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Written for

L. A. Maynard, Press Agency,  
New York.

No. 9, Vol. 9.

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copy  
Original sent to La Maza  
Turn agency no 27, 1907

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### Some Lessons Derived from the South African War.

To the mind of an American who has followed the war of the Boers waged against Great Britain, the primary cause, whether right or wrong, was to secure ~~a~~ freedom from the limited sovereignty which Britain was exercising. For this purpose the Boers, having more or less the sympathy of several nations, organized their forces and accumulated supplies of arms and amunition, and had <sup>place</sup> over their army ~~a good general~~ <sup>General Joubert, an officer</sup> of large capacity. He began his work by pushing beyond the borders of the Transvaal, and attacking the English near their camps and forts, hoping to strike blows so hard and so rapid as to preclude the possibility of English reinforcement, at least from outside of South Africa. The general's <sup>business</sup> effort was glorious; in a measure successful; but not complete. He found it impossible to take from the British their strongholds, and even his successful engagements were never really decisive. British generalship was not remarkable for brilliancy or progress till Lord Roberst came to South Africa and assumed the supreme command. He passed rapidly across the Orange river, crushed Cronje's <sup>army</sup> ~~force~~, retook the outposts <sup>in time</sup> and relieved from siege every important fortress. Meanwhile he moved rapidly northward, fighting successfully until Johanasburgh and Pretoria, the capitol, <sup>a</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> in his possession. The reason the final battles of the Boers were so weak was because they had lost their able general <sup>by sickness and later by death</sup> and had nobody equal to the task of <sup>concentrating</sup> ~~gathering~~ <sup>remaining</sup> anything their forces and giving <sup>any</sup> like effective resistance to the oncoming British.



Some Lessons Derived from the South African War.

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Now as to the lessons of this war which other nations, small and great, may learn:

1st. Every day's news shows the folly of continuing warfare after so complete a settlement by arms. The Boers gave the challenge. The English accepted the challenge and conquered. Since the <sup>a</sup>capital, Pretoria, fell into British hands there has been <sup>valin</sup> no excuse for a prolonged guerrilla warfare. It frets and worries the British, it is true; but it is at the cost of intense and unnecessary suffering on the part of non-combatants, men, women, and children.

2nd. There is an evident demonstration of the use and abuse of a concentration camp. I do not mean the camps <sup>or bivouacs</sup> of prisoners at St. Helena, Bermuda and elsewhere. These must be allowed until <sup>peace comes, or perhaps</sup> exchanges of prisoners can be affected. From accounts it appears that the British have shown great humanity to the Boers who are thus restrained of their liberty. The concentration camps, however, which were undoubtedly established <sup>in South Africa</sup> mainly for the sake of humanity, have produced the <sup>impression</sup> everywhere of want, suffering and death that might have been <sup>lessened</sup> avoided. They remind the world of General Weyler's <sup>re</sup>concentrados in Cuba. He penned his victims, old men, women and children, in what were called Trochas and had them kept within them by guards well armed. The results were a gradual starvation and deaths summed up to the amount of more than a quarter of a million <sup>of</sup> noncombatants. The difference is plain enough; for the English have fed the people whom they have gathered into concentration camps, and doubtless provided for the wants of this kind of prisoners as well as is ever done in an active campaign



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where the commanding officers can seldom do more than afford them a simple sust<sup>e</sup>~~x~~nance. The death rate is very alarming and gives a good foundation for complaint on the part of the Boers of cruelty and neglect, even where no such hardship was intended.

I remember very well that at one grave period of our civil war the disturbance of the population was so great that we had in such camps of concentration over a hundred thousand noncombatants to whom we were feeding daily rations. This continued until after the war. For a time <sup>then</sup> that whole work of feeding the multitude fell into my hands ~~as commissioner~~. In May, 1865, there were nearly one hundred and fifty thousand persons of every age, non-combatants called refugees and freed-men, to whom I <sup>as Boer commissioner</sup> caused to be issued daily rations. The sick were gathered into hospitals and <sup>orphan</sup> ~~often~~ children into asylums. About one-third of the whole number thus cared for were whites, mainly those in the mountains lying between West Virginia and the Mississippi who had been disturbed by the operations of the great war. The most eff<sup>e</sup>~~x~~ective method I found for the reduction of this singular army was to ascertain places, north, south, east and west, where remunerative work could be obtained. They were sent <sup>thither</sup> in groups or companies under a carefully selected agent's care. Ten thousand were distributed in this manner to new homes throughout the country from Washington alone. The whites for the most part left us and took care of themselves as the conditions of peace were favorable to them, and very soon all the able bodied of both races found sufficient employment and compensation to relieve the government of their support. Remembering these things, our <sup>i</sup>ph~~x~~anthropic people ought not to be harsh in their judgment of the British method of supply-



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ing the destitute. They could easily follow our lead <sup>or do better</sup> in the reduction of want if the Boers would stop their irritating guerrilla business.

3rd. It occurs to me that there has been a want of wisdom in the policy of the British in not offering better terms to the conquered. It is evident that the Boer has an intense desire for independence <sup>e</sup> of the British yoke, and is doubtless, as a rule, willing to sacrifice his property, his life and risk every suffering that may come to his family to secure it; but we remember that there are within the limits of the Transvaal large numbers of people who are not Boers, who, of course, should have a reasonable participation in the affairs of government. As inhabitants they must be looked out for. The natives <sup>I believe</sup> have never been treated by the Boers with anything looking to their education and upbuilding, and the immigrants from all nations flood the cities and the mining <sup>portions of the</sup> country. Surely out of all these elements, including those Boers who are ready to submit to reasonable terms, the British could go on and organize self government as we have done, or are endeavoring to do in the Philippines. The prompt following up of military victories by civil methods appears to an onlooker to be a wise policy.

4th. The Orange Free State <sup>y</sup> will be obliged to abide the consequences of her course. Relieved only by the generosity of the conquerors. Out of pure sympathy that state entered into the war and identified her independent <sup>e</sup> existence with that of the Transvaal. Of course in the end she will have all the privileges <sup>e</sup> and all the freedom which the Canadians enjoy today, and that



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freedom will be extended to the immigrants of all nations within her limits.

5th. I am frequently asked how an American, a citizen of the United States, can sympathize with Great Britain in this struggle. I answer only for myself. The design of the prime movers against the British flag is doubtless to establish a great republic in South Africa. A republic which will include the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and the remainder of the country to Cape Town. <sup>*Surely*</sup> ~~Of course~~ this cannot be done without the breaking of what we call the British Empire. A break in South Africa would be likely to be followed by the revolt ~~ing~~ of other countries subject wholly or in part to British sovereignty. By such breaks Great Britain, as a dominant power in the earth, would perish forever. What the loyal American claimed for the Union during our civil war, the ~~British loyalist~~ loyal Briton justly claims for the Empire, and for one I do not desire to see Great Britain either crippled or destroyed.

6th. Many of our public men, and especially army leaders, have believed and often asserted that modern arms on account of long ranges and quick firing repeating guns, would be so destructive of life in war that wars would necessarily cease. Our war with Spain, and all its entailments in the Philippines, has shown that this is not the case. The war in South Africa in every respect re-enforces the opinion that the improvement of arms will never produce a cessation of wars so that the friends of peace will be obliged to look to other influences for securing their noble aspirations. The reason for this is very plain, the forests, the



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kopjes, the crags and the canyons still exist. They are a shelter to advance or retreat and they limit the destructiveness of long range guns. And there <sup>are</sup> also many limitations to the quickest of magazine rifles; for example the amount of ammunition a man can carry <sup>is always limited; again there is</sup> the constant waste of rapid firing and the danger of jamming or clogging of such weapons under the best of care in handling. With regard to ~~the~~ shortening of ~~the~~ wars in consequence of improved armament, this desirable consumation may <sup>sometimes</sup> be effected; but the very boasted ability of magazine arms may be <sup>and</sup> doubtless is a large factor in the encouragement of the Ladrones of the Philippines and the Boers of South Africa to keep up their guerrilla entertainment.

In conclusion may I say that in my judgement the wisest course to pursue in the case of an irritating partizan strife after a great war, is for the conquering nation to do as nations always have done, that is hold and fortify important points, and, if necessary, ~~to~~ put a movable force into the field, ~~to~~ send out the detachments of it in <sup>sufficiently strong,</sup> ~~strong~~ force so that no guerrilla band <sup>ever</sup> can have the éolat of a small victory here and there. Peace I hope for, peace complete and thorough, but it cannot be gained except by the exercise of wisdom and of justice. Neither can Great Britain <sup>or</sup> the United States afford to deal with any nation <sup>great or small</sup> except with impartial justice.



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