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The Struggle of the Dutch Republics.

A GREAT CRIME.

(AN APPEAL TO THE CONSCIENCE OF THE BRITISH NATION.)

BY

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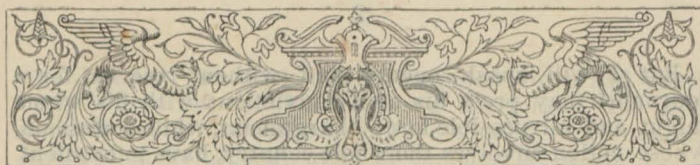
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The struggle of the Dutch Republics.

III.

A GREAT CRIME.

(An appeal to the conscience of the British Nation.)

And Pharaoh said: „Who is the Lord
thath I should obey His voice?

„I know not the Lord, neither will I
let Israel go“.

How difficult it is to show sufficient selfcontrol, when standing with bound hands, incapable to interfere, near a cruelly murdered nation, while witnessing the ghaftliest forms of injustice and untruth!

But there is always danger that in the extravagant words of outraged feeling strength may evaporate. So self control is imperative, as strength is wanted for the future. To a great poet or orator I leave the task to express with the fervour of a Milton or Wordsworth the horror and the wrath, kindled in the hearts of all men, who love righteousness and believe in God and liberty, by this utterly vile war in South-Africa and by the temporary success of the Rhodesians and of the press and the Statesmen, who bear their yoke.

Whilst leaving to poets the use of their noble gift to this noble end, I make an appeal to the conscience of the English people, while it is still time to save a nation of freemen from annihilation. But you must testify at once if you would testify at all, for opportunities pass away from you.

But I will speak openly and without reserve, for a journalist may press his own convictions with his whole might and all possible force of argument, while statesmen, whose action involves the whole country, have to be silent.

And I will not speak as one without hope in the future.

For I am not thoroughly broken yet by disappointment.... I absolutely refuse to believe that the austere and ardent spiritualism of the Puritan is dead in England.... I still believe in the thousands of Englishmen and women, who want liberty to be cherished and preserved.... I believe in the love for high principle of the massive remains of the people of Bright and Gladstone, in their breadth of view and their liberal judgment, in their fairness and in their awe for moral law — God's revelation!

* * *

I know how little chance I have to be heard by the majority!

The British Jingo would rather burst in ignorance than allow himself to be approached by a foreigner, who acknowledges with a smile and a tear, that he is a „pro-Boer“.... that he is one in soul and heart with the men and women of French-Dutch descent, who are killed or enslaved on the veld they conquered in a stern struggle with impossibility.

I know that it is impracticable as yet to appeal to those who „see red“, intoxicated as they are by the war spirit... that it is useless to address myself to those who are effeminate by their neutrality and indifference, but I know also that the old British national character still lives in a minority, that looks with horror and disdain at the sordid pride and selfishness of the ungenerous plutocracy of international capitalists that fomented this war.

* * *

For that the war has been caused by financial intrigue is now known the whole world over!

It has now been proven to the hilt that the grievances of the Outlanders were wildly exaggerated.... that the agitation, particularly so far as the press was concerned,

was largely the work of the financiers, who had previously organised the Johannesburg conspiracy, and who, as their chief has subsequently confessed, regarded the British flag as „the greatest of commercial assets”!

Mr. Hobson, who for the *Manchester Guardian* carefully investigated the political position on the Rand, and whose verdict can be read in his crystal-clear book *“The War in South Africa”*, predicted that the annexation of the Transvaal, far from benefiting the white workman or the Kaffir, would place in power this same ring of financiers, whose primary object would be, first, to destroy competition and establish a monopoly of the gold industry, and then to beat down wages by the wholesale importation of native labour.

Mr. Hobson summed up the whole case in these words: — *“We are fighting in order to place a small international oligarchy of mineowners and speculators in power at Pretoria.”*

And now eighteen months after the agitation began, it has been proved how right he was!

We have received from Capetown the “Protest of the Refugee Committee, Cape Town, against Capitalist Legislation”.

In this pamphlet the Outlanders petition to be saved from their deliverers. Their grievances before the war seem slight by comparison with the grievances which the settlement threatens.

They declare that the administration of the Transvaal is being worked by and in the interest of the financiers. They italicise Mr. Hobson’s statement that the Eckstein group has already formed the nucleus of “a monopoly which may become to the Rand what De Beers has been for some years to Kimberley”. They similarly emphasise Mr. Hobson’s statement that “the industrial and agricultural future of the Transvaal is already hypothecated to this small ring of financial foreigners”, and his prophecy that “when the British arms have established firm order this foreign host will return with enhanced numbers and increased power”, and that they will “add to their other businesses the business of politics”.

The enormous political power exercised by these men arises, the committee says, from the facts that they are

the largest employers of labour, command unlimited wealth, and "control the leading organs of the press".

The authors of this Protest of the Refugee Committee are all men of substance at the Rand, and the Committee was appointed at a general meeting of the Outlander refugees lately held in Capetown.

Pretoria had barely fallen, it is pointed out by them, before Lord Roberts and the military Governor of the Rand were surrounded by an atmosphere of "interests," and the most responsible civil positions in the country were filled by former representatives of the interested financial corporations. These men, by virtue of their new offices, became armed with extensive powers for prying into the private financial affairs of the absent community. The cases are instanced of "the individual in charge of the money-lending department of Barnato's Consolidated Company who was installed as Financial Adviser; a director of the house of Eckstein who is appointed Civil Commissioner; a former prominent official of the Consolidated Goldfields" — Rhodus-Rudd — who became "Minister of Mines." It is added that "this list is capable of very considerable extension." The immediate outcome of this state of affairs was the issue of two proclamations by Lord Roberts, which the pamphlet describes as "two of the most glaring instances of capitalistic legislation ever witnessed."

If the situation were not so tragic it would be ludicrous!

The flies, having strayed into the web of Mr. Rhodes, hold a meeting to protest against the spider's tricks and manners!

But we in Holland knew and foresaw all this and we warned the dupes in time.

And it is for the sake of these financiers, who now drive the natives, once protected by President Kruger, into their compounds . . . who develop South Africa into a large slavestate . . . who want to tax the native in order to pay for the war ¹), that England sacrifices a

¹) In the annual report of the Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa, Limited, which is to be presented to the shareholders on 6 November next we read?

"The directors are happy to report that the leading companies and

Christian nation of free men, and brings a lasting stain upon the honour of the country!

* * *

To the descendants of the men who made England great I appeal!

Face the question! feel your responsibility.

Be not afraid of disturbing thoughts.

There is only danger and humiliation in facing the question sideways.

Answer unreservedly whether what your soldiers and politicians do in the Dutch Republics and Cape Colony is right?

If you answer this honestly the general reinvigoration of the national conscience will follow.

But the awakening cannot wait a moment, for it does amaze me "almost to helplessness of hand and thought", as Ruskin used to say, to find so many men and women in England, who are content in these dark days of their country's dishonour to live happily and cheerfully and without care for the morrow . . . who in their safe and sun-bright houses, surrounded by the smiling upturned faces of lovely children, can sing with the dearest and tenderest words of their familiar speech of "home, sweet home!" . . . while in the most criminal war of this whole century their soldiers make bloodstained tracks through two small states of freeborn men, soiling all they touch, causing widespread multitudinous misery, confiscating land, ruining

firms are working together in complete accord as regards the importation of native labor to the Transvaal, and its distribution to the various mines.

"It may be expected that the mine laborer will, owing to these and other reforms, become a better and therefore — apart from the rate of wage which will no doubt settle itself as the various ordinary forces which affect supply and demand come into play — a *cheaper workman*. It is to be hoped that, in return for the many advantages which the native races of British South Africa will now secure, Government will take care that in some form or other those who have not hitherto been directly taxed *shall now contribute to the expenses of the war* and of the Government of the country, and become an industrious and useful portion of the population!"

homesteads, burning farms, looting, wounding, killing . . . and all this out of abject fear, that a small community of peaceful farmers and shepherds, without an army, might destroy their immense Empire!

* * *

In appealing for the third time in behalf of the struggling Dutch Republics to the love for righteousness of all Christian nations, I begin by speaking with the utmost respect and reverence of some noble and courageous Englishmen.

The British delegation at the Peace conference in Paris has shown the inherent strength of character of the English nation and the great moral force of which their country still disposes. It was the British group, who proposed these resolutions, which were passed in full congress after a debate of two days:

(1) »The responsibility for the war now devastating South Africa falls upon the one of the two parties which repeatedly refused arbitration—that is, upon the British Government.

(1) The British Government, in ignoring the principles of right and justice which have been the glory of the great British nation—that is to say, in refusing arbitration and in using menaces only too likely to bring about war in a dispute which might have been settled by juridical methods—has committed an outrage against the rights of nations calculated to retard the pacific evolution of humanity.«

This refusal of arbitration makes the British government responsible for this war. It is right to impress this on Englishmen, though I know that it is unnecessary, as neither Mr. Chamberlain nor the South-African league any longer shirk their responsibility for it!

Has not Mr. Chamberlain said lately: "If it were really true that I am responsible for the war, I should say that it was a feather in my cap!"¹⁾ and has not confessed

1) The *Morning Leader* of 10 October quotes this beautiful expression of a *feather in his cap*, from the Election speech of Mr. Chamberlain at Cannock Chase, when he also has claimed that "the war was the war of the whole Government." It used to be the war of Mr. Kruger!

in one of those election speeches, which will brand him for ever:

"I believe in my heart that the war would never have come if I could have persuaded Krüger that I was in earnest."

These sentences yield a clue to the negotiations of last year! How this politician managed to have himself misunderstood we all know, but this "*Bekennniss seiner schönen Seele*" is of interest, because the lie of a long meditated plan of Boer aggression is knocked on the head by it. Mr. Chamberlain admits that the initiative came from him, that he meant to have his way, that he forced the Republics to war for the small difference between what he asked and the Boers would give.

* * *

When I have to use Mr. Chamberlain's name I feel how your war demoralises even those, who only read of it. It is horrible and degrading to hate! But how can we speak without loathing of the ambitious politician, whose reckless bullying methods forced on the war?

Your leading minister is a politician, who refuses to meet the grave charges arising from his neglect of the precautions rightly felt to be necessary for the prevention of corruption in the public service....

who did not hesitate to use as the material of electioneering calumnies the contents of a private letter stolen and opened by officials through whose hands it passed....

who, as the *Quarterly Review* acknowledges: "treats a considerable body of Englishmen as being consciously indifferent to the interest and honour of their country".

Well, this speculator in patriotism, who shouts: "Traitor!" from the platform, to a couple of million of his own people, is the man, whose word you had to believe when he accused the statesmen of the Republics.... this slanderer is the minister who conducted the negotiations with the Transvaal!

* * *

Let us now, to understand the wickedness of Mr. Chamberlain's war see for a moment what sort of men these

slandered Boers are, the devastation of whose country is a feather in the English Minister's cap.

Major Spencer-Browne (a Queensland contingent officer) writes in the *Brisbane Courier*;

.... I never want to meet kinder, more hospitable and more comfortable people. True, some of them are poor and ignorant, but the general run of them live comfortably, rear their families well and with fair education. *They are the reverse of what we have been taught to consider them.* It will be a happy day for Australia when our pastoral country is settled by as fine a class of people."

Dr. Conan Doyle addressing the other night the members to the Pall-Mall Club, said:

„The Boers had been the victims of a great deal of cheap slander in the Press. The men who had seen most of the Boers in the field were the most generous in estimating their character. That the white flag was hoisted by the Boers as a cold-blooded device for luring our men into the open was an absolute calumny. To discredit their valour was to discredit our victory."

Can honest Englishmen read without the most mournful feeling what Mr. R. H. Davis writes about them in *Scribner's Magazine*?

He proffers this testimony to the general character of the Boers, which is the more impressive as he had been predisposed to an entirely opposite view. He says: —

"I left Pretoria with every reason for regret. I had come to it a stranger and had found friends among men whom I had learned to like for themselves and for their cause. I had come prejudiced against them, believing them to be all the English press and my English friends had painted them: semi-barbarous, uncouth, money-loving, and treacherous in warfare. I found them simple to the limit of their own disadvantage, magnanimous to their enemies, independent and kindly. I had heard much of the corruption of their officials; and I saw daily their chief minister of state, at a time when every foreign resident was driving through Pretoria in a carriage, passing to and from the government buildings in a tram-car, their President living in a white-washed cottage, their generals serving for months at the front without pay and without hope of medals or titles.

„Their ignorance of the usages and customs of the great world outside of their own mountains, for which the English held them in such derision, harmed no one so greatly as it harmed them

selves. Had they known the outside world, had they been able to overcome their distrust of the foreigner, had they understood in what way to make use of him, how to manipulate the press of the world to tell the truth in their behalf as cleverly as the English had used it to misrepresent them; had they known how to make capital of the sympathies of the French, the Americans, and the Germans, and to turn it to their own account; had they known which men to send abroad to tell the facts, to plead and to explain; had they known which foreign adventurer was the one to follow implicitly on the battle-field and which to "vootsak" to the border; had they been men of the world instead of farmers in total ignorance of it, they might have brought about intervention, or an honourable peace. The very unworldliness of the Boer, at which the Englishman sneers, did much, I believe, to save Great Britain from greater humiliations, from more frequent "reverses" and more costly defeats".

It is the country of these people, which is devastated by the English, because they defend their independence and their soil to the last!

* * *

When some English, ashamed of the slanders of their yellow press, acknowledge the kindheartedness and honourable character of the Boers, they defend the war and the annexation by the plea of "the security of the empire". I wonder that they are not ashamed of their unheroic plea, of this cowardly excuse for a crime.

For it has now been confessed by Dr. Jameson that "the long-planned Boerconspiracy" against the British Empire is a lie.

The Transvaal did no prepare for 15 years to make war on England!

Dr. Jameson, who is now a member of the Cape Parliament, told his electors, that when in the beginning of 1896 he began the Raid with 600 men he was not attacking foolishly a well-armed State.

For the historian of the war his words are invaluable:

"At that time the Transvaal was not like the Transvaal of to-day. Apart from the rifles in the hands of individual burghers, the whole armoury of the Transvaal was contained in the so-called Pretoria Fort, guarded by three Staats artillerymen, and its sole protection was a broken-down corrugated iron fence. Only a few days before he crossed the border, Judge Kotze had

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told Mr. Newton, with whom, he was travelling that, seeing and recognising the serious discontent on the Rand then, he was on his way to warn Mr. Kruger that, in his opinion, any night 150 Randites, armed with sticks, could march across to Pretoria, seize the Fort, and have the Transvaal in their possession. The Rand revolutionists had more than that number, not armed with sticks, but thoughly well armed, and thoroughly prepared to carry out that very project, which was to have come off on the very day he crossed the border'.

The Transvaal only started its armaments when the invasion of its territory in time of peace had roused it to a sudden knowledge of its danger.

It was the German Emperor's knowledge that the Transvaal was *not* armed, which caused his Majesty in his noble indignation to send to president Kruger the historic telegram:

"I express my sincere congratulations that, supported by your people and without appealing for the help of Friendly Powers, you have succeeded by your own energetic action against armed bands which invaded your country as disturbers of the peace and have thus been enabled to restore peace and safeguard the independence of the country against attacks from outside".

And when after the Raid arms had been ordered for the citizens to enable them to defend their country, "the security of the Empire" was not threatened by them.

For it is now known in the whole world, that these "aggressive Boers" have no army and never had one!

The best book about the war I know is Mr. Howard C. Hillegas's *With the Boer forces* (Methuen).

Mr. Hillegas acted as war correspondent of the *New York World* with the Boer Army, and had every opportunity of following the fighting both in Natal and in the later battles in the territory of the Republics.

As a result of his observation and inquiries Mr. Hillegas believes that the Boers never had more than 30,000 men in the field at one time, and that the average was considerably under 25,000. The numbers fluctuated from time to time as the farmers deserted or returned to the laagers. No such fighting force has ever been seen before, nor probably will ever be seen again. It consisted actually of the entire male population of the two Republics. No

condition or position was sufficient excuse to remain behind. University students, backwoodsmen, millionaires and farmers fought shoulder to shoulder. All were on a common footing. These men had no battle cry of revenge. Even the name of Jameson appears to have raised no bitter feeling. His name, says Mr. Hillegas, was frequently heard, but always in a manner which would have led one unacquainted with recent Transvaal history to believe that he was the patron saint of the Republic. The cry of "Remember Jameson" was not caused by the memory of the wrongs which he had committed, but was rather a plea to honour him for having placed the Republic on its guard against the dangers which threatened it from beyond its borders.

* * *

The Boer army, according to Mr. Hillegas's account, was one of the most remarkable fighting machines that has ever existed. How it ever accomplished anything is a mystery! There was no discipline, punishments could not be enforced, and obedience to orders was a purely voluntary matter. Burghers, it is true, could be compelled to go to the front but no power on earth could compel them to fight if they did not choose to do so. It was a republican army, composed of republicans, and run on republican principles. All officers were elected by public vote, but beyond their personal influence they had no real authority. There were hundreds of men in the Natal laagers, says Mr. Hillegas, who never engaged in one battle, and never fired one shot in the first six months of the war. On all disputed questions the majority vote decided. A council of war, or *krijgsraad*, settled the plan of campaign and all other military questions. It was composed of every officer from corporal to commander-in-chief, and the corporal's vote had the same value as a general's:—

„When there happened to be a deadlock in the balloting at a *krijgsraad*, it was more than once the case that the vote of the commandant-general counted for less than the voice of a burgher. In one of the minor *krijgsraads* in Natal there was a tie in the voting, which was ended when an old burgher called his corporal aside and influenced him to change his vote.“

The decision of the Krijgsraad, however, was not binding. It could be, and frequently was, disregarded by individual commanders. In any case the officers could only call for volunteers to carry out the project resolved upon. They could not order their men to fight. If the burghers did not approve they did not volunteer. Mr. Hillegas mentions one instance. Several days after the Spion Kop battle, General Botha called for four hundred volunteers to assist in resisting an attack that it was feared would be made. There were almost 10,000 men in the environs of Ladysmith at that time, but it was with the utmost difficulty that the 400 men could be gathered. In Natal during the early part of the campaign the real fighting spirit was absent. It was not till after the capture of Cronje that the burghers polished up their rifles and fought with a will.

What was it that kept this mass of undisciplined men together and made them so formidable?

Mr. Hillegas replies that it was the deeply religious feeling which pervaded the whole of the commandoes. That, he believes, was the secret of their success:—

“It was as much his religion as his ability to aim unerringly that made the Boer a good soldier. If the Boer army had been composed of an irreligious, undisciplined body of men instead of the psalming farmers, it would have been conquered by itself. The religion of the Boers was their discipline.,,

* * *

Now I ask all men of honour in England, whether the dangers with which this handful of peasants, whose religion is their discipline, threaten the British Empire of Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australia, are great enough to justify a war of extermination and the annexation?

And it is *no* argument to mention your losses in this war?

You mourn for the multitude of slain, forgetting that the greatest number of your sons were not killed by the bullets of the Boers but by the incurable negligence of your own government and by the ineptitude of your officers. And that is why your cry for revenge on the Boers... that is why your longing for burned homes

and a ruined and depopulated country is a crime as well as a delusion!

"What!!" you answer indignant, "we want revenge?"

Yes, you want revenge, revenge for your humiliations, your wounded vanity and pride, your loss of prestige and honour, revenge for Majuba, revenge for countless defeats, surrenders and losses of canon a hundred times more shameful than Majuba, revenge for your military system broken down, for your army, that has ceased to exist as an organised whole.

And what a noble revenge you take!

Think of the way you treat your own subjects in Cape Colony!

Though there was no rebellion in any part of British territory, save where British forces could not give protection, and the enemy was left in sole occupation, you treat the Cape Dutch as criminals. Is it not true what *the Speaker* observes:

"Before the war our colonists were assured that our Army was able to defend their borders; during the war we broke our word, leaving Dutch-born fellow-subjects to the tender mercies of the invader, and in these circumstances the absence of British protection and the presence of a kindred race fighting for independence combined to undermine loyalty to the Crown; and yet, after the war, we are going to inflict a punishment for disaffection, which was regarded as impossibly severe after the Canadian rebellion and to apply it to unwilling accessories who were exempted even after the Indian Mutiny."

What is your defence against this indictment, oh Englishmen, who used to pride yourselves on your "free, tolerant and unaggressive Empire", but who now condone the political job to defranchise and punish thousands of Dutchborn British subjects in Cape Colony, thus giving the notorious "loyalists" a majority?

* * *

How terrible it is to read about the way honourable and innocent men and women are dragooned there.

The latest information regarding martial law in Cape Colony makes it evident that it has been used by the Cape politicians, in whose hands it has been placed, in order to exasperate and disfranchise as many Dutch as

possible. The policy is thus succinctly described in a letter from a correspondent, who has travelled the entire north-east of the colony within the last few weeks:

"The game was in many cases to drive men over to the enemy; when they wouldn't go they were arrested, in spite, whenever a Kaffir could be got to lie about them".

All who know the nature of the Kaffir, and how easily he is induced by fear or mere complaisance to give the desired answer, are aware that convictions obtained upon such evidence are mere abuses of the forms of legal trial. When it is added that agents are employed to approach Kaffir servants in order to elicit from them information which may incriminate their master some notion of the scandals perpetrated in the name of martial law may be formed.

When Mr. A. P. du Plessis protested in the Capehouse of Assembly to the effect that his servants were being furtively offered rewards to testify against him, the official reply was: the servants were only promised their "expenses" if they should go and give testimony at Steynsburg. Now, Mr. Du Plessis' servants could reach Steynsburg in only one of three ways—on foot, by horse or conveyance belonging to him, or by transport supplied by the spies. There is no railway, and there is no inn on the way; so that "expenses" in such a case can stand for nothing but reward. The official defence was a farce... yet Mr. Innes accepted it!

* * *

Can the English nation think, with pride of lord Salisbury's:

"*We seek no gold-fields and desire no territory*", words spoken at the critical moment, when many Colonial Dutch thought of going to their kinsmen's aid, and refrained from doing so because they believed the declaration of the English Prime-Minister... but words repudiated as soon as England's danger passed? Do the English in Canada and Australia admire the conduct of English officers, turning helpless women and children, as they did at Boshoff, out of their homes and then hunting them in midwinter into a wilderness 2000 feet above sea level,

out of the Kaffir dwellings, where they had sought and found shelter, and which huts were then destroyed?

Was it really indispensable to the greatness and power of the British Empire to force a mother with a twenty-four hour's old baby, to rise and come out and look on while her home and possessions were destroyed. She was the niece of a lady in Capetown who told of this crime.

Are Alva and Weyler the new King Arthurs of the British race?

In what way is England's treatment of the Dutch in the highlands of South Africa to be preferred to the way their forefathers were treated in the lowlands of Europe by the owners of a former Armada?

* * *

In Froude's History of the English in Ireland I read about the conquest of Ireland:

"The English nation were shuddering over the atrocities of the Duke of Alva. The children in the nurseries were being inflamed to patriotic rage and madness by tales of Spanish tyranny. But it was no fault of the English soldiers if any Irish child of that generation was allowed to live to manhood... So desolate became Munster that the lowing of a cow or the voice of the ploughman was not to be heard that year from Dingle to the Rock of Cashel."

History repeats itself! The English nation shuddered over the atrocities of Weyler... and at once imitated him.

There is, as Froude shows, only one country Europe treated so unjustly and so cruelly before.... and that is Ireland!

Is that example so exhilarating that you treat again a whole nation as political helots.... that you let men like general Brabant, the leader of the Brabantists, declare in the Capehouse of Assembly: "I regard any one with a Dutch name as suspect?".... that you let men like major Crewe boast:

"that he had put the whole of the election committee of his successful rival at the last General Election into goal, where they remained untried and, for the most part, unaccused, "on suspicion"!

Even after the honorable way in which Mr. Chamberlain has manipulated your own elections we dare to ask: do these words and acts redound to your credit? Is it not odious to act as you do in Cape Colony against women and children, whose husbands and fathers were compelled against their will to join in the insurrection, when by your bad management and the want of knowledge and commonsense of your generals you left them without defence?

Is it not as stupid as wicked to treat the inhabitants of Cape-Colony as rebels, while you cannot contradict what Mr. Merriman pointed out:

"Not many months ago, it is not too much to say, the British hold on South Africa lay in the hands of the Dutch Colonists, who, had they risen, might have made the military situation impossible. At that time their representatives, their ministers of religion, and leaders of all classes threw their weight on the side of the British connection."

If the Dutch of Cape colony had joined their kinsmen, your army, such as it was, would have been forced to surrender, but now you make use of your hundred thousand men to deprive the Dutch of their vote and to govern them by terrorism!

What is the meaning of your terrible cruelty?

In the *Revue des Paris* of October Mr. Chevrillon exposes the complete inability of the English in the Boer war to conceive any point of view other than the purely selfish one.

But what puzzles him most is the astonishing pressing even of Christianity itself into the service of imperial expansion,

In the *Revue des Revues* Mme. Novicoff writes:

"The English are constantly talking of humanity, and in practice they are very often the most inhuman of all nations."

Fourteen months ago I would have passionately contradicted this accusation.

But now?

* * *

English mothers, do you realise what is being done in South-Africa in the name of a woman, of your own noble Queen Victoria? Do you know the meaning of the proud news Lord Roberts wired:

«Lord Methuen has denuded the country round Zeerust?»

In these words Lords Roberts boasts of the atrocity of laying a whole country bare and of making a grey wasteful desolation of happy harvest fields and homes.

What is worse: killing outright as Alva did, or taking away the means by which the farmers live and the house that shelters their children?

When there was a fear that the Boers would destroy the mines and property of British capitalists in defence of their country, how loud was the lamentation in the city, and how bloodcurdling its threats and denunciations! And now, how does Lord Roberts describe his Spanish way of winning the loyalty of men and women, whom he wants to exalt to the proud position of his fellow subjects? As he says in his second proclamation, he feels *“compelled to adopt measures which are ruinous to the country, entail endless suffering on the burghers and their families, and the longer this guerilla warfare continues the more rigorously they will be enforced.”*

And what are these measures? Let England's Liberal review *the Speaker* give the answer:

“The principal one is the burning of farmhouse, where the enemy have found shelter in any of the farm buildings, or where the railway has been wrecked in the neighbourhood: that is to say, that if De Wet or any other leader of a commando, makes a swoop upon the railway, or occupies a farm, our gallant Generals, who cannot catch De Wet, will take it out of the women and children who have committed the crime of living in the neighbourhood. The husband and father may be in the fighting line or may not: if he be, this method of fighting him is unworthy of Englishmen; if he be not it is foolish as well as ignoble.”

England's reign of terror.

To make the English people understand the terrible mistake that was made by Mr. Chamberlain in goading on the boers to war by his bullying style of diplomacy, and by lord Roberts adopting the strategy of Tilly and

Weyler, I want to show the desolation and misery they caused, the appalling nature of which is not yet realised in England.

In giving some examples of the cruel way the English troops are desolating the whole country, and of the reign of terror which have established, I only quote Englishmen. Everything is near, authentic, despicable. Afterwards in a book will be published the testimony under oath of Boers and Hollanders, Germans and French. For the moment I want to prevent the cheap answer that my witnesses are enemies of the English.

As some people might think that the cruelties of the English in South Africa began only recently, when the guerilla war roused them to despair, I summon as my first witness captain Ritchie, who issued on July 9th at Krugersdorp this proclamation.

By order

V. R.

PUBLIC NOTICE.

[I t is hereby notified for information that unless the men at present on commando belonging to families in the **Town and District of Krugersdorp** surrender themselves and hand in their arms to the Imperial Authorities by **20 JULY**, the whole of their property will be confiscated and their families turned out destitute and homeless.

By Order,

C. H. M. RITCHIE,

Capt. K. Horse,

Dist. Supt. Police. ³⁾

Krugersdorp, 9 July, 1900.

³⁾ This is copied from the official proclamation.

When it was condemned by some influential men at the Cape, it was altered a week afterwards as follows:

V. R.

PUBLIC NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given that unless those persons of the town and district of Krugersdorp, who are now on commando, surrender them-

This is a good example of British military rule! How noble to tell brave and honourable enemies that, unless they desert their countrymen's ranks (for the Transvaal was not even annexed yet), their families will be turned out destitute and homeless!

When even some Tories cried: "Shame!" the proclamation was changed, but it had already shown what military rule means, and with what cruelty it can threaten under the initials of the kindhearted old Victoria Regina.

The special correspondent of the *Express*, from Bloemfontein, writes an article on "Loot a shameless crime". He describes a house near Paardeberg:

"A few regiments of irregular horse swooped down and did the work; broken furniture, crockery, pictures, *bric-à-brac* of all kinds, clothing, broken glass—everything destroyed—a pitiable scene of desolation. In a corner, with its legs twisted out of shape, lay a little tin horse, a child's toy—the paint cracked and the head bent back tho the tall. Even this trifle had been deserving of the attention of some stalwart trooper. I picked up a tattered Bible, mechanically tearing out a few more leaves."

The special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* said in riding from Bloemfontein to Kimberley:

selves and their arms and ammunition and take the oath of neutrality, and further declare stock and supplies in their possession, before 20 July 1900, the whole of their stock and supplies is liable to be confiscated,

The previous notice in this matter is cancelled.

By Order,
G. H. M. RITCHIE,
Capt. K. Horse,
Dist. Supt. Police.

Krugersdorp, 16 July, 1900.

But it came to the same in the end!

"Scrutator" wrote a fortnight afterwards to *The Morning Leader*: "Both proclamations are alike "By Order"; and when one learns that a multitude of women and children were actually deported after all, it may be inferred that the cancellation of the first notice is simply an act of prudence. It represents a policy deliberately resolved on by the authorities; and we can but ask ourselves to what methode we are coming in the Transvaal!"

"The way is a line of desolation, the farmhouses have not merely been sacked, they have been savagely destroyed. The mirrors have been smashed, the pianos wrecked, children's toys and books wantonly destroyed. Even the buildings themselves have been burned and seriously damaged."

Earl de la Warr, correspondent for the *Globe*, writes after the Modder River fight:

"It is certainly worthy of remark that the Boers, who are not supposed to have any discipline at all, have in this part of the country (Cape Colony and Free State) apparently behaved with, exemplary consideration for the rights of private property."

A Munster Fusilier, writing to his mother from Honey Nest, says:—

"We have a nice job on hand, going out to the farms for firewood — it doesn't matter what it is. The other day we brought in two pianos, a sofa and two dozen chairs what you would get £150 for at home — and Billy Jones made short work of them to boil our dinner with. All the people have left their homes, and we can do what we like with them."

Another private writing from Modder River Honey Nestkloof, says:—

"We have to go out every morning on what they call looting, robbing the farmers' houses of all we can get in the line of firewood, breaking up chairs, tables, and even pianos. The farmer's houses are splendidly furnished."

Mr. John Stuart, of the *Morning Post*, writes of the Boer farms:—

"Wat a scene of loot! We found several rifles. The natives of the neighbourhood looted all the furniture and then someone without orders set fire to the house. I own to having felt a warm glow at the heart when I saw the smoke of that bonfire ascending to heaven. A beast of a rebel was getting his deserts. Another farm was being looted. Again I had the joy of seeing the smoke of a rebel's house ascending'".

This district had sent in months ago a petition to Sir A. Milner appealing against the brutality of the English troops.

Mr. Thomas F. Millard, special correspondent with the Boer army, sends an account to the *Daily Mail* of the flight to the Vaal River:

"Huge waggons, drawn by full spans of trek oxen, piled high with farmhouse furniture, where perched wistful-eyed women and children, with frightened tear-stained faces; past deserted houses, with wildeopen doors and scattered belongings; past ambulances filled with groaning wounded. It was bitterly cold. The wind had a frost edge and cut to the quick. Thinly-clad women clasped their shivering babes. Heartrending as was this enforced and hurried abandonment of homes, few hesitated to make the sacrifice. Anything was better than to fall into the hands of the hated English!"

Private Fred Bonsor of the Imperial Yeomanry writes:

"Of course, all farms and houses on our way are looted, burned down and destroyed. It looks an awful shame, and the scenes are simply sickening at times, when some poor women try hard to save something for themselves and their children; but we cannot pass over the fact that their husbands, fathers and sons are all away fighting against us day after day. It really looks terrible when, glancing back on the way, you see smoke and flames all along the sky-line, and shadows of women and kids running about trying to save something."

The "of course", with which private Bonsor begins, is a noble tribute to England's way of subduing a free people!

In the article which Mr. Conan Doyle wrote for the *Strand Magazine* of September I came across a sketch of the looting of a Free State farm from which shots had been fired on the troops:

"The general rides up, but he has no consolation for the women. The farm has brought it upon itself. He rides on.

A parson rides up. "I can't imagine why they don't burn it," says he."

The Levite of the English church not only passes the wounded man but wishes to finish him!

How the war has warped good sense and good feeling! How terrible the ever gathering popularity of ignorant brute force and the nearly total absence of a watchful and temperate opinion at home!

Many on the British side put no disguise on their satisfaction over vindictive measures. I have before me the "Cape Argus of 21 June, in which there is cited this statement from the *South African News*:

"Between Bloemfontein and Boshof, between 30 and 40 homesteads have been burnt down—utterly destroyed. That is only one route. Many others have been burnt down also. Their homes destroyed, women and children have been turned out on to the field in the bitter South African winter."

To this allegation not a word of denial is offered by the "Argus," Without a hint of repudiation, it proceeds:

"When our troops have been fired at from farmhouses flying the white flag, when arms have been found concealed, and when Boers who have taken the oath of neutrality have violated that oath, it is only to be expected that sharp and summary punishment would be inflicted as a warning to others."

Here we have the implicit claim that the misdeeds of Boers are fitly to be punished at the hands of a British force by turning out their women and children to freeze to death in the winter fields. When this is openly argued, it can be felt how many acts of extreme vindictiveness have been committed.

* * *

"Scrutator" writes from Cape town to the *Morning Leader*:

"After getting hundreds to surrender on a proclamation, Lord Roberts holds himself at liberty to cancel his promises because certain individuals have broken faith. In strict fact his agreement was with individuals as such, and he has no more right to throw over two on the score of the bad faith of one than the civil power has right to punish one man for another's crime. It is merely martial law in excelsis—the will of the general overriding every principle of equity. A concrete case, reported in a loyalist telegram, will serve to show how things are going in the Transvaal".

Johannesburg, 17 Aug. — On Tuesday evening Pte. Richards, of the Railway Pioneers, was mysteriously shot near Witpoortje, four miles from Krugersdorp. He was doing patrol duty, and when picked up yesterday he had five bullet wounds including one through the head. As he was sniped by some resident in the vicinity, the people were called upon to produce the murderer. As they did not, some four houses were demolished, and the occupants sent to Johannesburg.

The crime, be it observed, was "mysterious"; that is to say, nobody knows who did it. But for purposes of

martial law it is assumed that "some resident in the vicinity" is guilty and as nobody can pretend to identify that resident, four houses are at once demolished, and four families sent to Johannesburg. Thus are Boers taught to realise and revere the majesty of British justice. You first penalise some 50 people at random, and afterwards you may perhaps put them on trial.

Had Lord Roberts resolutely adhered to his first policy of clemency, and disdained to break his public promise of protection and immunity to all who surrendered, he would have made himself respected.

But he has given a free hand to the farmburners... penalised helpless and disarmed people for damage done to the railway in their district by flying bands... he has even resorted to the evil expedient of placing innocent neutrals on his trains to receive the fire of their armed countrymen. The result is that the credit of British fairness is gone for ever in South-Africa. War was made against women and children. The Burghers were evicted from Pretoria. Listen to the beautiful way in which Reuter's correspondent at Pretoria describes this Christian act of war:

"It has of late been apparent to the British military authorities here that among a great number of poor in the town, who were being fed practically free of charge, were the wives of many burghers now actually in the field against us. Even to British magnanimity there must be some limit (!) and to-day a proclamation has been issued ordering the wives of all Boers now fighting to report themselves to the authorities tomorrow in order that they may be sent into the enemy's lines."

These mothers and children were deprived of their own houses and beds... were driven from a place of safety into the field of active warfare. Nobody could pretend that these women are the wives of rebels and traitors.

What a way to convert the Dutch into submissive subjects!

Lord Roberts certainly took up Longfellow's *Evangeline* after his courageous sortie against women. It must have comforted him that the English were already just as brutal under George.

How charmed he will have been when he read of that awful eviction of Acadians, or Nova Scotians, as described in "Evangeline" . . . when he read the prefatory note to the poem and the description of how the Acadians were scattered in different colonies, relations and friends being purposely separated! This was in 1714.

Now it is the jubilee year 1900!

Lord Roberts, continuing his policy of ferocity, and as if he had not done harm enough already by breaking his pledge of protection and immunity to individual burghers of the Free State, who have surrendered, formally rescinded all previous proclamations in the Transvaal, and announces that:

"all the burghers in the districts occupied by the British forces, except those who have taken the oath will be regarded as prisoners of war, and will be transported."

And his soldiers understand what he wants.

Here is an extract from a letter written by an English soldier:

"We have got a force of irregulars working round the district, all mounted infantry, and their orders seem to be, as far as I can make out, "Shoot, loot, and burn. They returned after three days' excursion yesterday, having had one man killed and *about twelve farms burnt*. I reckon this game will do more to bring the Boers to their senses than anything else!"

The *St. James's Gazette* printed a letter from its correspondent at Ficksburg in the Orange Free State. He is a violent Anti-Boer. But his criticisms are none the less damaging to the English!

He is a partisan of rigor. Like the *Standard* he regards De Wet and his followers as "brigands", who ought to be "shot or hanged".

But he complains that the English authorities are inconsistent. Proclamations are for ever being issued, now lenient, now severe, but each invariably contradicting its predecessor. To-day we dismiss a man to his farm on parole, to morrow we burn his hay and take him prisoner. The result is that whereas:

"Six months ago at least a third of the Free Staters were in our favor, now it is doubtful if we possess a single friend."

The writer attributes this result to "inconsistency". But here is his description of a march with General Campbell's column:

"The General told me thad he had received orders to "sweep" the country. . . . All farms on the line of march were cleared of horses cattle, sheep, waggons, carts, &c., the forage being burnt, and the owners bidden to join the ranks of the prisoners, of whom there were already a goodly number. In several cases I ventured humbly to point out that many of these men, in fact most of them, had been paroled and allowed to return to their farms, and had received a protection certificate for their property from the District Commissioner. Some of them were Britishers, &c. . . . My pleas were of no avall."

This is the Pax Britannica!

The following is an extract from a letter from a soldier dated Kroonstad, September 23 which I read in *Reynold's Newspaper* of 28 October: "I have been on a thirty-four days' patrol, fired only eight shots all the time, was sent with 100 men burning farms and looting all stock, burnt twenty-eight farms. I wish I could have brought some of the stuff home we burnt in that trip."

This is the description given by the special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, with Colonel Mahon.

"In ten miles we have burned no fewer than six farmhouses; the wife watched from her sick husband's bedside the burning of her home a hundred yards away. It seems as though a kind of domestic murder were being committed. I stood till late last night and saw the flames lick round each piece of the poor furniture—the chairs and tables, the baby's cradle. The chest of drawers, containing a world of treasure, and when I saw the poor housewife's face pressed against the window of the neighbouring house, my own heart burned with a sense of outrage. The effect on the Colonial troops who are gratifying their feelings of hatred and revenge, is very bad. They swarm into the houses, looting and destroying, and filling the air with high sounding cries of vengeance. Why burn the houses—the ends achieved are so small, punishment, could be otherwise inflicted? If I described one-half of the little things wick I saw in the process of destruction, I should be accused of sentimentalising."

Mr. Battersby, in the *Morning Post*, June 30, writes.

"The dismantling of deserted houses is a speedy affair. The doors are smashed from their hinges, lintel and side-posts wrenched from the brickwork, the flooring is torn up, sometimes even the roof tree is dragged out, chairs, tables, and chests of drawers may be seen going into camp on the backs of the spoilers. The whole place is gutted with a passion for destruction."

The special correspondent of the *Morning Leader* Mr. E. W. Smith, writes:

"General French and General Pole-Carew, at the head of the Guards and eighteenth brigade, are marching in, burning practically everything on the road.

"I hear to-day that General Rundle burnt his way up to Dewetsdorp. At one farm only women were left. Still rifles were found under the mattress. Orders were inexorable. The woman threw her arms round the officers neck and begged that the homestead might be spared. When the flames burst from the doomed place the poor woman herself on her knees, tore open her bodice, and bared her breasts, screaming: "Shoot me—shoot me! I've nothing, more to live for now that my husband is gone, and our farm is burnt and our cattle taken!"

Private Stanley, of the N. S. W. contingent, writes to the *Sydney Telegraph*:

"When within 800 yards of the farm we halted and the infantry blazed a volley into the house; we broke open the place and went in. It was beautifully furnished and the officers got several things they could make use of. There was a lovely library—books of all descriptions, printed in Dutch and English. I secured a bible, also a rifle, quite new. After getting all we wanted out of the house, our men put a charge under and blew it up. It seemed such a pity, it was a lovely house."

A letter of a Trooper Morris, published September 6, 1900:

"Since we are with Clements we have had plenty of work, burning farms, destroying crops, and commandeering cattle. It is very hard sometimes, but it must be done. Last Sunday six of us, including myself, went out with an Imperial officer to a fine farmhouse, giving the occupants five minutes to clear out all their goods as well as themselves. There were an old grandmother, three married daughters, and several children, crying and

asking for mercy; but no. And when the time was up we burnt it to the ground".

The *South African News* of September 5th published a Proclamation issued at Bloemfontein, numbered 602, which runs as follows: —

"NOTICE.

"Whereas, by Proclamation, dated the 16th day of June, 1900. of Lord Roberts, Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief Her Majesty's Forces in South Africa, it was notified to, and the inhabitants and principal residents of the Orange River Colony and the South African Republic were warned, that whatever wanton damage to public property, such as Railways, Bridges, Culverts, Telegraph Wires, &c., took place the houses of persons living in the neighbourhood would be burned, inasmuch as such destruction could not take place without their knowledge and connivance, now, therefore, it is hereby notified for general information that the following sentences have been passed in connection with destruction of Property, Railways, &c., in the Orange River Colony, and have been approved by Field-Marshal Lord Roberts."

There follows a list of some forty persons whose farms have been burnt in accordance with Lord Roberts' Proclamation. It is difficult to see how these men can be made responsible for the attacks on the railway. The mobile Boer forces cover huge distances, descend on the railway at one point, and in a few days are able to attack the railway in some other direction. The Boers whose farms are burnt have not the slightest responsibility for the destruction of the railway.

All what I here tell is a reprint of what I wrote in the *Amsterdam Handelsblad*.

But since has appeared *the Memorial addressed to Lord Salisbury by the South African Conciliation Committee*: of which Mr. Leonard Courtney is President.

In this *Memorial* I read that on September 2nd Lord Roberts addressed a letter to General Botha informing him that he had actually given orders for the burning of all farmhouses near the spot where any attempt had been made to injure trains or railways, and that for ten miles round every farm should be denuded of all provisions, cattle, &c. He further informed him that, in consequence of guerilla fighting, and for the prevention of

intelligence being transmitted to the enemy, he proposed to expel from all towns and places occupied by British troops the wives and families of burghers in the field. He asked General Botha to make provision for receiving these outcast women and children, mentioning amongst them Mrs. Kruger and Mrs. Botha by name. General Botha replied that the Boer commandos were all acting under his direction, that they were necessarily small, and that they were scattered, "in order to be able to check the looting patrols under your Excellency's chief command, who scour the country to carry off cattle and provisions from the different farms." He added: —

"With regard to paragraph 4 of your Excellency's letter, I extremely regret to learn that my burghers' and my own determination to persevere in the struggle for our independence is to be visited on our wives and children, and this is the first instance of this kind known to me in the history of civilised warfare. I can only protest against your proposed measures as being in opposition to all principles of civilised warfare and excessively cruel towards the women and children. I desire to give you the assurance that nothing you may do to our women and children will deter us in the struggle for our independence."

The increasing rigour of the measures adopted by Lord Roberts is illustrated by each day's intelligence from South Africa. October closed with the news of the burning of all the Boer houses between Vryheid and Dundee—a distance of upwards of fifty miles; the complete destruction of Bothaville and Ventersburg, and the imprisonment of many Dutch Reformed ministers, the effect of the last-named step being to deprive infants of baptism and grown-up persons of those spiritual ministrations which are deeply valued by them.

A further advance on the road of severity is seen in a Reuter's special telegram of October 30, which announces that every male Boer over fourteen years of age outside a radius of ten miles of Bloemfontein is being "coralied" or "concentrated" into Bloemfontein. Their women and children are being carried away hundreds of miles into the Cape Colony. A still further development of this drastic policy is to be found in a proclamation, stated to have been issued from Bloemfontein on October

24, requiring all farmers to scour every night the vicinity of their farms, to prevent "sniping." Failure to comply with this order subjects the farmers first to a fine of £ 200, and secondly to the burning of their farms. A moment's consideration of the large areas of the Boer farms and the mobility of the Boer commandos reveals the difficult situation thus thrust upon the unfortunate farmers.

It is indeed difficult to realise how the character of the struggle has passed from phase to phase. As now developed, it involves the burning of farms and even of villages, the denudation of whole districts of stock and crop, the deportation of the women and children left homeless, some of them over the borders, some into the remoter parts of the Transvaal, and some apparently about to be driven into the ranks of the companies of the enemy still in the field.

A telegram from Port Elizabeth states that 160 women and children, deported by the military authorities, chiefly from the Edenburg district, arrived there this morning.

Ventersburg had been destroyed (Nov. 1).

Reuter.

"It is not pleasant to hear that in some cases which have been investigated it has been shown that Transvaal and Free State farms which have been found to be without male inhabitants and have accordingly been burned on the supposition that the owner was on commando have really belonged to Boers who were our prisoners in St. Helena or elsewhere."

Manchester Guardian. (6 Nov.)

* * *

I am tired copying all this atrocious news about the way England wages war, and I leave piles of letters and newspapers cuttings unused, describing barbarities worthy of a Tilly in the seventeenth century not of a British general in the year 1900.

But before indicating the cause of all these cruel expedients, it is necessary to ask what induced English journalists in this crisis to excite the soldiers far off to use a violence, which is not a cement but a wedge?

What is the meaning of all this cruelty, of goading the Dutch population in Cape Colony to hostility . . . of exter-

minating the Dutchmen from Capetown to the Zambesi?

What can induce so many gentlemen to lie and slander, to conceal the truth about the Boers, to exult in all their weaknesses, to sneer at their heartfelt, simple religious faith and laugh at their bitter sorrows, insulting their president, and shooting at his effigy, as Sir Alfred Milner did? 4)

What makes them ask for the appointment of this same Sir Alfred Milner — who showed himself shortsighted, impatient, intolerant, irritating his adversaries, and never losing the chance to insult the Dutch — as satrap over the vanquished people, thus committing the honour of the lady to the care of the ravisher?

We ask the English people the question asked before: . . . do the exigences of your own safety justify the crimes committed in your name? . . .

the use of surrendered burghers from the Free State as shields for your own soldiers in your trains? . . .

the systematic barbarity threatened by Lord Robert's proclamations?

Have you the right before God and men to deport in captivity to far off islands, far from their family thou-

4) *Son Excellence s'amuse.*

My attention was drawn to sir Alfred's amusements by the following words of *The Star*:

"We may remind the reader of the description in the *Cape Times* of how sir Alfred Milner, the representative of the Queen, appeared at a garden-party in Cape Town, and amid the delighted guffaws of the wealthy vulgar took potshots at an effigy of President Kruger.

Extract from a "Cape Times" report of a garden party given by the Admiral and Ledy Harris at Simon's Town on Monday afternoon, at which his Excellency the Governor was present:

"On the top row a cardboard image of Oom Paul—with a top hat and Vierkleur sash complete—scowled at the detested English. Near him a spectacled, much-moustached infant in short frock, crawled on a visionary floor (Mr. Morrیمان). To the right a very tall person with a stoop, a cynical smile, and telescopic boots, had a good position on the line (Mr. James Molteno). These were targets for all who chose to try their skill with a Lee-Metford, fitted with the Morris tube. Pr. Kruger's presentment was soon like a sieve, and there were scores of little round holes in the other figures. *His Excellency made good practise with the rifle.*"

sands and thousands of men, whose only crime was to fight for their independence?

I read in the *Westminster Gazette* that De Wet became an irreconcilable only when Lord Kitchener burnt his farmhouse. Standing amid the ruins, he did what nine men of spirit in ten would have done - he vowed to be revenged.

Does it never occur to England's generals that confiscating and burning the private property of those who are lawfully in arms against them, is specifically forbidden by the Hague Convention, which Lord Salisbury's government has ratified, and to which the Boers were not a party.... for the simple reason that Mr. Chamberlain, foreseeing the war, excluded them from the debates and divisions in "the House in the Wood".

As Mr. Charles Williams wrote:

"Lord Kitchener has a good many things to answer for, if he ever comes home, and among the three most serious of them is questions why he avenged himself on the property of Christian De Wet on account of that Boer's superior tactical ability".

Though the whole world knows by this time what cruelties can be expected of lord Kitchener, I ask again, why this terrible outrage?

"*Destroy their tombs*" was the latest cry of the *Standard* and other Tory-papers, who wanted to demolish and pollute the burial grounds of the Chinese, part of whose religion is their reverence for their ancestors.

This Christian way of subduing enemies by grubbing up their graves and decapitating their dead was first followed in the Kitchener experiment of digging up the remains of the Mahdi, and boiling his head in an old oil can. But it is a new thing to read how English papers of standing encourage such cruel acts.

The greatest part of your English press has utterly disgraced itself during their war.

It can never be believed again! Their war has been a series of impostures from beginning to end.

Stoneblind to whatever they did not mean to see, they allowed what Russell Lowell calls "the mythic instinct" to shape things as they ought to have been.

I read with delight Mr. Michael Davitt's statement that

he proposes to embody in a chapter of a work on "*The Boer Story of the War*" the number, character, and variety of the lies, which were circulated both immediately before and during the war by the jingo Press of England and of the Cape. He has the same task before him as confronted Hercules when he stood before the stables of Augeas. So "more power to his elbow", as I once heard an Irishman say, for he is right in saying, that "a more monstrous and more unblushing use of falsehood in the service of an infamous cause has never been chronicled in the history of politics or of warfare than can be thus compiled."

* * *

But while I found them exceedingly careless as to exact truth, exalting fierce personal bias as Imperialistic patriotism, I never believed that it was possible British journalists would ever become advocates of the way Alva tried to subdue Holland an Zeeland.

Alas, it were not only Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, who in panic and despair imitated General Weyler's methods in Cuba... no, your newspapers egged them on! The *Morning Post* is convinced that nothing would be so effective as a system of loot... the *St. James's Gazette* (Monday 18 August) welcomes general Weyler's method as the only effective one...

"as the imitation imposed by necessity of the draconic measure by which the Spanish Captain-General endeavoured to pacify the Pearl of the Antilles... but it would be far better to adopt the policy of thorough at once, and "reconcentrate" the whole Dutch population of "the Transvaal at St. Helena or in Ceylon."

In the *Saturday Review* of 3 November I read:

"It is satisfactory to hear that the houses of the inhabitants of Palmietspruit who admitted the Boers have been destroyed."

The *Standard*, the advocate of the systematic devastation which lord Roberts practises in South-Africa, wrote on Friday 2 November:

"The burning of houses in very unpleasant word. It is costly and repulsive to our feelings to be compelled to remove the population and confine them in pens."

But we are convinced that the paper would have added, if Frenchmen had been guilty of these barbarities:

"It is not only costly but it is a confession of weakness, a cruel practice forbidden by the code of honour of civilised nations!"

Mr. Sidney Lamont, the correspondent of the *Daily Express* gave six weeks ago the following advice to Lord Roberts, which he has nearly completely followed since:

"If the present state of things goes on, I would advocate a policy of absolute devastation, followed by subsequent compensation. Occupy all the principal towns—hold the rails and raze the villages and farm to the ground. Destroy all growing crops, and do not leave a mouthful of food for man or beast in an entire district... It sounds very terrible such a wholesale policy of destruction. But in reality it would not be so bad as it sounds... We could destroy more than a thousand farms a day for the same price as it now costs us to carry on the war for 24 hours."

The Standard of 16 October goes one better.

That Tory paper lowered the newspaper press of England in the sight of the world by urging that the prisoners taken in the war should be put to death! The suggestion that every burgher in arms should be killed is abominably cruel. If it were acted on, England would become a pariah among the nations.

* * *|

To these murderers in armchairs I say: the heroes of the two Republics are only doing what each nation of freemen believes and hopes and prays their own sons would do, if an enemy refused to treat with its government, simply proclaiming the whole country with its mines and men and women to be his property.

The English make war in the manner of Nebuchadnezzar.... it is a war of annihilation.... they want to imprison a whole Christian nation of noble European descent... they want to finish the vile war, not by an honorable treaty but by the proclamation of a military despot. What can men, who love their country and their homes, whose farms are burned, whose wives and children are homeless and destitute, who have only imprisonment, humiliation and servitude before them, what can they do

but fight to the bitter end, and continue a war which costs their enemy, who knows neither generosity nor justice, two hundred lives and two millions of money every week?

The raiding of the Boers is a perfectly legitimate act of war.

At the conference in the Hague Sir John Ardagh *) has been pleading eloquently, as the representative of Great Britain, for the fullest measure of rights which a population can claim in resisting invaders!

And how do English generals bring their acts in harmony with the honeyed words of their sleek statesmen?

* * *

The Boers go on fighting because it is a sacred duty to struggle to the end in defence of language, hearth and home and independence.

But the English Imperialists wage a war of greed and revenge, without any regard for the patriotism that others feel as much as Englishmen.

Is there an insult so unbearable as the one the *Daily News* inflicted on the courageous warriors for liberty? That paper, once edited by men of principle, who believed

*) The clauses of the Hague Convention which deal with the subject are clear and definite. Sir John Ardagh, one of England's representatives, proposed on behalf of Great Britain—"Nothing in this chapter shall be considered as tending to lessen or suppress the rights which belong to the population of an invaded country to fulfil its duty of opposing the invaders by all lawful means, with the most energetic patriotic resistance"—(Peace Conference Blue-book, October, 1899, p. 161.)

The Convention itself provides—

Art. 44: Any compulsion of the population of occupied territory to take part in military operations against its own country is prohibited.

Art. 45: Any pressure on the population of occupied territory to take the oath to the hostile Power is prohibited.

Art. 46: Family honours and rights, individual lives and property, as well as religious convictions and liberty, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated.

Art. 47: Pillage is formally prohibited.

Art. 50: No general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, can be inflicted on the population on account of the acts of individuals for which it cannot be regarded as collectively responsible.

in liberty, congratulated the Boers upon the beginning of a "new era", for now, after a period of tyranny and military rule, they are going to obtain that true independence, that real enjoyment of the blessings of self-government, which they have so long been denied. Now at length they are to obtain "administration on the principles of equality and justice and selfgovernment."

And this to the sturdy heroes, who for the sake of their independence, their religion and language have "trekked" and fought and died for nearly a whole century.

If their claim to a national existence was worth an 80 years war in Europa and an endless struggle in Africa, it is worth maintaining at any cost against Rhodes and Chamberlain!

The *Daily News*, false to its traditions, writes as if nationalism were a dead abstraction . . . as if patriotism had been annexed by force and fraud as the exclusive possession of British Imperialists, . . . as if love for our country, its language, laws, past and future were not a living virtue in the moral nature of us, Hollanders, and of those of our blood, raising an ideal for all men of action.

What poor argument it is for robbing the Dutch of their independence to say that it was of little value!

Is it any defence of the honesty of a housebreaker to urge that what he had stolen, after killing the housekeeper, was of little value to the owner?

What is good enough for Birmingham is not good enough for Pretoria, just as what is good enough for Louisiana is not considered good enough by the Canadians.

What miserable talk is this!

Does this renegade of Liberalism really believe he can soothe a high-spirited nation, descendants of the men who in 1672 fought Great Britain and France, leagued together against them, by the ignominious delusion, that after a time some liberty may be thrown to them, and that the best way of securing liberty is first to lose it?

Are these flunkeys of imperialism satisfied with wearing the livery of the Jingo, because they may get leave to lay it aside some evening after a carouse of mafficking, when their services are no longer wanted? Are they happy in doing penal servitude under Chamberlain be-

cause some day, if they are submissive enough, they may get a ticket of leave?

It is a grand thing for a "Liberal" paper to snarl in praise of a policy, which is a dissolution of all liberal principles, and which culminates in the ruin of a nation, . . . a glorious thing to crouch to the strong, encroaching on the feeble, howling with the mob and hunting up excuses for what strikes all lovers of liberty as one of the greatest crimes in history!

What honour for the paper, that once was proud to echo Gladstone's trumpet-ones and the *réveil* he sounded, when he saw a nation oppressed, to adulate Roman Imperialism and to try to crush nationalities at the frontier, not with a temporary prostration merely but with utter desolation and dissolution!

The cause of all the cruelty.

The reason for all the crimes committed in South-Africa by the British is known on the continent and in America, though hidden to the English nation by the Rhodesian press.

There is no reason for sugaring the bitter truth to you.

The political witches, who met Mr. Chamberlain on the road from Birmingham to London, have ruined his reputation and the happiness of South-Africa with their: "All hail hereafter!"

His endeavour to consolidate the different parts of the Empire, which he believes he has discovered, by a complicity of blood, proves a mistake.

As Shakespeare said: 'there is no sure foundation set on blood'.

A handful of farmers and shop boys, of untrained peasants without cohesion, officers, and discipline has led captive 5000 of England's best regulars, capturing guns and convoy, and forcing the ministers to denude England and India of almost every soldier of the regular army, and to implore for help and volunteers in Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australia!

They have wrecked your military system and broken your influence throughout the world.

To save what could be saved Lord Roberts was sent to annihilate the people you could not conquer.

But Lord Roberts, just as your whole army, has been spoiled by easy wars against frontiersmen in India, and against African warriors, armed with spears.

He has been so long accustomed to lording it over cringing natives, that he had continually to rub his eyes, now that he had continually to rub his eyes, now that he had to deal with a people of European descent, moved to great deeds by an independence centuries old.

His strategy, which is a wonder in your eyes, showed the same kind of desperation that was visible in Mr. Chamberlain's mode of appeal to the country... quick or it is too late!

He disdained to make each step secure before taking the next... he cut himself adrift from a safe line of communication with his base... he staked everything on the one throw of a headlong rush to Bloemfontein and Pretoria... and he lost the reality for the shadow.

You try to make believe he is a new Wellington... but he could not even protect the Bloemfontein waterworks... Olivier and the large convoy escaped him... he had to pay for his hurry by long months of humiliating inaction and the owners of the goldmines, for the protection of which he sacrificed thousands of English lives, are still waiting for permission to work them.

By his reckless hurry he wrecked the hospital and transport systems and so he maimed and killed his own soldiers by hundreds after terrible sickness and suffering... in despair of honorable victory he was driven from one barbarity to another... he forced the Boers to the tactics that are the best for them and the worst for you.

Certainly, he did not risk one terrible defeat, one Waterloo by his unscientific strategy, as he outnumbered by ten to one the Boers, who had no organised army, but his strategy forced him to be cruel in South Africa as before he had been in Afghanistan.

By his way of making war he has incumbered the political with an economic problem. He has destroyed wealth, harvestfields, farms, and means to live wholesale...

does the ruin of a whole country of labouring men and farmers spell the glory of the reckless and despairing conqueror?

Those who know Lord Roberts say that notwithstanding his cruel proclamations in practise he does his best to be humane in the performance of a task that is essentially inhuman.

But I ask them: do you claim Lord Roberts' kindness of heart as a sanctuary for his crime against humanity?

What do we care for the smoothness of a tree if it bears poisonous fruit?

Your House of Parliament ought to be surrounded with a grim frieze of murderous scenes, towns burned, women and children destroyed, as a history of Lord Robert's glorious war.

* * *

Do you know what Lord Roberts has done?

At the Conference of clergymen of the Dutch Reformed Church, held in Cope Town the other day, the presiding clergyman said:

"I was always loyal... at the time of her Majesty" Jubilee I spoke of our loyalty and devotion to her throne and person, and we carried resolutions to that effect. Today I am only loyal *because I have to be*, and I don't care who knows it'.

This clergyman had been all the time in Cape Town, but what he had heard of the horrors the British troops committed has turned him and all the men of Dutch descent against the English

By their treatment of the Dutch in Cape Colony the English statesmen and generals have started a movement, which we may call the birth of a new nationalism. What does Mr Merriman say, he a member of the late Cape Ministry, an Englishman, "son of perhaps the most respected Bishop, who ever lived in South Africa", as one of your Reviews calls him?

He spoke in support of Mr. Sauer's motion in favour of granting a qualified independence to the Boer States. A verbatim report of the speech was published in the *South African News* of September 26th, and should be read by every one who desires to understand the intense feeling

of antagonism, which has been aroused among Afrianders by the policy of Mr. Chamberlain & Sir Alfred Milner. He said:

"I have lived to see my country—that country which stood two years ago horrified at the doings of the infamous General Weyler in Cuba, applauding that same General, and saying through the mouth of one of its influential London newspapers that those are the ways which must be followed in the Free State and the Transvaal—that is degradation indeed. England has indeed fallen from her high estate when such things can be written and said. (Opposition cheers).

"One of the most remarkable things about this war is that it is a war à outrance; no terms are to be given, and I am surprised to hear members talking about the Boers' fruitless resistance. I wish some opportunity was given to these people to stop this miserable bloodshed by offering them some reasonable terms. But no terms are offered; they are pursued hither and thither; they are to be utterly wiped out. The war is carried on as no war has been carried on, I suppose, since the days of Tilly and Wallenstein, except by the infamous General Weyler. That is not the way to get a high-spirited people to give in. We have all read of the 300 Spartans and other Greeks who fell at Thermopylae. No doubt they knew they were fighting a hopeless battle. No doubt many of their friends said to them that they should have gone round some other way and not thrown their lives away, but they handed down their names to posterity, and I will venture to say that the burghers of the Free State and the Transvaal, when we here are dead and our miserable little political squabbles are forgotten, will be remembered in history as these men of Thermopylae are remembered. (Loud Opposition cheers.)"

"I warn Great Britain against, the policy of annexation. Some people talk light-heartedly about the solemn act of taking away the life of a nation, but I look upon it as something like murder upon the individual. I tell you what you are going to do by annexation; you are going to make England lose South Africa; that is the plain English of it, Mr. Speaker and it is better for us to speak out. Annex these people to-day, and as sure as you do England is going to lose South Africa, and something much worse is going to happen—South Africa is going to lose England. England could afford to lose South Africa, but South Africa could not afford to lose England and all that England means to us. (Opposition cheers.) These people are not sentimental people, but they have one sentiment to the

extreme, and that is the sentiment of freedom. (Loud Opposition cheers.) We are going to fight against the thing, which is the most difficult in the world to fight... against sentiment. England is going to take a wolf by the ears, and as sure as she does that she is going to lose South Africa.

.....
 "Believe there is a bright future for the Transvaal and the Free State if we adopted the principle of the protected State, which is, I think, what Mr. Sauer means, and which is stated in detail by Mr. Schreiner. (Opposition cheers.) That would give the Republics individual national existence, which is all they want, and it would be of enormous advantage to South Africa and the Empire. It is no advantage to us to swamp out these little civilisations; it is all the better to have such civilisations, perhaps to show us things we can copy with advantage. Annexation will turn the energies of these people away from peaceful pursuits to preparation for the next revolt, and whenever England is in a tight place—mark my words, sir—these people will get ready and will fly at her throat. (Opposition cheers.)

"Is that a wise policy? Is that a policy which any man who loves his Mother Country would support? If annexation is applied, I can only say that the people will regret this thing when we have passed away from the scene, and when it doesn't matter whether Sprigg or Merriman or any one else is sitting on these benches. It does matter a great deal whether in South Africa we are to progress along the lines of English civilisation, doing our work by subduing and civilising and helping the coloured races of this country, or whether we are to be torn with racial discord, torn with revolt, with more burnings of homes, more murders, and the whole miserable story of Ireland repeated." (Opposition cheers).

* * *

But even if you were the race appointed by Providence to govern all the goldfields of the world, you might be satisfied with them.... you might consider the rights of other nationalities on their land and their farms and refuse to lay thousands of happy homes desolate from North to South, and from East to West.

What is the crime for which this little nation of a few thousands men and women must be exterminated under such frightful tortures?

Their only crime is simply love of independence and ardent patriotism.... this crime Lord Roberts and the

government try to punish by the annihilation of the whole people.

You dare not answer me again when I repeat my question:

Why all these cruelties?

For the terrible answer is that your politicians have driven honourable generals to systematic barbarity by the refusal to recognise either the Free State or the Transvaal Government as responsible authorities, with whom they can negotiate. Your Government has decided not so much to annex or incorporate the Boer States as to treat them as a sort of no-man's land, dealing only with individual Boers, while punishing them as rebels and traitors.

Your Government had to decide between two solutions—limited independence and absolute despotism... and with a curse it choose the latter!

Mr. H. W. Massingham, who during this war has been an honour to journalism by strength of character, moral courage and enthusiastic disinterestedness, wrote in *the Morning Leader* of 5 November:

"From what cause do these horrors proceed? From the fact that we are making war not upon Governments but upon a people. The Governments of the Boer States have been crushed out. The warfare continues. No terms are offered to the military leaders of the people, any more than they were offered to their duly constituted civil representatives.

"It is for this reason that we are engaged in the dreadful work of tearing up a community by its roots; of harrying women and children to their death or their ruin; of deporting a whole population to foreign lands; of burning their houses and crops; of making groups of women prisoners, conveying them hundreds of miles from their homes, and leaving them (as in one case that has been brought to my knowledge) penniless and shelterless in strange English towns,

"Without one shadow of reason—for the resistance to our arms is as keen as ever, and as ably and thoroughly organised—we have worked a military hocus pocus, by which, in a phrase, we have changed enemies into rebels, an unconquered foreign country into a British colony. Why have we done this? In order to justify the appalling barbarity of our military methods."

"Why do not the Boers make peace, now that they are beaten?" kindhearted Englishmen have asked me,

refusing to listen to the answer the *Manchester Guardian* had given already: "because it is for the conqueror, not the conquered, to make peace, and that in this case the conqueror has repeatedly refused to offer any terms whatever."

Unconditional surrender is not a condition of peace that has ever been accepted by any community of white men in modern times.

England could, by only lifting its finger, obtain everything it went to war for, and more besides, and so could have saved thousands of lives, but you prefer, as Mr. Charles Williams said in his noble indignation, to rival the achievements of Attila, leaving a country

"Where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes".

* * *

Making a desolation and calling it peace, actually boasting of atrocities, that you would not have dared to attempt in Europe, brings down upon the doers the curse of all civilised people.

The war goes on because your remorseless cruelty gives the patriots of the Republics the most powerful motives for continuing the struggle.

It is because your severity has overreached itself.

Your organisers of defeat, your Chamberlains and Milners, refused to terminate the war by convincing the Boers that defeat is not going to rob them of everything.

These Shylocks want the last ounce of flesh! They demand such an absolute surrender from a whole nation as has not been asked since the partition of Poland. They force a whole people of freeborn Christians to choose between surrender or the prison. If they surrender voluntarily you deport them. If they go on fighting you burn their farms and turn their women and children adrift into the winter... you confiscate their land and you expel the foreigners, on whose behalf you took up arms!

Your cruel methods can produce no settlement!

You can repeat the mean platitudes of the *Daily News* about the reconciliation, which is to be effected as soon

as the victory is completed, till you get disgusted yourselves by the nauseous sentimentality, but you can not truly believe them.

It is a mere question of force, the right, as Swift explained of the grenadier to take the property of a naked man!

* * *

The cause of this protracted war and all this cruelty is the annexation, by which you tear every shred of independence from the country "denuded" by your troops.

You entered on this war with the plea that it was undertaken for "equal rights", and you are now depriving all men in the Transvaal and Free State of their rights, devastating the country with fire and sword, driving defenceless women and children from their ruined homes.

This annexation is the final acknowledgment and coronation of the policy first attempted by Mr. Rhodes and Dr. Jameson five years ago and continued by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner.

Mr. Cecil Rhodes said:

"Three years ago I made a Raid, and everybody said I was wrong; now the Queen's Government are preparing another Raid, and everybody says, they are right".

So the annexation and destruction of the Republics is a compliment to him... and a distinct step backward in civilised usage. This is acknowledged by the *Manchester Guardian* in these severe and solemn words:

"It is many years since any civilised State has claimed the right utterly to annihilate another. Cession of territory has indeed been demanded, but the main recent cases in which it has been enforced against the will of the inhabitants have not been encouraging. The Americans have not found the process of "liberating" the Filipinos a happy one. The annexation of Alsace-Lorraine has done more than anything else to turn Europe into an armed camp. Instead of giving Germany security, it has forced her into militarism and kept her in permanent dread of France for nearly thirty years. But these partial cessions of territory are a very different thing from the entire destruction of a nation. They have at least the semblance of legality, for they are performed

by a responsible Government, and that the Government to which the ceded territory owed allegiance. The annexation of the Free State and the Transvaal have and can have no such legal basis. Our Government merely announce their intention of annexing. That is to say, they claim the right to kill or make prisoners all the male inhabitants of the Transvaal, who refuse to accept a Government, imposed on them by sheer force, and to punish acts of "rebellion" by burning farms in the district where an outbreak occurs. There could be no more naked denial of right as between nations. And this denial of national rights means inevitably the infliction of suffering on individual men and women in proportion as they are good patriots. It means a dreary future of confiscations, hangings, and burning of farms. It is no doubt true that no Englishman wishes or intends these consequences. But they follow on the policy of crushing a free and brave people as night follows day. A military Government perforce weeds out the best men among the people that it governs. It drives them into exile or it kills them. It makes some of the best feelings of men criminal, and it encourages most those who are most servile. This is the kind of government to which this country, forgetful of its sympathy with enslaved Greece and Italy, has doomed the Boers of the Republics. Such is the outcome of the campaign for liberty and equality in South Africa."

* * *

How these words of the Manchester Guardian, spoken two months ago, are already proven to be true!

The women of South-Africa saw the danger. At a large meeting in Capetown, attended by 1500 women the following resolutions were unanimously passed:

First Resolution.

Proposed by Mrs. W. F. Purcell, seconded by Olive Schreiner: "This meeting records its solemn protest against the annexation of the Republics and against the spirit of revenge shown in carrying out that policy, which will outrage the principles of morality and strike a deadly blow to the best interests of South Africa and England."

Second Resolution.

Proposed by Mrs. A. F. Steyler, seconded by Mrs. Roos, and supported by Miss Molteno:

"This meeting of South African mothers and daughters strongly condemns the unjustifiable intervention of the present British Government in the internal affairs of the Transvaal, which has resulted in the cruel and unrighteous war now being waged in South Africa."

They saw the consequence of England's violating the laws of justice and liberty by a policy of annexation, which was popular because it required no thought, because it satisfied feelings of revenge, and because it adds to what passes in these your days of degeneration for national glory! But oppression is of the same dirty khaki hue the whole world over!

* * *

Can this oppression remain popular when the sons of British mothers see by what means this annexation is forced on two free nations?

If the new Imperialists of England want to search history for precedent, anxious to find a law of conquest... they will find that this so called law, is a denial of all law and apt to overturn the liberty of their own country.

Even Ireland was not annexed without treaty or pact or charter.

No, England can get no title for possession resting on law... no title by the law of covenant... no title even by the law of usage.

What Spinoza said of laws is equally true of settlements after a war: "Those are strong which appeal to reason, but impregnable are those, which appeal to the assent as well of reason as of the common affections of mankind".

Mr. Chamberlain, subverting the fundamental laws of England and the free colonies, introduces an arbitrary and tyrannical government to convince the Boers that they ought to have treated aliens at once as citizens!

What he does has no place in jurisprudence... he sets a stamp and character of servitude on freeborn Christian men of old and noble European race, who have fought to the last for their independence.

If England's colonies had the perspicacity to understand the meaning of his highhanded acts against the self-government of one of the colonies, he should be impeached as Strafford was.

But they will wait till the Empire is a wreck, wrecked by militarism and that most deplorable of all arbitrary governments: tyranny by a deluded democracy!

But violation is no legislation and robbery unpunished does not repeal the decalogue.

The sword of Divine Justice seems slow, and we have too often seen "captive good attending captain ill" to believe in God so immediately interfering in events as would satisfy our impatience of injustice.

But surely the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and history teaches, as Russell Lowell so tersely says, "that wrong can reckon on no alliance with the diviner part of man, while every high example of virtue, though it let to the stake or the scaffold, becomes a part of the reserved force of humanity, and from generation to generation summons kindred natures to the standard of righteousness as with the sound of a trumpet...."

It is the fatal necessity of all wrong to revenge itself upon those who are guilty of it or even accessory to it. Your victory renders you helpless to promote good or prevent evil. The oppressor is dragged down by the victim of his tyranny. The eternal justice makes the balance even.

* * *

While the men and women of Dutch descent in the whole of South-Africa will be lifted above their physical abasement by spiritual compensations, by the memory of a heroic struggle and the hope, that the day is near when the Lord's sword will smite you, your new gold-mines will be counterpoised by moral impoverishment and the enmity of the whole world leagued together.

Are you blind in England?

You have no longer any army to be employed in aggressive Imperialism... in China you have learnt how your craving for expansion has diminished your power... no retrenchment is possible to you for a long time as it will require many years and many millions before you have put even your defence in tolerable order... and the little time left to you, you waste in murdering a small free people, teaching Cossacks how to behave when whip in hand they race through English villages.

The smouldering war you call peace will flame up when the wind that threatens you gets up from the North.

* * *

Do not threaten and boast so loudly, oh leaders of the British Imperialists!

Prudent guides enjoin silence in the regions of avalanches... the vibration of your shouting and Mafficking may dislodge what threatens you from the dark mountain of the North.

But it is true your cruelty has gained you one admirer, sultan Abdul Hamid, who is strengthened in evildoing by your following his exemple, and of whom by your own acts you have now become the forced accomplice in Armenia. But you have estranged from you for ever all the small nations of Europe... you have done intolerable wrong to the Hollanders and the Flemish, who look with horror at you across the North Sea.

Blind to the lessons of all experience you make a New Ireland in Africa, and you have made it impossible for England ever to interfere, when it sees a nation being murdered by a strong neighbour... even the stones would turn against you for such hypocrisy! You have prevented yourselves healing the wounds of the war... for who can heal an amputated limb? The stump will ache with every change of the political weather... the time of your danger will be the time of the Lord. The race-feud which Sir Alfred Milner has kindled in South-Africa will threaten your Empire... the men and women of Dutch descent in South Africa, growing up in rooted animosity and endless sorrow, will be braced up to the deed of their own deliverance by memories of your endless cruelties... it will create a pride to feel the indignity of bondage... without selfgovernment, dragooned by your soldiers, sullenly submitting for a time to a destiny which they loathe, they will be as lead to your feet, a burden and a disgrace... they will remain morally ungovernable by the intolerable recollection of hopeless wrong... death, sin, cruelty will stalk amongst you and will make two races glare into each other's eyes... you never will be able to unite these men with yourselves in a common feeling in a common cause... they will not tremble before their oppressors, who, scourged by the moral indignation of public opinion and history, inevitably will get more and more cruel... the heroes and the sons of the heroes will accomplish

at last their own redemption, "going forth as it were with nothing but a stone and a sling and what oppression could not take away!" And if you desire to know by what authority they will act, I answer with Henry Grattan, that their right is the right every man has to defend his property against a robber, his life against a murderer, his country against an invader, whether coming with civil or military force — a foreign army or a foreign legislature.

* * *

If it be the worst of crimes to injure a human conscience, who can hold guiltless the statesmen, who now sin against Milton's England by brutalising a free people and leading weak consciences to call right what is wrong?

When the other day I was in England I found a city full of men with their faces turned backwards to a past of unrighteousness and violence instead of forward to the future the Peace Conference promised.

This war has demoralised the majority of your nation, forcing ten thousands of them to a fatal compromise with their hereditary principles of right, fair play and justice.

But all these Boers and British soldiers, maimed and killed quite needlessly, will force themselves into your conscience and sit at Christmas by your hearth stones.

You are praised by the Sultan but condemned by religion and poetry! Poetry is at the side of the heroes of the republics! What man, touched by God's sacred fire, can be exulting and triumphant over your conduct in the war? . . . who can celebrate the chivalrous act of a glacier crushing a hamlet built round a church on the sunny slope of an Alp?

The "absent minded Beggar" is the right sort of hymn for your predatory war, but the poets of your New Ireland will deepen the national consciousness and intensify the popular emotion, they will set the chords vibrating to wrathful resolve in South-Africa from sea to sea.

Singing poets and sobbing methers will dare your mallet of brute force on the desolate veld amidst the burned homesteads.

* * *

Why do you not stop the war which disgraces you?
Will there be no striking of a truce of God?

Is England so absorbed and angry with the performing of the meanest task a great people ever undertook, that it does not unite in condemning with one voice the present conduct of the war?

Can you not come back to the honest every-day logic of John Bright?.... to the goodhumoured sagacity of the John Bull, we liked and respected in former years, by calling upon the Government to bring it to and end first by negotiations with the military leaders, and then by the promise of full powers of self-government accompanied by a complete amnesty, and by the restoration of those bonds of family life in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State which have been wickedly and lawlessly broken?

Oh! what is wanted in England is a prophet as the prophets of old, who with exalted conceptions of God and the national vocation, corrects the aspirations of the community and holds a lofty ideal up to the people.

He will appeal to that high type of Englishmen, I revere, to earnest men and women, who obey the dictates of conscience, because right is right, and who, examining the worth of the opinions they currently receive from their newspaper, will appeal from the newspapers to the conscience and ask revision of the verdict by which a free nation is condemned to death.

For that nation is not yet dead. We do not give up the country of the Hollanders in Africa. We see her in a swoon, but with Ireland's noble orator I say: "she is not dead... though in her tomb she lies helpless and motionless, still there is on her lips a spirit of life, and on her cheek a glow of beauty..."

"Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there."

May it please Almighty God to interpose His mercy between the stroke of death and the liberty of a Cristian nation!

England's awakening will be the history of a conscience.

AMSTERDAM,
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CHARLES BOISSEVAIN.

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