

The Daily Record

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THE CONGO HORROR.

MR. MOREL'S NEW BOOK.

We can hardly imagine any book more painful for an Englishman to read than this ("Great Britain and the Congo"). It is studiously, almost meticulously, moderate, and every statement it contains is supported by evidence too strong to admit of a doubt. Yet the final result is such a catalogue of horror, cowardice, and hypocrisy as makes one's blood run cold. For nine years Mr. Morel has been investigating the hideous story of Belgian rule in the Congo basin, and whoever desires to get at the facts of this dreadful outrage upon humanity must needs go to him for information. He does not deal here, except by way of illustration, with the revolting details of torture, lust, and avarice which he set forth in that damning indictment, "King Leopold's Rule in Africa," or in that still more appalling book, "Red Rubber." The facts therein alleged have received such overwhelming proof, and have, we trust, been brought home so clearly to the mind of Europe, that there is no need for him to reiterate them. His purpose here is to show at once the responsibility which lies on England for the continuance of a reign of horror beside which the dominion of the Inquisition was a paternal rule and the atrocities of Alva the necessary severities of an enlightened administration, and the manner in which that responsibility has been evaded. It may be said that England is not more guilty than the other Powers who signed "in the name of Almighty God" the treaty which pledged them "to watch over the preservation of the native population and the improvement of the moral and material conditions of existence." Perhaps not. But because she has made, and still does make, louder protestations than others of tenderness for the inferior races, because she has an incomparably longer experience of them than any other Power, and because she loudly claims to found Empire upon justice and liberty, the responsibility lies heavier on her. We are not among those who would like to see England undertaking the rôle of an Imperial Don Quixote, redressing wrongs with which she has no concern, and intervening in the internal affairs of nations who are quite well able to manage them without her help. We are all for England minding her own business, which, Heaven knows, is large enough in all conscience. But this is her business. She made it so when she put her hand "in the name of Almighty God" to the instrument by which the lives, liberties, and happiness of the races of the Congo were placed in King Leopold's hands. It is not merely that she guaranteed these rights. The veriest child in international politics knows that while the Congo Free State might have come into existence despite the objection of almost any other Power, England's consent was essential.

Let us understand what has happened. In the matter of conquest no nation has the right to reproach another, for all have been equally guilty, and, upon the whole, their guilt has been of benefit to the world. Of that we make no complaint against the Congo Administration. In the matter of individual oppression and cruelty, England is equally in the same case. No nation has succeeded in picking so carefully its administrators in conquered lands that none of them has given way to the passions of lust, cruelty, or avarice. If Englishmen have, on the whole, sinned less in these respects against the inferior races, yet they have sinned plentifully, and history will not allow them to deny it. But here is a new thing. Other oppressions have been carried out by the man on the spot, confident that he would escape notice at home, or, at least, that the arm of authority would not be long enough to restrain him, or bring him to book. Here it is authority itself which urges the man on the spot to pile horror upon horror, to torture as well as to kill, to forget the very name of mercy in exacting the last drop of life blood from the miserable nation under his control. We wonder if people in England or Germany realise what it means when an eminent Belgian statesman can declare from his place in Parliament and amid the cheers of his followers that "the natives have no rights." The era over which that Devil's Magna Charta holds good is as large as Europe, if Russia be taken out, and was filled before it came into operation with a vast population, of which now only a remnant is left. Not merely towns, but whole

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countries have been depopulated, in order that the shareholders may get their rubber, and the Royal director the not inconsiderable fees which he draws in return for his "piety and philanthropy" towards a people who never did or wished him any harm. Those who survive live in a state of slavery incomparably worse than anything in the system which sent the North Americans into arms against their own brethren, and they may call themselves lucky if Bula Matadi, the all-powerful Administration, leaves them with two hands to gather the rubber it demands.

There is one argument put forward by counsellors of "let well alone" which is becoming threadbare by reiteration. It is that, if England used the iron hand towards the administrators of the Congo, she would immediately be confronted by the "mailed fist," and a grave dispute might ensue. We are not among those who credit this theory. It is notorious that thoughtful men in Germany are equally alive to the crimes against God and man perpetrated in the Congo as are Englishmen. It is inconceivable that a cultured and peace-loving nation like Germany should support inhuman barbarities for material ends. On the contrary, there is excellent reason to believe that negotiations have on more than one occasion taken place between London and Berlin on this very subject. It is rumoured that Herr Dernburg, during his recent sojourn in England, discussed the Congo affair with the Foreign Office. But every day lost means another contribution to the lurid annals of crime and horror in the Congo. The world's conscience is burdened by it, and the burden will not be lifted until action, single-handed or united, is taken to erase this horrid blot from the escutcheon of civilisation.

NEWS OF THE WORLD.

(From our correspondent.) LONDON, Thursday. While members of the Lower House are dispersed far and wide across the country in search of rest and recreation after one of the most strenuous Sessions on record, the Lords are debating a number

of Government Bills in which the country does not take much interest. It is now tacitly admitted that the second reading of the Finance Bill is fixed for November 22. On that day, therefore, the Titanic struggle will commence between Lords and Commons. In spite of inspired statements in the Opposition journals, there is as yet no definite proof that the Budget is to be rejected. Lord Lansdowne, leader of the Opposition in the Lords, maintains absolute silence. He has said nothing in regard to the amendment of rejection forecasted by the parliamentary correspondent of the Times. It is becoming more clear every day that the stalwarts in the Commons do not want the Budget to pass. They admit it, and their papers also admit it. Journals like the Daily News—the morning half-penny which enjoys the dignity of being a Government mouthpiece—are indulging in unbearably bitter vituperation against the Peers. The language of the News recalls the worst phases of political controversy in the time of William Pitt. It alleges that most of the Peers have no interest other than the gaming-tables of Monte Carlo or the Turf, and excoriates the most honourable among them in language reminiscent of Grub-street lampoons. Many of its leading articles are undoubtedly the voice of Mr. Lloyd George, who is doing brilliantly in his new rôle of a Mad Mullah preaching the Jihad. A hundred years ago Mr. George and his colleagues might have succeeded in so inflaming popular passions as to actually bring about a not altogether bloodless revolution; but the national mind is more steady now, and not easily to be shaken by the manifestly partisan attacks on a class which, in spite of its many grave defects, has frequently rendered the nation yeoman service. The insults levelled at them by the Government newspapers cannot be entirely without effect on the Peers. In schoolboy language they are being "dared" to throw out the Budget; but the Peers have at least one great advantage over their opponents in that they are gentlemen, and not schoolboys. Even should the Budget be passed, the Government admit their intention of soon raising other contentious issues with the direct object of placing the Lords in a quandary whence they must emerge stripped of any legislative influence. Thus, the battle is not for the Budget, but for the establishment of a one-Chamber system of Government, or, in plainer language, a Radical oligarchy able to force its will on the nation, Peers and public alike. This is the plain issue, which all the fulminations and Billingsgate epithets of Cabinet Ministers is unable to wholly obscure. But the nation is not to be fooled. The Liberal Party recognises the gravity of the struggle ahead, and is leaving nothing undone to secure the largest possible vote. Every Liberal journal has temporarily established a pamphlet department, from which are issued hundreds of leaflets, more or less mendacious, purporting to show the elector the hard times which would follow Tariff Reform, or revealing the shocking turpitude of those terrible Dukes. The war thus far is exclusively a wordy one, but there is no guarantee that, if the Liberals continue to deliberately incite the lower elements by unrestrained and inflammatory language, it will not develop into something much more serious.

(From our correspondent.) NEW YORK, Nov. 1. —According to estimates by the Panama Isthmus Canal Commission of Washington, D.C., half the amount of excavation work judged necessary by American engineers when the Panama Canal scheme was taken over from French hands has now been completed. By the end of September 87,172,058 cubic yards of earth had been excavated. When the French promoters handed over the enterprise to the United States Government, 81,548,000 cubic yards had been removed. The question of how to defend the great waterway when completed is now engaging the War Department's attention. It is proposed to erect batteries at each end, and at several points along the canal, armed with enormously powerful heavy guns. These batteries will be garrisoned by the Army, but the Navy also enters into the defence scheme. Special squadrons will be formed to patrol the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific canal areas. It is estimated that the erection of the fixed defences necessary will run well into \$50,000,000. The strategic advantages of the Canal to America cannot be underestimated. Its completion will put quite a different complexion on the balance of power in the Pacific, since it will enable American warships to cross from ocean to ocean in the minimum period of time.