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Once more Lord Kitchener "regrets to report"—this time "greatly." And well may he "greatly regret," for the capture of Gen. Methuen appears under the circumstances, and as in its psychological effects it will doubtless prove to be, the worst disaster the British have yet suffered in this stupendous conflict.

It was the British defeat at Saratoga that turned the tide of the American Revolution. Although that war dragged on many years after this decisive event, its culmination in the independence of the United States was thenceforth inevitable; for the Saratoga victory revived the spirits of the Americans, it dampened the ardor of England, and it made possible the intervention of France. Similar results may reasonably be looked for from the capture of Methuen. Important as this capture is, merely as a battle victory, it is infinitely more important for the message it conveys to the desperately struggling Boer people, to the stolid masses of Great Britain, and to the onlooking world.

Lord Kitchener has for weeks been laying enormous but futile traps for the capture of Gen. DeWet, and the tory government has assured the British people that with DeWet out of the field the Boer resistance would collapse. But Gen. Delarey discredits these assurances and throws suspicion upon Kitchener's competency by achieving a victory which admonishes everybody that even if DeWet were captured the end of the war would not be in sight, for Delarey would still be at large. Nor is that all. The fact is emphasized that besides Delarey and DeWet there is Botha, who has recently given a good account of himself; and the ignorant and confiding are excited to wonder what other talent for defensive warfare, as yet without distinction, these patriotic leaders may not have in their following and under their tuition?

So shocking to the assumed confidence of the British government is this spectacular victory of Delarey's, so significant is it of the unexhausted possibilities of the Boer powers of resistance, that the necessity is freely considered in official circles in London for adding 30,000 more troops to the 300,000 that have already been sent into South Africa. But it is only a few days since a British minister stated on the floor of the House of Commons that a call for more troops would probably mean conscription. So far the supply of troops has been drawn largely from the "submerged tenth." Men coming from that quarter, however, have proved to be defective. Even if they were efficient, the supply of those to whom love of adventure and "a sure living so long as they don't get shot" are important considerations, has given out. A continuance of the war with a larger force, therefore, will mean to England something more than empty boasts about British valor. It will mean that the flower of the British people must either enlist or stand a draft. This would put the British to a test which defensive patriotism might well endure, but from which the spirit of foreign conquest is almost certain to recoil. It was that possibility, and not personal sympathy for Methuen, who has suffered only one of the ordinary fortunes of war, that depressed the jingo element of Great Britain when the news came, and, save for Irish cheers, cast the House of Commons in gloom.

Nor is the effect of Delarey's exploit likely to begin and end with the dampening of British ardor. Other nations will feel its influence. Even our own pro-British government may realize that a change is taking place which demands that Boer envoys be treated by it with international respect, and that our nominal neutrality be made more genuine. Should the South African republics succeed in preserving their independence the history of the British supply post at New Orleans—where British army agents rendezvous horses and mules and ship them directly in British army transports to the British forces in South Africa—might unpleasantly disturb our future diplomatic negotiations with the triumphant Boers; and, conscious of this, our government might abolish the American base of British war supplies. If Delarey's achievement secured no more than the stoppage of this manifest breach of neutrality, it would have virtually won the war for his people.

One fact in connection with Delarey's capture of Methuen is worthy of special comment. When Lord Roberts announced the disaster on the floor of the House of Lords, he assured the British public that Delarey's conduct throughout the war was a guarantee that Gen. Methuen would be well cared for. This is more than an ordinary tribute. For it must be borne in mind that British officers have shot and hanged Boer prisoners without mercy, and that the British government has approved it. Scores of Boer soldiers, captured by the British, have been hanged as traitors. They were not deserters from the British army, but were only claimed as British subjects by birth,

residents of Cape Colony who had joined the armies of the Boer republics. The universally conceded right of voluntary expatriation was denied them; and in their case the old British doctrine of "once a British subject always a British subject," one of the causes of our war with Great Britain in 1812, was revived to make an excuse for hanging them. To hang these men for joining the Boers was the same as if in our civil war we had hanged Northern men found fighting for the Confederacy, or the Confederacy had hanged East Tennesseeans who served in the Federal army. Besides hanging scores of such men the British have gone the length of shooting Boer commandants whom they had captured. One was Scheepers, whose alleged crime was violation of the laws of war. He denied the charges circumstantially, but a British army court-martial convicted him. British newspapers of high standing have shown that even if the facts laid to his charge were true, all that he did was done under orders from military superiors, and that this should have exonerated him from responsibility. It was evident, however, that he was doomed from the hour of his capture. Another commandant, Kritzinger, is under trial by British court-martial upon similar charges. Apparently the British army policy in South Africa is to shoot prisoners whose military exploits have embarrassed them, using baseless charges of military crime as their legal excuse, and the assumption that the Boer government is only a government on horseback as their moral justification; and Gen. Delarey, were he to retaliate, now that he has Methuen in custody, would be justified. But, notwithstanding these British outrages upon prisoners; notwithstanding the widespread desolation of his country by the wanton burnings of Boer farms, whole districts at a time, by British orders; notwithstanding the horrors and wholesale deaths of the reconcentrado camps which the British army has established in South Africa in imitation of Weyler in Cuba—notwithstanding all this provocation, Gen. Delarey's character for humanity has been so deeply impressed upon his enemy that Lord Roberts feels justified in publicly guaranteeing the safety of Methuen in Delarey's hands. One could hardly feel so sure of Delarey's safety in Kitchener's hands.

It would be difficult to characterize the spirit in which the American invasion of the Philippines was begun and is maintained, so accurately yet with such bitter though unconscious irony, as it was done the other night by Funston—he who secured a brigadier general's commission and a rather discreditable niche in American military history, by the spy methods he adopted to capture Aguinaldo. This sudden and somewhat unsavory brigadier general was being dined and wined at a Chicago Republican club, where he made a speech imperiously denouncing Americans who stand for the Declaration of Independence. Ignoring the really vital fact that no American soldiers would have been hurt in the Philippines if they had not defied the traditions of their own country by invading the islands, he absurdly and with apparent malice tried to shift responsibility for the slaughter since January, 1900, to the anti-imperialists. But the gem of his speech was the sentence already alluded to as unconsciously satirizing the spirit of the invasion. Said he:

Let us keep our differences to ourselves until the sovereignty of the United States has been established. Then, if we must, let us pull hair among ourselves as to how we shall dispose of our possessions.

There is the idea exactly. Let us keep quiet until the theft is complete, and then quarrel all we please over the division of the loot! And that is modern patriotism! Where do its ethics and tactics differ, except in magnitude, from those of a midnight expedition of "benevolent assimilation" to a water melon patch or a hen coop?

As the next election in California approaches, the Democrats of that state are beginning to discuss their prospects and purposes. Certain leaders, those who wear the uniform of Democracy but often camp in the tents of the plutocrats, are urging the nomination of a safe, conservative, and—as the San Francisco Star appropriately adds—"a weak man, who is not known to have any opinions on great public questions, or who, having opinions, has kept them carefully bottled up and hermetically sealed." The Star does not want such a candidate. It wants no mere orator, who will recount "the glorious deeds of the fathers" while ignoring our departure from their teachings; it wants no little reformer without sincere convictions; it wants no boss's tool. What it demands is—

that a clear-cut declaration of really democratic principles be adopted, and that the party's standard bearer be not one who sulked in his tent in the Bryan campaigns, and whose voice has never been uplifted for industrial and political freedom, but a man of the people, and known to the people as the upholder and defender of all the rights to which the Declaration of Independence says man is entitled, and which the Constitution of the United States once guaranteed.

That is about what is needed not only by the Democratic party in California, but also by the Democratic party of the nation.

In the issue of the Commoner of March 7, Mr. Bryan considers David B. Hill as a presidential candidate. There is nothing obtrusive in Mr. Bryan's having done this, for the Manhattan club banquet at New York was as undisguised an effort to place Mr. Hill in the foreground for the Democratic nomination as could possibly be made. It would not have been more pronounced either on his own part or on the part of this club, which, by the way, is said to have supported McKinley in 1896, had he worn a label inscribed in big letters: "I am a Democrat and am a Candidate for President." But Hill's presidential prospects are blighted. If Mr. Wood's speech at the banquet, which is now gaining considerable circulation in the Democratic press, did not assure the spoilsmen present that they were