

THE BOERS IN EUROPE

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A Sidelight on History

BY

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CHAPTER I.

THE WAR OF THE PEN.

DURING the war the Boers in Europe were often spoken about as if they were a strolling company of exiles, masquerading as the members of a Government, who wandered about the Netherlands, looking in now and then at Hilversum or Utrecht to see Mr Kruger and plot some new move against England. But though Mr Kruger lived in Holland, the Boers in Europe had their headquarters at Brussels, where was the Transvaal Legation, with a huge brass plate upon the door bearing the words "Chancellerie de la République Sud-africaine"—a large place, thoroughly organized with secretaries, clerks, messengers, and all the

apparatus for carrying on their business, with its numerous ramifications throughout Europe. As everyone knows, Dr Leyds, who was called the Envoy, or Transvaal Minister in Europe, is a Hollander; but his chief colleagues were the Boer delegates who were sent from South Africa shortly after the relief of Kimberley. Of these, Mr Daniel Wolmarans, a member of the First Volksraad, represented the Transvaal; Mr Cornelius Wessels, President of the Orange Volksraad, who commanded the Free State men at Magersfontein, represented the Orange State; and Mr Abraham Fischer, member of the Free State Volksraad and Executive Council, was supposed to act on behalf of both Republics. Mr De Bruyn was secretary to the delegates. Mr Groebler, whose name often appeared, had been "Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs" in the old Transvaal Government, but had no longer any official status. He came to Europe about the same time as Mr Kruger, whose kinsman he was. There were also a number of other persons connected with the Boer propaganda, who acted in various capacities.

The delegates, when they left Africa, bore letters of credence to all the European Governments; but they had not been recognized by any except the Government of Holland. But though the Legation at Brussels had thus no diplomatic status in Europe, it was the centre of very great activity. Councils were held at frequent intervals, in Brussels generally, but sometimes in Holland. Lecturers were sent in all directions; and in almost every country there were associations which, under their various names of leagues, committees, provincial councils, and so forth, were organized for the purpose of helping the Boer-Hollander cause. The members of these associations regarded Mr Kruger and his council as responsible authorities, acting on behalf of the Transvaal and Orange Free State; and they always said, down to the last moment before the surrender, that neither Mr Steyn nor Mr Schalk-Burger, who had been appointed Vice-President when Mr Kruger left Africa, nor any of the commandants, would end the war without consulting the Boer representatives in Europe.

As to the object of sending the delegates to Europe, General De Wet, in his *Three Years' War*, says: "Was it that our Governments relied on foreign intervention? Emphatically no! They never thought of such a thing. Neither in his harangue to the burghers at Poplar Grove, nor in any of his subsequent speeches, did President Steyn give any hint of such an intention. The deputation was sent in order that the whole world might know the state of affairs in South Africa. It fulfilled its purpose, and was justified by its results. It helped to win us the sympathies of the nations." But though the idea of obtaining foreign intervention may not have been spoken about in public, the tactics which they adopted, the line taken by the press which supported them, and even the speeches made by the Boer Generals themselves, both at Vereeniging and afterwards when they came to Europe, show that the delegates were working for something far more practical than mere sympathy.

Their official organ in the Belgian Press was the *Petit Bleu* of Brussels. It was often said

that this paper was in the pay of Dr Leyds; but of that there is no evidence, nor is there any reason to suppose it except the fact that it warmly supported the Boers and attacked the British bitterly. Moreover, it must in common fairness be admitted that it never went to such extremes of coarseness as some of the other Boer-Hollander papers did, particularly in Germany. It contained extremely clever, though one-sided, criticisms of the military operations; and its articles were often remarkably well written. It was the paper to which the English supporters of the Boer side used to write. That it was inspired by the Boer-Hollander coterie, as were also the *Patrie* and the *Presse* in France, the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* in Holland, and a number of other papers in Europe, was evident during the whole course of the war. The *Paris Nouvelles* news agency was another channel through which the Boers in Europe communicated their views to the peoples of the Continent; and in London there was an agency, about which some mystery was made, known as the *Kabel-Correspondenz*, which

supplied the German market with many of the extraordinary stories which were so greedily swallowed by those rabid Pan-Germans, who were foremost in the evil work which has done so much to breed bad blood between the two nations. It would be difficult to trace any connection between the *Kabel-Correspondenz* and either the Legation at Brussels or the Transvaal Consulate at London, over which Mr Montague White presided; but as the British people, both in Britain and beyond the seas, well know, whilst their soldiers were contending with the Boers in South Africa, a war of the pen, in the shape of a campaign of wholesale calumny, was waged in Europe against the British army, against the Ministers, and, excepting those who took the side of the Boers, against all, in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, and in Africa itself, who bore the name of Briton.

In July 1899, two months before the war began, Mr J. Van der Merve, who was then in England on a special mission, wrote to Mr Kruger assuring him that he could rely on the support of some men of influence in

England, but at the same time warning him against the dangers of Dr Leyds' policy. "I draw your attention," he said, "to the Embassy at Brussels. In England our cause is in no way furthered by the Embassy. I ground this assertion on facts laid before me by English M.P.'s who have taken up a brief in our defence. Our Embassy is distrusted by them. Dr Leyds' diplomacy is condemned. His game is to play off our young State against England with the Great Powers of the Continent. This is a fatal mistake." He pressed this view very strongly, saying, "It is infinitely to our advantage to be on friendly terms with Britain." But it was all in vain. The Kruger-Leyds' policy was pursued to the bitter end. Mr Kruger rushed headlong to his ruin; and when he came to Europe and settled in Holland, the Legation at Brussels, presided over by Dr Leyds, still continued to be the headquarters of the anti-British agitation.

When the situation of the Boer forces in the field became desperate, the chief point of resistance to peace was in Europe. In May 1901 the burghers were losing heart, and

thought it was time to listen to the voice of reason. They were allowed to communicate with Mr Kruger and the delegates; and the answer they received was that they should fight on, because the Boers in Europe had "great hopes of a satisfactory end of the long struggle." On this Mr Steyn and Mr Schalk-Burger gave orders that the war was to continue; and it might almost be said that the responsibility for every drop of blood shed in South Africa since that day is on the heads of Mr Kruger and his colleagues in Belgium and Holland. At Vereeniging, during the peace negotiations, Commandant Smuts said that his expedition into Cape Colony had been "the result of the advice which the deputation had given; namely, to continue the war." General Delarey said: "Some of the delegates¹ set their hopes on the European deputation; but what did that deputation say? It said that all depended on their continuing to fight. They continued to fight. What more, then, was there left for them to do?"² Even then, at the supreme moment, the same

¹ At Vereeniging.

² De Wet, App. C. p. 480.

baleful advice went from Europe to the worn-out men in Africa. A letter was read from the delegates telling them to struggle on, for their cause was never brighter in Europe than at the date the letter was written; but Commandant Smuts put it thus: "So far as we are concerned, the situation is that we obtain a great deal of sympathy, for which we are naturally most grateful. More than this we do not obtain, nor shall obtain for many a long year. . . . We have no hope of success. . . . If we refuse the proposal which the British Government now makes to us, I am afraid that we shall considerably weaken our position in the eyes of the world, and thus lose much of the sympathy which to-day it evinces in our favour."

This urging of the unfortunate burghers to fight on, this reckless disregard of all the misery which they must endure, was the outcome of that overweening confidence in the final overthrow of Great Britain which was so remarkable a feature of the war of the pen which was raging in Europe. In the autumn of 1901, Sir Henry Campbell-

Bannerman said something about making provision for the return of prisoners after the war, to which the Amsterdam *Handelsblad* at once replied that long before these men returned the Boer flag would be waving from the Limpopo to the sea, from Rhodes-drift to Cape Town. "How often must we repeat," said the *Petit Bleu*, "that the Boers will accept nothing, save at the muzzles of their rifles; and that, far from asking anything from England, they will end by imposing their terms on her?" So confident were the Boers in the winter of 1901-1902 that it was plain they were still fighting, as at first, for the whole of South Africa, Natal and Cape Colony, as well as the Transvaal and Orange State. "The Boers are resolved to carry on the war till they chase England even from her own colonies in South Africa," said Dr Leyds' paper. And at a later date, about the time of the Dutch Note, when the end was approaching, it was just the same—the same boastful words, the same arrogance, the same remorseless cry for more bloodshed; until on the 31st of January 1902 this journal

declared that "The English Government, driven, in spite of itself, by King Edward to make peace, evidently seeks some means of negotiating at the price of as little humiliation as possible."

There were three causes which chiefly fostered this boundless confidence of victory. In the first place, there was that complete conviction of their own strength, as a military power, which had originally induced the Boer Government to let slip the dogs of war. "I do not think," Mr Schalk-Burger told the Boers assembled at Vereeniging, "we can appropriately call this a 'war of faith.' Undoubtedly we began this war strong in the faith of God, but there were also two or three other things to rely upon. We had considerable confidence in our own weapons; we underestimated the enemy; the fighting spirit had seized upon our people; and the thought of victory had banished that of the possibility of defeat." A great deal was said in public, in newspapers and in speeches, about "two small Republics" and a "race of innocent farmers"; but that was only at first, when it was

thought that sympathy might lead to active support. Soon truculence became the note of the Boer-Hollander papers; and in private the Boers were always spoken of as the stronger side. An immense deal of very earnest but quite misplaced sentiment seems to have been displayed on this subject in Great Britain. On the Continent it was everywhere believed that the British would not only be defeated, but defeated ignominiously, and that the Boers would become the overlords of all South Africa. The Governments, no doubt, and a majority of the upper class of society, thought otherwise; but the ordinary citizen was convinced, from October 1899 till May 1902, that our retreat from South Africa was only a question of time. All through those long months, though the gradual wasting away of the Boer army, by death or capture, was announced weekly in Lord Kitchener's despatches, nobody believed them. Every Boer success was magnified into a crushing blow to the British; and every British success was explained away or, not infrequently, denied altogether. There were

many people in the Netherlands, in Germany, and perhaps in France, who knew South Africa, and the frightful difficulties against which our army had to contend, the nature of the climate, the character of the country, and the skill and military equipment of the Boers. British subjects who spent, perhaps, a month or two abroad in each year of the war, might easily be led to imagine that in the eyes of foreigners the Boer Republics were two weak States which were being overrun and oppressed by the British army; but anyone who mixed with various classes for a long time soon found out that it was thought quite impossible for England to win, if he heard the discussions on the immense superiority of Boer weapons and Boer tactics which took place in private houses, on the pavements outside the Belgian cafés, and in the beer-gardens of Germany. And every now and then, of an evening, the streets rang with cries from the newsvendors of "Encore victoire des Boers," on which everyone paid his five centimes for the news, and was more confident than ever in his opinion. If there was an

English success you seldom heard of it till next morning, and then perhaps only found it by chance in some remote corner of a newspaper. And, strange to say, in spite of all the losses which the burghers were suffering, the Boers in Europe maintained their unshaken confidence to the very end. When Mr Theophilus Schreiner said to Mr Reitz, in 1882, "You don't suppose that the British flag is going to disappear from South Africa without a tremendous struggle?" Mr Reitz answered calmly, "Well, I suppose not. But, even so, what of that?" They had looked forward to the possibility of war against England for twenty years; they had never doubted the result; and now, after all those years of waiting, they could not believe it possible that the destruction of British power in South Africa would not be brought about.

The second of the causes which contributed to prolong the war was the hope of foreign intervention. All the Great Powers of Europe were approached, directly or indirectly; but it was to Germany that the Boer party in Europe seemed always to look for an ally.

Mr Kruger's visit to Berlin in 1884; his reception by the Kaiser Wilhelm I.; the noticeable circumstance that just about the time when the Transvaal tried to extend its boundaries over Bechuanaland and the Kalakari desert, Germany made a forward move which suggested a wish to frustrate the further growth of the British Empire in South Africa; the decoration of Mr Kruger by the present Kaiser with the Order of the Red Eagle; the terms of the telegram sent from Berlin to Pretoria in January 1896,—all these were things which helped to encourage the belief that, sooner or later, the German Government would intervene. "As a child grows up," Mr Kruger once told a company of Germans at Pretoria, "it requires bigger clothes, the old ones will burst; and that is our position to-day—we are growing up, and although we are young, we feel that if one nation tries to kick us, the other will try to stop it." And then he added: "I feel sure that when the time comes for the Republic to wear still larger clothes, you will have done much to bring it about." This was a pretty broad hint that he counted on help

from Germany in the event of a contest with Great Britain; and as such it was taken by Lord Kimberley at the time.

Mr Kruger, however, had not been long in Europe, after his flight from the scenes of war, in which he was now too old to take a part, before it was seen that none of the Great Powers would interfere in his quarrel with Great Britain. His reception on landing in France had, apparently, led him to think otherwise for a time; but the anti-British movement in France is purely Nationalist in its origin, receives no countenance from the Government, and might soon disappear altogether if people outside Government circles, on both sides of the Channel, would respect each other's prejudices and national customs a little more than they sometimes do. He was offered a house in the suburbs of Brussels by a Dutch sympathiser; but the Ministers of King Leopold informed the Transvaal Legation that his presence in Belgium was not desired. He started for Berlin, but was met at Cologne by a telegram from the Kaiser, refusing to see him. It was in Holland alone that he was

made welcome. Nevertheless it was long before the Boer-Hollander party abandoned the idea of intervention in some form or other; and it would be easy to show, from the columns of the daily papers only, that it was not until the beginning of 1902 that the last gleams of hope flickered out. The men in the field had given up such hopes entirely. During the conferences at Vereeniging the subject was frequently mentioned, and in a way which shows that, at one time, they had expected assistance from without; but one speaker after another admitted that it was now useless to prolong the war in reliance on European intervention. General Botha said none of the Powers would do anything, and that "England will not tolerate the intervention of any foreign Power whatsoever"; while General Delarey said he had never thought it possible. "Even before the war broke out I said that nothing would come of it."¹

The third of the causes which chiefly induced

¹ It will be remembered that General Botha and General Delarey were opposed to the Kruger policy before the war.

the Boers in Europe to persist in their policy of continued resistance was the encouragement they received from their supporters in England.

It has often been said that the burghers were led to prolong the war by the doings of those in England who took their side; and of this there seems to be some evidence. For example, General De Wet's speech at Vereeniging is worth noticing. He alluded to the sympathy felt for the Boers, and said: "Even in England this sympathy is to be found, as is shown by the largely-attended 'Pro-Boer' meetings which have been held in that country." This shows that the existence of a Boer party in England was well known, though they probably had no idea how weak it really was; and then at the end of his speech he said: "Taking all these facts into consideration, and remembering that the sympathy for us which is to be found in England itself may be regarded as being, for all practical purposes, a sort of indirect intervention, I maintain that this terrible struggle must be continued." It would have been, indeed, very strange if the

burghers had not been led to prolong the war by such a meeting as that held in the Queen's Hall in July 1901, when three cheers were called for in honour of De Wet, and the names of the British Ministers were hissed; when a soiled and torn Union Jack was held up on the platform to be laughed at by the audience, and a resolution was passed in favour of complete independence for the Boers.

It was proved at the trial of Mr Broeksma that the prisoner had written to Dr Krause suggesting that "quite respectable papers like the *Review of Reviews*" should be smuggled into South Africa; and any burgher into whose hands a copy of that journal might have fallen, would read this about the Queen's Hall meeting: "Every suggestion that the Boers might even now be victorious was enthusiastically cheered, and the Dutch declarations of loyalty from the platform evoked very ominous responses from the audience. Never before did the opponents of the war let themselves go so completely. Never before did they shrink so little from identifying themselves with the enemies of their country. It was an

indication of the turning of the tide. Soon the opponents of the war will not have to excite popular indignation against its authors. They will have difficulty in restraining within just limits the passionate wrath of a populace tardily awakened to the way in which it has been deceived, and its interests have been betrayed by Ministers of the Crown." This is manifestly a direct encouragement to continue the war; British subjects identifying themselves with the enemies of their country; every suggestion that the Boers would win cheered; the tide turning; and the rest of it. But whether, in point of fact, the burghers in the field were or were not induced to fight by these meetings, it is certain that the Boers in Europe were encouraged by what took place in England.

One instance of this was not a 'Pro-Boer' meeting, but a meeting of the Liberal Federation at Derby, in December 1901, at which the supporters of the Boer cause evidently mustered very strong. The way in which the Boer Press on the Continent spoke of the Liberal leaders depended on circumstances.

We used to read about the "timidly Pro-Boer policy" of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, about "that political chameleon Lord Rosebery," and that "immoral politician Monsieur Asquith." The Opposition was generally described as the most 'useless' England had ever seen. The Boers, we were told one day, had more to hope "from the ferocious Joe Chamberlain himself than from these sham Pro-Boer Liberals. He, at least, begins to perceive that England is defeated in South Africa, and his last speech¹ proves that he is dying to see the Boers making overtures for an honourable peace—that is to say, one which may save England from a profound humiliation. It is he who will, some day or other, give the word to retreat, and to restore independence to the Boers, which the poltroons of the English left dare only to murmur." But there was always a lurking belief that the country was wearied, and would give in if the war was continued long enough; and after the Derby meeting, at which it was proposed to

¹ Debate on the Address, Jan. 20, 1902. Hansard, 4 ser. vol. ci. pp. 360-383.

supersede Lord Milner¹ and send out a Special Commissioner to arrange an armistice, the Boers in Europe were more resolute than ever to make no move for peace. "The Federation has shown," said the chief Boer paper, "that the hundred thousand electors whom it represents have had enough of war, and demand immediate negotiations for peace." But negotiations, it was explained, are of no use, "except for the purpose of reconciling the English public to the abandonment of its haughty purpose of demanding the unconditional surrender of the Boers, and of familiarizing it gradually with the idea of making concessions, each day a little more important, and leading, step by step, with the help of the bullets, to the final surrender."

This meeting at Derby did great harm to the cause of peace on the Continent. "The opinions of Lord Rosebery and Mr Asquith have been drowned in the Pro-Boer wave,"

¹ Mr Labouchere, who presided at the Queen's Hall meeting, said the policy of the Liberal Party was "that some man of good counsel should be sent out to South Africa, instead of that wretched penny-a-liner Lord Milner."

was what one foreign journalist said next day ; and an incident was noted with significant satisfaction. A delegate from Sheffield reminded the Federation that they had previously resolved that the Government had no option but to prosecute the war vigorously ; and this was received with cries of " We have done that long enough," " We are sick of it," and such interruption that the speaker could hardly obtain a hearing. The lesson drawn from these proceedings was that if the burghers would only continue to fight on, the British would retire from South Africa.¹ To show how closely the attitude of the English public was watched, it may be noticed that, about the same time as the Derby meeting, General Botha sent a message to all the Commandants telling them to continue fighting, because the English people were so tired of the war that

¹ On the day after the meeting at Derby there was a letter in one of the papers from Dr John Clifford, in which he said : " Mr Chamberlain and Mr Milner ought to be impeached and dismissed. Till that is done nothing can be done to stop our advance along the broad road which leads to destruction. If Englishmen will not rise and end this war it will end us." That was the kind of thing which kept the war party in Europe in good heart.

the Parliament, which was about to meet in January, would not vote money for carrying it on. Moreover, at Vereeniging, on the 15th of May, a letter was read to the burghers which had been smuggled through the English lines. It was written five months previously, which would be exactly at the date of the Federation meeting, and it "contained little more than an assurance that our cause occupied a better position in Europe than it had ever done before."¹ It may be merely a coincidence; but no public event had taken place in Europe in December 1901 which could be said to advance the Boer cause except that Derby meeting, which led to the belief that the country was quite worn out by the war, and at which the policy of bringing back Lord Milner and having an armistice was discussed, apparently in quite a serious way. It is not too much to say that if that policy had been put in practice, the war might have been going on still.

Every word spoken about peace in England was construed as a sign of weakness. "Full of

¹ De Wet, App. A. p. 405.

confidence in the eventual triumph of their cause," said the Leyds paper, "in spite of all British bluff, they (the Boers in Europe) will not ask anything which can be taken as a sign of yielding. War of extermination—be it so." Even in March, when the men in the field were reduced to the last extremity, Dr Leyds' paper used words which show how foolish it was for those who wanted to stop the war to say so much about it. "There are Englishmen who admit as a possible solution the restoration to the Boers of their independence as it was before the war. A year ago, they would not have dared to think of such a thing. In a few months many of those who now object will come to think with them, while they themselves will perceive that the immediate restoration of Boer independence is the only possible solution; and in a few months more a majority of the English people will be of the same opinion. The bullets of the Boers will have converted them." It was obviously a most dangerous thing in the interests of peace to speak about having an armistice in the presence of those thoroughgoing fire-eaters.

When, towards the end of March, it became known in Europe that Mr Schalk-Burger, Mr Reitz, and General Lucas Meyer, had entered Pretoria under a flag of truce, and that negotiations were going on, the moderate Pro-Boers at once admitted that there could be only one end of the war. "To hope," said the *Indépendance Belge*, "that England will consent to recognize the absolute independence of the two Republics would be a strange delusion." But the official organ of the Kruger-Leyds party was as intractable as ever. England, it said, had invited the Boers to negotiate, that was all; the Boers would never give in. "I am able to assure you that this is the case," was the message sent from London; "and that the leading Boers have done nothing but respond to new advances from their enemy." Mr Wolmarans and Mr Wessels came back from a journey, in the interests of the Boer propaganda, to America a few days after the news of the negotiations reached Europe; and they were as confident as ever. "We are resolved," they said, "to fight to a finish, and impose peace on England by a resistance more and

more obstinate. Our successes will be repeated : you may trust to that." Veldt-Cornet Louw, an escaped prisoner, who had been some time in Holland, said the Boers would not be satisfied with suzerainty, or even a large autonomy, or the Canadian system of government. "The policy of the Transvaal," he said, "has for a long time aimed at access to the sea, notably the Bay of Kosi, between Durban and Delagoa. At present, England, desirous to make peace at any price, provided appearances can be saved, would probably be disposed to abandon the Bay of Kosi, or that of St Lucia, in exchange for the Rand." Such were the wild ideas that floated about in the Netherlands; and, if the British people had perfect confidence about what the end of the negotiations would be, the Boer-Hollander party were equally confident that the war would continue till the British were driven out of South Africa.

Nothing will better explain the frame of mind of the Boers in Europe during the negotiations than a few quotations; and they are not without lessons for the present and for the future.

On the 18th of April the *Petit Bleu* published a letter from London, which said:—
“The friends of the Boers may observe with a smile the alternations of hope and fear which permeate English opinion as to the *pour parlers* for peace. Tricked for two years by the most dishonest Ministry which has governed this country for a century and a half, the English are destined to be tricked again before they perceive this truth—that the Boer heroes are in a position to prolong the war until it has exhausted the resources of Britain.” A couple of days later the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* declared that it was known at The Hague that the negotiations were at an end; and the *Paris Nouvelles* said that a Boer messenger had reached Utrecht with news that Lord Kitchener had given up all hope of success; that the British soldiers knew this, and were completely disheartened; that the Boers had abundance of provisions, ammunition, and horses; that they only numbered fifteen thousand, but did not increase their numbers, because if they did so, they would have to alter their system of tactics. The *Petit*

Bleu said that the *Daily News* of London was mistaken in thinking that the war would last, under one form or another, for ever. "No! no! It will cease with the total expulsion of the English from South Africa—a task, without doubt, which will take some time, but will not last for ever."

On the 24th of April Dr Leyds' paper printed a letter from London in these terms:—"In plain truth, I tell you, the world, which the Boers are astonishing by the epic duration of their resistance and the quantity of blood and tears which have been shed, might be even more astonished by the disasters which this resistance has heaped on England, and by the extraordinary economic revolution which she is undergoing. And he must be blind indeed who does not expect the still longer resistance of the Boers to bring about the final overthrow of Great Britain. It is *inevitable*, if the heroic burghers are able to hold on for a year or eighteen months. For the country already trembles, though it does not know all, at the abyss into which it is falling; and it will pause at the Budget of

next year, if, as there is every reason to suppose, the war is then still going on. In other words, if the people of the Transvaal and Orange State, deceived by the English or quite worn out, should lay down their arms at the date dreamed of by the optimistic subjects of Edward VII., it would be at the very moment when their final victory was visible in the relatively near future."

A month later, on the 24th of May, the *Petit Bleu* said:—"We yesterday received from a British subject, a Pro-Boer from the Cape, but now in London, a letter saying, 'I believe that peace is at hand; but it is of no importance, for the struggle will begin again, fiercer than ever, a little later, the two races being quite irreconcilable.' We have also had a visit in Brussels from a late official of the Boer Government, who came to Europe from the Transvaal four months ago. He said, 'I do not believe in the peace.' The war will last for years more, that is, until the English have yielded. In any case, even if the war should be interrupted presently, there would be

nothing but a truce more or less long. It is a fight to the death between the English and the Boers in Africa. It will last, with intervals, till the disappearance of one people or the other—in reality of the English people, South Africa, big towns and seaports excepted, being Hollander-Boer to the core.” Language of this sort ought to open the eyes of those who speak of Great Britain oppressing the Boer States.

Three days later, on the 27th of May, we heard that “England continues to await the declaration of peace with a confidence which we must hope for her, but not for the Boers, has more justification than that which the dupes of Madame Humbert cherished until the opening of the famous strong-box.” As the feeling in England became more hopeful every day, it was hinted that the Boers in Europe intended to protest against a peace made without their concurrence; and at last on Sunday the 1st of June, before it was known what the terms of peace were, though it was known they had been signed, the situation was described in Dr Leyds’ paper as follows :—

“If the British Ministry guarantees to the Boers representative government after a tolerably short delay, that is, at such an early date that the Boers will have a majority in the two Republics changed into English colonies, they will pass laws for the purpose of getting rid of the English. If, on the other hand, the personal rule of Lord Milner should continue for some time, it will so speedily become intolerable to the Boers that, helped by the Hollanders of the Cape, they will rise and drive out the English by a new *coup de main à la Majuba Hill*, as in 1881. If the military occupation lasts for some time, it will become so unbearable to the Boers that there will be conflicts every day. If it is shortened, the weapons of rebellion, for the recovery of their country by the Boers, will be dug up as soon as the redcoats have departed. They will talk about the reconciliation of races, about coming together by kindness, etc. A silly dream! . . . If really the Boers have been compelled to bend before an inexorable necessity, the spirit of vengeance in their hearts will await, every hour by day and

night, the moment to burst forth. England, prisoner in the Transvaal, the Orange State, and even in the Cape, will have to sacrifice throughout the whole world all her interests, so as to avoid a conflict with third parties, since any such conflict would be the signal in Africa for revolt, helped by the enemies of Great Britain over the rest of the world. The conquest she has made will be a terrible weight, which her foot will drag along until she has to yield."

When the terms of peace were made known, men of moderate Pro-Boer opinions said they thought them very liberal, and that everything possible should now be done to heal the wounds of the war; and the *Indépendance Belge* insisted that the war of words against England must now cease. The London correspondent of Dr Leyds' paper telegraphed the terms to Mr Kruger at Utrecht; and a message came to Brussels saying that the old man refused to say anything until he had seen Dr Leyds and the delegates. Dr Leyds and Mr Fischer reached Brussels from Paris on the afternoon of Monday the 2nd of June. The

Legation staff, and almost the whole Boer colony in Brussels, met them at the Midi station. They seem all to have been surprised at the news of peace having been made. "There is not," said their official paper, "one single Boer amongst us who has not expressed his ardent and invincible desire of future revenge, and there is not one of those who have signed the Treaty of Peace but has done so with the *arrière pensée* of shaking it off as soon as possible, and the resolution of restoring some day the independent Republics of the Transvaal and Orange State in a South African Confederation dominated by the Hollander-Boer element." The same feeling ran through many of the comments made in the Pro-Boer Press of Europe; as in Germany, where the *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten* said that the Boers were not yet conquered, that England would fail to radically reform her army, and "the Boers will prepare for a fresh outburst, and it is very possible that this long war has only been the first step towards the complete effacement of England in South Africa." In the meantime the flags of the Transvaal and

Orange State continued to fly at the Villa Oranjestad at Utrecht, which was said to mean that Mr Kruger and the other Boers in Europe refused to recognize the validity of the terms of peace.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST DAYS OF THE PEACE.

ON the evening of Friday the 30th of May, a few hours before the terms of surrender were signed, Lord Rosebery made a speech at Leeds, in which he predicted the announcement of peace within a very short time. For the future, he said, "our endeavour must be to convert those who have been brave foes into brave friends and fellow-citizens and subjects with us in a new and brighter South Africa." These words expressed the general sentiment of the British people, though it was difficult to say much about sympathy with the burghers; for it seemed as if our own soldiers, on whom such calumnies had been heaped, were more in need of consideration than their adversaries, however brave

and unfortunate these might be. But when the negotiations in South Africa closed, and the terms of peace became known, there was throughout the British Empire both an intense feeling of relief that the long struggle was over, and a very genuine desire to be not only just, but also generous, to the Boers.

During the first weeks of June strange stories came from South Africa. In the beginning, when the war broke out, the idea of there being any difficulty about defeating the Boers was laughed at; and when the transports were starting the only fear was that the fighting would be over before they arrived. That delusion was speedily destroyed; but now, the fighting being done, after a contest which cost an immense sum of money and many lives, people seemed to think that, though the war had turned out, after all, to be a really serious piece of work, there would be no difficulty about the peace, and that the burghers were, in point of fact, delighted to lay down their arms. The men of the Republics, it appeared, after fighting desperately for nearly three years to preserve their inde-

pendence, were now giving ringing cheers for the King. Boer commandos, their country a waste, their homes, many of them, mere heaps of blackened ruin, were dancing and singing "Rule Britannia" round the camp fires.

All this seemed very strange; but an eyewitness, who saw how the news that all had been lost was received at one part of the vast field of battle, tells a different story. Robert, Marquis de Kersauson, a nephew of that Colonel de Villebois-Mareuil who died at Boshof, is a young French officer who served under Commandants Smuts and Maritz in the west of Cape Colony. In April they had taken Concordia, an important village in Namaqualand, the British garrison having surrendered without firing a shot,¹ and the whole district in which they were operating was practically in their hands when, to their surprise, Commandant Smuts was summoned to attend a meeting at Vereeniging on the 15th of May, "to discuss conditions of peace offered to the two Republics by his Britannic Majesty."

¹ At least the Marquis de Kersauson says so.

It was on the 25th of April that Commandant Smuts departed on his long ride; and no news of what was passing reached his men until the 5th of June, when Commandant Maritz received a despatch from the British headquarters informing him that hostilities had ceased, and that in a few days Commandant Smuts would return, and explain the conditions on which the war had ended and the 'general disarmament' which was to follow.

"At the first news of peace," the Marquis de Kersauson says, "all the region which we occupied in the West Cape was filled with transports of joy. The country people felt sure that the conditions would fulfil all the hopes of the burghers. Immediately the Transvaal flag was hung from the farm windows, and at evening prayer the national hymn was sung in tones of gladness." They asked each other what the expression 'general disarmament' might mean; but the popular view was that it meant disarmament of all, Briton and Boer alike. The Boers were to lay down their arms and go home to their

farms, and the English troops were to lay down theirs, and go back to England; for there was scarcely a doubt that if peace was made, the English would have to leave, and that the Transvaal and Orange States would remain not only independent, but the paramount powers in South Africa. At last, on the evening of the 14th of June, they learned the truth; and when Commandant Smuts spoke the fatal words, some of the burghers burst into sobs, whilst others lifted up their hands with curses to heaven. The sight, M. de Kersauson says, was sadder than anything he saw during the fighting; and whatever may have happened in some places to suggest the legend of Boer rejoicings over the result of the war, there can be no doubt that it plunged the vast majority of the burghers into profound sorrow.¹

¹ At Vereeniging Commandant Smuts spoke in favour of surrender. He said it was a dark period in their history. "To me it is all the darker because I was one of those who, as members of the Government of the Transvaal, provoked the war with England. A man, however, may not draw back from the consequences of his deeds." And again, alluding to Mr Kruger's advice

THE FIRST DAYS OF THE PEACE ^{SO}
^{PO}

Far away, in Europe, the exile on whom rested the heavy responsibility of having given the signal for the fighting which had ended so disastrously for his country, answered a message of condolence sent to him from Germany in these words: "My grief is beyond expression. I cannot say more"; and those who had been waging the war of the pen so industriously could not conceal their mortification. "Germany! Avenge the Transvaal," screamed a writer in the *Ostdeutsche Rundschau*.¹ "Redeem thy own future as thou hast failed to save the poor peasants of thy own blood. Cursed be every man who does not think of revenge. Cursed be every nation which does not take a solemn oath to revenge the shame of Pretoria!" In great Britain, except some of those who took the Boer side, none had ever doubted the result, but it was otherwise on the Continent. There

to go on fighting: "For twelve months we have been testing the value of the methods which he urged upon us. And as the result of it all we have become convinced that these methods are of no avail" (De Wet, App. C. p. 495).

¹ Pan-German, published in Austria.

people had gloried in every disaster to the British army, and had foretold its final and ignominious retreat, and with it the retreat of the British rule from Capetown, from Natal, and even from Rhodesia. Such a book as *L'Agonie d'Albion*, in which M. Eugene Demolder pictured the coming of a time when England, driven out of South Africa and herself invaded by the Boers, might seek in vain for help from the European Governments, did not profess to be more than a fanciful satire; but it embodied the day-dreams of those who firmly believed that the war would irretrievably ruin the British Empire. Month after month, week after week, day after day, they had not only attacked England with unexampled ferocity, but had declared that her presence in any part of South Africa was no longer to be endured, using language which in itself was sufficient to prove that the independence of the Transvaal and Orange State was incompatible with the security of our possessions in that part of the world.

Just as it had been the policy of the Pro-Boers in Europe to misrepresent the conduct

of England in making war, so was it now their policy to misrepresent her conduct in making peace ; and it was noised abroad that the Boers in Africa had been tricked into signing the terms of surrender. On the afternoon of Friday the 30th of May, the following message was sent from London to Brussels :—“ Who knows whether, after all, the English Ministers, those past masters in lying, are not in good faith now, when they assert that they are within a handsbreadth of obtaining the submission of the Boers ? They yield everything which their formidable enemy demands, except independence. If they were in the Boers' place, they would accept, without hesitation, peace on such conditions. The possibility of the Boers refusing in the end has not occurred to them. They have not thought that the Boers have reasoned thus : ‘ Let us agree to negotiate, so as to induce England to state her real maximum of concessions. We shall thus gain an armistice, rest, time to prepare a new effort against her. We shall also accustom England, little by little, to giving in, and familiarize her with the idea of the complete

retreat to which we shall drive her by a prolonged resistance.' England may well be encouraged to hope for peace by the success with which she has cut off all communications between the Boer leaders in Africa and their representatives in Europe—MM. Kruger, Leyds, Fischer, Wolmarans, and Wessels. She dreaded such communications above all things, knowing that the delegates of the Transvaal and Orange State in Europe could reveal to their brethren in Africa the terribly hampered state of the English Treasury, the weariness of the English people, and the advantages which the Boers would gain by continuing their resistance."¹

¹ During the negotiations a message from the delegates in Europe reached Africa, and was communicated to the Boer representatives at Vereeniging on the 17th of May (De Wet's *Three Years' War*, Appendix A. p. 432). On the 29th General De Wet spoke upon this subject. "What did that messenger say! Among other things he said that our cause was winning new adherents every day. It might be asked, however, why the deputation did not send a report of its own? I reply that it had its hand upon the pulse of the Governments, and that the information it was thus gaining was of such a character that it could not be entrusted to any messenger whatever. Perhaps the deputation was unable *in any way* to

This appeared in Dr Leyds' official paper of Saturday the 31st of May. That peace had been made was known in London and Brussels next day ; and it was understood that the conditions of the Boer surrender would be announced in Parliament on Monday the 2nd of June. "I am still convinced," the London correspondent of the Boer paper wrote on the Sunday evening, "that the Boers have neither signed a peace, nor will sign a peace, without securing their independence, and without previously consulting their representatives in Europe." Whatever the terms of peace might be, it was openly proclaimed by the Pro-Boers, they would lead to nothing but a short truce ; and when the terms were known, the following characteristic comment was made :—"One must rejoice that England shows herself as cruel in the hour of peace as during the war. The harsher the peace, the less durable will it be."

It being no longer possible to deny that the communicate what it knew to us—*it would never do to noise abroad the secrets of European policy.*" Is this not pathetic ! What trust in a broken reed ! Commandant Ben Viljoen is always said to have threatened to wring Dr Leyds' neck some day.

Boer leaders had agreed, after consulting representatives of the burghers, to abandon the hope of independence, a story was started in Holland, with singularly bad feeling, that Botha, Delarey, and De Wet had been bribed by the British Government; but this calumny was only whispered, and it was industriously spread abroad that the Commandants and their men were merely playing a comedy of submission. "In spite of all appearances," we were told on the 4th of June, "justice waits, and will prevail. The Boers wish to exhibit all the signs of submission, to appear as tame as sheep, while watching for the fated hour of vengeance."

On Saturday the 7th of June a service of thanksgiving was held in St Paul's, where, kneeling on the stones which cover the ashes of so many valiant dead, the people prayed that hereafter peace and mutual forgiveness might take the place of war and hatred. This solemn occasion was the signal for an outburst of wrathful mockery:—"It is done. The Deity officially associated with the campaign of extermination which enslaves, for a few

years more or less, the race of South African heroes. 'Thanks be rendered unto Thee, O Lord! We have been able to send only half a million of men against forty thousand Boers. We had only a hundred times more big guns than our enemies. We had only the monopoly of the cables, the means of deceiving our foes, and the active or tacit complicity of Europe and the United States. We were on the point of giving in, when Thou, Lord, didst lend us the help of Thy all-powerful arm, of Thy omniscient Spirit. Thanks be rendered unto Thee.' But in London they forget that this peace is only the *entr'acte* of a drama which has been played in South Africa for the last three years, and which is not yet finished. The true *Te Deum* will be sung in Pretoria, Bloemfontein, and Cape Town, on that day, inevitable, when the united Boers and Hollanders shall have chased the English, not only from the Transvaal and the Orange State, but from the whole of South Africa."

On the morning of the very day on which the ceremony in St Paul's took place the following was published in the official Boer

paper in Brussels:—"The oath of an English clergyman.—The Rev. M. Fillingham, that courageous clergyman of the Anglican Church, who made an ardent campaign in the United States on behalf of the Boers, has sent us an interesting letter, of which this is the principal passage: 'Yes, England believes herself covered with glory for having crushed, after nearly three years' fighting, two feeble little Republics. One might say, so pleased is London at the news of peace, that this was a city of fools and drunkards. Courtesans dance in the streets. Merchants, fathers of families, amuse themselves by destroying the hats of other people, to show their lofty patriotism. At Cambridge the young students carried off and demolished the shutters of shops, and burnt them to make bonfires on the occasion of the "glorious victory." All my friends in England and the United States *have sworn, even before peace was concluded, never to cease fighting for the independence of the Transvaal and Orange State, even if the Boers gave in for a time.* The task of England does not end to-day. It begins. In

the devastated territories a new generation is growing up which will regard as a sacred right this independence for which its forefathers have shed their blood. *We have not lost hope.* The future is with us, with all those who consecrate their lives to the triumph of justice. Some day the blunderers who now shout and sing of victory in the English towns will see that this peace, so noisily celebrated, was not the end of the war, but the beginning of still heavier misfortunes for our country. (Signed) R. C. Fillingham, Curé d'Hexton, Angleterre.'"

This was, unfortunately, the spirit in which the news of peace was received by not a few of those who were called 'Pro-Boers' in England. A message "To the men and women of the Transvaal and Orange River State" was drawn up, in which it was assumed that the war was a crime, the result of a conspiracy against the Republics, and in which the Boers were encouraged to anticipate the overthrow of the British supremacy in South Africa. "We believe," it said, "that history will repeat itself in the creation of

another United States—the United States of South Africa.”¹ However loyally the Boer leaders might intend to abide by the terms of peace, this message could not fail to keep alive the flames of disaffection, if it reached those to whom it was addressed. It is true that the authors explained that the separation from the British Empire was not to be achieved by force of arms, but apparently by political agitation. Nevertheless, written, as it was, when the sounds of battle had scarcely died away, and sent to brave men whose hearts were sore and their blood still hot from

¹ During the war I had several conversations with a member of the Boer Legation staff at Brussels, and noticed that he once or twice argued that what was going on in South Africa was analogous to what took place in America between 1775 and 1782. At last one day he lent me a book, in which I found the source of these ideas—*Peace or War in South Africa*, by Mr Methuen, where the author compared (at great length) the Boer War with the American War of Independence, and seemed to think that our army was engaged in a task beyond its powers. This book, though evidently not written with that object, was eminently fitted to encourage the Boer-Hollander party in their hope of wearing out the British army, by prolonging the war, and ultimately establishing the “United States of South Africa,” when the British had retired from the scene.

fighting, it was both an incentive to treasonable plots in South Africa, and a direct encouragement to those European enemies of England who were loudly proclaiming that the peace was only a truce.

On Saturday the 7th of June, the day of thanksgiving throughout the British Empire, the flags of the Transvaal and Orange Free State were hauled down at the Villa Oranjelust; and the Volkslied was no longer chimed from the church-towers in Holland. It seemed as if accomplished facts were recognized, and as if the war of the pen and the Pro-Boer agitation on the Continent were about to cease. But it soon came out that in Belgium, Holland, and Germany new societies were being formed, or the old societies re-organized, with the object of keeping alive the anti-British movement and hindering the growth of British influence in South Africa. It was said that Dr Leyds was the instigator of these schemes, and also that agents were to be secretly despatched to Africa for the purpose of interfering with the work of settling the country. How bitter

the feeling was in Holland on the subject of the peace became apparent when, through some mistake, it was stated in the English newspapers that Dr Kuyper had been invited to the Coronation as a recognition of what he had done in connection with the preliminaries which led to the termination of hostilities; the Dutch papers attacking the Prime Minister because the Note to the British Government, of January 1902, had led Commandant Botha and Mr Schalk-Burger to open negotiations with Lord Kitchener. Dr Kuyper had always found that the attitude of Mr Kruger and his party was the great difficulty which thwarted every movement for peace. Though, as a matter of fact, they had been already approached by Dr Kuyper, yet when the Note was made public they protested that they knew nothing about it. They sheltered themselves behind their letters of credence, which were dated in March 1900, and bound them to insist on the independence of the two Republics, refusing, on that ground, to entertain Dr Kuyper's proposal that they should make a move for peace. The Note, it will be

remembered, suggested that the Boer delegates should be allowed to go to Africa, and the British Government, while declining to acknowledge them officially, and stating that negotiations for peace must take place at the seat of war, intimated its willingness to consider an application for safe-conducts to Africa, if made by the delegates themselves. No such application was made; and the Boers in Europe maintained their irreconcilable attitude to the end. As soon as it became known that the Boer leaders in Africa, having seen the Note and Lord Lansdowne's answer, had opened negotiations with Lord Kitchener, and still more when the negotiations ended in the peace, the disappointment of the Boers and Pro-Boers in Holland knew no bounds. Hence their anger against Dr Kuyper, whom M. Boissevain, one of their chief journalists, called "a political flaneur, whose miserable diplomacy has played into the hands of the British."

Soon after the end of the war the question of returning to Africa was discussed; and their frame of mind as to this, and the position

they were likely to take up towards the new Government, was fully explained. The Boers in Europe, the Hague correspondent of their official paper in Belgium said, had formed no plans as to their eventual return to their homes. "I believe," he added, "that some of them would make no compromise in order to acquire the right of going back, but that others would sign all possible engagements of neutrality, of fidelity to England, considering that a promise extorted in such circumstances, under the threat of perpetual exile, is not more binding on those who make it than is an engagement wrung by a house-breaker from his victim, bound hand and foot, that he will not denounce him after he has got away with his booty."

This theory of the lawfulness of a mental reservation while professing allegiance to the British Government, was necessary in order to meet the difficulty created by Articles I. and II. of the terms of surrender, which require the recognition of King Edward as lawful sovereign; and that stumbling-block was easily surmounted. The Boers, it was ex-

plained, who made the declaration provided for in the Articles did so because they thought the King would not live very long, and that they were not committing themselves to his successor. They intended, it was explained, "to leave themselves as free as possible"; and it is much to be feared that, though the leaders may have set their hands to the compact without any mental reservation, the same cannot be said of all the burghers who have ostensibly accepted the position of British subjects. Long ago, in more troublous times than these, a Jesuit of the seminary of St Omer boasted that the Jacobites took the oath of allegiance "*comme une bagatelle*"; and, if those who profess to represent the Boers are to be believed, there is reason to fear that many of the pledges given by the burghers were not worth the paper on which they were written.

CHAPTER III.

CORONATION FESTIVITIES.

NOTHING better illustrates the character of the Pro-Boer agitation than what took place in connection with the Coronation. Abuse of the British Royal Family had been a favourite weapon on the Continent during the war; and that abuse was so persistent and so shamefully coarse as to make it clear that sheer blind hatred, and a wish to give offence, far more than any genuine desire to throw light on the rights and wrongs of the quarrel in South Africa, had been the chief reasons why the war of the pen was conducted with such zeal. Neither the age nor the noble character of Queen Victoria had protected her. During her lifetime and after she died, contempt, ridicule, and insult were heaped upon her by

the caricaturists. In one cartoon she was drawn suffering indignities from Mr Kruger which cannot be put in print, and in another as a drunken, helpless woman trying to tear the feathers from an ostrich ; and in a work produced, with the assistance of Dr Leyds, by Germans of considerable social and literary standing, the calumnies of the Dutch pastor Van Brockhuizen were endorsed, and the Queen of England and her family were represented bestowing the Victoria Cross on a young soldier because, "though he is only thirteen, he has already outraged eight Boer women."¹ After her death she was depicted crawling about the mouth of hell ; and the accession of King Edward VII. was the occasion for an outburst of further brutality. It was, therefore, natural that the Coronation should be made

¹ "Der Burenkrieg, mit Kurzen Biographien der hervorragendsten Heerführer. München, 1900." This brochure was edited by Dr Ludwig Thoma. Dr Leyds furnished information ; and they were helped by a number of Germans of very good position. It may fairly be called a work of art ; but it proves that the German Burenfreund is more an enemy of England than a friend to the Boers.

the excuse for a signal display of zeal for the Boer cause and of enmity to England.¹

In March, before the news of the impending negotiations had reached Europe, the Pro-Boer committees of Belgium were corresponding on the subject with those of Germany, France, America, Ireland, and Russia; and it was proposed that on the 26th of June, the day then fixed for the Coronation, there should be some great and imposing manifestations of homage to Mr Kruger and of admiration for the two South African Republics. The form which these manifestations should take was not then finally arranged; but it was suggested that there should be meetings and processions in all the capitals of Europe, that the flags of the Transvaal and Orange State should be displayed, and that England should be irritated by the arrival of a shower of telegrams from every quarter demanding independence for the Boers. A manifesto was

¹ In the winter of 1899 the Austrian Government, having obtained a power of attorney from the British Embassy at Vienna, took criminal proceedings against the publishers of some very gross attacks.

issued which said that the rejoicings and ostentatious parade with which England meant to flatter her own pride and the vanity of her sovereign ought to be silenced by the voice of all civilized peoples, who would take this opportunity of protesting against the barbarities committed in South Africa.

The unexpected news of peace was a blow to the promoters of this scheme. But the idea was not abandoned; and on Tuesday the 10th of June delegates from forty Belgian Pro-Boer committees met in Brussels to draw up a programme for that city. It was arranged that there should be no procession through the streets on the Coronation Day, but that on the evening of the 25th a public meeting would be held in the hall of the Brasserie Flamande, when resolutions of sympathy with the Boers were to be moved. It was explained, on this occasion, that nothing had been decided as to the future of the agitation on the Continent. "The Pro-Boer Committees," the chairman said, "have still a *raison d'être*; for the peace which was signed the other day does not settle the Transvaal question. Some

future Majuba may change the situation once more."

When it became known that the King's health was causing anxiety, the Pro-Boer papers were quietly hopeful; and a letter came from London in these terms:—"The Supreme Being, invoked by England as the effectual ally of the triumphant Kitchener, has decidedly the air of neglecting His Britannic *protégé* since the conclusion of peace at Pretoria. It is not only that the heavenly waters wet the festoons prepared for the grand parade of the Coronation, and interfere with all the arrangements. It is even more this devil of an illness of the King's threatening to spoil all or part of the programme; and really God, 'friend and ally,' should have spared the King of Great Britain and Ireland, Emperor of India, at such a time. In fact one cannot help thinking that the God who helped Kitchener and the murderers of women and children in the camps of concentration, finds that He has done enough for England in the meantime, and is inclined to change over to the other side."

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday the 24th of June that the news of the King's serious illness and of the postponement of the Coronation reached Brussels. The British Colony were making preparations for a fête in honour of the event, and all the arrangements for the Pro-Boer meeting, which had been widely advertised, were now completed. The English festivities were, of course, abandoned, and the *Etoile Belge* and *Indépendance Belge* declared their sorrow and their sympathy with the British people, the latter paper expressing the opinion that the preservation of the King's life would be the best guarantee for the continuance of peace throughout the world. But the journal which had been the chief supporter of the Boer cause during the war issued a special Coronation Supplement containing a short history of the war for children, printed in both French and Dutch, and addressed "To the Young People of Europe." It described the struggle as having been waged between forty thousand Boers, with one hundred guns, and four hundred thousand English soldiers, with a

thousand guns, aided by thousands upon thousands of armed blacks, and ended with this admonition:—"Never forget this history. Learn it by heart. When you grow up you will be able to do much to help the Boers to become again masters of their own country, free and happy. You will never, in all your lives, be able to do anything more useful or more noble than to aid the Boers, this people so grand and so cruelly treated."

This little history, written in simple language, and with the evident desire of inciting the rising generation to hate Great Britain, was illustrated by four rough woodcuts. In one, English soldiers were burning a Boer farmhouse. In another a stout gentleman, of the Pickwick type, in top-boots and a tall hat, was inciting a stark naked, coal black Kaffir to shoot an innocent-looking individual from behind a rock, and saying, "Voilà, mon frère blanc, le Boer, Tirez dessus, bon nègre." In the third the gentleman in top-boots was flogging a Boer, whose hands were tied. In the fourth a carpenter was breaking up the furniture of a schoolroom; and underneath

were the words, "With school benches the English make little coffins for children." The wisdom of giving their own children such a history lesson was a question for those who gave it. But even the young English living in their midst could not be left to enjoy a treat in peace; and the war of the pen must needs be carried into the nursery. And accordingly in this Coronation number of the great Pro-Boer journal there was published, with equal common sense and good taste, this address, printed in English:—"To the Little English Children in Brussels.—You are going to be given a treat to-morrow, June 26th, 1902, on the occasion of the Coronation of King Edward VII. May you enjoy yourselves heartily. You are spotless little boys and girls. But as you grow up you will learn that the Coronation of the King was also the crowning of a frightful and cruel war waged by England against the brave and free Boer people—a war during which the English army not only killed the Boer soldiers to conquer the survivors, but also caused Boer women, and little children such as you are, to

die by thousands in captivity. And if, when you are men and women, you remain as good and spotless as you now are, you will do everything in your power to help in wiping out that terrible crime, and to make the Boer people a free people again under their own flag. And you will thus also win back to your country hundreds of thousands of foreign friends, who will remain her enemies as long as the crime has not been repaired."

It is only fair to say that this was actually in the press at the moment when the news of the postponement came to Brussels. Otherwise it might have been delayed. But it is curious to find that the child's history of the war was not only translated into German and Italian, but was published in at least one English Pro-Boer paper, and that an Englishman, whose name was given as "Mr Thomas Wright of Bedford," wrote to the *Petit Bleu* of Brussels saying that he agreed with every word of it, and had bought a number of copies for distribution in the United Kingdom. He assured the Belgian Pro-Boers, at the same time, that he and his friends would spare no

pains to destroy the British dream of ruling South Africa.

Though the Coronation was put off, the Pro-Boer demonstration took place on the evening of Wednesday the 25th of June. The Belgian Government, however, had resolved that there should be no unseemly doings outside the Brasserie Flamande; and instructions were given that persons uttering cries of insult to England would be at once arrested, while the organizers were warned that they would be held personally responsible if any breach of the peace took place. The Comité Pro-Boer was indignant, and there was a good deal of grumbling; but violent though the speeches were, everything passed off quietly. The platform was decorated with the colours of the Transvaal and Orange State, and a strip of calico in a prominent position bore the words, "Een volk zal niet vergaan" ("A nation can never perish"). The attendance, however, was small, and everyone seemed in low spirits, as if ashamed. A little life was infused into the proceedings by M. René Henry, one of the staff of the *Journal de Bruxelles*, a

Government paper which had all along opposed the meeting as a senseless affront to a friendly nation, who asked if they were not there in order to abuse the English rather than to assist the Boers? This question somewhat disturbed the equanimity of the audience, but there was no serious disorder.

At the close of the meeting the chairman, M. de Backer, deputy for Alost, moved a long resolution, which began by protesting "against the Convention of Pretoria of 31st May 1902, imposed at the point of the sword, under the deceptive name of peace, on the valiant defenders of the South African Republic and the Orange Free State," and ended by expressing the hope that Mr Kruger and Mr Steyn would be called upon, at some future time, "to sign a genuine treaty of peace recognizing once more the independence of the two peoples of which they are still the leaders." This resolution was duly carried, and then the company departed after singing the *Volkslied*. It was a dismal failure; and Belgian society condemned it as a breach of the common courtesies of international life.

The grief which the people of England felt on account of the King's illness was ascribed to a change of opinion about the war; and in the *Petit Bleu* it was said that symptoms of a revulsion of feeling were already beginning to appear. "People," their London correspondent wrote on the evening of Wednesday the 26th of June, when the King's life was trembling in the scale, "have been asking themselves if this sudden collapse of the great festivities prepared for the glorification of the King and of the conquest of the Transvaal and the Orange State is not the act of some hidden power, of some avenging deity, who wishes to humble the national pride, and to punish the immoderate joy caused by the destruction of the weak. 'Is this a warning?' some are saying openly. 'May we not have acted wrongly to the Boers? Are other misfortunes in store for us?' It is the commencement of a dark remorse."

In France the *Assiette au Beurre* rejoiced the hearts of the Pro-Boers by making the King's illness the occasion for fresh ribaldry. There was a frightful picture of the Prince of

Wales, saying "It is a good thing. I shall not have to wait long"; and the frontispiece was a most disgraceful caricature of the King himself. Another cartoon represented "Le Mauvais rêve d'Edouard VII." Lord Kitchener, too, appeared as a hyena, with his claws fixed in the bleeding body of a Boer. But M. Delcasse issued orders; the kiosks were raided; and this number was suppressed by the police of Paris during the 28th and 29th of June.¹

¹ In Germany there was a pleasant Coronation picture-postcard, which people sent to each other. The King was walking towards the throne, and Mr Chamberlain was standing, as the Angel of Peace, with a besom in his hand near a heap of skulls. The letterpress said:—
"Chamberlain: 'Hurrah! The fête won't be interfered with. Have I not swept it up quickly!' Edward: 'All right. But these damned marks of blood on the ground and on my clothes! If one could only get rid of them before the fête!' Chamberlain: 'Oh, your Majesty may console yourself. I'm not much to boast of myself!'"

CHAPTER IV.

ARRIVALS FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

OF all this it is needless to say the brave men who had borne the heat and burden of the day in South Africa knew nothing; and now the time was at hand when some of them were expected to arrive in Europe.

Their opinions were, obviously, of great importance; and the news which came through the ordinary sources of information seemed to indicate that all was going well in the new colonies. "Those," it was said, "make a great mistake who consider that the expressions of Boer loyalty are merely words, and will not be translated into deeds"; and in the first week of July General Botha was at Pietermaritzburg, where he said that he believed in the future of South Africa under British rule, and that his

countrymen would heartily co-operate with their fellow-subjects. But the Boers in Europe would not hear of this. "Don't you believe a word of it," said an old official of the Transvaal. "They will wait, and educate their children for revenge." As to what General Botha's sentiments really were nothing definite was known. On the morning after the negotiations ended he telegraphed to Mrs Botha in Brussels: "Peace signed. I come to Europe next month." Since then only one letter had been received from him, written a few days later, in which he said that he would be unable to come to Europe as soon as he had expected. The contents of this letter were private, and it was supposed to have passed through the hands of the Censor; but its terms were said, by those who saw it, to show that the articles of surrender had cost the writer's heart a bitter pang.

About the middle of July news began to come from South Africa which showed that it was not all such plain sailing as had been supposed at first. Some of the burghers were complaining that they had not understood the

terms of peace when they surrendered. Others were threatening the National Scouts for having helped the British. The colours of the Transvaal and Orange State were displayed. There were some who wore the letters Z.A.R. (Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek) as a badge. It was proposed to open Dutch schools before the English had time to arrange a system of education. And these signs of discontent were encouraged by Dutchmen who had not themselves borne arms during the war. A report came from Pretoria that the burghers of the Vryheid district were so seriously discontented at the cession of their territory to Natal that they intended to sell their farms and settle in the Transvaal. General Botha, it was reported, would do so; and this, we were told, "makes the revolt of the Boers more certain than ever." It came out, too, that trouble might be expected at Johannesburg, where the mineowners wished to have everything their own way.

There was nothing surprising in all this; but it served as ammunition for the anti-British Press, which made the most of it, particularly

in Germany, where the official papers were now preaching the doctrine of peace. They preached, however, in vain. "Two months after the war," it was affirmed, "we are able to say that the opinion of the European peoples remains unchanged; and this, looking to the future, is disquieting to the British Government, which knows very well that though it has certain European Governments on its side at present, it will lose their support the moment they have a motive for withdrawing it, for the simple reason that Governments are actuated exclusively by their interests and not by sentiment, and that the interests which have induced them to leave England a free hand in Africa during the last three years may disappear to-morrow." In sober language such as this we are told, in more than one quarter, that the question of the Boers would be kept alive, and that perhaps on some future occasion it might be the policy of a European power to intervene in the affairs of South Africa. Meant as a threat, this might be taken as a warning.

In the face of all the evidence which had

accumulated during the war, it was now very difficult to pretend that the story of an intention to destroy the British Empire in South Africa was a mere fable; and this was probably the reason why there was so little concealment about it. In the European Pro-Boer press there had, for some time, been practically none; and now, during the first months of peace, it could be seen that other weapons were expected to succeed where arms had failed. Actual fighting, another appeal to the Mauser, further bloodshed, it is true, were constantly predicted; but prudence suggested the employment of different methods in the meantime. The *Algemeen Handelsblad* of Amsterdam put it tersely:—"We are approaching a period in South Africa during which a struggle will be waged not less interesting, if less sensational, than that of from 1899 to 1902"; and the aspirations of the Boer party in Belgium were even more clearly expressed. "The Boers of the Transvaal and Orange State will accept, with alacrity, a federation with the British Colonies. This would be the most sure means of uniting South

Africa, so that they could seize it entirely, at one blow, when the proper time comes." That was what the official paper of the Boers said on the 5th of July; and their view was that the British Ministers, in deciding not to suspend the constitution of Cape Colony, had merely chosen the less of two evils. Their decision had roused against them the hostility of the English at the Cape; while, if they had adopted another policy, it would have brought them face to face with the still more formidable hostility of the Dutch. But, in any case, the result would be the same—*Delenda est Carthago*. The British are to be driven out of South Africa. A few words, however, breathing a different spirit came from South Africa itself, and from an unexpected quarter there. *Ons Land*, one of the Afrikaner organs which in the past always encouraged the hope of Dutch supremacy, appeared after having been suspended for eighteen months, and expressed a desire that both races would in future understand each other better, and work together for the welfare of the country.

On the 29th of July Mr Chamberlain made an important speech in the House of Commons, in which he explained the South African policy of the Government; the establishment at first of a Crown Colony administration in the new dominions, to be followed by the addition of an elected element, and as soon as possible by self-government. He said there was no wish that the gallant Boers should break with their old traditions, but at the same time it was hoped that they would join hands with the English, and help to promote the prosperity of South Africa. This was most favourably received by the official press of the Continent; and such papers as the Austrian *Fremdenblatt* predicted that if the policy indicated was followed out, the Boers would in time forget the bitter memories of the war, and England would be able to point once more with pride to another triumph of her statecraft and traditions of liberty. Because, however, Mr Chamberlain acknowledged the difficulties of the task which lay before the country, the chief Boer paper called his speech a "cry of agony," and said it proved that

the British Ministers were trembling at the thought of how impossible it was to pacify the Boers.

A few days before this speech was made, Mr Chamberlain, in answer to a question about the movements of Dr Leyds, had said that "such persons" would not be allowed to return to South Africa. This want of respect gave grave offence. "There," said the official journal, "is how the ex-merchant of screw-nails from Birmingham speaks of the Ambassador of the Boer Republics! The individual with the eyeglass, corrupt to the marrow, who presides over the destinies of England, forgot to add that Dr Leyds never asked leave to re-visit South Africa." The fact was that this question of the return of the Boer officials to Africa was a very sore one, and particularly for Dr Leyds. It was known to all the world that he and the other Boers in Europe had been completely ignored by the British Government during the peace negotiations. The Commandants had, indeed, raised the question;¹ but

¹ "They pressed for the return of the delegates, and for an armistice to consult their burghers. I refused both

in the end the war had been brought to a conclusion without their having any say in the matter. And now, in his speech in the House of Commons, Mr Chamberlain stated that the Government reserved the power of refusing to allow the return of, or to deport if they arrived, any persons who by their actions might show themselves undesirable subjects. He gave as a reason that the Ministers were not going to allow the loyalty of the country to be undermined by any sort of intrigue. This was a plain warning to all those men who, in 1901, at a time when even Mr Reitz seemed ready to submit, had been allowed to communicate with the Commandants, and had sent a message urging them to continue the hopeless struggle, that they must not take it for granted, as a matter of course, that they would be allowed to transfer the scene of their activity to South Africa.

It was significant that for some time applications had been made, in one case amongst others at the British Embassy at Brussels, for on military grounds."—Lord Kitchener to Secretary for War, April 17th, 1902.

leave to return; and the caution with which these applications, very properly, were met, was explained by Dr Leyds' paper in a way which showed what language the applicants might be expected to use if they were allowed to set foot in South Africa. "The English Ministers," it was said, "fear above all things the revelations which the Boers in Europe would make to their friends in Africa on the subject of the condition of England at the time when they deceived the Boer peace negotiators for the purpose of persuading them to disarm; and the relation, on the other hand, which these (the Boers in Africa) would make to their friends from Europe of certain horrors as yet unknown, and of the lies employed by Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener to hasten the surrender of the two Republics. It is the explosion of the truth, bound to come forth at the first meeting of the African and European Boers, which Mr Chamberlain and his colleagues dread." That is to say, that if certain Boers in Europe, and Hollanders who had been in the service of Mr Kruger, were allowed to return, they would go about amongst the

burghers, and tell them they had been tricked into surrendering, that England was in such an exhausted condition that she was on the point of retreating, and that they should look upon the peace as merely a truce which must be broken at the first favourable opportunity.

It was in this frame of mind that the Boers in Europe, and the warriors who had fought so nobly in the editorial chairs, awaited the arrival of the Commandants. They had all along spoken of the brave soldiers who, only when reduced to desperate extremities, had signed the terms of surrender, as acting in bad faith. For example, when the burghers at Winburg, in the Orange River Colony, laid down their arms, General De Wet made an appeal for loyalty to the new Government. "We have," said Dr Leyds' paper, "only the English version of De Wet's speech; but it is probably correct, for his words are in agreement with the policy of feigned submission, which alone can enable the Boers to prepare their future revenge." And when Commandant Smuts, who was State Attorney of the Transvaal before the war, along with two

members of the Boer Staff General, Mr Jacobsy and Mr De Wet, were re-admitted to practice in the courts at Pretoria, the comment was, "They will just as easily exchange the gown of the advocate for the felt hat of the combatant when the time comes." There was so much of the same kind of thing as to make it evident that Mr Kruger and his party hoped to see the peace broken, and that no pains would be spared to draw the Commandants from their allegiance.

The first to arrive was General Lucas Meyer, whose wife and children had been in Holland for the last two years. His career is well known; how he was President of the First Volksraad of the South African Republic, fought in the campaign which ended at Majuba Hill, and against the Zulus, and led the enemy at Talana Hill, the first battle of the great war. On the death of General Joubert, it was expected that Lucas Meyer would succeed him; but the youth and military talent of Louis Botha, who was a simple veldt-cornet when the war began, had attracted the notice of General Joubert, who, when dying,

named him as the man fittest for the chief command, to which he was appointed. Thereafter Lucas Meyer served chiefly in a civil capacity. He was now welcomed with open arms in London, and received the attentions of English society so readily as to expose himself to hostile criticism on the Continent. From London he went to Utrecht, where he visited Mr Kruger, who was said (though he denied it) to have reproached him for the friendliness of his attitude to the English, and specially for having accepted the hospitality of Mr Chamberlain. His meeting with Mr Kruger was on the 5th of August. Four days later he died suddenly at Brussels, where he and his wife, then on their way to Carlsbad for a cure, had just taken rooms for a few days near Mrs Botha's house.

The Boers had always spoken of Meyer as the least *intransigent* of the Commandants. But after his death it was hinted that even he had assumed an appearance of friendliness to the English for the purpose of deceiving them as to his real feelings; and a letter from London was published, the writer of which

professed to know what had passed during the late General's private interview with Mr Chamberlain. When Meyer arrived in Holland it was announced "officially" that—"All the authorities of the former Republics will put themselves, during the stay of the General in Holland, in communication with the Transvaal delegates, MM. Leyds, Fischer, Wolmarans and Wessels, and the ex-President Kruger and his advisers." The object was to show that the Boers in Europe were still a factor in the councils of the Boer people; and this letter from London made it appear as if General Meyer's chief object had been to request leave for their return to South Africa. "In the course of this *tête-à-tête*," it was said, "the General called attention to the position of the Transvaal and Orange delegates, and other Boer exiles in Europe, demanding for them permission to return to Africa. But Mr Chamberlain replied that he could not treat on the same footing the Boers who had bravely fought on the field of battle and those who had fled to Europe, instead of taking their share of the dangers faced by their countrymen.

There, then, is the point of view taken by the crafty Colonial Minister in order to prevent the Boer exiles' return to their native land. This point of view is all the baser because Mr Chamberlain knows very well that these Boers came to Europe to fight, in their own way, in support of the noble cause which their brethren were defending, rifle in hand, in South Africa. Just as M. Thiers sought from one Court to another European intervention on behalf of Paris when it was besieged, so the Boer delegates chose perhaps the most trying sphere of action, when they gave up, in the interests of their country, their desire to fight the English face to face. Mr Chamberlain is well aware of the difficulties and nobility of their heavy task; but just because their sojourn in Europe has made them acquainted with all his treacherous manœuvres, he fears that on their return to Africa they will enable the Boers to see too clearly the true facts about the English campaign. But Mr Chamberlain is wasting his trouble if he imagines he can obstruct the march of truth by his despotic decisions. As soon as they arrive the Boer Generals will

know how to bring matters to a head, and obtain justice and respect for right. Moreover, the news of their very probable arrival in Belgium, without stopping at Southampton, because of the death of their colleague at Brussels, ruffles the English a little. They had hoped to give the Boer Generals a compromising reception, and by means of invented or misrepresented interviews, to create an impression which might impair the influence of Botha, De Wet, and Delarey with their countrymen in Europe. One may conceive, then, the annoyance of the British Government at the idea that the Glorious Trio may communicate with the Boers in Holland and Belgium before going to England."

This was the first hint that a plan was on foot to intercept the three great Boer leaders, and prevent them responding, as poor General Meyer had, to the friendly advances of the English people.

In the meantime, while they were on the high seas, others were reaching Europe, the most important of whom was Mr Steyn. His health had completely broken down under the

hardships of war, and he was now so weak as to be unable to walk. The fortitude with which he had encountered the dangers of the field, the enormous sacrifices he had made, and the belief that he still adhered to the policy of Mr Kruger, made him the object of something very like adoration amongst the Boer colony in Holland and the Dutch themselves; and it was resolved that he at least should not land in England. When, therefore, the 'Carisbrooke Castle,' which had brought him from Africa, reached Southampton in the early morning of Saturday the 2nd of August, Mr Fischer and Mr Wessels were there. He was carried on board a Dutch steamer on an ambulance; and they started at once for the Hook of Holland. There Mr Wolmarans met them; and the Dutch sailors carried Mr Steyn, through a crowd of fishermen with uncovered heads and women who shed tears, to a carriage decked with the colours of the Orange State, in which he journeyed to Scheveningen. "Amidst a dramatic silence," says one who was present, "broken only by women's sobs, Mr Steyn was carried up the steps of the villa, where a

number of young Free Staters were assembled." But it soon came out that, stricken though he was, the late President of the Orange State still believed that the objects of the war would be attained, though not perhaps by force of arms. "We shall recover politically what we have lost for the present," he was reported to have said during the voyage between Southampton and the Hook of Holland.

Since the end of the war Mr Kruger had been living quietly in the Villa Oranjest at Utrecht, seeing very few people except the Boer officials, and, doubtless, helping in the compilation of the "Memoirs." Now he roused himself for the purpose of going to see Mr Steyn, their first meeting since they parted near Komati Poort in September 1900, when Mr Kruger was about to leave Africa. When he reached Scheveningen people were surprised to see how well the old President looked, with eyesight improved, stout, and in most excellent health, a great contrast to his faithful ally, whom some would call his victim. Very little passed between

them; for Mr Steyn was so weak that the doctor would not allow an interview of more than a few minutes. But soon there was another arrival from the seat of war of whom Mr Kruger was able to see a great deal.

This was Mr Reitz, who had travelled from Laurencio Marquez by the Suez Canal to Naples, and thence by land to Holland. On the way he used language which did not come with a very good grace from the lips of one who had put his hand to the terms of peace. "We shall have war again in three or four years," he said at Naples. "The Boers will remain always irreconcilable, and will never submit to the loss of their independence. Many, including myself, will emigrate to Madagascar." As soon as he reached Holland he saw Mr Kruger. They had the first of many long interviews, after which the plan of going to Madagascar seemed to have been given up. "We are not going to Madagascar," he now declared. "I signed the agreement as Secretary. Francois Willem Reitz, as a man, will go on fighting. Neither President Steyn

nor I give in. We shall work from here in the meantime." These words attracted some attention at the time; but, as will presently be seen, they were only the prelude to still plainer speaking.

Nobody was surprised that Mr Reitz should be so hostile. More than twenty years before, when he was Chief-Justice of the Orange Free State, he had been unable to deny that he was aiming at the expulsion of the British flag from South Africa; and later, when Secretary of State in the Transvaal, he was deep in the confidence of Mr Kruger down to that momentous day, in the autumn of 1899, when he wrote the declaration of war against Great Britain. During the conferences at Vereeniging he had held out, as long as he could, for continuing the war. Then he had proposed making some concessions, such as giving the Witwatersrand to England, or even accepting a British Protectorate. Ultimately, however, he had signed the terms of peace, and acknowledged King Edward VII. as his lawful sovereign; but this, we now know, he did with a mental reservation that he was not

morally bound to abide by the agreement to which he put his name.¹

¹ In 1900 Mr Reitz published a pamphlet which contains an *ex parte* statement of the case for the Boers against Great Britain—"Een Eeuw van Onrecht" (Dordrecht, 1900). He ends this work with a prophecy that "Freedom shall rise in South Africa as the sun out of the morning clouds, as Freedom rose in the United States of North America. Then shall it be, from Zambesi to Simon's Bay, Africa for the Africaner." It is interesting to compare this with a Dutch pamphlet published in 1882, "De Transvaalse Oorlog" (The Transvaal War of 1880), where it is said: "So long as the English flag remains here, the Africaner Bond must be our Confederation. And the British will come to see that Froude's advice is the best for them. They must just have Simon's Bay as a naval and military station on the road to India, and give over all the rest of South Africa to the Africaner." Another typical instance is what the Rev. S. J. du Toit (who at that time held the extreme Bond view) said at Amsterdam in 1884: "The Vierkleur shall yet wave from Table Bay to the Zambesi, be that end accomplished by blood or ink." Nothing is ever to be found about living side by side with the British. Boer-Hollander supremacy over the whole of South Africa, obtained "by blood or ink," is always the theme. See *North American Review*, Nov. 1902, for an article by Mr Reitz, in which he repudiates the Articles of Peace entirely and unblushingly, and says that, with Lord Kitchener's knowledge, he signed in his 'representative' and not in his 'individual' capacity.

CHAPTER V.

GENERALS BOTHA, DELAREY, AND DE WET COME TO EUROPE.

THUS the Boer colony in the Netherlands was gradually increasing, though the arrival of some who joined it passed almost without notice, either because they shrank from observation or because they went to join their families in country quarters, where there were none of the crowds who shouted in the streets of Amsterdam or Brussels. One afternoon in the first week of August Commandant Maritz-Botha, released from captivity at St Helena, landed at Dunkirk, where he was met quietly by his wife, who had been living with their children at the old Belgian watering-place of La Panne. In order to avoid a 'reception,' Madame Maritz-Botha had

allowed people to think that her husband would arrive by a later train; and, without anything more disturbing than a few cries of "Vivent les Boers" which greeted them as they entered La Panne, the family were reunited, after three anxious years, in a house which bore a name of good omen for the future, the Villa Félicité. It was curious that on the same afternoon another actor in the war arrived in Belgium, unobserved by the passengers in the steamer from Dover to Ostende. This was General French, who went on to Brussels, and paid a visit to Waterloo. None of the English who were there that day appear to have recognized him. A Belgian who did said that he looked quite harmless, and that no one would suspect him of having laid waste a great part of the Transvaal!

So the newcomers from the seat of war kept arriving. Not all of them were Boers; as, for instance, Mijnheer Slegtkamp, who was received with much honour by the burgemeestre and people of his native place, Ymuiden on the Noordzee Kanaal, where,

showing how fields were won, he strutted about for some days wearing spurs, field glasses, and pistols, and looked at with awe by the village children as the hero who had slaughtered many Engelschmen on a dune called Spion Kop.¹ There was the Russian Colonel Maximoff, who, after the death of Colonel de Villebois-Mareuil, led a contingent of foreigners in the Transvaal, and now, on his way home, passed through Holland, where he visited Mr Kruger and told him that revenge was only a question of time; and Dr von Rennenkampf, who explained how the burghers surrendered only because the English threatened to retaliate for a war *à outrance* by killing all the Boer women and children. Every day brought some fresh news, which lost nothing in the telling; and the campaign against Great Britain went on briskly in the Pro-Boer papers. It was

¹ General Viljoen, when complaining to General Botha of the robberies which some of their men were committing, said: "I am also very much dissatisfied with Lieutenant Slegtkamp, who commits the meanest and most cruel deeds when trains are captured. He robs and strips everybody, dead or alive."

evident that when the three great soldiers came, they would need strong heads if they were to escape being drawn into the vortex.

In the meantime they had been enthusiastically received in Cape Colony, where they made some speeches which the Boers in Europe said might let Englishmen who could read between the lines see that they would never submit to the English. "Now that South Africa is under one flag, must we admit that we are conquered? Faith and hope will guide us. Africa is the heritage of our race," said Commandant Botha. "The meaning of these words, however discreet, is plain to those who are not deaf," said Dr Leyds' paper. On the 29th of July they published an Address to the people of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, the terms of which should be noticed in connection with the 'Appeal' which they issued when they were in Europe. "We intend," they said, "sailing for Europe to-morrow, July 30. We wish to collect gifts, our chief aim being to provide for the maintenance of our widows, orphans, and wounded, also for the housing and education of the

orphans. We likewise wish to assist the families which have been reduced to poverty. You will at once see the object of our writing to counsel you to be patient. Do not be discouraged. Be tolerant. Remain in the land, and pray without ceasing. We hope soon to offer you assistance."

During the day on which this address came out, General Delarey's daughter was married, at Cape Town, to Mr Ferreira, the General's secretary, and in a few hours the party, in carriages drawn by the boys of a Dutch school, were accompanied by a cheering crowd to the docks, and sailed for Europe, where the moral drawn from these demonstrations was that British rule was doomed in South Africa.

The extent to which private property had suffered from the military operations was not yet known, or even suspected, in Europe; and the address of the Generals caused some surprise. In Holland it was said that their real object was not to obtain funds, but to raise a number of points in connection with the terms of peace, which they hoped to alter. In England it was understood that the Colonial

Office was strongly in favour of the Boer leaders visiting the British Islands, and that a conference would take place between them and Mr Chamberlain. The feeling towards the Generals was at this time most cordial. Before the peace, one young officer who met General De Wet had described him as "a ripping sportsman," and now there was a rumour that some of the Imperial Yeomanry who had passed through his hands were going to ask him to dinner, in recognition of the way in which he had treated them. There were, in short, many signs that the English people wished to be friendly, and to further in London the work of peace which had begun in Pretoria.

But this was exactly what the agitators on the Continent and their confederates in Great Britain wished to prevent; and a word of warning, with some useful hints, came across the Channel. "Our Jingoës," wrote the London correspondent of the leading Pro-Boer paper, "hope to capture Botha, Delarey, and De Wet, when they come to demand from the English Cabinet respect for the

treaty of surrender, the abandonment of the scheme for annexing the South-East Transvaal to Natal, and the stoppage of other iniquities. To prevent misunderstandings, one may say that the Glorious Trio will be under the necessity of accepting certain invitations and certain receptions prepared in their honour, because a refusal would imply a declaration, to some extent, of eternal hostility, which it would be imprudent on their part to admit, directly or indirectly, so long as the situation is not ripe for the future revenge. The same reasons may be given why people will not hear Botha, Delarey, and De Wet utter a single word of defiance, anger, or hatred, which the English could use as an excuse for making the life of the Boers more insupportable than it cannot fail to be, so long as they are under the British yoke. England, blinded, will be taken in by these tactics, which are urgently required in the interests of the two captive Republics; but on the Continent everyone will understand, unless they wish to rival the simplicity of John Bull."

The three Generals little knew to what a

hotbed of intrigue they were coming. The 'Saxon' steamed along—Botha playing cards, and winning prizes at deck quoits; Delarey as great, it seems, at draughts as Napoleon was at chess; and De Wet hiding himself all day long in his cabin, writing his book about the war. On Tuesday the 12th of August they reached Funchal, and in the evening a telegram was sent to London saying: "The Generals were all immensely pleased when I informed them of the King's command to take part in the Naval Review, and to be presented to his Majesty on the Sunday following." Two days later it was quite understood in Brussels that a message had come from the Generals saying that they had received an invitation to witness the Review at Spithead on Saturday the 16th of August, and might be expected in Holland on the following Tuesday.

The Continental wirepullers had already taken the precaution of explaining frequently and at great length in the press, that if the Generals accepted English hospitality, it would only be for the purpose of throwing

dust in the eyes of the English people. But even in Holland and Belgium their influence was not what it had been in the old days, when the Boers were winning their victories; and it was difficult to persuade level-headed and honest Pro-Boers that the three warriors, whom the extreme men intended to make use of for the purpose of keeping alive the anti-British agitation, were really acting in bad faith. If, however, the Generals were to abandon their intention of landing in England, and come straight to Holland, especially after their presence had been expected at the Review, it would be easy to use the fact of their doing so as a proof of their irreconcilable attitude, and afterwards during their visit to England, to represent them as trading on the "simplicity of John Bull." For a few days, accordingly, it was thought in Amsterdam that Mr Fischer, Mr Wolmarans, and Mr Wessels might journey to Southampton in a Dutch steamer, and intercept the Generals; but in the end it was intimated that Mr Fischer would go alone.

When the morning of Saturday the 16th

of August came, *The Times* announced the official programme, which was that the three Boer Generals, on landing at Southampton, would be met by Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, and Mr Chamberlain, that they would, if there was time, have an audience of the King, and would afterwards witness the Review from the 'Wildfire,' special service vessel, which was to await them.

The Solent was thick in mist that morning, which delayed the liner; and by ten o'clock, when she reached her berth, a great crowd had assembled, and the arrival of the Boer leaders was greeted with loud cheers. A naval officer went on board, and gave the formal invitation to the Review. But Mr Fischer, who, according to the newspapers, appeared upon the scene in company with Miss Hobhouse, was already there, and had been for some time in consultation with the Generals; and it soon became known that the invitation had been refused. They went, however, to the 'Nigeria,' a vessel chartered by the Colonial Office for the Review, and exchanged a few words with Lord Roberts, Lord

Kitchener, and Mr Chamberlain. Thence they returned to the 'Saxon,' and soon after took train to London; the reason given for their refusal to go round the fleet being that they were tired, and in need of rest.

In London the Generals were welcomed with even greater warmth than at Southampton. Next day they had an audience of the King on board the yacht 'Victoria and Albert,' after which they visited the Fleet at Spithead, and, on their return to London, they were again the objects of a popular ovation.

There were some in England who thought that all this cheering for the leaders of a people with whom we had been so lately at war was unnatural, and perhaps undignified. But in other countries, even where the South African policy of the British Government had been very strongly condemned, there were many who admired it; and, judging by what was said in the foreign press, it did much, except in Holland, to create a feeling that the Boers would do well to show confidence in the good intentions of the English nation. "The Boer leaders," said an Austrian paper,

“ must, in spite of all the bitterness which may be lurking in their hearts, have obtained the impression that the English are a magnanimous people”; and the *Journal des Débats* asked Paris to believe that the applause given to the Boer Generals was a genuine expression of admiration for their virtues, and not just the admiration of the English conquerors for themselves. Nor was it unexpected in France; for when a statue of Colonel de Villebois-Mareuil was unveiled, the official who performed the ceremony said: “The English are so strangely magnanimous that had this soldier survived the war he would have received the enthusiastic welcome which is being prepared for the Boer Generals on their visit to England. One hardly knows, indeed, which to admire most—the wonderful magnanimity of the English, or the tenacity of the Boers.”

It was in a very different spirit from this that the Irreconcilables, working for other ends than peace, treated the subject; and a message sent from London, a few hours after the Generals arrived, speaks for itself. “The

British Cockneys," it said, "baffled a fortnight ago when President Steyn arrived in Europe and did not choose to set foot on the enemy's soil, have taken their revenge this morning by cheering the heroic three—Botha, Delarey, and De Wet—at Southampton. The brave Generals, who went to Horrex's Hotel and received at Waterloo Station the same frantic cheers as when they left the 'Saxon,' had no choice but to tolerate these obsequious ovations, so as not to excite against themselves, on reaching Europe, a current of hostility which might injure the success of the mission with which they are charged. Nevertheless, the readiness with which they gave fatigue—they, the indefatigables!—as a pretext for refusing the invitation to the Royal Review at Spithead, proves their determination not to respond to such attentions, sometimes but little delicate, on the part of England, except where it will compromise neither their own dignity nor their plans for improving the position of the Boers. The same considerations have led them to accept King Edward's invitation to pay him a visit on Sunday morning at Cowes."

This incident of the Review was of no real importance, though it caused some talk, and several explanations of why the Generals refused to go were afterwards given. Perhaps the invitation, though meant as a token of friendship, was a mistake; for some of our watchful enemies did not fail to say that there had been a wish to exhibit the Boer leaders as captives at a British triumph. The refusal was the cause of much satisfaction in Holland, where it was regarded as a snub to the British Ministers, and a small diplomatic triumph for Mr Fischer.

The Generals left London for Rotterdam suddenly on the afternoon of Monday the 18th of August, Mr Fischer going with them. Some little mystery was made about their departure, which their friends in England, it appears, intended should remain a secret until after they had sailed; but it would have been unreasonable to expect them to remain long in England at that time, or to join with light hearts in the festivities in which the British people were then engaged. The overwhelming blow which had fallen upon their country, and

the serious business of their mission to Europe, must have been uppermost in their minds; and it was natural that they should wish to escape from the uncongenial atmosphere of London, and at once go to see their countrymen in Holland, even though they knew that they must meet those who were to blame for the disasters of the war, and, in particular, for the devastation which had swept over the land since 1901. It must have been difficult for General Botha, who had so strenuously opposed the impracticable policy of Mr Kruger, Dr Leyds, and Mr Reitz, not to feel some misgivings at the prospect of taking counsel with them. That they were bent on thwarting the efforts of the British Government to pacify and re-settle South Africa he probably suspected. A glance, indeed, at a few of the Pro-Boer papers would convince him of that; and the question of how he was to meet them, on what footing he, who had declared his purpose of being loyal to the British Crown, was to stand with those who were still engaged in plotting against Great Britain, was one which it must have been hard to answer.

That an attempt would be made to compromise the Generals was certain; and what intrigues and dubious schemes of double-dealing might be contemplated was plain to everyone who had followed the Pro-Boer propaganda for the last three years, or was acquainted with the recent utterances of the extreme men. So well was this known that the *Indépendance Belge*, which had loyally supported the Boers during the war, took occasion, as soon as the Generals were in Europe, to offer some advice. "The Pro-Boers of Europe," it said, "who have not ceased to urge the war *à outrance*, but have taken good care not to give the men of the Transvaal and Orange State the help of their own arms, are pursuing their old tactics, and trying to create between the Boers and the English such differences that the reconciliation of the two races may be for ever impossible. We sincerely hope that their counsels will not be listened to, and that the Boer leaders will bear in mind that they have no worse enemies than those who would compel England to show herself pitiless by stirring up against the

English people hostile manifestations, for the purpose of creating an impression that that people is outside the pale of civilized nations."

Advice such as this was well-timed ; for it is no great stretch of imagination to suppose that many conflicting emotions must have passed through the minds of those who stood on the deck of the 'Batavier' when she left the open sea and entered the waterway of the Maas. This at last was Holland, of which they had always heard so much and whose history they knew so well : the Motherland of their race, that famous country which, at the cost of fearful suffering, had wrung freedom from Spain when Spain was the greatest empire in the world, had successfully resisted the encroachments of France, had waged war, on equal terms, both as the ally and as the enemy of England, and was now the home of a prosperous and happy people, whose rich warehouses, spacious shipbuilding yards, and docks crowded by ships laden with merchandise from all parts of the world, they were now approaching. Who could find it in his heart to blame them if, at the sight of Holland, they

thought bitterly of their own vanished independence, and of the red ruins they had left behind, and began to wonder if, after all, they might not throw in their lot with the men of their own stubborn blood who were waiting to whisper that all was not yet lost, and that faith need not be kept with England?

It was, at least, very natural that before they had been two hours ashore the reserve which they had shown in London was broken through. They were met by a crowd whose sympathy, though not loudly expressed that day, they knew to be deep and real. There was not much speech-making at the landing-place. All the municipal councillor who greeted them in the name of the city said was: "Because I know that you prefer deeds to words, I merely welcome you to Holland without more ado." But when they reached The Hague, about noon, General Botha spoke some bitter words. "We have not come here to rejoice," he said. "We are the delegates of a most unhappy people; and we are unhappy because we have done our duty, because we have defended our liberty and our inde-

pendence." Later in the day they went down to Scheveningen, saw Mr Steyn at his villa there, and went to a Pro-Boer exhibition of art and industry, where the President of the exhibition, in congratulating them on their exploits, praised the "generosity and patience with which you have borne the barbarous deeds of your enemies." To this De Wet replied in a voice trembling with emotion:¹ "All the artists and other persons who organized this exhibition of art and industry have contributed to the growth of nations. We South Africans were on the road to development in art and industry, but the legs were cut from us, so that we need help and support to rise again. It is for that very purpose that we have come to Europe, and we are grateful for the honour shown us from the moment when we set foot on Dutch soil. The fact that we feel so much at our ease in Holland proves conclusively that we are descendants of the Dutch people. Our hearts are too full for us to speak. We are too depressed to find words, but we are full of gratitude for the

¹ *Indépendance Belge*, Aug. 21, 1902.

women who have contributed so much to soften the grief of our wives and children, and for all the Dutch who help us.”

There seemed to be in England something like a feeling of resentment that the Boer Generals should use such language, and of surprise that they were abandoning the reticence which had been observed in London. But in Holland they were amongst their own people, to whom they spoke as they felt; and, in the interests both of Britain and of South Africa, it was just as well they spoke in a way which showed at once that it might be as difficult to reconcile the Boers as it had been to conquer them.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LETTER FROM THE HAGUE.

THE Generals, however, had not come to Europe in order to saunter about the pleasant streets of The Hague, or to enjoy the sea air on the digue at Scheveningen. Their purpose was to confer with the British Government on matters relating to the settlement in South Africa, and to ask the people of Europe for some measure of help in money—to 'collect gifts' was the simple phrase they used before leaving Cape Town. They had originally intended to request an immediate interview with Mr Chamberlain; for the impoverished condition of many of their countrymen called for haste. But circumstances had prevented that; they were in Holland instead of England; and in Holland the question of their

attitude to the British Government was of supreme interest.

The first step in the political campaign which was now on foot had been taken when Mr Fischer and the three Generals left London on the 18th of August. After that events followed each other in a regular sequence. Mr Kruger was seen on Wednesday the 20th. Very early that morning the Generals were taken to Utrecht by Dr Leyds, Mr Reitz, Dr Poutsma, Messrs Fischer, Wolmarans, Wessels, and De Bruyn. The conference at the Villa Oranjelust lasted for more than two hours. The official Boer papers said very little about what took place, except that Mr Kruger and the Generals met and parted on the best of terms, and that the result of their deliberations was to be kept secret. In the English papers, on the other hand, it was said that there had been a scene, Mr Kruger having fallen foul of General Botha and bitterly upbraided him for signing away the independence of the Transvaal. This seemed most unlikely. Yet before the war there was no one who spoke in plainer language than did Botha against the

old man's infatuated ways. Mr Kruger has a long memory. He had formerly been full of anger against young Mr Botha, member of the Volksraad; and it is just possible that young General Botha had to endure some hard words. It is possible; but, after his great services, one can hardly believe it.

In the afternoon there was a second conference in the Hotel des Bas-Pays, at which Mr Kruger was not present; and late in the day the Generals and their companions returned to The Hague.

At ten o'clock that night Mr Chamberlain received a telegram saying that they were now free to resume the course which they had originally laid down for themselves, and ready to return to London and discuss "questions of the greatest importance and interest to our country"; and for this purpose they asked him to arrange an interview.

As to what had been done during these secret consultations at Utrecht and The Hague the Boer press gave no sign; but in England it was believed that there were serious differences of opinion in the Boer councils, the

Generals having, it was said, refused to act in concert with the Irreconcilables, who had, as we have seen, fully counted on obtaining their support for the twofold policy of continuing the agitation against Great Britain on the Continent of Europe and interfering with the settlement in South Africa. Utrecht and The Hague had often before been the resorts of political exiles, who always seemed to find a curious difficulty in keeping the peace amongst themselves; and that history was repeating itself in the summer of 1902 was confidently asserted. But, a few days later, a statement in the following terms was published:—"Generals Botha, Delarey, and De Wet desire to say that their attention has been called to the news published by the English papers, on the authority of their correspondents at The Hague, Brussels, and other Continental towns, the object of which is to cast suspicion on the good understanding and harmony which exist between the Generals, President Kruger, the Boer delegates in Europe, and Dr Leyds, which it is desired to call in question by alleging that differences of

opinion have arisen in the course of their conferences. The Generals are very anxious to inform the public that the most complete harmony exists, and always has existed, between them and the aforesaid persons. Every assertion or suggestion to the contrary is an absolute untruth, and can only be attributed to malice, credulity, or erroneous information." Whether this *communiqué* accurately represents the facts, or was penned with a mental reservation, on the principle that the end justifies the means (which is quite likely), there the matter must be allowed to rest, though the question of the relations between the Generals and the Leyds party is one of obvious importance, both with regard to what was then taking place and looking forward to the course of future events in the new colonies.

A third conference was held at The Hague on the morning of the 21st; and in the afternoon General Botha went to Brussels with Mrs Botha and his son, a high-spirited lad of twelve, who had gone through the last part of the war with him, and of whom, poor boy,

some Pro-Boers said that he had, like Hannibal, sworn eternal hatred to his father's enemies! Generals Delarey and De Wet had purposed going also, and Mr Chamberlain had been requested to send his answer to Brussels; but they remained at The Hague.

On reaching Brussels the General and his wife and son had a most excellent reception at the station, where there was a large crowd; and then they drove up to the Rue Crespel, and the door opened, and the eldest daughter came out to meet her father, and the other fair-haired children ran across the pavement, and held up their faces to be kissed. A nurse carried out his boy, whom he had not seen before, and placed him in his father's arms. Holding the child, General Botha bowed to the crowd, and went up the steps. Across the lobby of his home his children had hung a little wreath of flowers with the word 'Welkom' on it. That was his triumphal arch.

At half-past six that evening, just when the train was running into the Gare du Nord, a telegram was despatched by Mr Chamberlain to the British Minister at Brussels, requesting

him to inform the Boer Generals that he had hoped to have a preliminary conversation on board the 'Nigeria,' if they had been able to accept the invitation, but that now he proposed a meeting in London on Tuesday the 2nd of September. "I should like," he said, "to know beforehand the subjects on which they wish to see me"; and he asked them to send a list of these to the Colonial Office.¹

Next morning General Botha was waited upon by the staff of the old Transvaal Legation, after which he went to the mortuary at Ixelles, and placed some flowers on the bier of Lucas Meyer, whose remains lay there awaiting the time of their removal to South Africa. In the afternoon he telegraphed, on behalf of himself and the other two Generals, to Mr Chamberlain fixing the interview and saying that the list of points which the Colonial Secretary had asked for would be sent "as soon as possible." There was a rumour in Brussels that the authorities had requested him to leave; but he contradicted it himself, and remained with his family in the Rue

¹ Mr Chamberlain was then at Birmingham.

Crespel, Generals Delarey and De Wet being still at The Hague.

Thence, on the following day, a letter was sent to Mr Chamberlain setting forth, in the name of the Generals, "the principal subjects" which it was proposed should be discussed in London. This letter must be read in the light of much which had preceded it. In the first place, we have repeated assertions, in the recognized organs of the Boer coterie in Belgium and Holland, that the terms of peace signed at Pretoria were not binding, and that the Boers did not intend to abide by them. Then we have statements, again and again reiterated, that whatever professions of fidelity the Boer leaders might make were made merely for the purpose of deceiving the British Government. Next we have the intimation that when the Boer leaders came to Europe they would be informed that, when the peace was made, England was not in a position to have carried on the war much longer, and that they had, therefore, been tricked into laying down their arms. There is also the suggestion that they might be brought to

Holland or Belgium first, and thus be at once put in the hands of Dr Leyds and the Boers there, who would tell them "the truth." They are met at Southampton by Mr Fischer, in whose company they forthwith journey to London, thereby missing that preliminary talk for which Mr Chamberlain had hoped. Their having paid their respects to the King at Cowes is described as a disagreeable necessity, to which they submitted only in order to avoid raising prejudices which might interfere with the success of their mission. It was not until after lengthy conferences with those who were deeply committed to an attitude of complete *intransigence* that they put themselves in communication with the Colonial Office; and all the time Dr Poutsma, one of those who went with them to Utrecht, was working hard to inflame popular feeling by publishing fresh calumnies against the conduct of the British army, which were so grotesque and incredible that the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, in which they first appeared, afterwards described them as preposterous.

It is in the light of these facts that we

must read the document which was written to prepare the way for an interview of vital importance to the future of South Africa, and second in that respect only to the transactions of Pretoria and Vereeniging.

It had been part of the Pro-Boer tactics to insist upon the impossibility of any peace between the Briton and the Boer, and to assure the people of Europe that the three great leaders had no intention of adhering to the terms which they had signed; but the crude idea that men of their character would, while protesting their loyalty to England, forthwith embark on a political agitation for the purpose of overthrowing the English rule, was abandoned when it was seen that they intended to approach the Government in a spirit of conciliation, and really with the object of inducing the Colonial Secretary to adopt measures which would, in their opinion, make for the pacification of South Africa. Bearing these facts in mind, it is not unreasonable to suppose that it was considered necessary, in order to save the situation from the *intransigent* point of view and draw the Generals

into the anti-British camp, to manœuvre them into a situation of difficulty with the British Government, and also to alienate the sympathetic feeling of the British people, which was what the extreme men on the Continent dreaded above all things, because it might lead to close friendship in the future. This could best be done by inducing them to put forward extensive claims of a character which would almost certainly lead to their being refused; and, accordingly, the demands made "at the request," as the Generals themselves explained, as well as with the concurrence of their friends, were of such a character.

It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of the questions which were raised in this letter; for on the answer which was to be given the whole future of South Africa might depend. There were matters such as the constitution of the Commissions for assisting the restoration of the people to their farms, with regard to which the local knowledge of the Generals would be of great use to the Government; and there was the question of handing over a portion of the Transvaal to

Natal, about which General Botha felt strongly.¹ There was also the very important topic of the Dutch and English languages in schools and courts of law. These were amongst the subjects which it was proposed to discuss; but they were not the most important.

In the front of the letter stood a request for a complete amnesty for all British subjects who had fought on the Boer side. What had happened about this was that, at Pretoria, on the 28th of May, after the terms of surrender which the British Government were prepared to accept were in the hands of the Boer leaders, "There now followed," General De Wet explains, "an informal discussion about the colonists who had been fighting on the side of the Republics. Lord Milner communicated what the British Government's intentions were with regard to the colonists, and read the following document."² This document placed it on record that those rebels who were citizens of Cape Colony and Natal were to be

¹ The Vryheid district, it will be remembered, was annexed by the Boers so late as 1883.

² De Wet, App. B. p. 468.

left in the hands of their own Governments, whilst other British subjects who had joined the enemy were liable to trial under the law of that part of the British Empire to which they belonged. It, moreover, explained the views of the two Colonial Governments, which the British Ministry had ascertained. The view of the Cape Government was that the rank and file should plead guilty to the crime of high treason, and that their punishment, provided they had not committed murder or acts contrary to the usages of warfare, should be disfranchisement for life. Rebel Commandants, or rebels holding official positions under Government, were to be tried for high treason, but in no case was the legal penalty of death to be inflicted.

The Government of Natal were simply of opinion that the rebels who fell under their jurisdiction should be dealt with according to the law of Natal; but there could be no doubt that as generous a measure of amnesty would be granted there as Cape Colony had promised.¹

¹ Correspondence respecting Terms of Surrender [Cd. 1096], 1902, No. 26.

When the leaders went from Pretoria and reported the result of their meeting to the general body of representative burghers at Vereeniging, they said: "During our formal negotiations certain informal conversations took place in reference to the British subjects (in Cape Colony and Natal) who have been fighting on our side. As a result of these informal conversations a communication from the British Government was imparted to us." Then the memorandum explaining the views of the Colonial Governments was read to the burghers.¹

Before separating, the burghers, having now agreed to surrender, drew up a statement of the reasons which led them to lay down their arms, at the end of which they said: "This meeting has noted with satisfaction the resolution of his Majesty's Government to grant a large measure of amnesty to those British subjects who took up arms on our side, and to whom we are bound by ties of blood and honour, and expresses the hope

¹ De Wet, App. C. p. 473. The English translation is not verbally the same as in the Blue Book.

that it may please his Majesty to extend this amnesty still further."

That, I think, is all which appears *ex facie* of any official documents on this question of amnesty, which the terms of peace do not touch. But Mr Stead¹ and Mr Reitz² have brought a charge of bad faith against the British Ministers in regard to this matter. Mr Stead says that, "in order to induce the Boers to lay down their arms," Lord Kitchener promised to recommend an amnesty at the time of the Coronation. "On the faith of this assurance," he continues, "relying upon Lord Kitchener's word of honour, and finding it difficult to believe that the King, or rather his advisers, would set at naught the urgent recommendations of the Commander-in-Chief, the Boers surrendered their arms, and waited for the result of Lord Kitchener's recommendations." Now the Boers themselves have never even hinted that they were induced to lay down their arms by anything relating

¹ *Review of Reviews*, Oct. 1902.

² "Is it Peace?" by F. W. Reitz, *North American Review*, Nov. 1902, p. 607.

to the question of amnesty. They have always said the same about it, namely, that they had come to the end of their resources, were without food or clothing, could no longer hope for success, could not subject their women and children to further hardships, and saw that their disappearance as a race must be the result of going on with the war; and it is perfectly evident that they would have laid down their arms even if no information as to the probable fate of the rebels had been forthcoming. "Most bitter of all," says General De Wet, "was the thought that we must abandon our brethren in Cape Colony and Natal, who had thrown in their lot with us"; and his book, which came out long after this business of the interview with Mr Chamberlain, contains no suggestion that any promise on the subject of amnesty had influenced the decision of the burghers. But the Boer leaders, rightly and naturally, were much concerned for the fate of those who had joined them, and very anxious to secure a complete amnesty; and something evidently took place which led the Generals to hope

that this complete amnesty might be granted at the time of the Coronation. Such words as "I'll do my best," may have been used; but that no promise was given is clear; for Lord Milner expressly stipulated that "all promises to which a reference may be made later" must be put in writing.¹ "The Boers," Mr Stead says, "only asked that Lord Kitchener should keep his word"; and Mr Reitz says: "The solemn and undeniable promise of the British representatives as regards a general amnesty to Cape rebels has been deliberately and scandalously broken." We may be perfectly sure that any promise made by either Lord Kitchener or Lord Milner is sacred, and that if they did, in point of fact, speak to the Government in favour of a further measure of amnesty than what was already granted, the Government gave what they said due consideration. If, for reasons of policy, the Government did not extend the amnesty beyond what the Governments of Cape Colony and Natal had suggested, that was not "playing fast and loose with the

¹ De Wet, App. B. p. 460.

pledged word of their representatives," no pledge that there would be a complete amnesty having been given. General Botha seems quite to have understood the situation; for he afterwards admitted that all those who signed the terms of peace were well aware of the exact position in which the rebels stood, though he said that Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener had "declared their readiness and intention to make representations favouring the granting of such amnesty." The British Government had, however, sent out a Commission to inquire into the cases of all rebels whose sentences had not yet expired; and the Government of Natal had, independently of any report from this Commission, amnestied, or reduced the sentences of, a considerable number of rebels.

Such was the position of the amnesty question when the Generals reached Europe. That it was a matter of enormous importance goes without saying; and no Minister could decide it offhand. There were many whose deliberate opinion it was that with the view of securing the British position in South Africa

a general pardon to all the rebels would, in the long run, prove the wisest policy. These wished it for the sake of peace, and in the interests of Great Britain.¹ But, on the other hand, those who were determined that there should be no peace in South Africa, and who were hostile to the British rule, as Mr Reitz was, believed that nothing would suit their purposes better than a wholesale gaol delivery, by means of which the loyal and the disloyal would be placed on the same footing. Therefore, to force, if possible, the hand of the British Government, and to support the charge of bad faith which Mr Reitz and Mr Stead have since made, it was stated point-blank in the Boer papers that a complete amnesty at the Coronation had been positively promised. This was, of course, untrue; and the Generals did not say so, but they were anxious to have an opportunity of supporting the cause of an amnesty at the Colonial Office.

Another question was "the right of immediate return to South Africa of all burghers

¹ There is a very good article on this side in the *Nineteenth Century* for July 1900, by Mr T. Shaw, M.P.

who may desire to do so." On this the Boers who had been in Europe during the war laid great stress; and for a very obvious reason. They had left Africa for the purpose, a perfectly legitimate one, of endeavouring to procure foreign intervention against Great Britain. Having failed to move any European Government to help them, they had ever since been engaged in a campaign of calumny against the British people, declaring that they must be driven out of South Africa, and representing the conduct of our army there in the most odious light. They had done all that in them lay to keep the war going; and now they were actively engaged in promulgating views of the future which may be compressed into their chosen formula, "The Peace is only an Armistice." Believing this to be true, they had a strong motive for going back to South Africa, where they would be in a far better position than in Europe for taking part either in some future rebellion, or in political action which might succeed in bringing about what arms had failed to accomplish. They had apparently thought

that, the war being at an end, they would be allowed to do as they pleased about going back. But the British Government had reserved the right of refusing to permit, for a time at least, the return of persons who did not loyally accept the new order of things, and whose presence in South Africa was, therefore, dangerous to the interests of peace. This they resented; and the Generals were requested to press the British Government on the subject.

Closely connected with this topic, from the point of view of the Irreconcilables, was the position of those who had been made burghers with a view to war against England. In September 1899, the Volksraad of the Transvaal, when preparing for hostilities, offered to confer the right of citizenship on all who would fight against Great Britain. On the declaration of war, certain foreigners, in consequence of this arrangement, became burghers. They did not lose their original nationality by fighting for the Boers; and those who had been taken prisoners, as many of them were, the British Government sent back to their own

countries, refusing to recognize them as genuine burghers of the Transvaal. Those who were still in the field had, by arrangement with the Boer leaders, not been allowed to vote on the question of peace or war at Vereeniging. Apart from the fact that they had been made burghers solely to fight against England, most of the acts of cruelty committed on the Boer side were, rightly or wrongly, attributed to them; and they could safely be relied on, if allowed to return, to join in any project which was hostile to Great Britain. It was, therefore, worth while to make an attempt to secure their presence in South Africa.

Another point raised in the letter from The Hague was about the oath of allegiance. The second article of the terms of surrender provided that burghers in the field outside the new colonies, and burgher prisoners of war outside South Africa, were to be brought back "on duly declaring their acceptance of the position of subjects of his Majesty King Edward VII." The question arose what the words "duly declaring" meant. The Government view of the phrase was that it implied

their taking an oath of allegiance. There had been no stipulation, at the time of the conferences of Pretoria and Vereeniging, that an oath would not be demanded; but the Boer leaders had understood that nothing beyond some form of declaration would be required, and objected to the administration of an oath. The Government complied with their wishes; a form of declaration was drawn up; and by the 3rd of July telegrams had been sent to all the prisoners' camps giving them a choice between the declaration and the oath. Three weeks later, by some mistake, four burghers who had refused to take the oath were still in prison; but when the mistake was made known to the proper authority they were at once released. The fact, however, that there had been this mistake, and the evident reluctance with which Lord Milner agreed to substitute the declaration for the oath, was seized upon by the Boers in Europe as an excuse for calling attention to the subject, about which they were anxious; and for a special reason. It seems that Boer prisoners who would make a declaration of allegiance might shrink from an oath. "It is

necessary," said the official Boer paper, "to know the chief reasons of the distinction made between the oath of allegiance and the simple declaration. The English law is pitiless to those who violate this oath. The burghers who may eventually revolt will be liable to death for trampling this oath under foot. That is why the Boer leaders, who foresee the future, wish to stop the oath as much as possible, by obtaining the right of simple declaration for the thirty thousand prisoners of war who, not having taken part in making the treaty, feel themselves less bound by it than the others."

This very cynical explanation of course means that those prisoners who took a declaration would more readily rebel than those who actually swore allegiance. The *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* boasted, it is true, that the young Boers were taking the oath of allegiance "with the tongue in the cheek," and that when it was sworn before Englishmen who did not understand the Taal a word which sounded like the King's name was used to deceive them. But boyish tricks like that could not be relied on ;

and it was desirable to be quite certain that in the future nothing but a simple declaration of allegiance, which few, it was hoped, would hesitate to break, would be required. Therefore, although the system of exacting the oath was understood to be abandoned, the question was now raised by "a protest against and request for the abolition of the compulsory administration of the oath of allegiance," so as to make assurance doubly sure.¹

¹ But this was not nearly all. In addition to these matters of a general amnesty for the rebels,

¹ In telegrams sent from the prisoners' camps to Europe, and also in letters, the words 'declaration' and 'oath of allegiance' were constantly used as if they meant the same thing, and this led to statements that the oath was still exacted—a favourite charge against the British. Even as late as the end of November 1902, a letter was sent from London to Brussels in these terms:—"Des lettres privées des îles Bermudas constatent que les 150 Boers du Transvaal, toujours internés là-bas, ont refusé de prêter le serment de fidélité au roi d'Angleterre auquel leur rapatriement est subordonné, déclarant préférer la torture et la déportation perpétuelle à une existence passée sous le joug britannique." Then came the usual hint: "Ils ont évidemment tort, puisqu'un serment arraché par la force ne lie jamais celui que le prend, comme l'on si bien compris la plupart des Boers."

of the return of all burghers, of the recognition as burghers and as subjects of Great Britain of foreigners who were naturalized in order to fight against Great Britain, of the oath of allegiance, of the transfer of the Vryheid district to Natal, of the constitution of the restoration commissions, and of the Dutch and English languages, there were a number of other topics, dealing with the whole financial position created by the war, which, this letter said, were to be raised.

By the terms of surrender the British Government agreed to appoint Commissions to assist the people to return to their homes, and to supply those who were in want with food and shelter, and with stock, seed, implements, and such other things as might be necessary to enable them to resume their normal occupations. There was also to be appointed a Judicial Commission, as it was called, which was to receive and investigate requisition notes given by Boer officers in the field for what they had taken, and these notes, if found correct, were to be evidence of war losses.¹

¹ In order to be examined these receipts must be

A sum of £3,000,000 was to be placed, as a free grant, at the disposal of these Commissions, to be spent in restoring the people to their homes, and relieving the destitute. In addition to this sum of £3,000,000 the Govern-

collected; and this led to a ridiculous charge that the English were getting hold of as many as possible in order to destroy them, and so make it difficult for the Boers to prove their losses. But a confusion has arisen. Mr Stead says it is the receipts given by English officers that we are accused of stealing, and adds that "this conduct, more worthy of the inmates of a thieves' kitchen than the representatives of a great Christian civilized Power, while it covers us with infamy before the civilized world, in no way invalidates the right of the Boers to regard as property their claim for compensation for goods commandeered." On the other hand, "M. Stead, dans la *Review of Reviews*, signale un fait absolument exact lorsqu'il déclare que l'Angleterre, pour ne pas avoir à payer les dettes du Transvaal et de l'Orange, dont elle est responsable, a confisqué et détruit des milliers de bons, remboursable après la guerre, que les Boers délivraient pour toute réquisition de chevaux, matériel, fourrages, vivres dans les propriétés privées" (*Petit Bleu*, Oct. 17, 1902). Here it is the Boer receipts which the English are said to destroy. Which is the authorized version of this particular tale? The Boer paper has misunderstood Mr Stead. Needless to say, the requisition notes given by the English army are being settled as quickly as possible, as in all previous wars. But they must be carefully examined, which takes a long time.

ment offered to lend money to the Boers for the same purposes, free of interest for two years, and afterwards repayable over a period of years with three per cent. of interest. The amount of this loan was not fixed, as it was impossible to say how much might be required.

The free grant of £3,000,000 was manifestly insufficient to cover all the claims which would be made upon it. No war of equal duration ever cost so few lives or less physical pain. But the pain, misery, and suffering which accompany all wars had been distributed over the whole Boer community. This was chiefly owing to the fact that the salutary rule that an army in the field must wear uniform, or at least some fixed distinctive emblem by which, even at a distance, the soldier can be distinguished from the civilian, did not bind the Boers, who were not parties to the transactions at The Hague. So that if the English found an unarmed man, dressed as a farmer, sitting in his house, the chances were that as soon as they were out of sight he took his rifle and bandolier from some hiding place,

mounted his horse and became a soldier. Throughout large districts many buildings were farms by day and barracks by night. Almost every dwelling was a storehouse of provisions and spare ammunition for the Boer army; and very nearly the whole population of both sexes in the country districts was taking part in the war. This made it absolutely necessary, as it was found necessary by General Grant and General Sheridan in the American War of 1861-65, to lay waste large districts, to destroy houses, to carry off the flocks and herds (or to kill them so that the enemy should not have the means of support), and to remove the people who could not be left without food or shelter, and at the mercy of the Kaffirs. All this fearful devastation was, it is clear, imperatively demanded by the necessities of war; but the people had suffered, and many of them had perished, in spite of the huge sums expended by Great Britain on their behalf. Their sufferings were what caused most pain; for, when it is remembered that more than fifty thousand men, out of some hundred and forty thousand who fought, fell

killed and wounded, in the space of one day, within the narrow limits of the slopes at Waterloo, the actual bloodshed in the South-African war does not seem great.¹

But so many homes had been laid waste, and so many families were in want of assistance, that the £3,000,000 was not nearly

¹ Nothing is so convincing as to the necessity for laying waste the country and removing the inhabitants as the admissions made by combatants on the Boer side. In Cape Colony, too, the invaders were helped in every way by the country people, who not only fed them and their horses, but acted as scouts, and gave warning if British troops were approaching. It must not be forgotten that the longer the concentration camps lasted the healthier they became; and that as the hardships of the men in the field increased, those of the women and children in the camps diminished. This was known. "The women," said Mr de Clercq (delegate for Middelburg) at Vereeniging on May 15, "had wished to go on foot to the English, but he had advised them to wait until the result of the present negotiations should become known." General De Wet, speaking of the women and children, says, "Their sufferings are among what we may call the necessary circumstances of the war." What added to the hardship of the removals was that the women were not always hardy peasants, but sometimes people who were not used to roughing it. One Boer young lady, who had been through it, and whose brother was on commando, told me some sad things, "but," she said, "it is war."

enough. Therefore, on the 31st of May, when the Boers at Vereeniging made up their minds to surrender, the Generals were instructed to collect money in Europe to help those who had suffered from the war, and in particular to provide for the widows, orphans, and wounded; and they also intended to ask Mr Chamberlain for a larger grant of money, either as a further free gift or by way of loan. But the Boers in Europe put aside the simple plan of asking a loan, or a larger free gift, and suggested a series of requests of such a nature that it is hardly possible to believe that they were seriously meant; for they read as if they had been intended to raise difficulties between the Generals and the British Government, and to prepare the way for the political campaign about which everyone was now talking. The offer of a loan was ignored. Great Britain was called upon to support the widows and orphans of the burghers, for whom, indeed, our Government had already made some provision; to pay for the maintenance of the wounded; to reinstate all officials of the Transvaal Government, or pay them compensa-

tion for the loss of their salaries; to make up all losses to private property occasioned by the war; and to pay all the obligations of the Republics, including those incurred just before and during the war; and all this without offering any explanation as to whether it was the case that a large sum of public money was in the hands of Mr Kruger and Dr Leyds.

It came to this. The Government of the Transvaal had made war upon England. The war had involved England in heavy expenses. Great liabilities, arising out of the war, lay before her in the future. Yet now she, the victor, was to pay all the losses which had fallen upon the Boers, and put them back, so far as money went, in just as good a position as if there had been no ultimatum, no invasion, no annexations of British territory, no destruction of farmhouses and lovely gardens in Natal, no looting of the property of British subjects, and no rebellion, stirred up by bodies of men sent for that very purpose into Cape Colony after the first inroad had been repulsed. And more. If there really were in existence the funds which Mr Kruger was said to possess, the

Boers of Europe, instead of being worse off and losing by the war, would actually make about £1,000,000 of clear profit. If England would do all this, perhaps she might be left in peace for a time. If not, let her beware. The fact is, that while the three Generals thought most of obtaining help for the needy, Mr Kruger, Dr Leyds, and their party refused to recognize either the terms of surrender, or that inexorable law of human society by which every community suffers for the wrongdoing of those who rule it.

The letter containing this financial ultimatum, and the request for leave to bring back so many elements of discord into South Africa, was sent from The Hague on the 23rd of August. On the same day the Boer statesman who had written the ultimatum of October 1899 was at Coutraï, where a Congress had met to discuss questions relating to the history and language of the Netherlands. The proceedings of that morning included a debate on the future of the Taal in South Africa, and the meeting was unanimous in condemning that article in the terms of peace which dealt

with the question of languages.¹ "If we do not take care," said one speaker, "the children will be the enemies of our race, and of our movement, for they will be educated by the English Government." The Taal, another pointed out, was not a tongue which could hold its own against English. It was unpolished, and possessed no literature; and the English influences would be far more easily opposed if the study of pure Dutch was encouraged.

Practical effect was given to this suggestion when it was mentioned that a Dutch school at Johannesburg, with two hundred pupils, was in need of funds, and annual subscriptions amounting to £440 were intimated on the spot. Mr Louw, from Pretoria, said that the battle between the Boers and England was now transferred to "the intellectual field," and pleaded for a system of private Dutch schools, supported from Belgium and Holland,

¹ Art. V.: "The Dutch language will be taught in public schools in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony when the parents of the children desire it, and will be allowed in courts of law when necessary for the better and more effectual administration of justice."

to counteract the public schools, which would be under the British Government. "We ask your help," he said, "for the liberation of the South African race." Mr Pretorius, also from the Transvaal, foretold that "if England once gains the Africander women to its culture, Dutch civilization will disappear in the Transvaal."¹

All this was very instructive; but the interesting moment came when Mr Reitz spoke.² "I have always," he said, "attached

¹ This may be compared with what *Die Patriot*, the Bond paper, said in 1882. "Now that the war against the English Government is over, the war against the English language (Rooitaal) must begin." It complained that children were being taught English, which was "a miscellaneous gibberish, without proper grammar or dictionary"; and again: "This so-called English education has done more mischief to our country and nation than we can ever express. Look at our children that have had English education. They are Anglicised to a worse degree than the English themselves. . . . We must work with all our might against the girls' schools; and the mad, unscriptural, house-corrupting notion that women are to have education in their hands must be forever banished out of our land."

² This was a scene in which Mr Reitz was well fitted to shine. One of his own contributions to Africander literature is very interesting—" *Vijftig Uitgesogte*

great importance to the question of language. It is of supreme importance now. Sir Alfred Milner has said to one of our Generals that he would like to hear only one language in South Africa. I reply to him that the most powerful tyrant on earth can never realize this project against us." This was received with loud applause. Then he went on to enlarge on the 'atrocities' of England in the Transvaal, and ended by declaring: "So long as I live I shall hope to see the difficulties of England increase."

At this declaration the whole audience rose, and there was a scene of great enthusiasm. But the moderate Pro-Boers were shocked.

Afrikaanse Gedigte: versameld deur F. W. Reitz: "a volume of fifty songs in the Taal. It contains translations from Burns and other British poets. "Tam o' Shanter," "Duncan Gray," and "the Laird of Cockpen" are amongst them. John Gilpin figures as Jan Jurgens, a citizen of Bloemfontein:—

"Jan Jurgens was een burgerman
Van aansien en van roem,
Een vrede-regter was hij ook
Op die fontein Van Bloem."

The "Slag van Majubaberg, op Sondag 27 Februarj 1881," is the subject of some exultant verses.

“Now that peace is made,” said the *Indépendance Belge*, “and all the Boer leaders in the field have accepted the conditions which the English Government offered them, it contrasts so violently with all that we have heard of the Boer character, that we cannot but regret bitterly this excess of language, and hope that the great majority of Mr Reitz’s countrymen do not share his sentiments.”

A few days later Mr Reitz was in Brussels, where he again poured forth the vials of his wrath against England in a long statement to the newspapers. “We had,” he said amongst a great deal more, “to surrender—I do not say make peace, for it is not made—only for the sake of our women and children. We could have provided ourselves with arms, as we pleased, at the expense of the English. The proof is that those which we laid down were exclusively Lee-Metfords taken from the enemy. The English will never dare to publish statistics of the Mausers, Boer rifles, which were handed over to them at the time of the surrender. There was not one per cent.” As to the National Scouts he said: “It is a stain

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on the past, but it is a blessing for the future. The chaff is separated from the wheat. We have now a magnificent Boer race, re-tempered by the war, without any dross, and reinforced by the whole Africander race of the Cape. It is the resurrection of our country assured, in spite of recent events, or what is going on at present."

These statements, accompanied by accusations of dishonourable conduct against Lord Milner, appeared on the day on which the three Generals started for England; and at the same time significant prominence was given to complaints that, "with their habitual bad faith," the English were spreading false reports that there was not perfect harmony between the Generals, Mr Kruger, Dr Leyds, and the other Boers of Europe. This was the parting shot, fired to give assurance to the world that the Generals were of Mr Kruger's party, with whose opinions, so ably declared by Mr Reitz, it was desired to identify them in the eyes of Europe.

CHAPTER VII.

MEETING AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE,
SEPTEMBER 5TH.

EARLY on Sunday the 31st of August, the Generals landed near the Tower Bridge, in company with Mr Fischer and Mr Brebner, their secretary. The day and the place, we heard next morning, had been so skilfully chosen that nobody had a chance of annoying the Boer leaders by unwelcome attentions; and it was soon found that they were not prepared to mingle with the English people. General Botha himself has since explained what they felt. "A man," he says, "whose father, sons or brethren have been killed in a quarrel may agree to forgive the slayer, to live with him in peace, to become his fellow-worker in a good cause, to hope and endeavour

to become his friend ; but can he be expected to do more than that before the first blades of grass have sprung up on the graves of those near and dear to him ?”¹ British soldiers had died in Africa as well as Boers. There was mourning still in British homes. But the people of this country were ready to bury the past in the graves of their own dead, not forgetting them, but fully and frankly forgiving those who slew them. But different races have different characters ; and it is easier for the victors than for the vanquished to be magnanimous.

Still, looking to the future, and in the interests of their countrymen who were now, however unwillingly, British subjects, it was most unfortunate for the Generals that their attitude was one of such extreme reserve. Fresh from the pernicious counsels of Utrecht and The Hague, they were isolated in a London hotel, and lost the opportunity of judging for themselves what really was the feeling of English society towards them. It is

¹ “The Boers and the Empire,” by General Botha, *Contemporary Review*, Nov. 1902.

impossible to know what truth there was in the report that Dr Leyds and his party had advised them to keep aloof from the English, to refuse all invitations except from those who had been on their side during the war, and to avoid social gatherings. If such advice was given, as everyone believed, it was probably for the purpose of preventing a good understanding and anything like true conciliation; and, while depriving the Generals of hearing much which would have been of great service to them as the representatives of their people, for whose sake they wished, as they have since explained, to co-operate with their new Government, it had the effect of diminishing that cordial admiration with which they had been at first received.

There were people whom they saw in London, from whom they got sympathy and to whom they spoke with some freedom. But these were members of the party known, in Great Britain and on the Continent, as 'Pro-Boers,' who could be of no real assistance to them in their diplomatic mission to the Colonial Office. The case for the Boers had

been sadly bungled by their British supporters. There had been many in England, at one time, whose opinions very much resembled those of the moderate section of Continental society, who thought the war might have been avoided, who admired the sturdy virtues of the Boer in spite of all his enmity to England, and were seriously perplexed by the circumstances of the Jameson Raid and the inquiry which followed it. Many of these belonged to that more or less impartial section of the community who are neither Capulets nor Montagues, and who not infrequently decide the fate of Ministries. But most men of this class had been converted to the policy of the Government by the manner in which the Boer cause was pleaded both in Great Britain and abroad; for it seemed to them that more energy was being expended in trying to blacken the character of Ministers, and in attacking the methods of the British Generals, than in defending the Boers. And this was particularly the case as regards the Colonial Secretary, the very Minister before whom the Boer leaders were to lay their

requests. Personal attacks had been made upon him, so unceasing and of such a nature, that men who had been in opposition to him for a long time now became indignant, and felt ready to think him right in almost everything he did. It was very like what happened in 1879-80, when Mr Gladstone, who was then abused in much the same fashion as Mr Chamberlain now was, went down to Scotland for his first Midlothian campaign. Some of the most influential people in the county were at first inclined to hold back. But the virulence with which he was attacked so offended their sense of what was fair that they did all they could to secure his return. Nothing is so useful to a British politician as persistent personal abuse, the imputation of foul motives, the hurling at him of injurious epithets; and the British supporters of the Boer side, like those in Germany, conducted their campaign largely in the shape of a personal onslaught on Mr Chamberlain. Perhaps it is Mr Stead, editor of the sensational *Review of Reviews*, who may be named as the writer who, during the war, did most in

England of what Dr Johannes Trojan, Herr Liebermann von Sonnenberg, and others were doing in Germany; but as to the language he used the less said the better. If a public man who habitually uses plain or dignified words worthy of great themes, should speak violently once, or twice, or even thrice, or coin some telling phrase, however acrimonious, against his opponents, the world may listen. But three long years' indulgence in the mere commonplaces of vituperation will destroy the influence of anyone. No Minister was ever driven out of office by a string of adjectives; but there were those who seemed to think it might be done, and the inevitable result followed. Mr Chamberlain grew stronger and stronger. And the other Ministers grew stronger with him, in so far as South Africa was concerned. They had made plenty of mistakes, and might make plenty more; but the 'Pro-Boers,' as people called them, were their best friends, and saved them from almost everything in the shape of dangerous criticism.

The Continental belief in the British

supporters of the Boers as a practical force died hard. So late as the 26th of June a letter from England was published, saying: "The English Pro-Boers are no more laying down their arms than those of the Continent. There are several Pro-Boer committees resolved to work for the independence of Mr Chamberlain's victims." But, on the whole, as soon as peace was made, the Boers in Europe came to regard their British allies as a *quantité négligeable* in the meantime; and it was quite understood that the Generals, when in London, could not receive any help in that quarter.

The Generals, again, coming as British subjects with a petition to their Government, might have sought, in ordinary circumstances, the aid of the Opposition in the House of Commons, and of the Liberal Party throughout the country. But the Liberal Party was, on this great question of the Anglo-Boer war, in a state of paralysis. So at least it appeared to those who looked on from a distance. All the responsible leaders, official and unofficial, seemed to endorse the policy of annexation;

but many of their followers were evidently on the Boer side, wished to stop the war at almost any price, and believed that we could have retained possession of Cape Colony and Natal, with independent Boer states, armed to the teeth, as our nearest neighbours. And it seemed also to British subjects who were living hundreds of miles away from the shores of Great Britain, that the Liberal Party was completely out of touch with the citizens of the British Empire over all the world. To men standing at a distance from political contentions at home it seemed as if in the pictures of the situation drawn in England everything was out of perspective. The foreground was filled up with the Jameson Raid, and questions of franchise, and gold mines, and the like. These were drawn large, and blocked the view; but in the background in reality there towered, all the time, the ambitions of a few men and the antagonism of two races. The claim of the black man to his native soil was a thing of the past. Hottentot, Kaffir, Zulu, Matabele, and the rest—they had all been crushed; and the two white races

which held dominion over South Africa stood face to face. One of them, being ready for the fray, took the other unawares; and Britain was plunged into a great war. Everything we possessed in South Africa was at stake. That was clear to all, friend and foe alike. Our European foes, at least, never tired of telling us that not a yard of South African soil would remain to us; and it seemed to most Englishmen abroad that such questions as whether the diplomacy of this statesman had been wise, or whether that statesman had known about the Raid, whether the Convention of 1884 meant one thing or meant another, were no longer worth talking about. The Power with which our country had been disputing had declared war upon her, invaded her territory, and called on the inhabitants to rise in rebellion. The long-standing quarrel of the two races had been brought, not by Britain but by the Government of the Transvaal, to a settlement by force of arms. Everything was swallowed up in that. It was no time for wrangling over the past, or trying to trip each other up in party squabbles; and on the

merits of the question, what Sir Wilfred Laurier said at Liverpool, when he was leaving for Canada, was what the British people throughout the world felt: "Canadians believed that it was a just quarrel on the part of England. They believed that the war was forced upon England by a foe who had long been plotting to have South Africa for one race alone." But many of the Liberal Party seemed not to share this general sentiment of the British people. The horizon of some seemed bounded by the terrace at Westminster, and their ears deaf to every sound but the division bells. The result was that the Party, like those who took the Boer side, grew weaker and weaker as the war went on, until at last, when peace was made, it could not exercise that influence over questions relating to the settlement in South Africa which a hearty support of the Imperial cause, during the war, would have given even to a party which was in a minority.¹

¹ During that first week in September, when the Generals were in London, the *Leyds* press attacked the English Liberals, accusing them of shutting their eyes

Thus the three Generals were alone, depriving themselves, in accordance with the wishes of the Leyds faction, who boasted of it in the papers, of the chance of hearing and seeing much which would have been useful to them, and of explaining informally their view of what their country required, as they might have done if they had not kept so much in retirement.

There was a delay of several days before they were received at the Colonial Office ; and of this various explanations were given in Brussels. It was "coquetterie," some said, on the part of Mr Chamberlain, mere caprice, a love of annoying people. Others suggested that perhaps the British Government would refuse to allow the interview because the Generals were acting in concert with "the Kruger-Leyds group, *bête noire* of England." But the fact was that, on receiving the letter from The Hague, Mr Chamberlain had written

to the South African question, simply because they thought, "in their disgusting egotism," that the Education Bill was a better subject on which to oppose the Government.

to say that the character of the Boer proposals had greatly surprised him, because they suggested, he pointed out, the substitution in many points of an entirely new agreement for the terms of peace which had been accepted at Pretoria. He therefore explained that the interview must take place on the footing that the terms of peace were not to be altered. To this the Generals replied by reminding him that the terms had been placed before them as an ultimatum, and had only been accepted to prevent further bloodshed. They disclaimed, however, the intention of claiming any right to alter the terms, but expressed their wish to make representations upon certain subjects, in particular the question of amnesty and "a substantial measure of compensation, aid, and relief to our people." Some further correspondence followed, and at last the interview was fixed for Friday the 5th of September, on the understanding that nothing inconsistent with the terms of surrender was to be discussed.

On that day, after a final consultation with Mr Fischer, who returned to London from the

neighbourhood of Hastings, where his family were then staying, just in time, they went to the Colonial Office. The interview lasted two hours, and nothing authentic was known as to what had happened.

But the Boer papers had plenty of news. It appeared that Mr Chamberlain had insisted that Mr Fischer was not to be present. Why? Because Mr Chamberlain could not forgive the Boer delegates for having "staggered humanity" at the expense of Great Britain. Besides, he was afraid to look Mr Fischer in the face, and tell him he could not go back to South Africa. But it did not matter. Though the Generals were physically alone with Mr Chamberlain, "they were morally accompanied by their delegates in Europe, with whom they had previously agreed on all the points which were to be raised, and on the manner of treating them." In order to avoid the distasteful cheers of the Londoners, they drove up in a closed carriage. "Mr Chamberlain, ill-mannered, like himself and the inferior race to which he belongs," kept them waiting for half an hour before he appeared, "with his

eyeglass screwed in his eye, and one of his famous orchids at his button-hole." He rudely addressed De Wet as "Mr De Wet," but he had met his match, for the other sharply spoke to him as "General Chamberlain." The Minister felt crushed, bit his lip, and gave the General his military title. What passed after this hopeful beginning was a secret; but it was rumoured that the Generals had asked leave for the Boer delegates to return to Africa without declaring their allegiance; but this was thought unlikely, for "MM. Fischer, Wolmarans, and Wessels would be ready to take the oath of allegiance in order to return to their country and devote themselves to her regeneration. An oath of allegiance is no more binding when it is obtained by a criminal war than the oath given to a robber when his knife is at your throat."¹

¹ "It is not a peace that should be regarded as a lasting one, or as one binding upon the consciences of those men who, to save the remnant of their wives and children, signed it—signed it, so to speak, with the knife at their throats."—Mr Reitz, in the *North American Review*, Nov. 1902, p. 611. One of the most curious of these revelations of trickiness, or 'slimness,' is a Boer answer

At the interview, the truth about which was soon published officially, there were present, besides the three Generals and the Colonial Secretary, Lord Onslow, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Kitchener, Mr Graham, Assistant Under-Secretary, and Mr J. H. de Villiers as interpreter. The proceedings, which were taken down in shorthand, began with an explanation by the Boer leaders that they had not intended to propose any alterations in the terms of surrender, to which Mr Chamberlain replied shortly, "I am very glad to hear it."

Then the question of amnesty was tabled; and General Botha said, after the position of the rebels had been discussed for some time, that they were "rather disappointed, after the promise given to them by Lord Kitchener to the statement that Mr Kruger accepted a paid office under the British Government in 1877. They say he merely consented to act as a polling clerk if there was a plebiscite on the question of annexation in order that he might destroy voting papers given in favour of annexation! In 1877 Mr Kruger was in office as a member of the Executive Council; but the British Government refused to continue him when his appointment expired.

that at the time of the Coronation Lord Kitchener would make a recommendation to the Government, they were rather disappointed that these men were not amnestied at the time of the King's Coronation."

Mr Chamberlain, before asking Lord Kitchener to explain, pointed out that there was nothing about this in the correspondence relating to the negotiations, and that a statement had been read to the Boer representatives at Pretoria fully explaining the position in which the rebels stood. "That," he said, "is the whole of the undertaking of which his Majesty's Government have any cognizance whatever."¹ "That statement," said Lord Kitchener, "is the final statement about the amnesty which was given, and must be considered as the only one which was in any

¹ *Supra*, pp. 121, 122. The statement is in "Correspondence respecting the Terms of Surrender" [Cd. 1096], 1902, No. 26. Mr Reitz prints it in his article in the *North American Review* for Nov. 1902. See also De Wet, App. B. 468, C. 472. The Boer papers have always pretended that an amnesty was absolutely promised (though General Botha has explained that it was not), and Mr Reitz evidently tries to create the same impression.

way binding on us, or had anything to do with what we, Lord Milner and myself, spoke of at the time. It was clearly understood that that finally settled the question. That statement was the last statement we made at the end of the conference." General Botha admitted this, and that Mr Schalk-Burger knew exactly in what position the rebels stood, but added that "the only thing he wanted to call Lord Kitchener's attention to, was promises made for recommendation at the time of the Coronation for amnesty."

Mr Chamberlain replied by assuring the Generals that the British Government would not interfere to hinder any generous intentions which the Cape or Natal Governments might have in regard to the rebels.

On this General Botha said that he thanked the Colonial Secretary very much for these words, and that his only object was that the Government should be magnanimous, "so as to enable us all to live in peace in future in South Africa."

Then they passed from the amnesty question; and the next point was that of allowing

certain burghers to return to South Africa. The name of Mr Wessels was mentioned, and Mr Chamberlain explained that his case was under consideration. "I think," he added, "perhaps in any ordinary case there would be no difficulty whatever about the return of gentlemen who are ex-burghers, and who under any circumstances had come to Europe during the war. I say under ordinary circumstances. Of course the Government must keep in its own hands the right to prevent the return of people whom they believe to be disloyal and who have not frankly accepted the terms of peace. General Botha will, I am sure, like me, speak freely." Then he alluded to the conduct of Mr Reitz. "We want to be friends," he said, "but the friendship must be on both sides, and when anyone gives us reason to believe that he will not be friendly if he returns to South Africa, we will do our best to prevent him from returning. But with regard to those whom we believe to be perfectly honest and straightforward with us, we think there will be no difficulty in their early return to their country."

General Botha answered that if one man had said anything foolish, he should suffer for it alone, and that he asked the Government "to trust them."

"Trust whom?" asked Mr Chamberlain.

Himself and the others, the people in general who had surrendered, was the answer.

"We have," said Mr Chamberlain, "accepted all that they have agreed to as having been agreed to in perfect good faith; and until they give us any reason to doubt them we shall place entire trust in them."¹

Then other matters were brought up: the return of prisoners of war, as to which Mr Chamberlain pointed out that the Government,

¹ A fortnight after this Mr Reitz said, when speaking of this interview at the Colonial Office, "I remain friends with the Generals, as they with me; but my attitude concerns me only. I am alone, all alone; I do not even belong to my country any more; for I do not intend ever to submit and to live, even for a little, under the British flag." He mentioned at the same time that, after his speech at Coutrai, a rich German had offered to find him two submarines for use against English shipping. Mr Reitz's position is practically that of the eighteenth century *non-juror*.

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on the ground of expense, if for no other reason, were most anxious to send them back as soon as possible; the oath of allegiance, as to which it was again explained, in the clearest manner, that ever since the 3rd of July the rule had been to give the prisoners the choice of taking the oath or making a simple declaration; and the security of burghers in their property, which was raised by General Botha, who said that the burghers did not feel safe, because of a report that the Government intended to sell some of the farms, apparently for public purposes.

Mr Chamberlain said that it might be necessary to acquire land compulsorily for railways, on the basis of its value, or for allotments, as is done in England; and General Botha asked that that point should not be raised until self-government had been granted.

“Any proposal of that kind,” Mr Chamberlain replied, “if it ever is made, will be published and well known to everybody before it is enforced; and they would have an opportunity of making any remarks or

criticisms, either to me or the local government, that they desired.”

“General Botha begs to thank you for that,” said the interpreter. Then the conversation turned upon farms which had been sold under the Proclamation of 7th August 1901.¹ The Generals asked if these could be given back to the former owners, for, though Lord Milner had offered them the money, they would prefer the land; especially, General De Wet said, as some of them had been sold for very low prices.

¹ This was the Proclamation under which all the leaders were to be banished from South Africa for life unless they surrendered by September 15th, 1901. It was the result of a strong recommendation from Lord Kitchener and the Government of Natal. On the 26th of May 1902, during the negotiations, Mr Chamberlain wrote to Lord Milner, suggesting that it might now be set aside. Lord Milner replied that, though he had been in favour of the Proclamation, it must be tacitly dropped if the Boers surrendered. “So far from regretting the Proclamation,” he said, “I believe it has had great effect in increasing the number of surrenders, and in inducing the Boers in the field to desist from further fighting.” General De Wet, on the other hand, says, “It had no effect whatsoever.” Lord Kitchener thought it had been most useful; but then it was his idea originally.

Mr Chamberlain said that the lands which private persons had bought could not be recovered; but the Government had bought three, and "I am willing," he said, "if the Generals desire it, to ask Lord Milner whether he cannot arrange to re-transfer these to the private owners, if they desire to have them back."

"Thank you, thank you," said General De Wet, who seemed to appreciate the conduct of the Government in giving back their lands, or a certain equivalent in money, to those who had lost them by standing out for the last eight months of the war.

After some other questions had been talked over, the critical point came when Mr de Villiers said: "General Botha says that is all he can tell you now, or rather that he may tell you. There are other points upon which he is not allowed to speak at the present time, and he hopes that you will not take it amiss if at some future time the Generals put on paper some of those points that he would have liked to have made personally, and he thinks that because he thinks it will conduce

greatly to the good administration of the country and the general satisfaction in South Africa. Of course, we look to you for help, and the £3,000,000 he does not think would be at all adequate to help the people. Something must be done with regard to the widows and orphans. That is one of those points. You have got so many assets in the country."

Some good angel was prompting the British Minister in everything connected with this interview, or perhaps it was just business capacity, or long-headedness. He had told the Generals, when he wrote to The Hague, that the terms of peace must not be opened up; and now he gave no hint that more millions might be forthcoming when the House of Commons met for the autumn session; he never reminded them that the widows and orphans were being looked after; he never suggested that they had not asked for a loan; he gave no intimation that he would look much further into things, still less that he might sail all the way to South Africa to see with his own eyes how matters stood.

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He was, fortunately, firm and strong enough to say nothing then.

“I think we had better not enter upon discussion in detail upon matters of that kind,” was his answer.

The Generals were disappointed; and perhaps they took as little more than idle talk the words with which he closed the interview:—“We want South Africa to be a happy abiding place for all who live in it, not for one class alone, not for one section, for one race, or for one political party, but for all, and our duty is to regard the interest of all, and we desire that no section should be entirely unrepresented. I am sure that if you meet us half way you will find us to be in the future quite as good friends as we have been, I hope, loyal enemies in the past.”

So ended this singular interview, during which everything had been courteous and firm, and, to those who could read between the lines, symptomatic of what might lead to a good understanding in the future, but from which the Generals withdrew, disappointed and perplexed that they knew nothing more

than before as to what further help, if any, Great Britain might be ready to give them. It was most fortunate for all concerned that no promises of assistance were given, and that the Generals went away in a frame of mind which, as we shall now see, led them into a course of action the result of which was to reveal the utter hollowness of what was going on amongst the Continental Pro-Boers, and to prove that it was to Great Britain, which now ruled them, and to their own exertions in South Africa, that they must look for the means of restoring their countrymen to some measure of contentment and prosperity.

It was the peculiar fate of the Boer Generals when they were in Europe always to fall into the hands of injudicious advisers and dangerous friends; and some of these were now lying in wait for them in Holland and Belgium.

In the Netherlands the news that the British Government had refused to alter the terms of peace, and still more that the Generals had not succeeded in re-opening the question of money, was received as tidings of great joy;

for there was nothing now to interfere with that European campaign on which the numerous Pro-Boer Committees had set their hearts, and which they intended should take a form never contemplated by the Generals. If anyone asked what the next move was to be, the answer was a look of quiet elation, which seemed to mean "You'll see. Now we have them to ourselves." In private conversations and in the press nothing was so much resented as any suggestion that there might be differences of opinion between the Generals and the Leyds party; and it was in vain to hint that if money was needed for the sufferers from the war, application should be made to the British Government for a loan. Help from England was not wanted, they always said. And the papers took the same line.

"It is," said the leading Pro-Boer journal, on the 9th of September, "from Continental Europe, from the French, the Dutch, the Belgians, the Germans, the Swiss, that the Boer nation will obtain what it needs to restore its natural life, and re-organize itself for the purpose of reconquering its rights. So

much the worse for Great Britain. So much the better for civilization—and for the future.” By “the future” is meant the revenge, the revolt; but in the meantime the political agitation held the field.¹

¹ There was a rumour that the French, German, and Dutch Governments found means, at this point, for impressing on the Generals the necessity of being most conciliatory in their tone to Great Britain. Dr Kuyper had a long interview with them in the Hotel Vieux Doelen at The Hague on the afternoon of Wednesday, September 10.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE "APPEAL TO THE CIVILIZED WORLD."

ON the 11th of September the three Generals, who had left England two days before, were at Amsterdam with Dr Leyds and Mr Reitz. The Dutch Government had forbidden the display of Transvaal or Orange flags, and the singing of the Volkslied; but the popular enthusiasm was great, and speeches were made which attracted some attention at the time. One pastor, Dr Visscher, compared the Generals to three Christs carrying their crosses to Calvary beneath the scourge of England; and Dr Leyds said that he and his colleagues would continue to act in the future as in the past. A few days later they visited Antwerp, where there was a great display of Boer flags, the Volkslied was sung in the streets, and many

speeches were made, of which General De Wet's was the most important. "I have not come to Europe," he said, "with my comrades, to receive applause, but to seek the means of helping our people. We could not save our political independence, but we wish to preserve our economical independence; and, if we can obtain that, I promise you that the South African people will never disappear. You have helped us, you have sent to the concentration camps, for our wives and children, all you could; and if it did not arrive the fault is certainly not yours. I tell you this: if our race had not been threatened with extinction we would never have laid down our arms. To-day our people are in a most deplorable situation. We come to beseech Europe on their behalf, and also to shake hands with the friends of the Boers. God never created any people without the right of liberty. Ours will never allow anyone to use the whip to it; and it has given a most useful lesson to the small nations. It has said: 'Fight to the last before giving up your independence.'"

General De Wet, however, did not like

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these receptions and public meetings. “ See,” he said to a friend in Antwerp, “ how I am led about, and have to obey as if I was a good little boy. This life is worse than war. Don’t say a word to anyone, but I am going to run away and disappear as if I still had the English at my heels.” Having missed one train for Holland, he managed to hide himself while his two friends were taken to the Zoological Gardens, and shown to the good people of Antwerp; and presently he left for The Hague by himself.¹

A visit to Brussels was fixed for the 20th of September; but on the sudden death of Marie Henriette, Queen of the Belgians, at Spa, on the evening of the 19th, the Generals telegraphed to the “ Comité des Secours aux Boers ” intimating the abandonment for the present of their Belgian tour.

The intention of the Generals had been to travel through Europe and gather money in aid of those who had suffered through the war,

¹ General Botha was reported in some English papers to have said at Antwerp: “ We have laid down 20,000 Lee-Metfords, not 20,000 Mausers.”

from private persons, through subscription lists at the banks and in the newspapers, and by giving lectures such as those which General Ben Viljoen afterwards gave in England, at which collections could be made. But this quiet programme did not suit the militant Pro-Boers; and still less did it suit the Irreconcilable group, who saw in the popularity of the Generals the means of prolonging the agitation against England. Elaborate preparations were therefore made for a series of great public demonstrations, with receptions, processions, and all the paraphernalia of a political campaign on a large scale; and when the Generals returned from England, disappointed that the financial settlement had not been re-opened, they found everything ready, and were themselves in a frame of mind which made them fall an easy prey to those by whom they were surrounded—men who were for violent language, protests, manifestos, and setting the English Government at defiance; and the “Appeal of the Boer Generals to the Civilized World,” which appeared in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* of 25th September,

breathed their spirit if it did not speak their words.

Monsieur Yves Guyot had an article in the *Siècle* in which he explained how, in his opinion, the Appeal came to be issued. Mr Henry Phipps, of the Carnegie Steel Trust, had offered a gift of £20,000 to help the Boers. On the 21st of September General Botha accepted it, with the assurance that it would lead to nothing unfriendly to Britain; and the business details had been arranged in consultation with Mr Chamberlain. Monsieur Guyot's opinion was that when Dr Leyds and Mr Reitz heard of this they took alarm, and forthwith prepared the strongly-worded address, which was certainly calculated to raise ill-feeling against the British nation, in order to destroy the effect of the peaceful assurances given by General Botha. This was immediately denied, and it was announced that the appeal not only expressed the sentiments of the Generals, and was composed by them, but was typewritten and in their hands several days before they received Mr Phipps' offer. “We are able to state,” said Dr Leyds' official paper, “that Dr

Leyds has taken no part in the publication of the Appeal, any more than Mr Reitz or M. Guyot himself." But Dr Leyds was constantly in their company, and also Mr Reitz, who did not sail on his forlorn hope to America until the 26th of September; and it is very strange, if there was that perfect harmony, on which the Boer press was always insisting, between the Generals and Dr Leyds, that the latter was not consulted in the preparation of a document which suited his purposes so admirably, and led to evils which the Generals themselves dreaded at the time.¹

Whether the Generals wrote it themselves under the influence of disappointment, or whether they were helped by others, this manifesto was so framed that it could not fail to irritate the British people. Before the Generals left South Africa they had announced that they were going in order to collect gifts in Europe. But now they were represented as being driven to do so, because the British Government had refused to help them;

¹ "The Boers and the Empire," by General Botha, *Contemporary Review*, November 1902.

whereas, as they and their advisers knew, the Government was ready to advance money on easy terms in addition to the free grant of £3,000,000, a fact which was carefully suppressed in the Appeal. Prominence was given to the marks of sympathy from foreign nations and to money sent by them to the concentration camps. These camps, which were rendered necessary by the fruitless prolongation of the war in consequence of advice sent from Europe, had cost England more than £3,000,000. The amount sent by the foreign nations, taken at the highest figure, was a small matter compared with the burden laid on the British; and, moreover, the subscription lists on the Continent had been systematically used by the foreign sympathisers as a means of showing their hatred to Great Britain.¹ Help was asked for the destitute widows and orphans, as if Eng-

¹ The subscriptions were generally accompanied by some pious wish: for example, one day:—“To buy a rope for Edward VII. on his Coronation, 2 francs”; “that De Wet may drive out the last beast of an Englishman, 1 franc”; “death to Chamberlain and his thieves, 1 franc 10 centimes.” There were columns of that sort of thing in the papers week after week.

land was leaving them to perish ; whereas the Colonial Government had taken charge of them, providing for the widows, and clothing, feeding, and educating the children. Money, again, was asked to educate the children of the burghers, as if that was being neglected ; whereas, on the contrary, the Government was not only providing education now, but had spent upwards of £130,000 during the last year of the war in providing teachers and giving lessons.¹ The general effect of the

¹ "In nearly every camp there was a flourishing school, crowded by eager and intelligent children, keen to learn English, and ready to be interested in all that their teachers had to offer in the way of education, physical and mental."—Report on the Concentration Camps in South Africa by the Committee of Ladies, Dec. 1901 [Cd. 893], p. 5. One English paper suggested that the Government were educating the children out of pure cruelty! "What the camps want is nurses, not teachers; women to keep the children alive and 'mother them,' and not drive knowledge into bloodless brains. The Government dread nurses as they dread any extension of sympathy to these unhappy weaklings. *Hating education, their idea probably is that in sending school-mistresses they are applying a sort of punishment to the poor bairns.*"—*Daily News*, Nov. 15th, 1901. Everyone will recollect the little Boer maiden, Isie Malan, who wittily said she wanted to learn English so that she might say

Appeal was to hold up England to the execration of the world, and represent her as callously leaving to their fate the inhabitants of the regions which had been desolated by the war.

This gave great offence in England; and with good reason. But it was really a case more for pity than for anger. The three men who signed the Appeal had never been in European cities before. They imagined that the loud profession of zeal for their cause meant a great deal more than it did. They were easily led to believe that the pretentious committee men, the gentlemen in evening dress and decorations, who handed them bouquets and wreaths, and read long addresses, were going to do wonderful things. And the shouting crowds who thronged the streets gave the impression of a great public ready to help them in the shape of hard cash to a very large amount. Before the Appeal had been

“Hands up” to the ‘Khakis.’ When brought to the camps it was found that over 80 per cent. could neither read nor write; but they were very intelligent, and eager to learn.

two days in print people were finding reasons for keeping their money in their pockets; and one of these reasons was thus disposed of. "We have," said the chief Boer paper, "heard one objection from ardent Pro-Boers—'It is the duty of England to repair the desolation she has made. She, then, and not the Boers, will profit by what we give.' This objection will not bear examination. England does not wish to do her duty to her victims. She has a strong reason for not doing so; for the more poor and miserable the Boers are, the more power she will have over them. A people without bread is a people easily reduced to slavery."

But the chief feature of what was said on the Continent was extreme caution. Here and there a few words of warm support might be read; and, particularly in Germany, there were papers which made the Appeal an excuse for fresh attacks on England. But the Germans are very practical about money; and the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of Munich probably spoke for a majority of the Kaiser's subjects when it said that the best thing the Boers

could do would be to take a loan from England. That, it said plainly, would do them far more good than the very most they could possibly obtain from a tour through Europe, which would not be much. The English people, other Germans said, have too much common-sense to allow the Boers to starve, and the Generals should have equal common-sense, and not defeat their own object by travelling about, and alienating the English.¹ In Paris the *Débats* said that the Appeal seemed to be issued on behalf of a nationality which was distinct from the British Empire, and that the Boers not only failed to appreciate what had been done for them, but were attacking England in an underhand way. “It is a kind of spiritual sedition, a continuance of moral resistance in time of peace, and we are witnessing a British outburst which is just as English as it is human.”

¹ The well-known *Kölnische Zeitung* get rid of the Appeal for funds neatly by saying that if there was any private business to be arranged between England and the Boers, other countries should let them manage it for themselves without interference.

It was perfectly well known, too, that the Generals were being used for political purposes ; and on this point the *Indépendance Belge* spoke out. "The Anglophobes of the Continent," it said, "ought not to be permitted to employ the cause of the Boers in order to gratify their own personal spite ; and if the Boer Generals desire to remove all misconceptions, they ought to apply direct to the British people." In private circles the same thing was said on all hands, at least in Belgium, where the tactics of Dr Leyds and the extreme party had been thoroughly understood for a long time.

The Rubicon, however, had been crossed, and the campaign begun, on the 26th of September, with a journey to several Dutch towns, which Generals Botha and Delarey visited without General De Wet, who hated the whole thing even more than they did, and remained at Amsterdam looking after his book about the war.¹ The Generals did all they

¹ When he finished it he said writing was interesting work, but much harder than fighting, and he heartily pitied those who had to make a living by it.

could to prevent anti-English cries, discouraged the singing of the *Volkslied*, and induced the *Petit Bleu* of Brussels to refrain from printing, in the subscription lists, those insults to England which had hitherto accompanied everything given to the Boers. But it was soon easy to see that the issue of the Appeal and the commencement of the Generals' tour had put new life into the enemies of England. For a short time it had seemed as if the extreme Anglophobia of the last three years had worn itself out, and as if the ink-stained warriors who did their fighting with the pen were beginning to tire. But now the signal had been given for fresh hostilities; and the Pro-Boer papers teemed with what was intended to discredit England, and interfere with the peaceful settlement of South Africa.

Nor is it possible to say that the Generals themselves did nothing to inflame the minds of those whom they addressed against the country whose subjects they now were. General Botha afterwards said, when writing about this journey: “Not a single incident

took place anywhere which ought reasonably to wound the sensibilities of the most patriotic British subject"; and also: "Wherever we travelled, not only did we ourselves eschew politics, but we insisted in having them excluded by everyone else with whom we came into contact as well. How far we went in that direction will never be known from the newspapers, which can no more take cognizance of the private acts which prepare the ground for public ones, than they can perceive motives or gauge intentions." It is well known that they did all they could to prevent open attacks on England, and that they always laid great stress on the fact that they were engaged on a philanthropic errand. But the whole atmosphere in which these proceedings took place was charged with hostility to England; the people who arranged their meetings were, most of them, the very men who had already proved that their hatred to England knew no bounds; it was urged in the press, which supported them, that one great reason for helping the Boers was that it would enable them to rise against England at some future

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time. They were powerless to prevent their tour assuming a political aspect, though doubtless it was owing to their efforts that, in this respect, it fell far short of what had been originally intended.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE NETHERLANDS.

THE most successful meeting in Holland was held at Leeuwarden, the chief town of the Frisians in ancient days, and still a place of some interest, where General Botha explained the reasons for the surrender. "It was only," he said, "after great hesitation that we made peace, and we were only driven to peace because savage Kaffirs were allowed to make common cause against us, because hunger gnawed us, because thousands of our women and children died in the concentration camps, and because no European nation intervened in our behalf."¹

¹ Contrast this with "Correspondence relating to the Appeal of the Boer Generals to the Civilized World" [Cd. 1329], 1902, where Mr Chamberlain, having shown that for the last six months of the war the death rate was only

But the chief interest of the speeches made in Holland lies in what came out at that time, and in connection with them, about Mr Kruger's dealings with the public funds of the Transvaal, from which Mr Chamberlain afterwards suggested that substantial assistance might be obtained. Some letters written by burghers, in the *Leader* at Johannesburg, stated that there was a suspicion "that things were not quite right and aboveboard," and that "the collection tour for the benefit of the widows and orphans was all humbug, and that the funds will in reality flow into other channels and be applied to a widely different purpose"; and one of the writers, Mr Andreas Van der Merve, said that when appealing to

21 per thousand per annum, adds: "It is therefore clear that at the actual time of the surrender there could have been no cause for anxiety as to the condition of the women and children in the British camps"; and General Botha replies: "I recognize that towards the close of the war improvements were introduced into them in consequence of which the death-rate fell to an ordinary figure." At the last the Boers were anxious to get their womenfolk into the camps. It was even proposed that some of the burghers should surrender, in order to take the women to the British lines.

Europe the Boer leaders should give a statement of accounts showing what had become of all the gold which, he asserted, Mr Kruger had taken with him, and also of the assets of the Chamber of Orphans¹ in the Transvaal, which had disappeared.

These were matters which could not be ignored on the eve of an appeal for funds; and before Mr Reitz started for America he made a long statement, in which he defended Mr Kruger against the charge of having appropriated a large sum of money before he left the Transvaal. The *Nieuwe Courant*, published at The Hague, followed this up by stating, "on authority," that there was no truth in the report that the members of the old Transvaal Government carried off funds held by them on behalf of the orphans. "The Boer officials," it said, "did not take a single farthing belonging to the State. Before Mr Kruger left, all

¹ The *Weeskamer*, a Government department which held in trust the property of orphans who were minors. The British Government had already made itself responsible for this money (which had vanished) and ordered payment of principal and interest as they became due.

the available money was divided between the Transvaal and Orange commandos." Next an official explanation was given. It was the custom of the South African Republic to place all sums inherited by minors in the hands of the Treasurer-General, who lent them on mortgage on behalf of the orphans. When the war began these sums amounted to about £280,000, of which £80,000 were invested on mortgage. At the same time the deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank were £300,000, also placed on mortgage. At the beginning of the year 1900, when the war had continued for about three months, there was a run on the Savings Bank; and as the Bank was unable to realize the sums required, the Transvaal Government authorized the Treasurer-General to pay over to the Postmaster-General the cash of the orphans, in order to enable him to meet the calls upon the Savings Bank. About £250,000 were thus paid over; and it was intended that the mortgages held by the Savings Bank should serve as security for the money advanced out of the means held on behalf of the orphans.

It will be observed that, according to this statement, £80,000 of the orphans' money was invested. So that cash to the amount of about £200,000 must have been taken, and securities amounting to £50,000 realized, to make up the sum of £250,000 appropriated by the Transvaal Government out of the orphans' means in order to support the credit of the Savings Bank. It is true that if the mortgages held by Government were sufficient, the money could have been repaid; but in the meantime the cash of the Chamber of Orphans was gone.

When speaking in Holland General Botha said that Mr Kruger had lent to the Transvaal Government £40,000, repayment of which he was entitled to demand from England. This was followed by a statement in Dr Leyds' paper, which said that when the war was declared the Transvaal Government possessed only £60,000. Mr Kruger, however, lent his country the greater part of his fortune; and "it was, therefore, as a creditor of the Transvaal that Kruger left Komati-poort in September 1900 to embark at Laurenco Marquez. Since the peace, England, hav-

ing assumed the government of the former Republic, ought legally to acknowledge the debts of its previous Government, and restore to Kruger the money which he lent." ¹

As to the gold which was sent to Europe during the war the only explanation that has ever been given is that it was private property, belonging to certain banks. Mr Chamberlain has said that the Government are aware that

¹ "The proposal *de facto* is that the British Government shall repay all monies which the Republic borrowed with the object of fighting against England," said Lord Milner during the negotiations (De Wet, App. B. p. 454). This really was the idea in Pro-Boer circles abroad. It came to this, that if a Commandant chose to seize the whole contents of a shop and give a receipt for it, the English are bound to pay that receipt in full; still more must they pay back to Mr Kruger that portion of his private fortune which he is said to have handed over to the commandos to enable them to carry on the war. An American journalist who was in Pretoria just before it was occupied says that Mr Kruger told him that, up till then, the war had cost £4,000,000, and that, "with the help of the Almighty," they could carry it on indefinitely, as they were getting £1,000,000 a month out of the mines. Soon after the war began Dr Leyds was asked if the Transvaal had enough money. He said that "the financial resources of the Republic are quite sufficient, in view of our (the Boer) estimate of the probable duration of the war."

large sums were remitted to be expended in the interests of the South African Republic. General Botha has said that he has no knowledge of such remittances. Rumour has said that Mr Kruger and Dr Leyds are still in possession of about £1,000,000, which they retain as a war chest. The facts may never come out; but if this money is still in existence, we may well doubt whether much of it will reach the widows and orphans in South Africa. It is to be hoped that it will not be used for some purpose which may increase their number.

The town of Leeuwarden subscribed 50,000 francs to the Transvaal fund; and the Generals had every right to expect that large cities like Brussels, Antwerp, and Ghent, not to speak of Paris and Berlin afterwards, would do as well in proportion to their size. They had not yet found out that the more noise the less money was to be the rule; and the scene when they entered Brussels on the evening of Monday the 6th of October gave promise of a rich harvest. Nothing like it had ever been seen there on any previous

occasion. Long before half-past six, when the train was to arrive, the wide Place Rogier in front of the Gare du Nord was so crowded that it seemed as if the whole population of the city had gone thither. All the seats in front of the cafés and restaurants were occupied; every window was full; and it was almost impossible for any traveller to reach the station through the crowd, which overflowed the Place itself, and stood packed together in the neighbouring streets, and along the boulevards in the direction of the Hotel du Grand Monarque, where the Generals were to take up their quarters. The station was guarded by a company of the Tenth Regiment of the Line, and the railway officials did their best to keep out the crowd, and preserve order. But the platform was stormed, and when the train came in there was hardly standing room, in spite of all the soldiers could do to keep an open space in front of the carriage in which the Boer leaders travelled.

The moment the train stopped the soldiers were swept aside, and the Generals were

almost pulled out on to the platform, which rang with deafening shouts of "Vivent les Boers! Vive Botha! Vive De Wet!" By a quick flank movement General De Wet slipped aside past the engine, and escaped. But General Botha, in difficulties with a bag which he carried, was closed in until a porter said, "Give me your bag, General," and made his way in front, pushing through the people till at last they were at the entrance of the station, where, crushed and breathless from jostling through the crowd, they were greeted with tremendous cries of welcome, waving of hats, and shouts of "Vivent les Boers!" which sounded loud enough to rouse those who sleep beneath the trees in the orchard at Hugomont.

At last they reached their carriages, which went slowly through the multitude, with an escort of mounted police in front, out from the Place Rogier to the Boulevard Anspach, and round into the Rue Fripiers, where is the Hotel du Grand Monarque, which they entered amidst a scene of the wildest uproar. It was "Vive le Transvaal!" "Vive l'Orange!"

“Vivent les Boers!” all the time, with a glare of Bengal lights from the windows, flags waving, and a dense mass of people through which the Generals were just able to push their way with the help of the police, some of whom themselves cried “Vivent les Boers!” as they fought and struggled with the crowd.

Within, the Comité Pro-Boer had fitted up a ‘Salon Transvaalien,’ decorated with flowers and the colours of the Boer Republics, and with portraits of Mrs Botha, the Transvaal Government of 1882, and President Steyn; and here there was a short reception at which Mrs and Miss Helen Botha, Mrs Delarey and her daughter, Mrs Ferreira, Mrs Maritz-Botha, and some other ladies were present. But the man in the street was not to be denied, and the Generals had to appear on the balcony and say something. General Botha contented himself with thanking the people of Brussels for their welcome; but General De Wet said: “If all Europe had thought as you do, the Governments would have intervened.” General Deleray shouted as loud as he could, “Thanks to the Belgians. Long live Belgium.”

The Comité Pro-Boer worked the 'Glorious Trio' hard that night. As soon as they re-entered the hotel they had to hear a very long address read, of which one paragraph said: "With emotions of helpless anger we beheld the inaction of the political world in Europe permitting every cruelty and every infamy to be accomplished. Oh! if the people and not the statesmen had been in power, with what eagerness they would have rushed to help you!"¹ And later there was a great public meeting in the hall of the Grande-Harmonie, the largest place of the

¹ M. de Favereau got into terrible hot water for calling England "The torch of civilization." In December 1901 the Belgian Chamber of Deputies had a two days' debate on an interpellation brought forward by M. Vandervelde, a Socialist leader, the effect of which would have been to draw the Government from its neutral attitude. This was defeated by only five votes. M. de Favereau said that the British Government were doing all they could for the concentration camps. "Allons donc!" cried M. Vandervelde. "Even Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman," retorted M. de Favereau, "whose strong speeches we know so well, admits that the English Government has tried to do its duty." Next morning the *Petit Bleu* attacked M. de Favereau and challenged him to quote any speech by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman to that effect.

kind in Brussels. It was packed full; and the cheering was loud and long when the Generals arrived, and during their speeches, parts of which may be quoted. General De Wet began, and his first sentence made his hearers laugh. "When you see me," he said, "you will find out your mistake. You were expecting a phenomenon, but I'm a very ordinary sort of a man. I hope you will forgive me for that." But he touched a more serious vein presently. "We laid down our arms," he said, "on certain conditions. If those conditions are loyally performed—it is well." Here he paused for a moment before going on to say: "Our country is ruined, our farms are burned, and we have come to Europe to ask for help." As to the future his words were: "I have signed the terms of peace, and I will keep my word to our enemies of yesterday; but they must keep theirs too."

General Delarey, who followed, spoke in a strain which suited the feelings of the audience better, though next day there were people in Brussels who said they thought his statements were exaggerated, and his manner somewhat

offensive to his new Government. "Our country," he said, "is entirely devastated, and everything is destroyed. The losses are estimated at £75,000,000, and it seems to me that it would be only honest to pay the whole of these losses. As an honest man, I do not understand how they can throw in our faces a mere pittance."

General Botha, after thanking the people of Belgium for what they had done during the war, said: "One word as to the conditions of peace. We have come to understand the tactics of our enemies. They used two: first, their concentration camps, and then the burning of farms and the devastation of the country. Alas, we did everything to preserve our independence, but how could we resist a people which had decided to exterminate our race? The commandos went three or four days without food. The Commandants said they could not leave their men to die of hunger, and the women of misery; and they preferred the peace which was offered them to certain death. I have no heart to speak long of the sufferings we have endured."

The General seemed to speak as if the English headquarters should have sent daily rations to his men, or spared the cattle so that they might not go without food, and kept the houses standing so that they might always have shelter, and to forget that, after all, 'certain death' is the end of war for those who cannot win and will not yield. But the undeniable heroism with which these brave men had fought was what people were, quite rightly, thinking of that night; and when the meeting came to an end, and the Generals drove down the Montagne de la Cour, they were followed by a crowd who cheered and shouted "Vivent les Boers!" till they reached the Grand Monarque. It was enough to turn the heads of any men; but in the book of the hotel, General Botha, to describe his profession, wrote "Beggar for a people oppressed, but worthy," and General De Wet wrote "Faith is everything."¹

¹ "Bedelaar voor een volk verdrukt, maar vaardig," and "Geloof is alles." It was within a few minutes' walk of the spot now occupied by the Grande-Harmonie that the nobles of the Netherlands drank success to the 'Beggars,' whose nickname was so famous during the

On the 8th of October they spent the day in Ghent, where there was a meeting at which an orchestra played the Transvaal Hymn, and where Professor Fredericq of the University delivered an address, in which he said: "The rulers and Governments have abandoned you, the young Queen of Holland having alone done her duty; but the peoples are on your side, and they will always give you proofs of it." It was eleven o'clock at night before they returned to Brussels, laden with bouquets; but the crowds were waiting, and they were called on to the balcony of the hotel, where General De Wet made a very short speech. All he said was: "I want to know when the Belgians go to bed. For my part, I'm tired. Much obliged for your kindness, but I am going to sleep." With that he

War of Independence against Spain. Subscriptions were received at the 'Hotel du Grand Monarque,' by the *Petit Bleu*, and by the 'Comité Pro-Boer,' 28 Rue Ste Catherine. Collectors also called at private houses, and went round the cafés with boxes; but it was said that the total amount given by Brussels, Antwerp, and Ghent did not equal what was given by the Dutch of Leeuwarden.

retired; but at half-past seven next morning, before anyone was about in the street, he left the hotel alone, and took the train to Holland, without being noticed by the other passengers. It was said that neither of his companions knew he was going. "Is it possible," the *European Express*, the English paper in Brussels, asked, "that the wily General has been the first of the 'Glorious Trio' to estimate the noisy demonstration of friendship of their Belgian admirers at its proper value?"

In the evening Generals Botha and Delarey, with Dr Leyds, followed him; for the next day was Mr Kruger's birthday, and they were to spend it with him at Utrecht.

If on the 10th of October 1899, the day between the sending forth of the ultimatum and the invasion of Natal, Mr Kruger and Mr Reitz had chanced to ask each other where the next birthday would be kept, they might perhaps both have said in Cape Town, with the Vierkleur waving over their heads; and even now it must have seemed incredible to Mr Kruger, like a bad dream, to think that the Transvaal which, only three years before, had

been a place of arms, bristling with Mausers and Creusot guns and all the finest modern weapons of war, with the commandos confident that they would carry everything before them, was lying conquered in the hands of the enemy, and he, three years before the head of a military State, an exile and quite overshadowed, in the eyes of the world, by that very Mr Botha who had so annoyed him, in the day of his pride, by opposing the policy which had brought their country to such ruin. Only a year before, in October, 1901, everyone had been telling him that things were going badly for the English, that their army was worn out, stale, weary of fighting, and would soon not be able to fight any longer. But even then the beginning of the end had come. It was patience, preparation, that had been mistaken for weariness. The lion was only crouching for his spring. Now all was lost, so far as he was concerned; and the function at Utrecht that day seems to have been in keeping with the melancholy situation of the old man, who entered the cathedral in company with the Generals, mounted the

pulpit, and preached a short sermon in the Taal. "The words," it was said, "fell with difficulty from his trembling lips." That evening he gave a private dinner at the villa Oranjelust, and a few days later journeyed to Mentone, where he was to spend the winter, well cared for in a luxurious home, in the midst of palms and orange trees, and consoled by the thought that he had always done what was right, and that if his countrymen were suffering it was not his fault.

From Utrecht the Generals returned to Brussels, where they remained until the morning of the 13th of October, when they left for Paris.

CHAPTER X.

PARIS AND THE GENERALS.

DURING their stay in Brussels there had been no anti-British demonstrations, not even any cries of "À bas les Anglais" in the streets, which might have been expected at a time of such excitement; and it was known that this was so at the express request of the Generals. But they were in a very peculiar situation. British subjects, they had to address audiences which were seething with animosity to Great Britain, and to spend their time in the company of people who, during the war, had been talking, writing, and working against her, and in whose eyes their present mission was quite as much political as philanthropic. They took with them to Paris an interpreter to translate their speeches. This was M.

Camille Huysmans, one of the staff of the *Petit Bleu*, the recognized organ of Dr Leyds in the Belgian press, and, therefore, very active in the war of the pen against Great Britain. On the day after they left Brussels this paper published an article which shows what was simmering beneath the surface all the time, and how difficult it must have been for the three Generals to keep the Anglophobes in order. After saying that the "implacable hatred" of England was following them on their journey, it continued thus:—"It is necessary to read, as we do, the English papers, to see how they spit every day in the faces of these heroes, who would have been still unconquered if it had not been necessary to prevent the extermination of their wives and children. Not a day passes but the press of this generous Albion brutally reproaches the Boer Generals with the beggary to which England has reduced them. Not a day but it mocks at the uselessness of their appeal to Pro-Boer charity. Not a day but its sickening language reminds us of Delilah pouring sarcasms on the helplessness of Samson, chained

and blind—before, his locks having grown, he pulled down with his mighty arms the pillars of the house.” There we have a hint at the coming revenge; and then it explains why there had been a pause in the attacks on England:—“We can say fearlessly that if, during these last days, we have for our part endeavoured to curb a hatred to England which is as natural as the aversion of every conscience to the worst of malefactors, if from the first we have advised the public not to betray a shadow of hostility to the murderers of the Boer people, it is due to the influence of the heroic three Generals, who know how to control their own feelings as well as they controlled their troops, and to moderate those of other people by the very atmosphere which one breathes in their soothing company.”

This is quite a mild sample of the kind of writing on which the anti-British agitation thrived; but it is sufficient to show the real sentiments of the extreme men, what language they must have used in their intercourse with the Boer leaders, and in what a false position these were placed by the Appeal, and all that

followed it. And in Paris this became more plain than ever. The Parisian mob was not so reticent as that of Brussels. In the streets cries against England were heard as well as cheers for the Boers; and the arrest of some who shouted "Death to the English" did not stop these demonstrations. Here, too, they were in the midst of a population which had gloated over such things as the pictures in *Le Rire* and *L'Assiette au Beurre*, specimens of Continental Pro-Boer art so vile that more than once they had been suppressed by the French Government. One of these consisted of a large print in bright colours, in the upper part of which we saw heaven, the Father, and the Son, and before them Mrs Kruger bending over the mouth of hell, from which Queen Victoria, in the midst of flames and surrounded by devils, was trying vainly to escape, while beneath were the words "Bonne Madame Kruger! Pouvez vous jamais obtenir le pardon de cette Reine cruelle?" And there were things far worse than that, things of such a nature that some "Stop-the-vileness" tract, or at least some remonstrance, might

have been expected from the English supporters of Mr Kruger's cause. "Non tali auxilio," they might have said; but by silence they gave consent, and their own writings appeared side by side with the loathsome matter which lay for sale on the bookstalls of Paris. Here also was the *Paris Nouvelles* agency, with its office in the Rue des Saints-Pères, whence calumnies against the British army had been sent all over Europe. When brought to the test of evidence these had always broken down; but most of the people who met the Boer Generals still believed them, and M. Pauliat, one of the chief managers of the *Paris Nouvelles*, was the most prominent figure in the doings of the next few days.

On the morning of their arrival the Generals went to the Elysée, under pressure from the Comité Pro-Boer, it is said, and only after having received an assurance, on which they thought it necessary to insist, that no political meaning was to be given to their visit. M. Loubet was not in Paris; but they afterwards saw M. Combes and M. Delcasse.¹ They were

¹ The night before, the Paris correspondent of the

entertained at dinner that evening in the Restaurant Marguery, when some of the most violent of the Anglophobes were present, and when Dr Leyds made a speech in which he said that the Guerre de Plume which had been carried on in Europe was practically part of the struggle in which the Generals had been engaged in South Africa.

But the chief event of their sojourn in Paris was a public meeting in the Nouveau Théâtre on the evening of the 14th, when M. Pauliat was chairman. On this occasion the Generals had to sit on the stage, surrounded by Nationalists, and hear their chairman attacking Great Britain as having been the great enemy of

Petit Bleu wired to Brussels: "Vous pouvez démentir le bruit d'après lequel les généraux Boers, à leur arrivée à Paris demain matin, iront déposer leurs cartes chez le Président de la République et d'autres représentants du pouvoir. Ils se sont interdit de faire en quoi que ce soit des démarches de ce genre, d'une part de crainte de s'exposer, aux yeux de l'impitoyable Angleterre, au soupçon d'intrigue politique, d'autre part pour consacrer, autant que possible, tout leur temps et tous leurs efforts à la mission de charité, rude et pénible, qui leurs a été confiée par leur peuple en haillons et sans foyers." The visit, however, took place, though probably against the private wishes of the Generals.

France for a century and a half, praising them for having destroyed her position in the world, and declaring that their work was not yet done. Though General Botha was careful to admit, in his first sentence, that the Boers had been vanquished in the war, he used language about the concentration camps which led his audience to utter such cries as "Down with the English tyrants."¹ But, though they were cheered to the echo, the practical results

¹ See "Correspondence relating to the Appeal of the Boer Generals" [Cd. 1329], 1902, for Mr Chamberlain's remarks on this speech, and General Botha's explanation. The General's speech seemed to mean that the British had purposely made use of the sufferings of the people in the camps in order to bring about the Boer surrender; but when Mr Chamberlain called his attention to this he explained that he was alluding chiefly to the women and children outside the camps. General Botha, at the time of the surrender, evidently knew that all was well in the concentration camps; for he said to the burghers at Vereeniging, "One is only too thankful nowadays to know that our wives are under English protection" (De Wet, App. C. p. 491). It was in this speech that General Botha said the two Republics had, when the war began, "at least sixty thousand men under arms." Add to these the Cape rebels, and the chance of European intervention! No wonder the Boer-Hollanders were so certain of conquering the British colonies in South Africa.

gained by the Generals were not great. They received from one source £3000; but the rest of the subscriptions are said to have amounted to less than £400.

Flattering though the reception given to the Generals in Paris was, so far as words and noise went, the public enthusiasm fell short of that with which Mr Kruger had been greeted when he first came to Europe, at a time when Fashoda was still rankling in the minds of Frenchmen, and also what had been said in England about the affair of Dreyfus. Nevertheless their presence in Paris had been made an excuse for expressions of animosity to England by that noisy minority who always seek to pose as the French people; and what happened there helped to show that at any moment their journey might assume a political complexion. And now the time had come when their position, already sufficiently awkward, might become quite untenable; for the next move was to Germany.

CHAPTER XI.

GERMANY.

MR CHAMBERLAIN had failed to read the signs of the time aright, if, when he described the German agitation during the winter of 1901-1902 as 'artificial' he meant that it was worked up from outside, or started by the wirepullers of the Pro-Boer movement. It was something far more serious. Everyone who was in Germany during the war knows that we should have a very inadequate conception of what that outburst really meant if we supposed that it was not perfectly spontaneous. The dislike of many, perhaps even of most, Germans to England is deep and real. "The Boer war," said Professor Mommsen, "has accentuated the antagonism but it did not produce it"; and no words could better describe

the position. Disquisitions on the cause of this state of things have employed many pens on both sides of the North Sea; but all we know for certain is that the slumbering dislike to England was there, and that when the war broke out the German soil was ready for the seed which the press began to sow. The work of defamation went on; pen and pencil worked busily; and soon it was hardly possible to open a newspaper without finding an attack on England, or to walk along the streets of a German town without seeing some venomous new pamphlet, or scurrilous postcard in the windows, or some insulting cartoon in the *Ulk*, or *Kladderadatsch*, or the staring broadsheet of *Simplicissimus*. There were our soldiers described, in the press of this nation with which we were at peace, as inhuman monsters, thieves, robbers tearing open the dresses of women to steal a few pence, murderers shooting whole families in cold blood, whipping women and children, kicking them along the roads, leaving them to die of hunger on the ground, cowards sheltering themselves behind women in battle, digging

up dead Boers and flinging them in revenge upon the veldt, travelling in armoured trains with women tied to stakes round the sides of the trucks, starving the prisoners, and spreading disease purposely amongst them, murdering infants, and doing other things which cannot even be named.

This was how the German people were told that Great Britain was carrying on the war; and if a British subject tried to defend his countrymen, the answer always was that things as bad were said in England. What was a German to think when he read in English writings of "Massacre," of "intentional starvation," of "robbery," of "British hands dripping with blood," or "the policy of child murder"? The editor of an English journal thanked God "that in Germany and the other nations of the Continent there are men strong enough to call baby-murder a crime," and actually went so far as to ask this shameful question:—"What torture can be keener than that of the death by famine, which is now inflicted upon women and children as part of our system of severity? And is cannibalism

less awful than the enforced degradation of matron and maid compelled by hunger to submit to the extremity of shame in British camp and Kaffir kraal?" No wonder, then, that the worst was believed of the British soldier, or that when Mr Chamberlain alluded to the stern measures employed during the later stages of the war with France, a howl of rage rose from one end of Germany to the other, the Germans thinking that he had accused their army of having perpetrated the crimes of which they fully believed our soldiers to be guilty, on the testimony of their own press, corroborated by what had been said in England.¹

The agitation which followed Mr Chamberlain's Edinburgh speech of 25th October 1901

¹ In Germany people could not understand why our Government made no formal and public representation to the German Government. A German University friend of mine, who was a student with me before the big war of 1870-71, told me this was making a bad impression, and looked like letting judgment go by default. Prince Bismarck opened fire at once when the German army was attacked; but our Ministers acted so that the German press thought it might treat England just as it pleased.

was national in its dimensions. The German army is the German people. There is scarcely a village in the Fatherland in which one does not find a pillar placed in some open spot, so that all must see it, and inscribed with the names of the men from the surrounding district who fell in the war with France. These monuments are the objects of peculiar veneration; and, therefore, all classes were up in arms when they were told that the English Minister, who had already been represented to them as a monster of duplicity and wickedness, had accused the army of the Franco-German war of the excesses which they ignorantly believed the British army was committing in South Africa. That was the real secret of the German outburst, which, beginning with a misunderstanding and a protest against one Minister's speech, developed into an attack on the English people. Professors lectured, and learned men wrote books, against England. The *Kriegsvereine* of the old soldiers, knit together by the glorious memories of the war, were with difficulty restrained by Government from holding indigna-

tion meetings. Generals no longer on the active list harangued. Students marched the streets of the university towns and passed resolutions, though it was noticed that the white caps of the Corps Borussia at Bonn, to which the Crown Prince, like his father before him, belonged, were not seen at these gatherings. In every village wirtshaus, men sat round the iron stoves and cursed at England. And this went on during the rest of the war, though the German Court and Government were known to disapprove.

After the peace was made steps were taken to try and stop this dangerous war of the pen, which Professor Mommsen and other men of influence in Germany deplored; and the newspapers which are supposed to represent official opinion began to say that it was high time the attacks on Great Britain ceased, and to protest against the way in which the comic journals, which are numerous and strangely powerful in Germany, treated the British Royal family. But the Pan-German and the Socialist papers would not be silenced; and, indeed, their violence seemed

to be increased by the very fact that the Government was understood to have let it be known that the agitation against Great Britain gave displeasure in the official world. Nevertheless the movement for improving the tone of the press towards the British people might have led to good results if it had not been thwarted by the incidents which attended the coming of the Boer Generals to Berlin.¹

It was easy to see that the German Government looked askance at the prospect of this

¹ In March Freiherr von Richthofen, the Foreign Secretary, said in the Prussian Diet: "Let us not always assume, from the very first, that everything which happens on the English side is wrong and bad. I may quote an example. I read descriptions about the prisoners' camps which would make your hair stand on end. A few days ago one of our Generals, who was in a position from his own experience to report on the matter, was at my house, and he said to me, 'I consider it my duty, and I authorize you to make use of my name, to declare that I found the prisoners' camps in Ceylon perfect models.'" This was General Trotha, on his return from China. The German prisoners complained to him about their food, for which he laughed at them, and said they could hardly expect the English to feed them up on oysters. They had no other complaint; but the papers were full of horrors about that camp, as they were about all the others.

visit. Only eight months had passed since the great explosion against England was at its height. The Reichstag would be sitting; and there was no saying what members like Herr Liebermann von Sonnenberg might do. If he should again say, rising in his place as a member of the House, that the English army was composed of "thieves and banditti," in order to flatter the Boer Generals, perhaps Herr Bebel might reply that the German soldiers had been as brutal in China as the English in South Africa, and insist, as he had done before, that there had been grave excesses in the war with France.¹ Then the Socialist paper *Vorwärts* might once again argue that the Graf von Bülow, though he denied the truth of the charges made against the Germans in China, evidently believed those made against the English army, since he found

¹ "If you close with the enemy, know that *quarter is not to be given*, and that *no prisoners are to be taken*," were the Kaiser's orders, it will be remembered, when the troops sailed for China. *Simplicissimus* got into trouble for its criticisms and cartoons about the expedition to China, and the doings there. I think the editor was sent to prison.

fault with what Mr Chamberlain had said, and had himself nothing to say in defence of the British soldiers except that they knew how to die. And so the whole dreary round of recrimination might begin again, and was sure to end in making more bad blood than ever between England and Germany, as well as adding to the domestic troubles of the Imperial Government with the powerful Opposition in the Reichstag.

The South African question, the greater part of German society felt, was not at present one of practical politics. Just then, while the Generals were still in Paris, Herr Bassermann, a leader of the National Liberal Party, told a conference of the Liberal Associations at Eisenach that, in the meantime, Germans must keep quiet, and leave Great Britain alone until the navy was stronger. That was the opinion amongst men of moderate views, who did not believe in strong words with no chance of strong deeds to follow; and even if the naval power of Germany had somewhat grown since the war began, it was felt by all cool-headed people, however

hostile they might be to the 'Englische Politik,' if not to the English people, that an anti-British carnival in Berlin would give needless offence in Great Britain and could be of no earthly use to Germany. The papers said much the same thing. The *Kölnische Zeitung*, one of those which are called official, said it feared that the Boer Generals' visit would be made the occasion for a display of bad feeling towards England, and that Germans were making a mistake in mixing themselves up with the Boer question, which did not affect the interests of their own country. Why, it asked, though the answer is very obvious, did the Boers choose Germany, of all countries, for coming and making trouble in?

For a few days it was supposed that the Generals would abandon this German tour in consequence of the hostile attitude of the authorities at Berlin. But Mr Kruger's Dutch organ, the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*,¹

¹ This paper, at the time of the great German outburst of 1901-1902, made an amusingly ingenuous admission. "When," it said, "we published accounts of Boer wounded

announced that they were not frightened by the warnings which came from Germany ; and the Belgian paper said that all it asked was that the Kaiser would let his subjects receive the Boer leaders in their own way without interference, as he had been allowed to receive his friends the English Generals. "Besides," it added, "the German Pro-Boers, like those of Holland and Belgium, are firmly resolved not to utter hostile cries against John Bull ; because they know these would please John Bull himself, for they would give him an excuse for further severities against the Boers." And so it was soon known that the Pan-German League, which managed the business, was going on with its arrangements, which were to include a public dinner and a donation of £10,000. Suddenly, at the end of September, came the news that the Generals would probably be admitted to an audience by the Kaiser ; and this "put all the fat in the fire." The German official papers changed

and prisoners being killed at Elandslaagte, it was at the instigation of the Transvaal Ambassador (Dr Leyds), and from his purse we were paid."

their tone at once, said it was a gracious act to receive these British subjects, ceased all opposition to the visit, and explained that England could not take offence, because the Generals were to be received at their own request, and not by invitation from the Kaiser. This was never doubted at first, and it was believed that the Pastor Schowalter had managed to obtain the help of Dr Kuyper to arrange the audience. Indeed, Dr Leyds' own paper in Belgium spoke as if the initiative came from them:—"It appears that Generals Botha, Delarey, and De Wet have requested an audience from the Emperor William on the occasion of their visit to Berlin, and that this audience has been promised them by the Sovereign who, in December 1901, refused to receive President Kruger, but consents to receive them because they are, for the present, British subjects." The Kaiser, it was pointed out, would see for himself what sort of men the Boer Generals were, and this might have an important effect on "their future relations with German South Africa." As the Generals were 'momentarily' British subjects, the

Ambassador of Great Britain might have to present them. This was called 'un détail piquant'; but it turned out to be a very important matter.

The way in which the news of the Imperial audience was received in England showed that the Generals had been led into dangerous paths. The British public had not forgotten, nor was it likely they would soon forget, the terms in which the Kaiser had telegraphed to President Kruger in January 1896,¹ the grave suspicions that the German Government had meditated a coalition of European Powers for the purpose of intervening in South Africa, and the manner in which the German press had attacked, not only the people of Great Britain and their Ministers, but also Queen Victoria, King Edward, and the Royal House generally, without let or hindrance from any German authority. It was no use trying to

¹ "I express to you my sincere congratulations that, *without appealing to the help of friendly Powers*, you and your people have succeeded in repelling with your own forces the armed bands which had broken into your country, and in maintaining the independence of your country against *foreign aggression*."

hoodwink the English as to what this proposed reception at Berlin would be taken to mean on the Continent of Europe; for there are limits to the "simplicity of John Bull." The leading British journals went straight to the point. "Were they to seek and obtain such an audience," said the principal London paper, "we should be compelled to revise our views as to the personal friendship of the Emperor for us, and to revise our own judgment on the loyalty and honesty of the Boer chiefs."¹

The German press hastened to explain that the reception would have no political significance, because the Kaiser merely wished to see the Boer leaders and perhaps speak to them on military topics; while at the same time the official papers informed the country that no audience would be granted unless the Generals asked for it through the British Ambassador.

¹ *The Times*, Sept. 30, 1902. On the previous day, when the audience was first mentioned publicly, General De Wet wired to Brussels: "News premature; nothing yet decided. These statements hurt our cause." Failing the Kaiser, it was said an audience with the Tsar would be sought.

There the matter rested for a few days, during which the Leyds press showed somewhat of its ancient vigour. Whatever might be going on behind the scenes, the orchestra was playing bravely, and we were led to expect that when the curtain rose it would be on a magnificent set-scene,—Unter den Linden, the German people leading the Boer Generals in triumph to the Kaiser, and in the background England baffled and helpless. The reception, we were told one morning, would be “a grave reverse to British diplomacy.” The incident was spoken of as the new Anglo-German quarrel, which might lead to important results for the Boers. Articles began to appear saying that the South African question was not yet settled, and that the struggle was about to begin again without delay. All through the war the exiled Transvaal Government had pursued a kind of phantom foreign policy, and used all sorts of methods, which ranged from trying to form European combinations down to sending barrow-loads of post-cards to the Tsar of Russia, but always with the same object,—the intervention of some Continental Power between the

Briton and the Boer. And now we were told that the Kaiser was impulsive, and that there was no saying what he might do when he had seen the Generals. What was to prevent him demanding better conditions of peace? And some, taking a wild flight of fancy, said that, though it looked compact on paper, the German Empire was really torn (which is quite true) by internal dissensions which could only be healed by another great war in the fires of which the discordant elements would be fused into one solid mass. If the signal was given to break with England, Germany would be one: it would be "Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles," and in a last great struggle the union which the war against France had inaugurated would be finally consolidated. Then, when England was crushed—for that was a foregone conclusion—South Africa would be a part of the price which the victors would extort from her, and the Boers would be independent under a German protectorate. But these were only the day-dreams of imaginative Pan-Germans; and more sober-headed persons contented themselves

with wondering whether the Boer Generals would submit to the 'humiliation,' as it was called, of asking for an audience through the British Ambassador, and whether, if they refused, the Kaiser would "deprive himself of the honour of an interview with the Glorious Three."

On Tuesday the 6th of October it was believed in Berlin that the Imperial audience would take place, and a manifesto was issued by the Reception Committee, in which the Generals were described as "Botha the organizer, Delarey the victor, and De Wet the Blucher of South Africa"; and prominent amongst those who signed it were Herr Liebermann von Sonnenberg, who in the Reichstag had called the British Colonial Minister "Der verrüchtteste Bube den Gottes Erdboden trägt,"¹ and Dr Johannes Trojan, the editor of *Kladderadatsch*, which had teemed for three years with almost the coarsest specimens of Pan-German hate to England. But next morning it was announced

¹ "The most insane scoundrel that God's earth bears."

that the Kaiser was not to receive the Generals; and the explanation given was that the Kaiser had said he would receive the Generals if they were presented by the British Ambassador, that General De Wet had agreed to this, but that they now declined the audience unless they were first invited by the Kaiser himself.

Everyone saw what that meant. Whether the Generals had first asked for an audience, or whether the Kaiser had let them know that he wished to see them, the fact remained that they now declined to ask the British Ambassador to present them. It was evident that they had been persuaded to decline by those who wished to impart an anti-British character to the audience, and that the Kaiser was resolved not to play into the hands of these plotters of mischief. In Belgium some people thought that the refusal was purposely designed to cause a breach between the British Ministers and the Boer leaders, who might then be induced to give up all thoughts of conciliation, and go through Europe and America denouncing Mr Chamberlain and his colleagues.

Almost the whole German press laid the blame on the so-called "friends of the Boers," whose fatal policy it was to set the Generals in opposition to the British Government, and wean them from the conciliatory methods which they had tried to follow from the first. The *Tageblatt*, a thoroughgoing Pro-Boer paper, came out with an article against Dr Leyds, and went so far as to say that if the Generals continued to follow his lead and did not behave properly, it might be necessary to send them out of Germany as undesirable aliens. One paper after another took the same line, for the political game which was being played was seen through in a moment. The Generals themselves were severely censured; but, on the whole, the "Hollander gang," as they were called, were held accountable. There was an impression that the same tactics were being employed as when so much was done to obtain an audience for Mr Kruger on his arrival from South Africa, and that the ostensible purpose of the tour was falling out of sight. A letter sent by the Berlin correspondent of the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* put

it thus:—What was pardoned in the case of Kruger, and at a time when the cheering of crowds might still have had some influence on the attitude of Governments, and therefore upon the issue of the war, is condemned in the case of those Generals who signed articles of peace, who received every sign of attention from King Edward, from the people of London, and the entire British press, and have now sold the goodwill of the British masters of their country for a mess of pottage, say for a sixtieth part of what England granted as assistance to the Boers. If the whole agitation-tour should result in one hundred thousand pounds being collected throughout the length and breadth of Europe, people here would be greatly astonished. Three millions in English money sounds very little to Continental ears; but translated into sixty million marks, or seventy-five million francs, or seventy-two million kronen, it sounds a very great deal for the victor to grant to the vanquished, who by his obstinacy caused much of the damage himself—being, indeed, magnanimous without a parallel. If General Delarey should in

Germany repeat that the damage to the houses, furniture, and cattle of, say, fifty thousand Boers amounted to seventy-five million pounds, it would only be necessary for someone to shout 'That means fifteen hundred million marks, or thirty thousand marks for each soul of the property-holding classes of Boers, for the most Pro-Boer audience to recognize at once that they were being fooled. If the Boers continue in their present mood, the people will simply leave them to their lecturing and money-collecting.'

Three days after it was known that the Imperial audience had broken down General Botha was in Brussels, where he gave a statement to Dr Leyds' paper, in which he asked the public not to receive the German account of the fiasco without further explanations. He insisted very strongly on the non-political character of his mission, and said that he and his colleagues had made it distinctly understood in Germany that they would abandon their journey if it was to assume a political character. "I authorize you to repeat this," he said. Other accounts of the affair were given, one of

which was by General De Wet, who said that, if the Kaiser had expressed a wish to see them, he and his companions would have gladly availed themselves of a presentation by the British Ambassador; and people began to suspect, more than ever, that Dr Leyds was at the root of the whole difficulty, and now, perceiving that he had overreached himself, would gladly have seen the Generals received by the Kaiser even in the presence of the English Ambassador. But it was now too late to retrace the false step.

These arrangements for the much-talked-of visit to Berlin had been going on before and during the Generals' trip to Paris; and at last on the evening, and almost at the very hour, of their arrival in Berlin, a statement of what had taken place was issued by authority of the German Government. It seems that the Imperial representative at The Hague informed the Generals that the Kaiser would receive them if they were presented by the British Ambassador, and would promise to avoid anti-British agitation in Berlin. To this General De Wet agreed; and at the end of September,

the coming audience was made known in the press. But a week later, "The Generals informed the official representative of the Empire at The Hague that an application to the British Ambassador had not formed part of their plans, and that they, accordingly, would not apply for the mediation of the Ambassador unless they previously received a formal summons from the Emperor." This made it clear that they had changed their minds; and henceforth no one doubted that this had been brought about by those whose policy it was to place every possible barrier between them and the English Government.

Having left Paris on the afternoon of the 15th of October, the Generals, who were enthusiastically received in Cologne station at midnight, reached Berlin early in the evening of the 16th. The German Government had issued orders that the Appeal was not to be posted up in the city, and had given notice that the police would arrest anyone who uttered cries against England. The Reception Committee had been informed that no procession would be allowed, and that the Generals

must not drive along the main thoroughfares. Public functionaries were forbidden to take part in the proceedings except as private citizens; and officers of the army, it was said, had been told that they must not attend any of the Pro-Boer meetings. In short, the Government set its face against the whole business. But this did not damp the ardour of the people. Windows overlooking the scene of the arrival were hired at prices that ran as high as from £5 to £10 each. Provincial Pro-Boer Committees sent in many delegates. Men walked about the streets wearing Boer hats,¹ and buying post-cards with pictures of the Generals; and when the time came there was a great crowd outside the station, the precincts of which swarmed with policemen in uniform and detectives. The platform was

¹ Dressing up as Boers was quite common. There used to be processions of men on horseback, with rifles and bandoliers, pom-poms (imitation), and so on, leading British prisoners in red coats with their hands tied. The same kind of thing took place in Belgium, where men would be photographed as 'burghers,' sometimes with false beards to look more like the real thing, sitting on wooden rocks put up in the photographer's studio, and looking very fierce and brave.

crowded by members of the Pan-German League, and those to whom they had given tickets; and when the train came in, Herr Lückhoff, President of the Reception Committee, read an address, and presented an enormous wreath to the Generals. The distance from the Tiergarten Station to the Prinz Albrecht Hotel is about three miles by the prescribed route;¹ and, in the opinion of some Berlin people, the welcome which the Boers received all along the way surpassed that given to the troops returning from the great war.

They remained only two days, however, in Berlin. On the evening of their arrival they were entertained at a supper, when a sum of £10,000 was handed to them by the Pro-Boer Committee. Next day they were taken to the Reichstag, where a debate on the Tariff

¹ "Avec le tact qui les caractérise, les généraux ont spontanément décidé . . . de faire un détour pour éviter l'Ambassade Anglaise, afin d'épargner à celle-ci les manifestations Anglophobes qui ne manqueraient pas de se produire," said the *Petit Bleu* (Brussels); but the Pan-Germans would not have been so thoughtful, and it was the police who chose the route.

Bill was going on ; and while they were there, Herr Antrick, a Social Democrat member, who was speaking at the time, told the Chancellor that it was all very fine to talk about preserving the dignity of the House, but the dignity of the Empire had been lowered by the refusal of an audience to the Boer leaders.¹ Prince Herbert Bismarck took them through the building, showed them the busts of his father and of the Graf von Moltke, and then gave them coffee, and also, according to one of the papers, some sound advice. They should try, he is said to have told them, to come to an understanding with the British Government.

That evening there was a meeting in the Philharmonic Hall, where the Transvaal and Orange flags were hung in crape, and where the chairman, Herr Lückhoff, had to call the audience to order for shouting "English lies," when General Botha alluded to some of the charges which have been brought against Mr Kruger. But with that exception, there were no demonstrations against England. General

¹ Herr Antrick is said to have spoken for eight hours in the final debate on the Tariff Bill.

De Wet said that if the rulers had been as kind as the people he would not have hesitated to ask for an audience of the Kaiser; which was understood to mean that the question of the British Ambassador had somehow been the stumbling-block in the way of what had been regarded as the great feature of the visit to Berlin, the Imperial audience. After the meeting the Generals were escorted to their hotel by the crowd, who shouted "Hoch die Buren," and sang the Volkslied in their honour.

But that was the end of it. Two more public meetings which had been arranged were abandoned; and the only other functions which took place were a lunch given by the Pan-German League, a social gathering at which General Delarey told some anecdotes of the war,¹ and an afternoon tea at which the

¹ He said that when Lord Methuen was taken prisoner the burghers were most anxious to keep him as a hostage. One pastor mounted a chair, and blamed the General for proposing to release the Englishman; and it was with much difficulty that he got his own way. From what he said, his motives seem to have been the humane feeling that it would be cruel to retain a wounded prisoner for whom he could not provide, and a curious religious dread lest he might be taking revenge for the

ladies of the Pro-Boer Society presented an address.

The position in which they had placed themselves was quite impossible. They were trying to steer a middle course, to protest their loyalty to England, even to work together with their new Government, and at the same time to go about on the Continent speaking in support of the Appeal, every word of which was a covert attack on England. In pursuance of this policy of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds, this trying to play the double rôle of friend and foe to England, they had to consort everywhere with those who were so undeniably her enemies that these British subjects, in every town they visited, had to implore their friends to restrain their feelings, to moderate their language, and not to speak as they really felt about the British people. So impossible was the position created by this ill-starred Appeal that they themselves, if the whole business was not to be a farce, were under the necessity

loss of his son, who had chanced to be killed in action against troops under Lord Methuen's command.

of using words which strained the slender tie which as yet bound them to their fellow-subjects in the United Kingdom almost to the breaking-point.

In Berlin their speeches were more circumspect and moderate than anywhere else, for already they had begun to feel that, for the sake of their country, they must be careful; but the company they were compelled to keep spoke for them. Dr Trojan read a poem in their honour—Dr Trojan who had celebrated the accession of King Edward by a poem written for the purpose of insulting him; the member who took them into the Reichstag was Herr Liebermann von Sonnenberg, who had been called to order for the grossness of his railings against a British Minister; and their hosts were for the most part Pan-Germans, whose policy was the abasement of Great Britain. It had to be one thing or the other. They had to choose between working in concert with their Government or with its opponents, between genuine conciliation and scarcely veiled hostility. And if they left Europe, and prolonged their tour to America,

they would find Mr Rietz there, engaged in misrepresenting the British Government with inexcusable recklessness,¹ and would be in the midst of the Irish faction, some of whom had misled the Boers by their insane suggestions long before the war.² The plan of such men—those who surrounded them in Europe, and those whom they would meet in the United States—was that they should go about the world denouncing (to use their favourite word)

¹ Mr Reitz began his agitation with an article in the *North American Review* for November 1902, in which he printed the Resolutions passed by the burghers at Vereeniging, when the articles were signed, and said, "The British Ministry have carefully refrained from publishing this document, and their reason for so refraining is not far to seek," the fact being that the Government had published it at full length! It will be found in the South African correspondence laid before Parliament in July 1902 [Cd. 903].

² For example, Patrick Tynan, the Fenian 'No. One,' wrote to South Africa in May 1897: "One thing Britain fears, and that is the possibility of Russia, France, and Germany interfering in your favour, and ordering the evacuation of Egypt. If this alliance takes place, you will have the Pickelhaube and Red Breeches in London, and the Russian troops in India. God grant it; and then we'll see a smash up of the brutal and bloody British Empire."

Britain and the British Ministers. They had been doing it themselves for three years, and their love of violent language had grown by what it fed on. It was such easy work to 'denounce,' needing nothing but paper, pen, and ink, and some scraps from the vocabulary of Thersites, on which the changes could be rung. But it would settle nothing. It would not solve any problems in South Africa, or do anything but harm to those whose cause they had come across the seas to advocate; and it had been felt, probably by the Generals themselves, and certainly by some of those who wished them well in England, that the tour must be abandoned before more harm was done. In Africa, too, burghers who had fought through the war were beginning to shake their heads, and there were letters in the papers from some of them calling upon the Government to stop the agitation which their leaders were conducting in Europe. General De Wet, moreover, was disgusted with the whole business. So were, though for a different reason, those Germans who, in their enmity to England, had hoped to widen the gulf between

the two nations by means of the Imperial audience. "The result of the Generals' visit is unsatisfactory," said the *Tageblatt*. "There is discord between the Kaiser and his subjects, and humiliation before England." In Belgium the chief Boer paper at last admitted that the subscriptions were far behind the lowest estimate which had been formed, and that the Generals had no alternative but to accept help from England. The Appeal, in short, was a failure, and the journey on the Continent a blunder. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to go back to England. This had been perceived even before they left Paris; but after the German fiasco even the most extreme men, those who had opposed their holding any communication whatever with the British Government, could no longer deny it. So the Appeal went into the waste-paper basket, and the Generals went to London, which they reached on the 22nd of October.

"We must not forget them on the Continent," said Dr Leyds' paper on the 4th of November. "Their painful sojourn amongst the eternal enemies of their race, in the interests of their

race, is one act of heroism the more." But an article which General Botha published on "The Boers and the Empire," in the *Contemporary Review* for November, was so conciliatory in its tone, and so well fitted to mitigate the disappointment and surprise which had been felt in England at the language of the Appeal, for which it appeared to be meant as an antidote or even an apology, that it seemed as if at last he was fully alive to the real character and objects of the loud-voiced agitators into whose hands he and his companions had fallen in the Netherlands and Germany.

On the 5th of November the House of Commons went into Committee of Supply upon a vote of £8,000,000 for grants in aid of the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies, to meet expenses contingent upon the termination of the war. While Sir William Harcourt was speaking (not in a very hopeful strain), General Botha, General Delarey,¹ Mr Schalk-Burger, who had just arrived in Europe, and some other Boers, were brought into the

¹ General De Wet had already sailed for South Africa on the 1st of November.

Gallery by Mr Gully, son of the Speaker; and then they heard Mr Chamberlain speaking, perhaps, as he said, for the last time, before going to South Africa to see for himself, and form his own judgment on the situation there. On one point he spoke as if he intended that the Generals should hear him. "The defeated party in the war must," he said, "suffer more than the victors. That is only common-sense." He gave a very much needed explanation of how the Government had meant the free grant of £3,000,000 to be applied:—"There seems to be in some persons' minds an idea that that was offered as compensation for the war losses of those who had been our enemies. Well, surely that is a perfectly monstrous proposition. It is quite true that General Botha in May, and again, the signatories to the surrender the other day, asked that this money or some amount should be set aside in order to pay notes and receipts which had been given by them in connection with their requisitions. We refused to pay these notes. Why, a note might have been given to a man of substance, a gentleman of large property, for a portion

of his stock, and I should say that undoubtedly under these circumstances he should lose the money, that it was a loss which he must take, as many loyal subjects have had to take losses as necessary emergencies of the war. The people we have to think about are of two classes: first, the destitute, the widows and orphans, the people who would starve but for our assistance; and secondly, the people who, not being actually destitute, are nevertheless without the requisite means to restore the industry in which they have been engaged previously to the war. These are the two classes, and the only two classes, of which we take account. While we agree that the notes and receipts should be received by us as evidence of war losses—that is to say, as evidence of destitution, where it has been caused by the war, we do not engage to pay these notes or receipts unless the parties require the money in order to enable them to recover their means of subsistence. If, for the purpose we have in view—that is to say, the relief of the people who are absolutely destitute from any fear of starvation or misery approaching

to starvation, and in the second place to enable the people to work the land which belongs to them, and for which they have not at present the necessary capital—if the money which we have devoted to that purpose should be insufficient, well, I for one should not hesitate to come for more." That night's proceedings in the British House of Commons, where the money was voted unanimously, gave the best answer to what had been said on the Continent during the preceding two months.

CHAPTER XII.

FAS EST AB HOSTE DOCERI.

It was not long before some of the Boers returned home. Mr Schalk-Burger's flying visit to Europe was soon over, and he went away, the bearer, it was reported, of a letter from Mr Kruger to Mr Chamberlain asking leave to go back and end his days in South Africa, and accompanied by Mr Wessels, and also by Mr Wolmarans, who was supposed to go without permission "*pour voir ce qui arrivera.*" The departure of General Botha and General Delarey was prevented for a time by the illness of General Botha; but at last they embarked at Southampton on the afternoon of Saturday the 13th of December, leaving behind them a manifesto in which they said that they were going "in order to place our-

selves at the disposal of Mr Chamberlain, and to supply him on the spot with the wished-for information and assistance, in the hope of proving our desire to co-operate with our new Government, and to render the best possible service to our unfortunate countrymen." Dr Leyds' paper, consistent to the end, said that their real reason for going was that the British Government insisted on their leaving Europe, and that they feared Mr Chamberlain would gratify his revengeful temper by inflicting some fresh cruelties upon the burghers, if they refused. But their natural shrewdness must have made them feel instinctively that Dr Leyds and the Boer-Hollander coterie, from whom so much had been expected, had no diplomatic influence whatever in Europe. "That unfortunate embassy," Mr Schreiner said, "was more than anything else responsible for the war"; and everything which had taken place since the meeting at the Colonial Office and the promulgation of the Appeal had helped to prove that, in the meantime at least, the European game was played out. So they broke away

from the Irreconcilable group, and followed Mr Chamberlain to Africa.

Their departure and the journey of the British Minister were two conspicuous landmarks in the history of the South African question. Mr Chamberlain's policy of meeting the demands contained in the letter from The Hague with a firm refusal to open up the settlement of 31st May, when it was only three months old, and his going out to look into things for himself, was so evidently business that even those who had been loudest in condemning him for what had taken place at the Colonial Office were silenced. There was a little snarling; but even the most convinced of our critics on the Continent, and the most violent party men in Great Britain, had to admit that this was a practical step which might turn out to be a precedent for new methods of government. It showed at least that we were in earnest. The return home of the Boer Generals meant their final refusal to occupy that position of hostility to Great Britain into which the Boer-Hollander and Pan-German parties in Europe had so

nearly drawn them ; and their loyal acceptance of the position of British subjects put to shame the nefarious counsels of the extreme faction on the Continent and in Great Britain.¹

The incorporation of the Transvaal with Great Britain was a heavy blow to the Boer-Hollander party in the Netherlands. The Boers were, of course, a race of very mixed blood. The French Protestants who went to the Cape after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes received free passages thither from the Dutch Government and the means of settling on the land ; but the oppressive rule of the Dutch soon destroyed almost every trace of their origin. Their French names remained ; but their language was stamped out by law, and the broken corruption of Dutch, the 'Taal,' with its limited vocabulary, soon became the only dialect of a people who might have done great things for South Africa, but who, under the blighting influences of the

¹ As to money, the whole result of the Appeal was less than £97,000 from Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Russia, and the United States. Adding Mr Phipps' gift of £20,000, the funds collected up to January 1903 came to £116,810, 18s. 10d.

jealous race which ruled them, became entirely Dutch in character and sympathy. In Holland, for a long time before the outbreak of the war against Great Britain, the Transvaal was regarded as a place where young Hollanders were to find employment, as young Englishmen find employment in India. They kept flocking in, until, on the eve of the annexation of 1877, Sir Bartle Frere said that in the Government there was scarcely a man who was a native or genuine Boer of the Transvaal. Mr Kruger, as everyone knows, continued this system, after the restoration of independence in 1881, to such an extent that many of the burghers resented it; and this policy of ruling the Transvaal by the hands of Hollanders from Europe went side by side with the policy of ousting Great Britain from the whole of South Africa. All South Africa, such was the published programme of the Bond, belongs by right to the Africander nation. It is the privilege and duty of every Africander to contribute all in his power towards the expulsion of the English usurper. The States of South Africa must be federated in an independent

Republic. "It must be considered a disgrace," said *Die Patriot*, "to speak English. . . . In our family life, above all, a war without quarter must be waged against the English"; and the means by which this programme was to be carried out, in Cape Colony and elsewhere, were "personal persuasion, press propaganda, legislation, diplomacy." Personal persuasion meant spreading sedition; it could mean nothing else. Press propaganda meant *Die Patriot*, *Ons Land*, and other papers in South Africa. What it meant in Europe we have good reason to know. Legislation meant using self-government under the British flag for the purpose of expelling the British Crown. Diplomacy meant the employment of agencies like the Legation over which Dr Leyds presided at Brussels.

"There must," said one Bond writer, "be no English shops, no English signboards, no English advertisements, no English book-keepers." But that was not all. The British flag, as Mr Reitz admitted, would not disappear without a great struggle; and therefore, "Manufactories of munitions of war must be

started in the two Republics. The Transvaal and the Free State must make their own ammunition, and be well supplied with cannon, and provide a regiment of artillery to work them. At Heidelberg there are already four thousand cartridges made daily; and a few skilful Afrikanders have begun to make shells too. That is right. So must we become a nation." Or again, "Let every Afrikander see that he is at all times well armed with the best possible weapons, and maintain the expert use of the rifle among young and old, so as to be ready when duty calls, and the time is ripe for asserting the nation's rights and be rid of English thralldom." All this was immediately after the transaction of Majuba, before the gold mines were found, and fourteen years before the Raid. And this merely touches the fringe of what might be said; but surely it is enough to show that, as Mrs Steel, the novelist, says of India before the Mutiny, there was something "on the face of the waters."

But now the great struggle anticipated twenty years ago has been fought out, and the

British flag has not disappeared. The Bond has changed its name, and reappears as the "South African Party," or "Afrikander National Party." The supremacy of the British flag is admitted in words; but time alone can show whether a change of name has brought with it a change of sentiment. If the worst should happen, and if the new Afrikander National Party turns out to be the old Afrikander Bond writ large, and settles down to the work of opposing the British element in South Africa so as to prepare the way for the exclusion of the flag, the part which European Hollanders will take in the political war seems likely to be the creation of a Dutch 'atmosphere' in the schools; and the school books written for the purpose of keeping alive the anti-British feeling, which were in use before the war, should be forbidden, particularly in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, during their period of probation.

Judging by what is said in the Netherlands, it would be the excess of confidence to believe that the *fait accompli* is completely accepted. Amongst the extreme men, the Irreconcilables,

even now another war is spoken of; but they seem chiefly to rely on some shuffling of the political cards in Great Britain. They know as well as we do that British policy depends, in the long run, on the chances of party warfare, and that no prophet can predict the result of the next General Election. The present Government may fall in consequence of a general want of confidence, or on some special question. Mailed fists abroad and lawn sleeves at home may bring them down; or the mere swing of the pendulum may do it. Then, it is hoped something akin to what happened in 1881 may come to pass.

In Germany the result of the war caused profound disappointment and surprise. The Boer plan of campaign was always understood to have been prepared by an officer who is well known, indeed distinguished, as a strategist. They say it was scientifically perfect, and that, considering the superiority in numbers and arms possessed by the Boers in the beginning, and the sudden declaration of war followed by the immediate invasion of Natal in accordance with the plan, it ought

to have brought the war to an end in a few weeks. But the expert who framed this plan appears to have made no allowance for the difference in character between the German or British soldier and the Boer. The German or British fighting man thinks of nothing but the task, the duty, he has to perform. "Theirs but to do and die." But the disciplined courage, the all-pervading sense of duty in the presence of no matter what risks of death or suffering, which is the common attribute of the European armies, was wanting in the Boer army. General De Wet had sometimes to use his sjambok freely before his men would face the enemy; and the personal bravery of himself, the other leaders, and a great proportion of their men, was neutralised by the caution of many amongst the burghers, who were never at ease if there was any doubt about their line of retreat remaining open. To this is attributed the failure of the Boer army, so vastly superior in numbers, to realize its own expectation of driving the British forces before it to the sea, and raising Cape Colony on its march. Hence

the loss of their initial advantages; but even after this failure became evident, and Great Britain put into the field a force much larger than any which it had been considered possible for her to transport across the seas, most people in Germany believed that, with so many thousands engaged in guarding the lines of communication, and the remainder operating in a hostile territory of immense extent and perfectly suited for the Boer tactics of ambuscade and guerilla warfare, the British army would be completely worn out, and would never bring the war to an end.

The sudden collapse came, therefore, as a great surprise, and as a painful surprise. For it was, and still is, the firm belief in Germany that Great Britain wilfully and of set purpose provoked the war for purposes of conquest, intended it, worked for it. Of this charge Great Britain will, in after years, be acquitted in the High Court of History. But nothing will ever persuade the Germans of to-day, particularly the Pan-Germans, that the war in South Africa was not the result

of a deep laid plot.¹ And this belief of theirs, in view of the hostility of so many Germans, carries with it the most important lesson which the three years' war of the pen should teach the British people. They argue thus:— England made this war for her own purposes in the autumn of 1899. Look at her military position in the autumn of 1902. Her prestige damaged in our eyes; everything done by haphazard; the greatest difficulty in recruiting efficient men; money wasted; every department carried on in the most unbusiness-like way; a remount system which was a scandal; the nation struggling against the *vis inertiae* of a War Office in which it has no confidence; ugly rumours, set afloat by a responsible public man, that places in the army go by favour. In our army, if an officer

¹ One so-called proof of a design to invade the Transvaal carries no weight whatever in Germany—the discovery at Dundee of our military maps and plans showing lines of advance. In the autumn of 1901, at some army manœuvres, I was looking one evening at a military map of the district with a German soldier, and alluded to this. He laughed, and said, "We have a good map of England."

blunders at peace manœuvres, he receives a slip of paper in a few weeks, and retires from the service. Is that done in England? Few of their officers make a study and business of their profession. They play more than they work. Their army reform schemes are merely paper. Therefore, as a military power in Europe, they are nowhere, not to be taken seriously; and, this being so, why should we believe that as a naval power they are any better?

It is easy to see how powerfully this appeals to the Pan-German sentiment. This Pan-Germanism, *Alldeutschtum*, is often spoken of as the product of the last few years; but before the great war of 1870-71 students used to sing "Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?" and the chorus gave the answer that it was every region where the German tongue was spoken; and more, some Greater Germany beyond the seas—"Sein Vaterland muss grösser sein." One of the objects of the Pan-German League is the acquisition of dominions beyond the seas; and it is not to invade England, but to acquire these, to found German Colonies,

that the navy is to rival, and perhaps some day surpass, that of Great Britain. In the *Burenkrieg*, which came out at Munich, with the help of Dr Leyds, there is a picture of the German Michael, a sturdy fellow with a bludgeon, looking at an English soldier who is showing him the model of two warships. "Herrgott, kerl," says Michael, "dich wenn ich einmal am Land erwischen thät."¹ But this tacit admission of our present naval supremacy, thus coupled with so contemptuous a view of our military strength, is not expected to be always necessary; and the vast plans of the Pan-German League, whose representatives are becoming more numerous in the Reichstag, aim, as we know, at that world policy the glowing future of which is daily taught by writers who spare no pains to impress on the rising generations of the noble German people that Great Britain must one day be grappled with by means of a German fleet which shall be powerful enough to enforce the cession to Germany of some portion of our territories.

¹ "Lord, my lad, if I could catch you once on the dry land!"

When the Kaiser chanced to lament in one of his speeches, soon after the war began, that his proposals for the increase of the German fleet had been rejected, it was taken as a hint that if they had been agreed to the Boers might have been helped. Probably that was not what he meant; but a powerful party which now goes so far as to discuss the means of annexing Holland, and which has declared itself the mortal enemy of the British Empire, very naturally contemplated the possibility of aggression in South Africa. Mr Rhodes perceived this; and his opinion was that Germany might try to extend a protectorate over the Transvaal. In that case our position in South Africa could never be secure. During the war, when the defeat of England was thought to be impending, the *Deutsche Zeitung* said, "Every work of civilization, bridge, or factory built with English money, must be destroyed. The land must be devastated in such a way that only the Boer farmer can live on it"; and this plan of laying waste the country was suggested as a means of helping German interests by delaying

progress until Germany had a fleet strong enough to attack Great Britain in South Africa.

It is almost impossible for the people of Great Britain to conceive how men can form such gigantic projects for obtaining Colonies. Our own Fatherland has grown slowly and almost unconsciously till now it spreads over great continents which lie far beyond the seas ; but the German Colonies are to be the result of conscious effort, according to the Pan-German League. England built her fleets to defend her Colonies and Commerce ; Germany is building hers, they say, in order to found a Colonial Empire. Greater Britain has grown slowly from the acorn ; the Germans wish to plant a full-grown tree.

In the meantime the bad feeling between Great Britain and Germany has been discussed in the Reichstag. Herr Bebel has ascribed British resentment against Germany to this demand for a fleet strong enough to overthrow the sea power of Great Britain ; and the Graf von Bülow has explained that the Government have no aggressive aims. That,

however, is not the view of many Germans ; and the greatest lesson of the Boer campaign in Europe during the last three years will have been taught in vain, if, when the British people are engaged in the stupendous task of setting their South African house in order, they forget to make sure that things nearer home are in proper order too.

THE END.

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