

The Herald and News

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR.

The Stylus. The government of Great Britain, backed by its strong army, its almost limitless financial resources, and the haughty pride of its citizens is now waging an unholy war against the isolated little Transvaal Republic.

A brief summary of the causes of the war will show why the sympathies of the unbought people nearly everywhere, are with the weaker party in this contest, for it will show us a clear case of the brutal aggression of greed in an attempt to swallow up, to satisfy its appetite, and utterly regardless of its moral or legal right to do so, a weak and supposed helpless victim.

The English government through its mouthpiece, Doctor Chamberlain, claims Suterzainty over the Transvaal Republic, basing its claim on certain agreements signed nearly twenty years ago between the two powers. As the paramount power it claimed the right to interfere, whenever in its own judgment the occasion demanded, in the foreign and domestic affairs of the Transvaal, and did make the specific demand that the term of years required for the naturalization of the outlanders be reduced by the Transvaal government, and that English schools be maintained by it for the English-born inhabitants of the country.

We cannot go now into an examination of the terms of the convention under which the English base their claim, but will only say that unprejudiced writers quite generally agree, that at most, England can justly claim nothing more than the right of being consulted whenever the Transvaal government undertakes to exercise the treaty-making power.

This being true, then what legal right has England to interfere with the domestic affairs of the Transvaal? Have English subjects been robbed, unjustly imprisoned, or murdered by the Boers? No such charges are made. Then if she has no legal right to interfere, can she claim the moral right to do so on the high ground of humanity? Are the Boers a savage, bloodthirsty race whose right to regulate their own affairs cannot be regarded by civilized nations? Have they shown the lack of ability to maintain a stable government and law and order in their own dominion? Not at all. The Dutch Afrikaners are a simple, hardy, agricultural and pastoral people. They have schools and churches. "In the sweat of their faces they eat bread."

"They fear God and are not afraid of any man." For years they have been isolated, and it is no wonder that in industrial advancement they are far behind many other nations; other people in similar environment are in a similar industrial condition. The peasantry of central Ireland, after having lived for centuries under the English flag are now more ignorant and superstitious than the Boers. The mountain whites of the Southern States, surrounded on the east and on the west by an active, progressive race of kinsmen are to day more unprogressive and narrow-minded than the farmers and shepherds of the South African Veldt. Yet we condemn England's officious intermeddling with the Irish Catholics, and freely grant to our mountain population the full right of local self-government. But the Boers, because they refuse to give the ballot, and money for schools, to a floating population of Uitlanders, alien in race and sympathies, must now face British armies aggregating 165,000 men. Who are these precious Uitlanders for whom all this blood must be spilled and all this money spent? About fifty years ago, in order to escape English rule the Boers

fled from Cape Colony to a country "beyond the Vaal." There, amid untold hardships, they established their little paternal Republic. There for more than thirty years they lived free from English interference. But one day gold was found on their land; then diamonds. There rushed into the country thousands of gold and diamond diggers, a motley array, containing, of course, much of the riff raff of Europe, a large part of them being from the British Isles. These are the Uitlanders. In the interest of these people arose the first quarrel, and the charge and repulse at Majuba Hill ended it. Then followed the raid planned by the would-be robber, Cecil Rhodes, which raid came to naught and was disowned by the British government, but its moving spirit has never lost caste with his home government.

Now the Uitlanders demand the ballot which is equal to demanding the control of the government. But most presumptions of all, they demand the right to vote in the Transvaal and to retain their allegiance to Great Britain at the same time; and the English government upholds them in this claim! What American State would give the ballot to a large floating population of foreigners, who, while demanding it, would propose still to retain allegiance to their own country? Not one would do it. Not one could afford to do it. The Boers refused to grant such a privilege to the Uitlanders, and the Boers did the only thing they could do in the matter and still preserve the independence of their State. Further, as no State can, consistently with its own safety, grant the ballot to voters holding allegiance to a foreign power, so, for much the same reason, none can afford to pay for schools taught exclusively in a foreign language. In many parts of our country there are German, Swedish and Norwegian schools, where the children are taught in the language of their fathers, but in no case are these schools public, and we would think it indeed presumptuous for Germany, for instance, to demand free German schools in the city of Chicago for the children of German-born parents.

Another demand made by the Uitlanders and supported by the English was that the tax on mines and mining material be reduced. This tax, they insist, is extortionate. But it has been pointed out that this tax is really less in the Transvaal than the tax on similar privileges and materials in several of the British colonial dependencies.

Notwithstanding the lack of sufficient grounds, the English government gradually forced the Boers to take a position which made a conflict between the two inevitable. So now the war is on. The bravery, skill and humanity of the soldiers of the Transvaal have called forth cheers of admiration from all the civilized world. The sharp defeats encountered by the gallant English armies on their attempted advance into the enemy's country have surprised and shocked those English Statesmen who but three months ago had nothing but contemptuous sneers for the uncivilized Boer with his primitive ideas of independence, and his puritan-like faith in the God of battles. However, in the end, unless other nations make a diversion in favor of the Boers, there can be only one result—British military power, British gold, and British perseverance will triumph, and another province will be added to that power upon whose dominion even now the sun never sets. Will such a diversion ever be made? We sincerely hope so, a peaceable one if possible, a forcible one if necessary.

A cry has gone up in this country—a cry started by Anglo-maniacs, and taken up by better and more useful men, that lest civilization be endangered England must conquer in this war; that the possibility of Boer success is a menace to the continued progress and prosperity of the human race. We believe none of this. We would dislike ever to believe that the progress of Christian civilization is dependent upon the triumph of injustice anywhere or any time. England is great as a civilization, great as a colonizer, great as a governing power. To her the race is deeply indebted, and all good men would keenly regret to see the ruin of her power. But even should her defeat reduce her from greatness to utter insignificance we could but wish for the failure of her unholy aggressions against the Transvaal, for we can but wish that wrong, though backed by the strongest battalions, may ever fall in a conflict with right.

Why should any one think that England's greatness and true strength depends on her success in this war? Far from believing this, we believe that a defeat would be the very best thing that could happen to her, for she would then be in less danger of overreaching herself in the future, through greed and lust for dominion. The present government with the conscienceless devotees of traffic who inspire its policy would be hurled from power by the great English public, that at heart has always opposed this war. John Bull would become more circumspect in his actions, less inclined to be a bully and a braggart. He would realize that even an unprogressive State has rights, and that these rights must be respected, even by him.

More than one hundred years ago, the government of England, under the leadership of Lord North, attempted to levy an unjust tax upon certain English colonists. These colonists resisted, even in

arms, the collection of that tax. A mighty cry went up that the integrity of the British Empire was in danger through this result, and that therefore these colonists must be crushed into submission lest England be forever undone, and civilization set back several centuries. But the colonists persisted in their opposition, and aided by another nation gained their independence. England has survived the separation, and from her experience in that conflict has learned the greatest lesson in modern statesmanship—a knowledge that is a part of her glory—how to treat her colonists. "Lest she forget, lest she forget," May the plucky Boers, on the parched plains of South Africa, remind her that a strong nation cannot afford to treat unjustly a weak one lying apparently helpless and at her mercy.

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