

ish war in South Africa, there is little further to report of the peace negotiations mentioned last week, except that they are in progress. The Boer leaders of both republics met at Klerksdorp on the 9th. They had a second consultation there on the 10th. On the 11th it was announced that they had decided to enter into negotiations with the British if granted free use of the cable to consult the Boer representatives in Europe. Whether or not this condition was complied with has not been reported. It is certain, however, that any conditions precedent to negotiations, which may have been exacted, were allowed, for on the 12th the Boer leaders arrived at Pretoria to confer with the British authorities. The two groups—South African Republic and Orange Free State—came on different special trains and were quartered after their arrival in different houses. It is understood that they have since been in negotiation with Lord Kitchener and Sir Alfred Milner, the British commissioner for South Africa. On the day of their arrival at Pretoria a message was received from them, through Lord Kitchener, by the British ministry, and was answered. But neither the purport of the message nor that of the reply has been disclosed. There is no further trustworthy news on the subject.

It was announced in the House of Commons on the 11th by Mr. Broderick, secretary for war, that there would be no armistice during the absence of the Boer commandants from the field; and this announcement was confirmed on the 14th by news of severe fighting in the Transvaal region. Lord Kitchener reports about 200 Boers killed and about 100 British casualties. He also reports the overwhelming of a British patrol in the Orange Free State—one officer and three men being wounded and all the remainder of the British force captured.

On the 15th the statement of the condition of British finances, called the "budget," was laid before the House of Commons by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, chancellor of the exchequer. From this it appears that the cost of the Boer war for three years has been \$825,170,000. For the years 1902-3 it is put at \$227,000,000. The national debt has been increased \$290,000,000, and there is a deficit to be met of \$226,620,000. To provide for these obligations the chancel-

lor of the exchequer advocated a further (see vol. iv., p. 41) advance in the fiscal retrogression from the British free trade policy back to a bread tax. He proposed a customs tax of 6 cents per 100-weight on all kinds of imported grain; 10 cents per 100-weight on imported flour and meal; a stamp tax of 2 cents on dividend warrants; a stamp tax of 4 cents instead of 2 as now required, on checks; and an increase of 2 cents in the £1 in the income tax, making it 30 cents in the £1 instead of 28. The import duties on sugar, wine, beer, tobacco and tea, and the export duty on coal (vol. iv., p. 63), are not to be disturbed. Besides proposing these taxes, the chancellor asks authority to secure a loan of \$160,000,000.

It was significant of a more pacific policy on the part of the ministry that the chancellor of the exchequer was able to announce upon asking for this loan, that the ministry has acceded to the Boer demands for the restocking and rebuilding of the ruined farms in the South African Republic and Orange Free State; and still more significant of a changed public opinion that the House of Commons resounded with cheers for several minutes after the announcement. In making this announcement the chancellor is reported as having spoken in praise of the valor of the Boers, and expressed his hopes for friendship between Briton and Boer. During the pause in his speech while that sentiment was cheered he is reported to have "turned towards Mr. Chamberlain, the colonial secretary, who sat pale and motionless, palpably none too pleased at this official recantation of his unconditional surrender formula."

For several days the cable news from Belgium has been lurid, and now the country appears from the dispatches to be upon the verge of revolution. This news is evidently colored in the interest of the ruling class, but an outline of the situation and of the condition of the government of Belgium will enable the reader to draw reasonably accurate conclusions from the daily reports.

Belgium is a constitutional monarchy, both representative and hereditary, the legislative power being vested in an hereditary king and in a senate and a chamber of deputies elected by the people under a restricted and plural suffrage. Senators are

elected for eight years, part of them by the direct popular vote of citizens not less than 35 years of age, and part by provincial councils. Princes of the reigning branch of the royal family are senators by hereditary right. Members of the chamber of representatives are all elected by direct popular vote. The qualifications of voters for members of this chamber are defined as follows by the Statesman's Year Book for 1901:

Every citizen over 25 years of age, domiciled for not less than one year in the same commune, and not legally disqualified, has a vote. Every citizen over 35 years of age, married or widower, with legitimate issue, and paying at least 5 francs (\$1) a year in house tax, has a supplementary vote, as has also every citizen over 25 years of age owning immovable property to the value of 2,000 francs (\$400), or having a corresponding income from such property, or who for two years has derived at least 100 francs (\$20) a year from Belgian funds, either directly or through the savings bank. Two supplementary votes are given to citizens over 25 years of age who have received a diploma or certificate of higher instruction, or who fill or have filled office, or engaged in private professional practice, implying at least average higher instruction. No person has more than three votes.

This plural voting system is the cause of the present disorders.

In 1898 an aggregate of 2,175,957 votes were possessed by 1,418,480 voters, a vast proportion of whom had but one vote each. At the election that year (see vol. ii No. 70, p. 10) the Catholic party secured 112 seats, the Socialists 28, the Radicals 6, and the Liberals 6. To still further strengthen the majority, the premier proposed a measure which the Socialists especially, but also the Radicals and the Liberals, opposed. All these parties favor the "one man one vote" principle. Great opposition meetings were held, and from June 20 to July 1, 1898, there was rioting in several cities. Upon being notified by the mayors of four cities that they could not be responsible for public order unless the premier's offensive electoral measure were withdrawn, the king interfered; and those measures being in consequence referred to a parliamentary committee selected from all parties, which recommended their unqualified rejection, the ministry resigned. The new ministry (vol. ii, No. 70, p. 9) promised to present a proportional representation bill on the principle

of "one man one vote." This was subsequently done after a fashion (vol. ii., No. 73, p. 11), the chamber of deputies adopting the new law by a vote of 65 to 51 August 16, 1899. It was promulgated December 7, 1899. But that law provided merely for a crude system of proportional representation, leaving the obnoxious plural voting system unchanged.

Meanwhile the municipal elections of October, 1899 (vol. ii, No. 81, p. 10), had resulted in such great successes for Liberals and Socialists that hopes of overthrowing the conservative ministry at the next parliamentary election were entertained. These hopes, however, were not fully realized. The Socialists repudiated their fusion with the Liberals (vol. ii. No. 83, p. 9), and at the parliamentary elections of May 29, 1900 (vol. iii. p. 121) the Catholic majority was reduced from 112 to 85, the Socialists chiefly gaining by the change. After this election the news from Belgium was not calculated to excite general interest until early in the present year.

But the agitation for universal suffrage on the "one man one vote" principle had evidently not flagged in the interval. On the 23d of March, 1902, 20,000 persons paraded the streets of Brussels under the auspices of the Socialist party, and there were similar manifestations throughout the kingdom. Petitions were presented to the mayors of different cities for submission to parliament, demanding a revision of the constitution so as to establish universal suffrage and genuine proportional representation. On the 9th King Leopold was surrounded by a great mass of people at a railroad station in Brussels, and the air rang with shouts of "Long live the republic!" and "Long live universal suffrage!" But there were no attempts at violence. The crowd had not gone to the station to meet the king upon his arrival there, but as a compliment to four republican deputies of Spain, who had spoken at a Socialist meeting the night before and been therefore ordered out of Belgium by the Brussels police. Afterward popular sentiment against the police and the conservative elements had risen, and—whether the fault lies with the mob or the police it is impossible yet to tell—encounters between the police and the populace were frequent. The session of parliament on the 11th was also marked with ex-

traordinary violence. Meanwhile a general labor strike had been called to begin on the 14th, and as early as the 12th news poured in from every mining and industrial center of the probable great magnitude of this industrial demonstration in behalf of a revised constitution and universal suffrage. The strike began in earnest at the appointed time. Extensive military preparations have been made for it; but the troops are known to be saturated with socialistic ideas, and great lack of confidence in their fidelity is freely expressed. On the 15th it was reported that 15,000 out of the 40,000 Belgian coal miners had struck, and that more workmen were going out all the time. On the 16th the number of strikers was estimated at 300,000. It seems to be clear that the Socialist leaders are urging their followers to refrain from violence, but the socialists charge that the military display is designed by the ruling class to excite the strikers to acts of violence and so make a pretense for putting down the suffrage agitation by arbitrary means. In parliament the ministry has insisted upon voting first upon the appropriations and then upon the suffrage measures. But the combined opposition of Liberals, Radicals and Socialists, fearing that if the appropriations were once passed the ministry would dissolve parliament without acting on the suffrage reforms, have demanded such action first. They seem in this respect to have been successful; for on the 16th the parliamentary debate on the suffrage measures began.

#### NEWS NOTES.

—The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage died at Washington on the 12th. He was 70 years old.

—Gen. Wade Hampton, a lieutenant general in the Confederate service and afterwards governor of South Carolina, died at Columbia on the 11th, at the age of 84.

—The state of Minnesota, denied relief in the Supreme Court of the United States (vol. iv., pp. 739, 746), has begun suit in its own courts to restrain the merger of the northwestern railroads.

—The Supreme Court of Porto Rico has reversed the decision of the lower court convicting S. Iglesias, President of the Federation of Workmen of Porto Rico, of conspiracy to raise wages (vol. iv., p. 584), and discharged him from imprisonment.

—The constitution of Cuba was formally promulgated on the 16th by

Gov. Gen. Wood, who at the same time published a decree dissolving the constitutional convention which adjourned last October and calling the first Congress together for its first meeting on the 5th of May.

—On the 16th the Senate passed the Senate bill for the exclusion of Chinese immigrants. It simply extends the present exclusion law. The bill passed by the House on the same subject is much more drastic. (See "In Congress" in this issue.) It now remains for the two houses to come to an agreement.

—On a rehearing the appellate court of Texas, on the 16th, modified its anti-trust law decision (p. 10) so far as to hold that the question of the unconstitutionality of the Texas anti-trust law of 1899 is not involved in the case before it, that law being free from the special exemptions which nullify the previous acts.

—The London Times announced on the 7th that the Johannesburg (South Africa) city council has decided to levy taxes for municipal purposes only on real estate values, exclusive of improvements, and that there is great local opposition to this decision, the object of which is to discourage the holding of vacant building lots.

—The Cleveland Plain Dealer of the 15th, in its Columbus staff correspondence, announces that requests have been extended to Herbert S. Bigelow, of Cincinnati, by Democratic leaders from various parts of Ohio, in which Mayor Johnson has joined, to consent to accept the Democratic nomination for secretary of state, the head of this year's ticket.

—The Democratic Congressional Campaign committee agreed tentatively on the 11th upon the following executive committee: Ben T. Cable, Illinois, chairman; Lewis Nixon, New York, chairman of the Finance committee; David Overmeyer, Kansas; Thomas Taggart, Indiana; Richard Olney, Massachusetts, and Daniel Lamont, New York.

—On the 14th argument was heard before the United States Supreme Court, on the application of the State of Washington for leave to bring a suit in that court to restrain the merger of the northwestern railroads. This suit differs in some technical particulars from that decided against the State of Minnesota (vol. iv., pp. 739, 746), but is the same in purpose.

#### PRESS OPINIONS.

##### THE PHILIPPINE ATROCITIES.

Denver Post (neut.), April 12.—We cannot afford to countenance or commend barbarism such as it was reported Maj. Waller was guilty of. . . . And yet, on the other hand, we don't want to become a nation of sentimentalists. We don't want to adopt