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A NEW REPORT

BY

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of the South African Republic,*

TO

HIS HONOUR

State President S. J. P. KRUGER.

AUTHORISED EDITION.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

LONDON:

THE NEW AGE PRESS, 1 & 2 TOOK'S COURT,
FURNIVAL STREET, E.C.

1902.

BRENTANO'S
Booksellers & Stationers,
Union Square,
New York.

*Printed and Published by the New Age Press
1 & 2, Took's Court, Fumival Street
London, E.C.*

(E) 29687

PREFACE.

AMONG the excellent figures which contemporaneous South Africa has produced, and which, on account of the unique heroic War of Independence of the Afrikanders, have suddenly become world-famous, J. C. Smuts, the author of this Report, deserves special mention. One of the youngest of the genial Boer leaders, he is not inferior to any of them in his love for his fatherland, strength of spirit, and a noble confidence in the justice of his cause. Born from an old Cape-Dutch family, son of a generally esteemed member of the Upper House of Cape Colony, he devoted himself to a judicial career, and completed with distinction his juridical studies at an English University. Returning to his native country, he at first established himself as a lawyer in Cape Town, but attracted by the political and social life of the South African Republic, he came to Johannesburg in 1896, when in May, 1898, he was offered the important position of State-Attorney and Legal Adviser to the Government, as well as Chief of Justice and Police, which position he has filled until now with more than ordinary capability.

Meanwhile, the war which was forced upon his compatriots has suddenly developed the slumbering military talents in the lawyer, as has also been the case with Judge Hertzog of the Orange Free State. Although he was not given an officer's commission until after the capture of Pretoria, he soon distinguished himself as a military genius in such a manner that in 1901 he was ordered, accompanied by only about Two HUNDRED Transvaalers, to revive the war in Cape Colony. His campaign was crowned with such a success—who has not now read the recently published report of his splendidly successful operations?—that he was appointed by the Government of the South African Republic Assistant-Commandant General. The order given to General de la Rey to follow General Smuts into the Cape Colony was now considered to have become superfluous, and was, therefore, cancelled.*

At the present moment General Smuts is the soul of the armed resistance in the said British Colony; that resistance increases daily in extent and vigour.

General Smuts's part to-day is not less sublime and important than those of Botha, de Wet, de la Rey, and other famous Boer Generals.

* For a detailed and vivid description of General Smuts's triumphal march through Cape Colony in the face of almost unsurmountable difficulties, we refer our readers to the second edition of the Official Reports, published by the New Age Press.

A NEW REPORT BY GENERAL J. C. SMUTS.

van Rhijnsdorp, Cape Colony,
January, 1902.

TO HIS HONOUR THE STATE PRESIDENT S. J. P. KRUGER.

Herewith I have the honour to forward you a certain report relating to our cause, and to the condition of the Republics and of the Cape Colony. In order to inform you as clearly as possible of the present position, I wish to give you a short statement in regard to our cause and operations in South Africa as a whole. For this purpose it will be necessary to retrace our steps, and to begin with a rough sketch of our condition during the winter of last year [May-September, 1901].

The Situation in May—September, 1901.

Your Honour will remember the perilous position in which our cause stood during the winter of 1900, when the surrender of Pretoria without any defence led so many of our burghers to lose faith in the ability of their leaders and in the success of our cause. Thousands of burghers of both Republics laid down their arms, and while we were driven back by the enemy to the narrow eastern corner of the South African Republic, Chief-Commandant de Wet was compelled to withdraw his commandos from the Orange Free State, and to retreat to the bushveld of Waterberg in the South African Republic. At the beginning of summer, however, our position changed for the better. The confidence of the people in their leaders and head officers was fully restored; thousands took up their arms again, and the enemy, with a few exceptions, were driven back to the towns situated along the railways. At the end of the year 1900 the Federal armies were masters of all the districts of both Republics, and a beginning had already been made to revive our cause in Cape Colony.

The enemy, cured by our successes of the baseless belief that the war was over, did their utmost, under Lord Kitchener, to recover the territory they had lost. In the first place, under the leadership of General French, an attempt was made to retake the

western districts of the South African Republic, which, as your Honour will remember, were under the military control of General de la Rey and myself. When this attempt proved unsuccessful, French was put at the head of a great movement, the object of which was to retake and to devastate the eastern districts of the Republic. A war policy of the most unheard-of cruelty and barbarity, in violation of the most elementary principles of international law, was then enforced throughout both States by Lord Kitchener. The result was that in the winter of 1901 our poor country and people were reduced to a condition of indescribable ruin and misery. Nearly all the farms and townships in both Republics had been demolished and burnt; nearly all grain and the other necessaries of life had been destroyed; nearly all live-stock had been killed, or, rather, had been wantonly slaughtered. The majority of our women and children were eating the bread of bitterness in the prison-camps of the enemy, and those of them who were still free, were wandering in the scrub and on the mountains, among Kaffirs and wild animals. The veld of both Republics was set on fire by the enemy; as far as the eye could see, in all directions, everything was black, so that it seemed as if Nature herself were in mourning for the endless suffering of our people.

Resolution to Fight on.

Although our military position in the winter of 1901 was much better than it was in the winter of 1900, the social condition of our people had become much worse. The object of Lord Kitchener's war-policy was to reduce our people to discouragement and to submission, not by direct operations against the fighting commandos, but, indirectly, by crushing defenceless women and children. These were mercilessly pursued and persecuted in order that, through them, the lion-hearts of our commandos might be broken.

No wonder, then, that during the winter of 1901 many of our burghers wavered and began to listen to the arguments of the enemy, namely, that we were not morally justified in continuing to fight when the result was uncertain, and when we fought at the cost of such unfathomable misery to wife and child. Even some officers, almost reduced to despair by the endless scenes of devastation and misery, earnestly petitioned the Government to take into consideration whether further resistance was advisable. The Government granted the request, and called together the chief officers of the Republic, and at the same time made an effort to communicate with your Honour. As your Honour knows, I was appointed by the Government to correspond with you, whereupon I drew up a report, in which I tried to explain clearly our condition. State-President Steyn, Chief-Comandant C. A. de Wet, and other officers of the Orange Free State, joined our Government.

Our cause having been fully discussed by both Governments and their chief officers, a resolution was finally passed, on the

20th of June, at Waterval, in the district of Standerton, in which, after fully stating our motives, it was agreed (a) that no peace would be concluded, nor even negotiations entered into, unless on the basis of the independence of both Republics, and of the maintenance of the interests of our Colonial supporters; (b) that the war would be proceeded with vigorously until our goal had been reached.

This resolution was then sent to Lord Kitchener and to all our Commandos. It was decided further that we would continue fighting in Cape Colony with more energy than ever.

Independence, a Passion.

These resolutions were received with satisfaction by the whole of the people of both Republics. The burghers are longing for peace, and look forward eagerly for the conclusion of the war, not so much on account of what they themselves have to endure, as on account of the sufferings of their dear ones in prison. Notwithstanding this, the definite national independence for which so many material and personal sacrifices have already been made, weighs more heavily with them than any temporary sufferings of their families, no matter how terrible these may be. For the spirit of independence has become a passion with our people, in the heat of which all other aims, longings and ties are forgotten. For this we have chiefly to thank Lord Kitchener and his barbarous conduct of the war. To this I will refer later on.

When General de la Rey and myself were discussing the difficulties in connection with the resolution of both Governments as to operations in Cape Colony, it became clear to us that we would have to act very prudently. We at last came to the conclusion that I, with a small commando, should enter the Colony.*

The Boer Military Position in the early Summer, 1901-2.

When I left the Republic in the beginning of this summer, our military situation there was briefly as follows:—According to the statements of our officers, we had at least 20,000 burghers on commando. We were in full possession of all districts in both Republics, with the exception of that portion of the Bloemfontein district between the railway line and Petrusburg and Boomplaats, which I found fenced in by the enemy's forts and camps. (I, however, passed through them without opposition.) The enemy was in possession only of the railway and of the townships and villages lying along it, and of a few other small towns. The great majority of townships had been evacuated and burned. We still had sufficient horses, sufficient ammunition, sufficient food, and sufficient courage and inclination to continue the war vigorously.

From this it is quite clear that our condition in October, 1901,

* General J. C. Smuts, the author of this report, having been appointed Assistant-Commandant General for the South African Republic, the order to General de la Rey to enter Cape Colony was afterwards rescinded.

from a military point of view, was far better than it was in October, 1900. I go further and ask: Was our condition in October, 1901, so much worse than it was in October, 1899, that the enemy had any vestige of right to say that our struggle was hopeless? As your Honour knows, I have had a great deal to do with the mobilizing of our burgher forces from the beginning of the war, and I am, therefore, thoroughly acquainted with the numerical strength of our different commandos in the Republics and Colonies. My opinion is that we never had more than 32,000 men in the field. Our number has, therefore, been reduced by 12,000, or, say, by about one-third of the total. However, taking into consideration that these 32,000 burghers included men of all sorts and conditions, many of whom were of little use for military purposes, and that there was a great lack of discipline, while at present the 20,000 in the field are all disciplined veterans—the efficient balance of our former fighting forces—then your Honour will readily acknowledge that our present army is not much weaker than that with which we commenced the war.

Estimate of the British Position.

The enemy are in possession of our railways and capitals, but at what great cost! According to my calculation, it is necessary for the enemy to employ at least 100,000 men to guard the railway lines and the most important towns in the Republics. This number is steadily being increased, owing to the useless establishment of new lines of blockhouses, and to our having threatened their railways and towns in the west of Cape Colony. And because they do not fight, but only guard the lines of communication, these men are practically inert, while the Boers have no lines of communication or towns to guard, and thus every Boer on commando is a fighting man. Further, experience has taught us that each fighting Boer is a match for about five English soldiers; so that the enemy require a fighting force of 100,000 mounted men in order to meet on equal terms the Boer force of 20,000 horsemen. Consequently, for the two Republics only, the enemy require a force of 200,000 men. To this must be added the 50,000 soldiers required to deal with the rebellion in the Colony. It is clear, therefore, that, in the circumstances now prevailing in South Africa, the enemy require at least 250,000 soldiers, of whom half must be mounted. And when I consider the great danger which threatens England's supremacy in Cape Colony, a danger which the enemy only partially sees and comprehends, I become convinced that this huge force, with its enormous current expenses and ultimate cost, will be required for many a long day if England is to maintain her position in South Africa; and I contend that even then it will fail in its purpose.

The Boers Live on the British Taxpayer.

It is not only the enormous expense of the British forces that

have to be met by the enemy; the Boers, too, are living on the British taxpayer. All our rifles and cannon, all our ammunition, horses, saddles, and bridles, yes, and in part our very clothes are being taken from the inexhaustible supply of Lord Kitchener. This may also be said in large measure of our food, which we continually capture from the enemy. The Boers hardly ever engage in an action without coming out of it with more ammunition than they had when they began it. Indeed, they often capture so much that whole waggon-loads have to be burned. The policy of extermination and exhaustion, of which the enemy expect so much, is clearly, therefore, an idle dream. We will never be exhausted, so far as ammunition is concerned, until the supply of the British War Office is exhausted; and then it will be quite time for the war to end.

From this it is plain how little ground the enemy have for proclaiming our struggle to be a hopeless one. When I think how tired and discouraged all British officers and soldiers are who fall into our hands; how courageously and cheerfully the Boers fight, then I come to the conclusion that hope is on our side, and that the hopelessness, yes, even the despair, is on the side of the English.

British Methods—Systematic Lying.

The enemy doubtless realise this distinctly enough. Therefore, they have recourse, with more and more persistence, to deeds and methods which are a defiance of all law, humanity and morality. These methods are of such immense importance in connection with the whole question that I wish to review them briefly as follows:—

(1) One of the most blameworthy methods which the enemy is using against us, is, as your Honour knows, systematic lying—I do not mean only the lying proclamations and notices with which they have tried unceasingly to confuse our people, and to seduce them from their duty—but also the reports, official as well as unofficial, which have been spread throughout the whole world by the British Press. This Press misrepresents everything; victories are announced where defeats have been sustained; large numbers of Boers are continually declared to have been wounded, killed, or taken prisoners; the whole war situation in South Africa is represented so as to convey an impression to the world, and especially to the English people, which is the exact reverse of the truth. Most of these lies are especially manufactured and published for the consumption of the English public. Thus, by way of example, there is a letter in possession of a Boer General, in which a staff-officer of General French, writing to a military friend, tells him as a joke that a fight has just taken place in which the loss of the enemy was officially given as so many killed, wounded, and prisoners—a high number—although he was certain that not a single Boer had been wounded. But it is unpleasant to continue dwelling

on these lying statements, which have poisoned the whole British military world. The truth will yet prevail, and meanwhile we will suffer in silence and fight till the coming of a brighter day.

Devastation—Worse for the British than for the Boers.

(2) The wholesale devastation of both Republics by the enemy you are also acquainted with. Their object was to deprive us of all our resources and to obtain by fire what could not be accomplished by the sword. This effort has also failed. By desolating the Republics and by killing all the cattle, the enemy have made it impossible for their forces and convoys to occupy the country, and will be compelled to limit their jurisdiction to the lines of railway. The burghers, on the other hand, will remain in possession of their beloved land, and will always have sufficient supplies for their commandos.

It was wonderful, to my mind, to see how quickly the burghers in the Transvaal understood and grasped this point. Instead of being discouraged by the destruction of their property, for which they had worked so hard and so long, they were quickly consoled by the conviction that this barbarous proceeding which had made the country uninhabitable and untenable for the enemy, was just an instrument in God's hands to keep the land for them and their children. The grass will grow once more; on the devastated farms the houses will be replaced by huts such as were used by our fathers, the Voortrekkers, and from the ground made sacred by so much blood and so many tears, we will reap the fruits of peace with unmeasured happiness and satisfaction.

Ill-treatment of Women and Children makes Cowards into Heroes.

(3) When not even the devastation of their farms and property broke the spirit of the Boers, the enemy sought and found a new torture, namely, the imprisonment and ill-treatment of the women and children. Even more than country and freedom, thought the enemy, the Boer loves his wife and children; take these away from him, and he will soon surrender. In this the enemy expected to find our people's weak spot, so at once there was started an unheard-of persecution of women and children. Your Honour knows how, while you were still amongst us, this persecution was carried on, and that all the women and children found in the townships occupied by the enemy were thrown on the commandos. Your Honour well knows how these deeds darkened the outlook of our cause. Suddenly, however, the enemy altered their plans. They flattered themselves that they had found a more efficient means for bringing the war to an end; but by God's overruling Providence, they used just the means most likely to give the victory ultimately to the Boers. Formerly, it was difficult, as a rule, for the officers to keep the burghers on commando and to get them to stay away from their families. Now they are ready to go to the world's end to fight. Cowards are heroes now; men who thought in secret that

England would establish a righteous Government in the Republics, have been cured of that idea for ever. While formerly we lived in dread lest in the long run our beloved ones would be left without food, and that famine might bring the war to an end, we are now thankful that this alarming possibility has been so unexpectedly removed. The enemy themselves will fall into the pit which they have dug for us.

It cannot be denied, however, that the enemy's policy of persecution has caused our people terrible suffering. Never can pen describe what the heroines of our people have suffered and endured since the spring of 1900. Fleeing before the enemy into the woods and mountains of Rustenburg, Waterburg, Zoutpansburg, Lydenburg, Swazieland, and Zululand, where skeletons now cry to heaven against the barbarous Kaffir, and against the still more barbarous British; hiding with their little ones knee-deep in water in the reeds of Schoonspruit and Mooi River, where they were fired at by the enemy with Lee-Metfords and Maxims, and driven into the towns; then, after months of useless fleeing, dumped at last into the prison-camps of the enemy, where, sick unto death themselves, they saw their children buried, and where they went hungry because they could not eat the bad meat and the still worse meal, and had no firewood for cooking—week after week, month after month, year after year, they sit meditating and longing and brooding over their husbands and sons, who have perhaps already been shot. Has such a picture of suffering ever been unfolded to the world before? The life of the man on the veld, although hard, is comfortable compared with the slow death of their imprisoned loved ones.

And still the women keep up marvellously; nearly all the letters which are smuggled out of these prison-camps encourage the men to hold out to the death, and never to bring shame on their name and family by surrender. No wonder that these burghers believe firmly that such a spirit is not human but is of God, and that He surely will not mock at it, but will see that the result is in keeping with the spirit which He has inspired. I do not believe that there was ever a more noble spectacle among men and one of which humanity may more rightly be proud, than that of the Boer wife. Her quiet suffering points out the way to our independence; her noble and heroic character is the guarantee for the greatness of our future.

We are sure that your Honour and our other friends abroad will leave no stone unturned to make the lot of those in the camps more bearable.

The Arming of Kaffirs.

(4) Even though the ill-treatment of the women and children had no other effect upon the burghers than to make them fight harder and persevere in their rightful struggle, the enemy next inaugurated a still more odious mode of fighting; I mean the arming

of Kaffirs and the use of them against us. Your Honour will remember how Lord Roberts haughtily disdained our protests, at the commencement of the war, against the arming of Linchwe's tribe, and against the cruel murders which took place at Derdepoort, and along the western border. His example has only too faithfully been followed by Lord Kitchener. When, at the beginning of the winter of 1901, the enemy penetrated northward toward Nylstroom and took Pietersburg, they sent presents and weapons to the Kaffir chiefs of Waterburg and Zoutpansberg. Shortly after this there were many sudden and frightful murders of women, children, and old people—unparalleled since the days of Dingaan and Moselekatze. (I regret that I have not with me the reports of General Beyers in regard to these murders, giving particulars; but I assure you that these particulars are truly terrible.) At the same time, in Swaziland, about seventy-two women and children, who had fled from the Highveld before General French's columns and bands of assassins, were also murdered. It is remarkable that these murders and outrages were perpetrated by native tribes which, until then, had been friendly, but which had been led astray by the enemy's agents. In Zululand, similar murders took place, but, fortunately, not so many. Sekukunis' people also rose, incited by the enemy. I believe that Commandant General Louis Botha is still in possession of the captured reports, from which it appears that these atrocities were perpetrated with the knowledge of the agents of the British Government. As far as I know, Koos Mamogalië is the only Kaffir Chief in the South African Republic who, up to the present, has resisted the pressure of the enemy, and has remained neutral. As a result of his neutrality, and as a lesson, undoubtedly, for other chiefs, his tribe has been banished and deported by the enemy. The many thousands of Kaffirs, who were more or less civilised, having been accustomed to live on the farms of the burghers, and who generally behaved peaceably, were all made prisoners, and were sent with their families to the camps. What became of them has been told us by several of those who escaped: as soon as they enter the camps, they are informed that, unless they are willing to take up arms, they will not be given food, and so they are forced in great numbers into the enemy's military service. In Cape Colony, the ignorant natives are told that if the Boers win, slavery will be established there, and that the natives will be inspanned in the waggons and ploughs by the cruel Boers, and will be made to pull these like oxen. In order to give greater emphasis to this argument, they are promised that if they join the English, they will become the proprietors of the Boers' farms, and that the Boers will have to work for them, and that they will be allowed to marry the Boer women. Terrible stories are being spread everywhere in regard to the cruel treatment of the coloured people by the Boers. The fear and cupidity of these people have been played upon to such an extent that thousands of them in Cape Colony have been induced by the English to do

military service. In Cape Colony and in the Orange Free State, most of the enemy's columns contain a considerable proportion of coloured men, who make it their business everywhere to insult peaceful whites, and who brag in a way that arouses great anxiety for the future of South Africa's white population. The enemy feel ashamed of being compelled—notwithstanding their alleged supremacy of strength—to call in the assistance of the natives. That is why the military and the British Government officially deny that natives are being armed to fight. But your Honour may accept the above statement as strictly true.

It is clear that the enemy apparently obtain a great advantage by this use of Kaffirs and other coloured people, who are paid with promises and flattering words instead of with hard cash, which makes the war considerably cheaper and more bearable for the not-inexhaustible British Treasury. Moreover, as the killed and wounded among them do not have to be reported, the disagreeable impression which such a casualty list would create in England is avoided. Further, notwithstanding their great cowardice, they often do good work as scouts and spies, for which the Britisher is totally unfit. But this advantage is only superficial, and is outweighed by the positive danger of using coloured people for military purposes. In my opinion their employment in this struggle against the Boers is the most fatal measure which the English have adopted—a step which, in the long run, must inevitably lead to Great Britain's downfall throughout the whole of South Africa. Just as, in the olden days, the arming of the Kaffirs and other coloured people, with the evils connected therewith, drove the Voortrekkers out of Cape Colony, and thus led to the establishment of the Republics, so this last measure will result in the loss of Cape Colony itself to the English. The enemy say that the Afrianders in Cape Colony have no grievances; but here is a grievance which strikes at the foundations of the social structure and national life, a grievance which inspires a terrible foreboding for the future, which will arouse the deepest passions, and which constitutes the greatest crime which has ever been perpetrated against the white race in South Africa. These are not idle words. I have been through the whole of Cape Colony, and have observed the profound impression which the sight of armed natives has made on the English colonists, as well as on the Afrianders. Just as the imprisonment of Boer women and children has left the burghers free to carry the war to its natural conclusion, so the use of armed natives by the enemy will prove to be a measure even more fatal to British interests, inasmuch as it will make that natural conclusion as decisive for the Cape Colony as for the Republics. It is, however, unnecessary for me to say more about this subject to your Honour.

The British Proclamations.

(5) I have now shown how the enemy, in blind rage at their

inability to bring the war to an end, have resorted to unlawful, unjust, and immoral methods of warfare.

The laws of war allow, in certain circumstances, the use of exceptional measures, but only on the ground of absolute necessity, and in order to avoid further bloodshed. But even this appearance of justification is stripped from the enemy, for, as I have already stated, their barbarous and unlawful acts prolong the war and will finally prove ruinous to them. Instead of being wise enough to abandon these methods, however, the enemy are becoming more and more bewildered and reckless, as is shown by their increasing disregard of law and justice. For instance, a proclamation has been published in which Boer officers are threatened with death in the event of a crime being committed by one of their men. Another proclamation threatens that all Boers found in khaki or yellow-coloured clothes, will summarily be shot. Considering that thousands of our burghers have worn clothes of khaki colour from the very first days of the war, I do not understand by what military right the enemy can have obtained a monopoly of this colour. And under this proclamation many of our best and bravest burghers have already been murdered in cold blood. Then again there is the proclamation under which officers are banished, and all the property of fighting burghers is confiscated. This measure, in its utter disregard of international right, is eminently worthy of the people who are always coming forward as the arrogant judges of the morals and acts of other nations. As this proclamation has been received by the burghers with contempt, it is not necessary for me to draw your attention further to the matter. I wish, however, to place on record President Steyn's powerful reply.*

British Treatment of Prisoners—Mutilation by Kaffirs.

As the enemy is animated by such a malevolent spirit, your Honour will readily understand that, the longer the struggle continues, the greater will be their cruelty, their breaches of the law and their barbarity. Burghers who have been captured are being indicted on all sorts of pretences, in violation of law and of truth, and are being heavily sentenced, even shot or hanged. They are being accused of crimes of which they are entirely ignorant and, naturally being without witnesses, they are sentenced and killed in cold blood. Some are shot upon the pretext that they have set fire to a house, or have blown up a railway-bridge—deeds which, of course, were right and lawful whenever the enemy committed them in the Republics, but which became unlawful when committed by the Republicans in the Colonies. Others have been hanged on the pretence that they had shot a Kaffir spy who had secretly entered our lines, in spite of the fact that these burghers are alleged only to have carried out, in this matter, the orders of their officers. In

* President Steyn's reply has been added to this report.

many cases our wounded, left on the battlefield, have afterwards been found in a condition of fearful mutilation. Their legs and arms had been broken, their skulls smashed, and so forth. These crimes are being committed by armed Kaffirs, the allies of the enemy. Only a few weeks ago a Boer prisoner, after being driven for a certain distance, was mortally wounded from behind by a British soldier. As his captors thought he was dead, they left him lying there; but he did not die until six days after I obtained his declaration. I have had sworn declarations made of many such cases.

“Africanderdom must be wiped out.”

But I have not the time to write more. The war is degenerating into an attempt to exterminate the Africander people. Day after day we hear of cruelties which make a fitting comment on the memorable words of the High Commissioner, that “Africanderdom must be wiped out.” And, notwithstanding all this provocation, the Boers continue to carry on the war in the old Christian way, and are resolved not to besmirch our holy cause with similar barbarity, but to leave our good name unsullied to our children, and to leave revenge to God. In the meantime we will continue the war courageously. Your Honour will have seen, even from the enemy’s reports, how heavily and with what success fighting has taken place in both Republics since the beginning of this summer [October, 1901]. In Cape Colony also our cause is progressing favourably, and I hope and trust that this year will bring a decisive change in the war.

The Hand of God!

As your Honour will have seen from the above statements, all the plans and measures of the enemy to subjugate us have been frustrated, and have reacted favourably to our cause. No wonder that we see herein the hand of God, the hand which, from generation to generation, has so powerfully controlled our history, and which now, through unknown paths and dark roads, yes, even through the valley of the shadow of death, guides our small nation to a new life and to a brighter day. To Him alone the honour is due that to-day we still stand fronting an enemy of far superior power, who are not what they were, but are possessed and driven by a fiendish spirit; who have abandoned their old traditions and principles; have lost all sense of right and virtue; and in blind fury are rushing on their doom.

I have the honour to be,

Your Honour’s most obedient servant,

(Signed) J. C. SMUTS,

*State Attorney and Assistant-Commandant General
of the South African Republic.*

**PRESIDENT STEYN'S REPLY TO LORD KITCHENER'S
PROCLAMATION.***

" 15th August, 1901.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your honoured letter of 6th August, 1901, enclosing the proclamation of even date. The not unfriendly tone of your Excellency's letter encourages me to reply somewhat at length to your Excellency's writing. I have noted that not only by you in your letter, but also by responsible statesmen on your side, it is affirmed that the declaration of war by the South African Republic and the invasion of British territory were the cause of the war. I hardly consider it necessary to remind your Excellency that in 1895, when the South African Republic was unarmed and at peace, trusting that her neighbours were civilised nations, an unexpected attack was made on her from British territory. I consider it unnecessary to point out to your Excellency that when this foolish undertaking (which could only have been undertaken by a man who had become insane through his vanity) failed, and all fell into the hands of the South African Republic, the Government of the South African Republic relying on the sense of justice of the English nation, handed over all the persons taken prisoners by them, and deserv- ing of death according to international law, to her Majesty's Government. I do not consider it necessary to point out to your Excellency that when a just judge sentenced the leaders of the expedition to imprisonment the principal men were not kept in prison till they had served their time, but were released on some trivial cause or other before the expiration of their term. I do not wish to remind your Excellency that when a Parliamentary Commission was appointed to examine into the cause and reason of the above-mentioned expedition that Commission, instead of examining into the case, kept back certain evidence, and when the Commission, in spite of the great influence which was brought to bear on them during the Session, found the chief conspirators and Mr. Rhodes guilty and reported them as such to the Parliament, Mr. Chamberlain, who was one of the members of the Commission, defended Mr. Rhodes in direct opposition to his own report. Your Excellency must admit that the South African Republic, like the civilised world, had the perfect right to come to the conclusion that the Jameson Raid, which we at first thought had been undertaken by irresponsible persons, was not unknown to her Majesty's Government, at least not to all of them. I do not wish to remind your Excellency that since that time not only has no reasonable compensation been paid out to the South African Republic, as was promised at that time, but she has been constantly bothered with dispatches and threats concerning her internal government. I need not remind your Excellency how outside influence was also made use of in getting up petitions to her Majesty concerning alleged grievances, in order to give her Majesty's Government the desired opportunity for meddling with the internal policy of the South African Republic. As I have said, I do not consider it necessary to remind your Excellency of the above-named facts, as I consider your Excellency to be well acquainted with them; but I greatly desire to draw your Excellency's kind

* See Appendix.

attention to the following facts, which seem to me to be unknown to your Excellency.

Massing the Troops.

When in the course of 1899 troops were massed on the borders not only of the South African Republic, but also of the hitherto friendly Orange Free State, and when it became evident to the South African Republic that the English did not desire the removal of the grievances, which are now declared on all hands never to have existed, but the destruction of the independence of the above-named Republics, she desired the British Government to withdraw the troops from her borders and to have all disputes settled by arbitration. This happened three weeks after the British Government had issued its ultimatum, and about a month after the Government of the Orange Free State had received a telegram from the High Commissioner asking her to remain neutral, thereby distinctly proving that the British Government was determined to wage war against the South African Republic. This telegram was sent to the Orange Free State, though it was well known that the Orange Free State had entered into a defensive-treaty with the South African Republic in 1889. When the South African Republic decided to guard her borders against the enemy who lay there in the vicinity, I was obliged to take one of the most painful steps to me—viz., to break the ties of friendship which existed between us and the British Government, and to be true to our treaty and stand by the South African Republic. That we were perfectly justified in our belief that the British Government was firmly resolved to wipe out the two Republics has been proved distinctly since the war broke out. It has not only been proved by documents which have fallen into our hands, from which it is distinctly evident that since 1896 (that is, since the Jameson Raid) the British Government was firmly resolved to invade both Republics; but only lately it was acknowledged by Lord Lansdowne that he had, as early as June, 1899, discussed with Lord Wolseley, then Commander-in-Chief of her Majesty's forces, as to the best time for invading the two Republics. Your Excellency will thus see that we did not draw the sword, but that we only pushed away the sword that was already laid at our throats. We only acted in self-defence, one of the holiest rights of man, in order to maintain our existence; and for that reason I consider, with all due reverence, that we have the right to trust in a righteous God.

I further note that your Excellency again refers to the impossibility of intervention by some foreign Power or other, and your Excellency makes it appear that we are only continuing the struggle in the hope of this intervention. With your Excellency's permission, I wish to explain clearly our position as regards intervention. It is this. We have hoped, and still hope, that the moral feeling of the civilised world would oppose the crime that England is perpetrating here in South Africa—viz., that she is trying to destroy the existence of a young nation—yet we were always fully determined, if that hope was not destined to be realised, to exert our utmost power in opposition, with firm confidence in a merciful God, and that is still our unchangeable resolve to-day.

I also note that your Excellency takes it for granted that our struggle is hopeless. I do not know on what grounds your Excellency bases this opinion; but let us compare for a moment our mutual conditions at the present time and a year ago, after the surrender of General Prinsloo. A year ago, after General Prinsloo's surrender,

the Cape Colony was altogether peaceful and free from our commandos; the Orange Free State was almost wholly in your hands, not only the principal towns, railways, and other villages, but also the whole country except there where Commandant Haasbroek was with his commandos. In the South African Republic it was the same; it was almost altogether in your hands, except there where General de la Rey was with his commandos, and where General Botha was with his, far in the Boschveld. At present the Cape Colony is, so to say, covered by our commandos, and they are in temporary possession of the greater part of the Cape Colony, where they move about as they wish, and where they are joined by many of our kindred and others, who thus oppose themselves to the gross injustice carried on against the Republics. I willingly admit that in the Orange Free State your Excellency is in possession of the capital, the railway and a few villages not situated on the railway line, but this is all that your Excellency possesses. The whole Orange Free State, with the exception of the above, is in our possession, and in almost all the chief towns we have appointed landdrosts, or where the town is not in our possession we have landdrosts in the districts, so that order and peace are maintained by us and not by your Excellency. In the Transvaal this is also the case. There, too, landdrosts, etc., are appointed by that Government and provision made for the maintenance of order and peace. If your Excellency will permit me, your Excellency's jurisdiction extends only as far as your Excellency's cannon can reach.

No Talk of Hopelessness.

If your Excellency views the Republics from a military standpoint, then your Excellency must acknowledge that during the last year, in spite of the overwhelming force brought against us, our cause has progressed wonderfully, and there can be no talk of hopelessness, so that if your Excellency's proclamation is based on this it has now less right to exist than a year ago. Now, as regards the 35,000 men whom your Excellency asserts to have in your hands, it is impossible for me to say anything about them as regards number. This, however, I wish to say, that except those men who either have been misled from their duty to their Government by your predecessor's proclamations, or who have gone over to the enemy on account of a spirit of treachery, or for other reasons, and who, thank God, are comparatively few in number, the remainder consists of those who have been honestly taken prisoners, and are still held as such, and old and sickly men and young boys who were not yet fit for service, and who were taken by force from their farms by your Excellency's troops and confined in camps against their will. It cannot, therefore, be expected of us to believe in earnest that the persons falling under these last two heads are living there in peace of their own free will. I can in truth affirm that, except the prisoners of war and the few who have gone over to the enemy, the great majority of the fighting burghers are still in arms. As regards the few who have gone over to the enemy (which hardly ever happens now), I can only say that we do not stand alone in that respect, for history teaches us that in all wars for independence, as the American war, for instance, there have been such, and we can only try to go on without them. As regards the 74,000 women and children, who according to your Excellency are being maintained in the camps, it seems to me that your Excellency does not know in what a barbarous way these poor defenceless people were torn from their

homes by your Excellency's forces, while all their property and goods were destroyed; so that these poor innocent victims of the war at the approach of a hostile force would flee in all weathers, at all hours of the day or night, from place to place, in order not to fall into their hands, and your Excellency's forces have not scrupled to fire upon them with cannon when they were fleeing either with or without their wagons (though your Excellency's forces knew that they were only women and children), that in this way they might fall into their hands, and many a woman was killed or wounded thus. Such was the case at Graspan, near Reitz, on June 6, 1901, where a woman's laager and not a convoy (as was reported to your Excellency) was captured by your Excellency's forces and again released by us, while your troops sought shelter behind these women, and when your reinforcements came they fired with cannon and small guns on that women's laager. I can mention hundreds of cases of this kind, but I do not consider it necessary, for if your Excellency will take the trouble to ask a truthful soldier, he must confirm my assertion. To say that they are in camps of their own free will is altogether opposed to facts, and to assert that these women were brought to the camps because the Boers refused to provide for their families (as the Minister for War is said to have done recently in Parliament), is a slander which wounds us less than the slanderer, and which, I feel sure, will never bear away your Excellency's approval.

As regards the proclamation itself, I can assure your Excellency that for myself it will make no difference to me in the fulfilment of my duty, such as my conscience and the enemy dictate, faithfully to the end. Our country is ruined, our homes and goods destroyed, our cattle carried off or killed in thousands, our women and children captured, insulted and carried into captivity by soldiers and low Kaffirs, and hundreds of them have already sacrificed their lives for the liberty of their fatherland. Shall we, can we now draw back from doing our duty, when our persons are threatened with banishment? Shall we now break our faith with the hundreds of dead and prisoners who, relying on our fidelity, willingly gave their lives and their liberty for the fatherland? Or shall we become untrue to our trust in a righteous God, who has hitherto preserved us in such a wonderful manner? I am convinced that if we were to act thus we would be despised, not only by your Excellency and every other honest man, but also by ourselves. I will conclude with assuring your Excellency that no one is more anxious than myself to see peace restored, and I am therefore prepared to meet your Excellency at any time in order to discuss terms with your Excellency whereby peace may be brought about. But that your Excellency may not be misled I must repeat that no peace will be acceptable to us in which the independence of the two Republics and the interests of our Cape Colony brothers who have joined us are not maintained. If it is a crime to fight in self-defence, and if such crime must be punished, then I think that his Majesty's Government ought to be satisfied with the destruction of the country, the chastisement of women and children, and the general misery which has been caused by this war. It is in your Excellency's power, more than in that of any other man, to make an end to this war, and by so doing to restore this unhappy part of the country to its former prosperity. We ask for no magnanimity; we only demand justice.

I enclose a translation of this writing, so that your Excellency may not be prevented from understanding the exact contents of my letter through a wrong translation, as was recently the case with a letter

which I wrote to the Government of the South African Republic, and which fell into your hands at Reitz, and was published by you, but in such a way that we hardly recognised it, for not only was it quite wrongly translated in some places, but sentences were added which I had never written, and other parts were left out altogether, so that quite a wrong interpretation was given to the letter. I have the honour to be, your Excellency's obedient servant,

(Signed) M. T. STEYN,
State President of the Orange Free State.

APPENDIX.

LORD KITCHENER'S PROCLAMATION.

NOTE.—The following is the form in which the Proclamation was directed to be issued:—

“Whereas the late Orange Free State and the late South African Republic have been annexed to his Majesty's dominions;

“And whereas his Majesty's forces are and have for some considerable time been in complete possession of the seats of Government of both the aforesaid territories with their public offices, and the whole machinery of Administration, as well as of all the principal towns and the whole of the railway lines;

“And whereas the great majority of the burghers of the two late Republics, to the number of 35,000, exclusive of those who have fallen in the war, are now either prisoners or have submitted to his Majesty's Government and are living peaceably in towns or camps under the control of his Majesty's forces;

“And whereas the burghers of the late Republics still in arms against his Majesty are not only few in numbers, but have lost almost all their guns and munitions of war, and are devoid of regular military organisation, and are therefore unable to carry on regular warfare or to offer any organised resistance to his Majesty's forces in any part of the country;

“And whereas those burghers who are still in arms, though unable to carry on regular warfare, continue to make isolated attacks upon small posts and detachments of his Majesty's forces, to plunder or destroy property, and to damage the railway and telegraph lines, both in the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal and in other portions of his Majesty's South African Dominions;

“And whereas the country is thus kept in a state of disturbance, checking the resumption of agricultural and industrial pursuits;

“And whereas his Majesty's Government is determined to put an end to a state of things which is aimlessly prolonging bloodshed and destruction and inflicting ruin upon the great majority of the inhabitants, who are anxious to live in peace and to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families;

“And whereas it is just to proceed against those still resisting, and especially against those persons who, being in a position of authority, are responsible for the continuance of the present state of

lawlessness, and are instigating their fellow burghers to continue their hopeless resistance to his Majesty's Government;

"Now therefore I, Lord Kitchener, etc., under instructions from his Majesty's Government proclaim and make known as follows:—

"All Commandants, Field-Cornets, and leaders of armed bands, being burghers of the late Republics, still engaged in resisting his Majesty's forces, whether in the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal or in any other portion of his Majesty's South African Dominions, and all members of the Governments of the late Orange Free State and the late South African Republic, shall, unless they surrender before the 15th of September next, be permanently banished from South Africa; the cost of the maintenance of the families of all burghers in the field who shall not have surrendered by 15th September shall be recoverable from such burghers and shall be a charge upon their property movable and immovable in the two Colonies."