now Lord Roberts was here both right and wrong. The Boers *did* loot unjustifiably in Natal: I have repeatedly heard the admission made on their side. And why should you be surprised? Have you not been showing us that they were semi-barbarians, utterly in the rear of civilisation? Had not your press been calling them brutes and ruffians before the war began? Had not the press of Natal been calling for the "extermination" of the stock? Your and your friends' shriek of protested amazement at their first acts of looting is a fair sample of your habitual insincerity.

### Depredations by Kaffirs.

On the other hand, Lord Roberts' letter charges on the Boers the looting and wrecking of the farm of Longwood, near Springfield, Natal. This I have elsewhere shown to be a myth. When in Natal in September-October, 1900, I took pains (rather more, I fancy, than you have taken over any point in the history of the war) to find the facts in this matter; and I found decisive evidence that the damage had been done by local Kaffirs. The wife of the owner, proceeding solely on angry inference, had charged it on the Boers; her letter was circulated in a Blue-book; and Lord Roberts, making no proper investigation, endorsed her statements. This is a fair sample of how your type of mind confuses all history.

Of the value of Lord Roberts' official assertions the same letter gives another test. He writes: "It is reported to me from Modder River that farms within the actual area of the British Camp have never been entered, the occupants are unmolested, and their houses, gardens, and crops remain absolutely untouched." Now I have elsewhere published an affidavit by a Cape Town attorney who lived at the Modder River in November, 1899, telling how *his* property was plundered and damaged by our officers and forces. I mention this to explain why I put aside your whole official parade of British virtue. It is neither here nor there. The fact remains that both sides early committed depredations: the question is, What is to be said for our being committed to a policy of universal ruin?

### **Wrecking our Colonies.**

That policy has two phases. As against the unquestionable looting done by the Boers in Natal, wholesale looting and destruction was soon done by our own forces *on the farms of our own Dutch colonists*. This was partly by way of lawless colonial revenge on our own Dutch for the deeds of their kindred; largely by way of martial law; partly by way of the random plunder and wrecking that accompanies all warfare. The facts have been pretty fully put on record, and you are, of course, careful to say not a word about them. We used to talk of the process of "Burke-ing" evidence: henceforth we may with propriety talk of Doyle-ing it.

The effect of thus plundering, insulting, imprisoning, and impoverishing hundreds of Dutch farmers in Cape Colony and Natal was to shake allegiance which had survived the shock of the wanton creation of the war. On the top of this policy of ruffianism and stupidity, in which colonial loyalists and the British authorities went hand in hand, came the policy of making a wilderness of the Free State and the Transvaal. The first process you ignore: the second you defend.

### **Wrecking the Boer States.**

To begin with, you repeat the pretence that the first resort to systematic farm-burning was in punishment of abuse of the white flag. But in one sentence you unguardedly betray the falsity of that pretext. You admit that about May in 1900 certain farm-houses were burned on the score that "while a white flag was flying from the *houses*, the troops were fired upon from the *farmsteads*." This is not perfectly clear: but it hints of the fact, which is, that in certain cases there was shooting on *farm lands* on which the farm-house flew the white flag.

As you must be well aware, though, of course, you do not mention it, there is no reason to believe that in these cases the Boer combatants had anything to do with the farm-house. Boer farms are of great extent, often ten miles in one direction, and containing hills of large size. It might well be that the firing party could not even see the farm-house, and *vice versa*. Now, *all* the land of the Boer States, save the townships, was parcelled in farms, and fight-

ing could not take place except on farms. It comes to this then, that our policy—I put it thus, not condemning Lord Roberts—involved our denial of any white-flag protection to non-combatants dwelling in farm-houses *anywhere*.

Secondly, our policy involved the decision by Lord Roberts to destroy all farm-houses within a given radius of any spot where an attempt was made to destroy the railway or telegraph lines, no matter whether the residents were non-combatants or neutrals. That is to say, the policy of annexation involved the utter devastation of *every district where the Boers conducted military operations*.

From that point it was but a step to the decision that wherever the Boers could get supplies or temporary shelter, the district must be wholly devastated. In fine, the policy of annexation has involved the absolute devastation of the entire area of the two Boer States, save in the small portions effectually held by our forces.

### **Annexationist Ethics.**

And now you have the audacity to tell us that *because* our policy is one of conquest we are justified in unlimited devastation! You conclude your chapter by saying that guerilla warfare "is a two-edged weapon, and the responsibility for the consequences rests upon the combatant who first employs it." Not to put too fine a point upon it, your contention is an insolent absurdity. The responsibility for guerilla warfare rests upon the combatant who, by decreeing the annexation of a formerly independent State, *forces such warfare on its people*. THAT is the initial and fundamental crime. Your defence is a house of cards. It proceeds on the assumption that conquest for annexation, for the utter annihilation of a State as such, is a process recognised by international law. It is the definite negation of all international law; and the process of justifying it is a virtual negation of the bases of all morality.

This is what your party's policy has brought us to—open iniquity of doctrine, the definite substitution of the test of might for the test of right. For the nation to come to that, there was necessary a progressive atrophy of the moral sense. In your tissue of false narrative and fraudulent argumentation we can scientifically trace the process.

### *2. The Concentration Camps.*

If you had the courage of your thesis, you would proceed, not to whitewash the Concentration Camps, but to claim that we are entitled to massacre all the women and children. Why not? Is it not "necessary for our purpose"? Many loyalists in the colonies have said so: English journals have suggested it. Mr. Swinburne, said to be our greatest living poet, has in an interval of sobriety poetically alleged, under the tolerant auspices of the *Saturday Review*, that no other power than England would have spared such "dams and whelps."

But such consistency staggers you, and you proceed to show that the Concentration Camps were at once necessary and credit-

able to us. It is one of your most pleasing demonstrations. There were three courses open, you say: (1) "to send the Boer women and children into the Boer lines—a course which became impossible when the Boer army broke into scattered bands and had no longer any definite lines"; (2) to leave them where they were; (3) to concentrate them in camps.

### First Thoughts.

Concerning the first course you thoughtfully omit to mention that we *did* dump down the women and children at the Boer lines as long as we could. It was a noble, a humane, a Christian and a gentlemanly policy, inherited by us in due course from our knightly Norman ancestors. A French artist has painted a bad but awakening picture of the procedure in the case of the great siege of Chateau Gaillard, when the chivalrous defenders turned out their "useless mouths" and the chivalrous besiegers kept them at bay between the castle and the camp, the living eating the dead, till all were slain by cold and hunger and disease. It is thus clearly a function of "the laws of war" to take women and children from their homes and use them to starve out their combatant relatives. Whatsoever things are base, whatsoever things are brutal, whatsoever things are cowardly, whatsoever things are iniquitous, these may we joyfully endorse under that mystic formula.

Clearly it was necessary. That is the beauty of the situation. We have only to decree annexation of an enemy's country, and then everything that will help to crush the resistance becomes legitimate. "The laws of war shall make you free." As we cannot reduce the resistance by fair means, we are clearly bound to try foul.

### Facts on the Veld.

Unhappily, as you note, the Boers ceased to have "lines"; and British taste in the main, like your own, still deprecated massacre. We could not leave the women and children on the veld, you say, "in the presence of a large Kaffir population." Strange! I thought we *had* left them on the veld for some time! I chanced to be in Cape Colony when the earlier devastations were being wrought; and from our own people I heard stories such as that of a humane English General (I shall not name him, lest it should make him unpopular with your majority) meeting a starving family group on the veld and feeding them, while from the Dutch I heard of Kaffirs feeding desolate Boer families in their huts—a thing regarded by Dutch people with unfeigned surprise.

### The Theory of the Camps.

It turns out, then, that Kaffirs—whom you thus in one page picture as dangerous beasts, while elsewhere you describe them as the hapless victims of the Dutch—are not so black as they are painted by either Dutch or Rhodesites. On the other hand, it happens that the Camps were not quite so philanthropically planned as you make out. The first scandal about these institutions was that

Boer women and children were there imprisoned in bad sanitary conditions when their relatives in Cape Colony offered to feed them. I have myself published an official missive which expressly refused to let a Boer woman go to her relatives in Natal because the men of her own family were on commando. The dictionaries do not yet, unfortunately, recognise such a policy as pure philanthropy.

### The Supply Trains.

You go on to speak of "the extraordinary spectacle" of "the British straining every nerve to feed the women and children of the enemy, while that enemy was sniping the engineers and derailing the trains which were bringing up the food." Why then did not the British send those women and children south? The answer is a little too simple for your purpose. The food for the camps came with the food for the troops. There is a limit to British philanthropy; and to remove the camps south of the theatre of war would have been to withdraw a serious check to the Boer resistance. As before, the women and children had to be used to "drown the war." Our "purpose" requires it.

I will not ask whether you have forgotten that there appeared in the *Times* of October 1, 1901, a letter from a favoured correspondent, who let out the circumstance that the Boers *let pass* certain supply-trains because they carried food for the camps. If you had had the letter before you you would not have mentioned it. Of some arguments you *can* see the bearing.

### The Sins of the Lamb.

Your perceptive powers, however, are precarious. In one passage (p. 97) you repeat the interesting statement that "the defects in sanitation are due to the habits of the inmates." On the same page, vaguely conscious that this will hardly do, you virtually confess that the prevalence of disease in the camps, "like that enteric outbreak which swept away so many British soldiers," is "beyond our present sanitary science, and can only be endured with sad resignation." But of course you could not delete that chivalrous aspersion of the victims; and you bethink you to repeat that other exquisitely plausible story that "children died of arsenical poisoning, having been covered from head to foot with green paint." It is thus happily established that, whatever other supplies may run short, our authorities keep the Boer families abundantly supplied with rations of arsenical paint!

### The Logic of "Admissions."

Perhaps, however, you are at your best when you deal with Miss Hobhouse's report. In one sagacious paragraph you say she "reduced her whole report to nothing" by saying, "they [the camp authorities] are, I believe, doing their very best with very limited means." "What more," you ask, "can be said"? Well, one hesitates to grapple with such sainted simplicity of appeal, but perhaps

some of your readers may appreciate the suggestion that if the camps are starved the guilt finally lies at the door of the British Government, with its ingenious policy of necessity, and of yourself and the rest of the acute moralists who support them. If it should chance that a whole camp were starved to death, British officials included, nobody, on your theory, could be blamed—except of course the Boers.

Miss Hobhouse, then, as other people were able to understand, was indicting the general policy and management, not aspersing the camp authorities. I surmise that after all you did manage to see as much, and that it was on that score that you produced your monumental refutation:—

“The value of her report was discounted by the fact that her political prejudices were known to be against the Government. Mr. Charles Hobhouse, a *relation* of hers, and a Radical member of Parliament, has since then *admitted* that some of her statements will not bear examination.”

This passage at least of your pamphlet the world will not willingly let die. Your party must regret that they had not the skill, in past years, to point to the destructive admissions made by the late Mr. Gladstone's Tory brother as to his shortcomings. Your use of the term “Radical” is peculiarly artistic: it so subtly obscures the fact that Mr. Charles Hobhouse supports the Government's war policy.

### The Boomerang.

But there are drawbacks to such dialectic. I have before me the *United Irishman* of January 25th, in which there is a review of “Conan Doyle, his book.” Among other things worth your attention the reviewer, an ex-Johannesburger, says:—“Mr. Doyle has sent me a copy of his book for my opinion. My opinion, belief, and conviction about it is that it is a lie. He falsifies history, he suppresses truth, he distorts facts.” And he goes on to give a good deal of evidence to that effect. Now, supposing that Irish *Outlander* and reviewer chanced to be a relation of yours—such things have happened—would his “admissions” on your behalf be held to have special weight? You so frequently appeal to the standards of “gentlemen” that one is curious to know how you solve such problems.

### A Few Official Facts.

When all is said, three substantial circumstances in regard to the camps stand unchallenged. One is your own avowal (p. 26) that while the camp diet in a given case is “a spare one,” the allowance “*may, however, be supplemented by purchase.*” That is to say, there is more food available for those who can pay for it. So that either Miss Hobhouse had been a little too charitable in her judgment of some of the camp authorities, or the higher authorities had directed them *not* to do their best with the means at their command.

The second fact is that, by express official order, the wives and children of men on commando were served with smaller rations than

were held requisite to maintain the health of other refugees. A pleasing proof at once of our official philanthropy ("no money was spared" is your modest allegation on p. 95), and of the proposition that the fighting Boers are the cause of their *own* families being in concentration camps.

The third circumstance is that, unfortunately for you, the commission of ladies sent out by the Government report even more discouragingly about the camps as did Miss Hobhouse. *Their* prejudices, you know, were carefully seen to before they were appointed; yet they declare, in contradiction to yourself, that sufficient care has *not* been taken to choose suitable sites; and that in some camps the officials have tended to sink "to a low standard of order, decency, and cleanliness in sanitary matters." In fine, where camps are properly placed and properly fed, there is no excessive death-rate. In many of the camps there is a juvenile death-rate so dreadful that, to the annoyance of your party, all Europe cries out. And the only show of rebuttal you can make, as apart from bluster, is the citation of testimony from inhabitants of the more fortunate camps to the effect that *they* have nothing to complain of.

### The Guilt.

I had better explain finally that I discuss these facts not in the least by way of laying responsibility on either the military or the medical authorities in South Africa. It is you and your friends at home, learned sir, that I arraign—you who preach annexation and call it policy. And if there are "Radicals" among you I should like to leave on record my opinion that they are the worst hypocrites of you all, inasmuch as they profess to make the right of self-government the first article in their political creed, and go about to destroy the rights of other men. The war will not be without its small mercies if it should purge Radicalism of such.

### The Acceptable Evidence.

But I must not omit to notice the personal aspect of your argument in this matter. "With the best will in the world," you say of Miss Hobhouse, "her conclusions would have been untrustworthy, since she could speak no Dutch, had no experience of the Boer character, and knew nothing of the normal conditions of South Africa." You have thus in advance convicted your chosen Government of the ineptitude of sending out to Africa, to investigate the camps, a number of ladies who, in the nature of the case, could come only to untrustworthy conclusions, their disqualifications being the same as Miss Hobhouse's.

But you, learned sir, how much Dutch do you know, and what is the extent of *your* knowledge of the Boer character?

It is presumably on the strength of your qualifications of that kind that you claim our acceptance of the evidence of "Mr. Dudley Keys, a surrendered burgher," who writes to his brother, for one thing, that "all of us who have surrendered are fully aware of the

fact that we are the aggressors, and that our statesmen are to blame for our present predicament," and for another, but

"Some of our women would tell her [Miss Hobhouse] anything for a dress or a pair of boots. If she knew our countrymen and women as well as we know them, her story would have been a short one."

This, as usual, is the sort of evidence that satisfies you. It has a natural affinity to your mind. A Boer renegade who is base enough—or, looking to his British blood, let us say, a naturalised Boer who is malevolent enough—to asperse Boer men and women in the lump as venal liars, this is your chosen witness. We are never to believe a Boer who fights for his country; we are always to believe a renegade, and the fouler-tongued he is the better. What right have you now to reject *any* British charge against Britons? You have set up a standard of testimony which I fear will give you trouble.

### VIII.—THE RECIPROCAL CHARGES OF OUTRAGES.

With that standard in view, let us take up your concluding chapters. You see I have not included this topic under "the conduct of the war": it seems to me to deal primarily with the conduct of the British and foreign press and public. My own unsophisticated view, based on much military and other testimony, is that vile things are done in all wars. That is one of my reasons for loathing war, and for failing to esteem those who, like yourself, whoop for it as a school of "virtue." You, I gather, are sometimes of my opinion that outrages are "inevitable" in war; but as usual you are infirm in your conviction.

#### Boer Sins.

You are convinced, I gather, that the Boers have committed the vilest outrages, especially since they have been fighting for their national existence. Since you wrote that the war was over, and they inconsiderately refused to corroborate you, they have, it would appear, shot Kaffirs, and brained little Kaffir children—thus jeopardising their rifle-butts when they might so easily have painted the victims green!—they have shot already wounded men who were seeking quarter; they have taken the money and the watches and private papers of their prisoners (instead of reciprocating the notorious generosity of our own troops in these matters); and they have even told ugly stories against our side.

#### Why the Surprise?

I confess here to distinct embarrassment.

First of all, what did you expect from those back-velled people, "lying right across the line of industrial progress," who so wickedly conspired to drive the British Empire out of Africa? On the other hand, now that you have reluctantly come to see them as the monsters they are, why are you still so wildly anxious to have them for fellow-citizens? If you could only sometimes contrive to be plausibly consistent, it would simplify the process of argument.

### Suzerainty and Slander.

But putting those difficulties aside, there remains this, that while you find it necessary to the happiness of your party and yourself to vilify the Boers, you are ostensibly astonished that they and their European sympathisers should vilify you and the British army. May I ask where you were brought up? Is there really a spot in these islands, or anywhere else, where scurrility and slander do not breed scurrility and slander? Your party began libelling the Boers with their whole power of mendacity long before the war began. They trumped up among other things a series of ante-war outrages so ludicrously incredible that even you, I notice, have omitted to recite them in your book. From the beginning of the war it has rained lies against the Boers. You yourself once noticed this, declaring that many anti-Boer stories were calumnies. On what grounds, then, as a man of science or of imagination, as a novelist or as a physician, are you surprised that there should be calumnies *per contra*?

### The Case Altered.

It is not only apparent calumnies that infuriate you. You are angry with Mr. Stead because he quoted published letters of British private soldiers in which they exultantly told how they bayoneted men kneeling for quarter. "Such expressions," you say, "should be accepted with considerable caution"—the soldier may be merely gasconading. But when the soldier accuses the enemy of outrages—then, oh then! no caution is required! And when a renegade calls all his nation beggarly liars, his evidence is unimpeachable—so long as he comes from the other side!

You apparently become conscious here of your own absurdity, for you proceed to confess that "such instances [of refusing quarter] could be found among troops in all wars." Why then leave standing your first denial? And having been twice absurd, why go on to urge against Mr. Stead that to found a general charge on a particular case "is unjust in the case of a foreigner, and unnatural in the case of our own people"? Mr. Stead never argued that A—B to Z. It is you and your party who take that line. No Briton ever supposed that all Britons were ruffians. But your party are usually much occupied in making out that all Boers are—see the extracts made by Mr. Methuen from your standard journals—and you are doing your best to help them. You seriously cite, as above noted, cases in which the Boers take the money of their prisoners, as if that were not the constant practice on our own side. By such methods, you simply work deceit. You speak again of the Boers' "callous neglect" of enteric patients among their prisoners at Pretoria, as if that very charge had not been made at Cape Town itself. In short, you work up your pamphlet to a final crescendo of aspersion and denunciation of the enemy; and all the while you are indignant that aspersions and denunciations return!

### The British Monopoly.

Where, pray, do you expect your curses to roost? Is suzerainty

to imply the subject's duty to be silent when vilified? You seem to desire, as one of the privileges of empire, a sort of Billingsgate millennium, a monopoly of malediction, for the Anglo-Saxon race—I beg pardon, I ought to use your term, the "Anglo-Celtic," you being one of those "Celts" who bow before Lord Salisbury's kick at the "Celtic fringe," and humbly beg leave to join the caste of the kickers. You may call the sacred race what you will, but I fancy you will have to endure yet awhile the reciprocation of insult and injury. It is no doubt very vexing: "Majuba" apparently rankles still—witness Lord Kitchener's recent despatch. But you cannot have both the triumph of perpetual crowing and the tribute of silence from the other dunghills—at least until you have annexed them.

### Justification by Precedent.

With your inveterate inconsequence, you think to repel calumny by justifying every official act of the war. "To derail a train," you say, "is legitimate warfare"—this after you have inadvertently recorded how certain rebels have been executed as "murderers" for derailing trains—"but to checkmate it by putting hostages upon the train is likewise legitimate warfare, with many precedents to support it also." This you pretend began in October, 1901, and you say there has not been "a single case of derailing" since. You are perfectly aware that Lord Roberts began the practice in 1900, using as "hostages" men who surrendered to him on his proclamation; and that after a time he desisted because of the outcry. You are also aware that there have been *attempts* at derailing since October, 1901.

But let the case be as you say. If we are quite justified in putting non-combatants on trains to protect us from the enemy, why are you so surprised at the story that we once used Boer women as shields? You speak of "precedents" as sufficient justification. Are there not plenty of precedents in war for the most abominable acts? Why not simply cite Weyler as giving us our precedent for concentration camps where the inmates cannot be fed, and there make an end? Why be surprised if, when you wage a war of devastation to achieve annexation, you are accused of following other "precedents" of conquest?

### From Thorns, Grapes?

But if it comes to that, why be surprised at anything from Boers? From people who will tell any lie for a pair of boots—as certified by your valued witness, Mr. Dudley Keys—what should come but untrue anecdotes about their veracious suzerains? Having demonstrated, with the help of Mr. Keys, their universal baseness, why wonder at their persistence in it? As for the pro-Boers, having once proved by the congenial voice of Paul Botha that Messrs. Sauer and Merriman are "Kruger's henchmen," need you be surprised that, even as some pro-Boers think you no more gentle-

manly than you should be, some should think British generals inhumane?

### The Foreign Tribunal.

To be sure, there are the slanders circulated among the other nations of Europe; and it is a little awkward to suppose that they are *all* as bad as the Boers. You consider them misled—a hypothesis which raises the wonder whether that might conceivably ever happen to the British nation. But the facts broadly stand thus. Our journals have within a year published a round dozen of what were later proved to be absolutely false tales of outrages by Boers—for instance that about the wounded English doctor whose brains were beaten out with a stone. For these inconceivable lies no apology is ever made; nobody is ever punished; and new lies are always on the cards. At the Cape, one hears them every day; and the loyalists, so furious at anti-British calumnies, never boggle at the anti-Boer phenomena. Where then is the wonder that people on the Continent, hating a war of confiscation, and regarding the very purpose as an iniquity, should in their turn believe that it is vilely carried out? Have you forgotten that the Boers are ethnologically “Anglo-Saxons,” the Dutch people being, of all sections of the “Teutonic race,” the most closely akin in speech to our noble selves? And if it is so certain that the Boers commit the outrages you recite, why should the intelligent foreigner hesitate to believe that Britons do similar things? In view of the Irish policy of your party, is he likely to suspect that you consider the “Celtic” to be the ennobling element?

### Boer, Briton, and Native.

To bring the matter to an end, I will put to your readers three points. Firstly, there is the case of Scheepers, a Boer leader who is declared by British witnesses to have repeatedly behaved with chivalrous kindness to his British prisoners, and who has been executed on a charge of “murdering” natives. I think it not impossible that in this war the Boers behave at times with cruel injustice to natives: that is a tendency they have thoroughly in common with Mr. Rhodes and many other Britons. The last is the important point here.

As you must be aware, there has been tried in our courts at the Cape a case in which a certain trooper was charged with shooting dead a native at a farm near Colesberg. The trooper pleaded that his captain had ordered him to shoot the native if he did not at once find a commandeered bridle. The native could not find it, and was accordingly shot dead after a few minutes. The trooper, having acted under orders, was acquitted. The captain, who attended court under a safe conduct from Lord Roberts, went scot free. No more wicked murder could well be committed by any Boer, and the crime goes absolutely unpunished.

Is it then to be supposed that foreigners will believe for an instant in the good faith of a judicial system which uses such

balances as these? And are they any more likely to be impressed by the good faith of a writer who, while justifying the execution of rebels, justifies also the execution of Boer prisoners for shooting natives *whom they regard as rebels*? That sort of thing is bad enough to begin with; but when you add to it the general charge of "the continual murder of *inoffensive* natives, some of them children," it would be interesting to know on what grounds you expect to escape the epithets you cast, and the kind of stories you tell.

**Explosive Bullets.**

You make it a charge against the Boers that they use "explosive bullets." The very word is a falsehood to start with: there are no explosive bullets in use anywhere. What you had in view were simply expansive bullets, though you speak of "expansive and explosive." You are aware, all the while, that the Boers got those bullets from ammunition stores captured by them from us. Then you explain that our expansive bullets were intended only for "practice in field firing"; and that "by some blundering in the packing at home, some of . . . . Mark IV must have got mixed up with the ordinary or Mark II ammunition," and were so used in battle; but that when this was discovered the expansive bullets were withdrawn.

I can imagine how you and your party would have treated a statement of this kind if made by Boers. I may quote the words of Lieutenant de Montmorency, in his letter of 9th February to the *Daily News*: "If anyone were to tell me that the large stores of Mark IV ammunition which were at Dundee . . . . were meant exclusively for practice, I should refer him to his Majesty's Royal Horse Marines." But, further, I would ask your readers to note Lieutenant de Montmorency's statements (1) that, after the withdrawal of Mark IV, the soldiers "used to file the points of their solid bullets, hoping so to improvise expansive bullets," and (2) that officers used expansive revolver-bullets. (This avowal was made to me by officers in South Africa.)

In view of all this, the net effect of your attempt to impeach the Boers will simply be to heighten the British repute for hypocrisy all over the world. You have to admit that England and America refused to condemn expansive bullets at the Hague Conference, and you comment that "in taking this view I cannot but think these enlightened and humanitarian Powers were ill-advised." Your moderation is exquisite when you are dealing with British deeds; but some of your readers can imagine how foreigners will appreciate the contrast set up by your language towards the other side.

**Iniquity Sitting in Judgment.**

But your crowning stroke in the way of inequity is your denunciation of the Boers for not wearing uniform. You say their practice is "entirely irregular as regards the recognised rules of warfare," citing the first article of the Conventions of The Hague. The Boers, you say, "were the invaders; and in view of their long and elaborate

preparations" they could easily have furnished their burghers with "some distinctive badge." Thus you ground your protest on the Hague Conventions. All the while you are aware that the British Government *insisted on excluding the Transvaal from the Hague Conference*; and *you yourself have justified the exclusion*, on the score that we could not allow the Transvaal to rank as an independent State!

So it comes to this, that the Transvaal is to be denounced for not observing one of the minor rules of warfare laid down by a Conference from which we insisted on excluding her, *while we have deliberately broken many of the main rules*, including those forbidding the bombardment of undefended buildings, pillage, looting, extortion of oaths, forcing the people to act against their own countrymen, confiscation of private property, and infliction of general penalties for individual acts. All the while, the British army has abandoned the use of "badges" about as completely as the Boers!

### L'Envoi.

Thus do you add the reek of a pervasive hypocrisy to the flavour of perversity which exhales from your treatise. You have done your best to inculcate on the British people the new commandment of Imperialism, "Do unto others as ye would *not* that they should do unto you"; and you think to mend matters by accusing our victims of a lack of conscientiousness. It is in the name of the national honour which you and yours have trodden in the mire, of the national watchwords which you have "soiled with all ignoble use," of the ideals of justice and humanity which you have shamed and defied, that I take leave to testify to other nations that this country is not wholly given over to your standards or your practices, and to impeach before our own people the tissue of untruth and unreason by which you seek to debauch them. Against the slanders of foreigners they have an open way of remedy—the ending of an act of international iniquity. From defamation they will never escape by your device of libel, any more than they can make an empire out of races whom they have taught how to fight them no less than how to hate them. Least of all will they escape by your puerile method of telling the Germans that henceforth they can count on no help from us in their wars. You thus contrive to make us ridiculous where already your party had made us odious. It is about time our neighbours were told that you and your party are not the nation.