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THE

Congo Atrocities.

A LECTURE

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BY

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THE CONGO ATROCITIES.

Part I.—Philanthropy in the Making.

1. Map shewing the position of the Congo Free States.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

For some time past the eyes of an increasingly large number of people in Great Britain and America have been turned upon that immense tract of country in the heart of Africa, known as the Congo Free State. Ever since the formation of that State there have been some who have suspected the intentions and good faith of its founder; but during recent years suspicion has developed into certainty, and the revelations which are now made public surpass in horror the wildest dreams of the prophets of evil. It is high time that the conscience of this country was thoroughly aroused; and I therefore beg you to follow me closely, as I endeavour to lay before you, briefly but clearly, the startling indictment against the sovereign of this so-called Free State.

The basin of the Congo River comprises roughly a million square miles. Its population is uncertain, but is variously estimated at from ten to fifteen millions of people. These figures will tell you nothing. We cannot think in millions. In the large map of Africa the Congo Free State looks like a moderate sized patch in a large quilt. But the Congo River and its tributary streams would cover the surface of Europe, with the exception of Spain and a part of Russia. The Congo River itself is considerably over 3,000 statute miles in length; so that you will understand that it is no insignificant tract of country with which we have to deal.

2. H. M. Stanley.

Mr. H. M. Stanley was the first to trace the Congo River from the great Lakes to its well-known mouth in the Atlantic, and he it was who described with natural enthusiasm the possibilities of this great division of Equatorial Africa. He foresaw quite clearly that under the influence of civilisation the country could be made to yield immeasurable stores of animal, vegetable and mineral wealth, to the mutual advantage of the white and coloured races. Comparing the basin of the Congo with that of the Mississippi, he struck the balance largely in favour of the Congo; and he says—and I ask you to specially note this—"It possesses over forty millions of moderately industrious and workable people, who are poor and degraded because they are encompassed round about by hostile forces of nature and man, denying them contact and intercourse with the elements which might have ameliorated the unhappiness of their condition." We shall see shortly how the advent of the European, which Stanley naturally encouraged, has "ameliorated the condition" of the "moderately industrious" native.

3. The Wealth of the Country—Palms.

But first of all let me tell you what it was that the native was to be taught to gather and barter; for Stanley always speaks of "the enterprising mercantile factor, who with one hand receives the raw produce from the native, in exchange for the finished product of the manufacturer's loom," which was the only method of trading known to the civilised business men of those days. You will see before long how King Leopold has improved upon these unprofitable and antiquated methods.

To begin with, then, there are palms in great variety, of which the most useful to commerce is the Oil Palm. In some districts there are entire forests of it, and as one tree yields annually from 500 to 1,000 nuts it will be seen at once that great wealth was being wasted. It is doubtful if Palm Oil would pay for export from the Upper Congo owing to the distance. It is exported from the Lower Congo. Palm Oil plays an important part in the home industries of the natives. There are also various species of gums, of which the red and white copals are the most important. The natives knew

nothing of their value in Stanley's day, but they have learned a good deal since. There are also vegetable oils and fibres of marketable value.

4. The Wealth of the Country—Rubber.

But more important by far than these is the gum of the india-rubber plant; and the great vines which produce the sap which we call rubber grow here in luxuriant profusion. I do not profess that the picture represents the rubber vines, but in forests such as this they are found in large numbers. As great creepers they hang in festoons from tree to tree, and, said Stanley, "if every warrior living on the immediate banks of the Congo and its navigable affluents were to pick about a third of a pound in rubber each day throughout the year . . . . and convey it to the trader for sale, five million pounds worth of vegetable produce could be obtained without exhaustion of the wild forest productions."

One man in Europe proved an apt scholar; and the Congolese native has been taught of recent years how to make the most of the natural products of his country.

5. The Wealth of the Country—Ivory.

One other source of wealth cannot be overlooked; and the picture, which shews a couple of young elephants shot at Lomako, will serve as a peg on which to hang the description. Stanley calculated that there were some 200,000 elephants in the Congo basin, "each carrying on an average 50 lbs. weight of ivory in his head, which would represent, when collected and sold in Europe, some five million pounds." There were, of course, large stocks of "dead" ivory accumulated in the big towns and villages as permanent assets of the tribe or clan. Stanley, however, was keensighted enough to place ivory "fifth in rank among the natural products of the basin." He foresaw its extinction in the not distant future. What he did not foresee was the methods by which this would be brought about. He did not reckon on the vigour of the royal trader.

I might speak also of the maize and bananas; the vast quantities of fruits and vegetables; and also of the mineral wealth of the country, but I have said sufficient to shew you that this favoured land was a prize worth struggling for.

6. Leopold II from Stanley's standpoint.

Before Stanley had issued his work on "The Congo" one man in Europe had set his heart on the prize. It was Leopold II, King of the Belgians. He captivated everybody by his philanthropic schemes for regenerating and saving the African races. His idea was to secure this great district from the selfish grabbers who were seeking to portion out Africa for mercenary ends, and to make it a "free" state, where the native would enjoy all the blessings of a just and Christian civilisation. Stanley fell under the spell of the philanthropic monarch. So did the British Chambers of Commerce. So did the Protestant Missionary Societies. So did everybody—or almost everybody, for there were just a few notable exceptions. Stanley dedicated his new work to the "generous monarch who so nobly conceived, ably conducted, and munificently sustained the enterprise which has obtained the recognition of all the Great Powers of the world, and has ended in the establishment of the Congo State." The picture on the screen is a reproduction of the cover of the book, and you will not fail to notice the honour paid to this "generous monarch." So that, you see, if halos could have been bestowed like titles, the head of the King of the Belgians would have been circled like a saint's. But suspend your judgment for a while. I am going to throw a light, not around the head, but upon the heart of the royal philanthropist.

7. Extracts from the Articles of the Berlin Conference.

In 1884, international complications necessitated a conference of the European Powers. This was held at Berlin, and its programme was limited "to the freedom of trade in the Basin of the Congo and its mouth." It resulted in the recognition of the new State and the eulogising of its author; and all the Powers congratulated themselves and each other on their humanity and self-abnegation. The Articles of the Conference provide:—

"That the trade of all nations shall enjoy complete freedom."

"That Foreigners without distinction shall enjoy protection of their persons and property."

And note this :—

"All the Powers . . . bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the condition of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the Slave Trade. They shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific, or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organised for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilisation."

8. The ideal Congo—A civilised Country.

The picture on the screen represents very adequately the anticipations and intentions of the Conference. The late Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, speaking in the British House of Commons on June 9th, 1904, expressed the international view quite clearly : " When the United States first, and the European governments subsequently, recognised the existence in the Congo Basin of a government possessed of a national status, that recognition was accorded not to the Congo State, but to an Association professing an international character, and proclaiming before the world as the object of its being, not the accumulation of rubber at an infinite cost of human life and suffering, but the protection and civilisation of the natives of Africa."

That is historically true—yet five months after the Conference closed, King Leopold notified the Signatory Powers that the International Association would be henceforth known as the " Congo Free State," and himself as sovereign of that " State." The anticipations of the Powers have been realised only in the neighbourhood of the Mission stations—the view upon the screen shows a " Missionary " and not a " State " reformation—and I shall have no difficulty in showing that every obstacle is thrown in the way of the missionaries, with a view to the prevention of " the civilisation of the natives." Their " protection and civilisation " is not now part of the scheme.

9. Entrance to a Cannibal Village.

Before I proceed to the period of disillusionment I want to remark in all fairness, and in the words of Sir Harry H. Johnston that " the Congo Basin was not a region of ideal happiness and peace for the negro " before the advent of the white man. " It

was, in fact, a region of isolated tribes and communities, almost the whole of which, except in the south, were confirmed cannibals. In the northern half of the Congo Free State, incessant wars and slave raids took place, not with a view to supplying labour, but with the intention of obtaining wives, and above all, victims for the cannibal feasts." But then, where is ideal happiness to be found in this world?

Mrs. Harris's excellent photograph shows the cage-like entrance to a Cannibal town—an entrance which could easily be made to act as a trap on occasion. The missionaries, however, state that many of the native tribes, even in the north, have never been cannibal.

10 Execution of Slaves.

Moreover the slave trade was in full swing, and the Arabs, whose incursions tended to suppress cannibalism and to introduce higher standards of comfort, carried the ravages of the traffic in human flesh far and wide ; though only in about one-fifth the area of the Congo State. Stanley, too, tells of the execution of slaves on the occasion of the death of a chief, and Mrs. Harris's photograph strikingly depicts the scene. The doomed men were made to sit or kneel, their arms and legs being securely bound. A young tree was then bent like a bow and a rope was lashed to the top. The rope was then passed round the man's head, drawing up his form and straining the neck, and almost lifting the body from the ground. Then the executioner advanced with his short broad-bladed falchion, and after measuring his distance, severed the head clean from the body. The spring of the released tree sent it bounding several yards away. But whilst all this is revolting enough, we must not forget that it is no worse than what took place in Europe in the Middle Ages ; and the condition of these people is, naturally, one of primitive barbarism.

11. An Executioner and a Warrior.

You have here a closer view of the executioner and of a native warrior, and their appearance is calculated to send a thrill through most of us, even at this distance. Their cruelties in the old days were undoubtedly terrible. "But," says Sir Harry Johnston, "it is no excuse for the evil doings of the Congo Free State, that the Congo Basin was a land of much misery before King Leopold took it in hand." Exactly. The founding of that State was to be the means of putting an end to all the wrongs and cruelties common to savage tribes.

Part II.—Philanthropy in operation.

12. Village Scene and Chief's compound.

Little but what was creditable was heard of the Congo Free State during the first five years of its existence. Leopold told the world what beneficent plans he was forming, and the world took them on trust. Yet towards the end of this period ugly rumours began to spread, and men who were both interested and clear sighted (and they were few in number) thought it wise to moderate their praises. The philanthropist began to reveal himself, in the words of Dr. Aked, as "the greatest pirate of all time."

First of all a decree was issued claiming all vacant land as the property of the State—in other words, the property of King Leopold. That is to say, the native was just allowed the ground upon which his hut was built, and any area of farm land he might have cultivated. Communal rights were not recognised. By a stroke of the pen nearly a million square miles of country and all its produce became the personal property of one man. Moreover other decrees were issued prohibiting their trade in india-rubber and gum copal; that is to say in the most valuable natural products.

13. Type of Congolese Warrior.

In the next place a large number of troops were recruited from the most savage tribes in the Upper Congo, and were equipped with modern rifles of precision. Imagine this native warrior instructed in the use of the Albini rifle! One naturally asks the reason. That Leopold had not acted without careful forethought is evident from a "Confidential" circular which was despatched to the officials on the Congo, and which became known only in 1905. From this it appears that bonuses were offered for healthy recruits, and even for children, who were to be drafted to camps of military instruction, and trained in the arts of war. At first, these so-called recruits were obtained by armed raids upon villages, and they were, in reality, nothing more or less than slaves. In fact, a letter written by a District Commissioner in 1896, authorises a native chief to "buy slaves" for him. A little later, when it became known what a good time the soldiers had, recruiting presented no more difficulties. Many of these savage men preferred, and not unnaturally, to be the hunters rather than the hunted.

14. Types of irregular Cannibal Soldiers

The reason soon became apparent. These cannibal soldiers (types of whom you see upon the screen) were required to force the natives to work for the philanthropic King. A decree was issued instructing the officials "to take urgent and necessary measures to secure for the state the domainial produce, notably ivory and rubber." At the same time, the natives were forbidden to sell ivory and rubber to European merchants. In reply to protests, the King defined his position. Everything in the country belonged to the State, and the natives were but tenants. If they interfered with the property they were poachers and criminals. This was bad enough, but worse was to follow. If the natives were not to be allowed to sell rubber and ivory and gum copal themselves, they were to be made to obtain it for the State. Not *invited* to do so, but *forced*. To this end—"to stimulate the zeal of our officials"—bonuses were allotted on a sliding scale, with the result that the official who obtained the most produce at the least cost secured the greatest bonus.

Do you see what that involved? It was a fiendish scheme. The official's future was bound up with the production of revenue. He *had* to obtain it, and he was told to "employ gentleness first, and if they persist in not accepting the imposition of the State, employ force of arms"—the force of arms of the gentry on the screen.

15. A savage Abir Sentry.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, do you understand why savage soldiers were required? "Under this system" (says Mr. E. D. Morel in his terribly fascinating book entitled "Red Rubber"), "£13,715,664 of raw produce (85 per cent. rubber) has been forced out of the Congo native in the last seven years at the point of the bayonet."

The Rev. Joseph Clark, of the American Baptist Missionary Union, shows us, in a letter to a correspondent, to what type of men King Leopold had entrusted the duties of compulsion and the interests of the State. He says: "The soldiers are themselves savages, some even cannibals, trained to use rifles, and in many cases they are sent away without any supervision, and they do as they please. When they come to a town no man's property or wife is safe, and when they are at war they are like devils." The soldier whose portrait is before you has murdered many natives for rubber.

16. Mr. E. D. Morel.

I wish you would all buy a copy of Mr. Morel's book, "Red Rubber," which is published by T. Fisher Unwin at the low price of half-a-crown. If you turn to the chapter entitled "The Deeds," you will find one long string of horrors extending from 1890 to the present day. The extracts published are from letters by explorers, military men, Swedish, American and British missionaries; and one turns faint and sick, as he reads page after page of heartless and systematic cruelties, perpetrated by men drunk with the lust of gold. To Mr. Morel the persecuted native, even more than the Christian public, owes a deep debt of gratitude. A Liverpool journalist, Editor of the "West African Mail," he has for years past devoted time and labour to the exposure of the diabolical methods of King Leopold. As Honorary Secretary of the Congo Reform Association, and as author of several works on the subject, he is cordially hated in Belgium by all those whose interest it is to prevent light from being thrown on the dark doings of the King. Mr. Morel's fearless denunciation of wrong has earned for him, however, the respect and admiration of all honest men; and if he has some enemies he has many friends, some of the staunchest being members of the Belgian House of Representatives.

Had it not been for his patient and persistent efforts, the curtain would not yet have been raised to allow Europe and America to witness the frightful atrocities in the Congo basin.

17. The Chicotte.

We have arrived, therefore, at this point. The king must have rubber; the native must be forced to produce it. To persuade him to do so, the "Chicotte" was introduced, "a murderous-looking instrument of hippopotamus hide, five feet long, thickened at one end for convenience of grip, flexible as a riding-whip, deadly as the knout." How many men and women have died under its blows none will ever know. Mr. Ruskin, of the Balolo Mission, says that he saw one woman flogged with 200 strokes, so severely that blood and water flowed from her, and that she died shortly after. A woman, mind you! Were these the only barbarities? Would to God it had been so! Towns were burnt to the ground; women were outraged; women and children were mutilated; hundreds, thousands were killed.

"Shall I lay myself open to the charge of exaggeration and sensationalism if I say that tens of thousands of people have been done to death under this regime?" asked Dr. Aked of Mr. Casement—a British Consul who had known the Congo for more than 20 years, and who was officially commissioned to inquire and report to the British Government. In low, deep tones he replied: "You are within the mark if you say millions!"

18. Matadi—The limit of Ocean navigation.

In 1904, Leopold found himself compelled, principally by the pressure of the British House of Commons, and the force of public opinion (which is practically the same as saying by Mr. Morel and Mr. H. R. Fox-Bourne), to appoint a Commission to inquire and report. The conscientious and honest character of the Belgian gentlemen who composed the Commission has never been questioned; and when they reached the scene of their labours it has never been suggested that they displayed anything but strict impartiality in taking evidence. When they reached Matadi they would find steamers waiting to convey the rubber to Europe, for Matadi is the limit of ocean navigation with the Congo river. But we must bear in mind that the Commissioners visited only easily-accessible points on the banks of the Congo river and two of its tributaries. It was impossible for them to touch more than the fringe of the question; the worst cases, perpetrated far from the neighbourhood of mission stations and civilisation, could not, in the nature of things, be investigated. Yet the Report, issued in 1905, roused a storm in Belgium, even though the evidence was suppressed and the "conclusions" only were published; and upon this Report, and the information furnished by the Rev. J. H. and Mrs. Harris and other missionaries, I shall rely for the details of oppression and cruelty which are to follow. Up to that time certain people had refused to believe that King Leopold was fully cognisant of what was going on in his private domain; but the atrocities still continue, so that he now stands self-condemned as a modern brigand of the most heartless type. You shall judge for yourselves.

19. Ngombe Rubber Workers with Baskets.

The Report recognises that the natives are *compelled* to obtain rubber for the State. The following extract from an official order was quoted in the debate in the Belgian Parliament without contradiction: "When you arrive at the first hut, speak

as follows to the owner thereof : ' Here is a basket ; you are to fill it with rubber. Go to the forest at once, and if in a week you have not returned with 10lbs. of rubber, I shall set fire to your hut and you will burn.' The ' trique ' (which by the way, is a kind of wooden mallet) may be used to drive into the forest those who refuse to leave the village. By burning one hut after another I think that you will not be compelled to proceed to last extremities before being obeyed. Inform the natives that if they cut another single vine, I will exterminate them to the last man."

So you now see how the condition of the natives, who are here shown with their baskets for collecting the rubber, is being improved by philanthropy.

20. Ruinous methods of obtaining Rubber.

Now listen to the Commissioners :

" In the majority of cases the native must go one or two day's march every fortnight, until he arrives at that part of the forest where the rubber vines can be met with in a certain degree of abundance. There the collector passes a number of days in a miserable existence. He has to build himself an improvised shelter, which cannot, obviously, replace his hut. He has not the food to which he is accustomed. He is deprived of his wife, exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, and the attacks of wild beasts. When once he has collected the rubber he must bring it to the State Station or that of the Company, and only then can he return to his village, where he can sojourn for barely more than two or three days, because the next demand is upon him."

This is not the testimony of " hostile missionaries." It is the report of Leopold's own Commission, which thus tells us that for 286 days in every year the native is the slave of the State, living a " miserable existence."

Moreover, these hard measures compel the native to adopt ruinous methods of producing the rubber. He cuts the vine down, instead of merely tapping it ; and bear in mind that if the vine is to be preserved, it should be tapped only twice a year.

21. The Treatment of Women.

And what if the native should fail to bring in the stipulated amount of rubber? Well, King Leopold and his officials have not overlooked that contingency. The Commissioners report

that the prevailing methods of Coercion are: "Taxing of hostages, the imprisonment of the chiefs, the institution of sentries, fines and military expeditions." These are some of the "noble conceptions," "ably conducted" to fruition by the "generous monarch" to whom Stanley dedicated his work.

Let us take them in this order, and first of all *Hostages*. That has a queer sound. What does it mean?

The Commissioners say: "The imprisonment of women hostages was hardly denied." It is easy of explanation. If the men fail to bring in sufficient produce their wives are seized and detained as prisoners in hostage houses; compelled to cultivate the ground; roped together as they march to and from their work; herded like cattle in their common prison house, and guarded by sentries, until their idle (?) husbands or fathers shall be spurred by desperation to superhuman efforts to bring wealth to the whiteman. But they are not slaves, mark you, they are "hostages"—a very different thing in the ethics of King Leopold. The picture is not a photograph of these "hostages." The women here are far too well-fed to serve as an illustration. They are simply natives bringing in produce. Had they been "hostages" they would have been roped together. Notice the anklets on their feet, for I shall have occasion to refer to them more than once.

22. Five great Chiefs.

The Commissioners next refer to the "Subjugation of the chiefs to servile labour and the humiliations forced upon them." You have here five of these great chiefs.

The Rev. Mr. Campbell says that he has known certain chiefs to be tied up for a week in ropes and kept tied until a sufficient ransom was brought. You can readily see how treatment of this kind destroys their prestige at once, and renders their claim to headship a pretence and a farce—which in itself disorganises the whole social life of the African, based as it is upon a patriarchal system.

23. Chiefs from rubber working district.

Mr. Harris tells how he has himself seen chiefs such as these, who are from the rubber working district, flogged with the chicotte, and made to sweep the roads. Yet they were held

responsible for any shortage in the rubber supplies required from their villages, although they had no longer the authority to compel their men to work.

24. The "Sentries"

The Commissioners next speak of the "Institution of Sentries," and they refer to them in these terms:

"According to the witnesses these auxiliaries, especially those who are stationed in the villages, abuse the authority placed in them, claiming the women and food—they kill, without pity, all those who attempt to resist their exigencies and whims."

The "Sentries" are the savage, sometimes cannibal soldiers to whom I have referred. You have two of them here; the one on the left is especially notorious for the number he has killed. They are the servants of the State; and there is ample evidence that the officials of the State have authorised and encouraged the awful barbarities which have shocked the civilised world.

The British Consul, Mr. Roger Casement, published in 1904 some terrible disclosures. He found that the natives whom he questioned got absolutely no pay for the rubber they brought in. When they could not obtain rubber, or when they could not produce it in sufficient quantities, he found that the sentries were instructed to kill the defaulters, and to cut off their hands or other parts of their bodies in proof that they had done so.

25. "Careful methods" of slaughter.

The sentry must account to the white man, you see, for the cartridges he expends, and the hands form the "tally." We shall see more of this later on. You are beginning, I trust, to realise how systematic the State is in its barbarities. It is careful, too, in its own way. The Rev. E. Scrivener, a Baptist Missionary, tells how men who had tried to run from their oppressors and had been caught, were made to stand one behind another, like those in the picture, and an Albini bullet sent through them. "A pity to waste cartridges on such wretches."

26. Shot for Climbing a Tree.

Consul Casement says (and his evidence is corroborated by many missionaries):

"Of acts of persistent mutilation by Government soldiers of this nature I had many statements made to me, some of them specifically, others in a general way. Of the fact of this mutilation and the causes inducing it, there can be no shadow of doubt. It was not a native custom prior to the coming of the whiteman; it was not the outcome of primitive instincts of savages in their fights between village and village; it was the deliberate act of the soldiers of a European Administration, and these men themselves never made any concealment that in committing these acts they were but obeying the positive orders of their superiors."

The man in the picture was shot in the hand and wrist whilst climbing a palm tree for kernels instead of working rubber. The wounds are quite visible in the photograph.

27. The Rev. J. H. and Mrs. Harris and the Rev. Edgar Stannard.

But to return to King Leopold's Commissioners. Among the witnesses examined were the Rev. J. H. Harris, F.R.G.S., Mrs. Harris, and the Rev. Edgar Stannard, who were British Missionaries at Baringa—a place on the Maringa river, in the part of the Congo known as the Abir Concession. These missionaries had already furnished the Congo Reform Association with long and detailed accounts of atrocities and general oppression, committed under the Abir's auspices in their neighbourhood, arising out of the methods employed by that concern—in which, by the way, King Leopold holds half the stock—to force rubber from the natives.

Mr. Stannard and Mr. and Mrs. Harris are seen in the foreground of the picture, and it is to the kindness of Mrs. Harris that I am indebted for permission to use the photographs which illustrate my lecture; almost the whole of which are from her camera.

28. Baringa in 1902.

Baringa itself affords an excellent example of the methods adopted by the State. In 1902, it was a prosperous village, as the photograph which was taken at the time indicates. The natives have never been cannibals, but were industrious and peaceable. In the picture you see the smoke arising from the huts where the women are busy cooking food for the evening meal—the closed hut is the sleeping house of the chief. A young man has been fetching fuel for the fires. The children are playing on

the grass, and the chief is sitting on the forked stool in the centre of the picture. It is a scene of peace. You see the wealth of plantains and food-producing trees around the compound. Notice particularly the branches of the fig tree on the left centre of the picture.

29. All that is left of Baringa.

The fig tree is all that now remains of Baringa. The village was arbitrarily destroyed in order to plant rubber, and the photograph shows the difference. It was less trouble for the officials to drive the natives away and use the cleared space for planting the trees, than to clear a space in the forest for themselves. So the dispossessed and injured native took refuge in the forest, and has built a new town half-an-hour's walk from the former site.

30. Rubber Plantation on the site of Baringa.

The photograph shows a part of the plantation. Where the huts of the villagers once stood, these trees have appeared ; and note ! this is not only a hardship and wrong to the native, it is also unjust to the missionary, who, at great cost had established his station in close proximity to the village. How much less service is he able to render when he is half-an-hour's walk from his people? Mr. Harris asserts emphatically that the principal object of the authorities was to render the missionaries' position untenable. The missionaries are awkward people to deal with, for they see far too much, and tell far too much. Consequently, it is good policy to get rid of Mission Stations as much as possible ; and what reason is there for a Station if the people are no longer there?

31. Missionaries protected by State Soldiers.

When the Report of the Commission appeared in October, 1905, it was published by the Congo authorities in Brussels, but all the evidence collected by the Commission at its public sittings and elsewhere was suppressed. It there only embodied the *conclusions* of the Commission, to which I have already referred. It said that, apart from missionary testimony, the reports of commercial agents and others " prove to demonstration the existence of these reprehensible practices," the truth of which " is borne out by a mass of evidence and official reports." It further declared that Government forces acted as rubber extortionists for

the Companies, and that illegalities were never reported because the officers were simply obeying the instructions of their superiors. The complicity of King Leopold's government is demonstrated and condemned by its own Commissioners.

But though the evidence was not published by the Congo authorities, Mr. Harris and Mr. Stannard sent to the British Consul at Boma, and to the Congo Reform Association brief accounts of the public proceedings at Baringa, which were soon issued to the press.

In the photograph you see State soldiers, sent to protect Mr. Stannard and Mr. and Mrs. Harris from the attack of a white official, who had threatened to take their lives in revenge for their having reported his atrocities. The local magistrate was an Italian, and although he had no legal authority for doing so, he sent the soldiers out of pure good nature, and they remained there until the danger was past.

32. Lontulu, Chief of Bolima.

One of the incidents upon which the Commission took evidence at Baringa, was the treatment of the village of Bolima, which had suffered severely at the hands of an officer named Hagstrom. This evidence was brought forward by Lontulu, the senior chief of Bolima, who came with 20 witnesses, and was assured of protection. His portrait is upon the screen. He brought with him 110 twigs, each of which represented a life sacrificed for rubber. They were of different lengths, representing men, women, and children. It was a horrible story of massacre, mutilation and cannibalism that he had to tell, and it was perfectly clear that he was telling the truth. He was supported by other eye-witnesses. These crimes were committed by those who were acting under the instructions and with the knowledge of white men. Although a chief of considerable standing he had been flogged, imprisoned, tied by the neck with men who were regarded as slaves, and made to do the most menial work. For giving this evidence, Lontulu was, soon after the departure of the Commissioners, arrested and kept in detention for several months; ostensibly, of course, for shortage in rubber, but in reality as a punishment for giving evidence.

33. Isekalokala—a Chief who died after Imprisonment.

Another chief, whose photograph is upon the screen, was imprisoned for shortage in the food supplies required from his

village. He was at that time just recovering from a long and severe illness, yet he was set to sweep the roads with a gang of low-born natives. When he became worse, owing to the hard work and the exposure, he was cut loose and set free; but he died a few days after his return home.

On another occasion, the sentries were flogged because they had not killed enough people. On still another, after they had killed a number of people, including the principal chief, his wives and children, the bodies—except that of the chief—were cut up, and the cannibalistic fighters attached to the Abir force were rationed on the meat thus supplied. After one attack, Lontulu was shown the dead bodies of his people, and asked by the rubber agent if he would bring in rubber now. He replied that he would.

34. Boaji mutilated for her constancy.

These, then, are the methods employed by the great philanthropist and his agents: this was the evidence gathered by the King's own Commissioners. There was no lack of such evidence.

Amongst the mutilated was a woman named Boaji, who was so treated because she wished to remain faithful to her husband. You must understand that when the soldiers drive men into the forest for rubber, a sentry is left behind to "guard" the women. The women are at his mercy. In this case he asked the woman for food, but she had none. He therefore struck her down on the left side with the butt of his gun—you see the permanent deformity it left—then assaulted her; and cut off her foot to secure the valuable anklet she wore. When her husband protested a little later, he was cruelly beaten with the chicotte for his interference.

35. A plucky Native—Lomboto.

Another man named Lomboto gave evidence before the Commission of Enquiry, and confronted the Abir Director, exclaiming: "There, great chiefs from Europe, stands the man who has murdered our fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters for rubber! Why, why, I say, has he done this?" This witness appears to bear a charmed life, for he has so far escaped official vengeance. If the Commissioners had not been present he would have been shot down like a dog. But he is a plucky fellow, and I am glad to be able to show his photograph. The Abir "Director" was allowed to return to Europe unmolested.

36. Isekausu. Mutilated for shortage.

Another witness was Isekausu, who had also been mutilated by "sentries" for shortage in rubber. You will naturally be surprised to find the men mutilated in this way, and of course it is not common. The men are too valuable to be damaged. You would never injure a workable machine! But when the soldiers approach a village the people flee into the forest. Then the sentries fire, right and left; and if by chance a man is struck his hand must be cut off to account for the cartridge. The reason for this requirement lies in the fact that previously the sentries were in the habit of shooting monkeys or birds for food; so the white man—ever economical—required a human hand for every cartridge expended. It was not the savage's idea, remember! If you would like further information on this subject, read "King Leopold's rule in Africa," published by W. Heinemann, Bedford Street, London.

37. A peaceful Village scene.

Will you try to picture the scene I am about to describe? It is not a fancy picture, it is only too true. Imagine a peaceful village like this upon the screen. The villagers, so far as they know—for they have no scales—have collected their rubber in readiness for the fortnightly market, and fondly imagine they have nothing to fear. Suddenly, two days before the market day, a raid is made upon the village by the sentries. The astonished chief inquires the reason. For reply, the sentries fire upon the people. The men flee for their lives to the protection of the forest, but the women stop to pick up their children, and to collect their household treasures. Fatal delay! As they hurry along, impeded with these burdens, and further hampered by the weight of their heavy anklets and collars, they are easily shot down. The children are taken by the feet and their brains dashed out. It is horrible, but it is true. Mr. and Mrs. Harris vouch for the truth of it.

38. Nsala. with his child's hand and foot.

Amongst the women who had been shot on the occasion I am referring to was the wife of a man called Nsala. When this man found that his wife and child were missing, he returned to the village at the risk of his life, and found (I am forced to tell you this, so that you may know the worst) his wife and child cut up, and prepared for cooking. He secured the hand and foot of

the little girl, and set off to tell the tale to the white agent at Baringa. But the agent—listen to me, please—was the man who had authorised the expedition, and he declined to receive him. The missionaries saw him pass through their station, and Mrs. Harris took this photograph on the verandah of her own house.

39. Natives, with hands of murdered relatives.

These natives on the same occasion, found their murdered relatives in the forest, and themselves cut off the hands and brought them to the missionaries in proof of their statements.

The Rev. William Morrison, of the American Presbyterian Mission, sent a private personal appeal to King Leopold in 1899. His colleague, Mr. Sheppard, had himself seen and counted eighty-one human hands slowly drying over a fire. Mr. Ackermann, a Swiss gentleman, wrote in 1903: "If the chief does not bring the stipulated number of baskets, soldiers are sent out and the people are killed without mercy. As proof, parts of the body are brought to the factory." The decrease in the population is appalling, and is estimated at the minimum rate of 100,000 per annum.

40. The boy Impongi, terribly mutilated.

Another witness before the Commission was the boy Impongi, who had been shamefully mutilated as you see, because he belonged to a village which was short in its rubber supply. He told the Commissioners that when the raid was made on the village, his father picked him up and attempted to escape. Finding the pursuit too hot, he dropped the boy by the roadside. When he returned a little later he found the poor lad's bleeding body—the hand cut off to account for a cartridge, and the foot for the sake of the anklet. The little fellow was only six or seven years old; and, remarkable to relate, recovered.

41. Mutilated boy at Wambala.

Here, again, a poor little lad had his hand hacked off by a "sentry" at Wambala. Mr. and Mrs. Harris had stopped at a village down the river to get food for their canoe paddlers. Amongst those who ran down to see them was this boy. It was the same story of a village raided, and a hand cut off to account for a cartridge. Here, again, the boy recovered, but think how many thousands are left in the forests to bleed to death, far from all human aid. May God have mercy on them, for man has none!

42. An Abandoned Child.

Not only is there the direct loss of life to which I have referred, but there is the indirect, for which the Government must be held responsible.

Mr. Harris found this starving baby whilst on his way to a town which, only a few weeks before, had been thickly populated. It was now deserted, but the child had crept into a hut and was crying. Mr. Harris's carriers called into the forest—for they have their own methods of summoning the natives—and some of the villagers returned, and amongst them the father of the child, who is seen in the picture. It appeared that a raid had been made on the village, and thirty women prisoners had been led away. One of them was the mother of this baby, which the sentry had forced her to leave behind, because its weight would hinder her from keeping up with the rest. Until the mother was released, the baby was carefully tended by Mrs. Harris.

43. Chief of the Village of Bongwonga.

So that you see, in the words of Mr. Stannard: "Defenceless women and children are shot down indiscriminately to strike terror into the hearts of the unhappy people, to force them to bring rubber. While the men are in the forest trying to get rubber, their wives are outraged and stolen from them by the State sentries. This has been the normal condition for years. This system is iniquitous in the extreme, and if continued will end in the total depopulation of the country."

What I have just said was exemplified in the case of the chief sitting on the left of the picture. In an attempt to save his wife from outrage by a sentry he had his right leg broken. He was laid across the tree trunk at the foot of the trees in the centre of the picture, and his leg smashed with the butt end of a rifle.

44. The Tree of Massacre.

A melancholy interest attaches to the tree upon the screen, which I have called "The Tree of Massacre." It stands on the ruined site of Nsongo town, and many victims have been tied to its trunk and shot, the bullets piercing their bodies and entering the trunk, whilst others have been hung from its branches.

Mr. Harris tells of one case where a young woman was tied to the fork in the left of the tree and chopped in half; beginning

at the left shoulder and chopping down through the chest. And this—think of it—to punish her husband! This is horrible enough, in all conscience, but there are worse things than this; things of which I cannot speak; things which in the words of Sir Charles Dilke, "are too horrible to publish."

45. The Carrier System.

One other iniquitous proceeding I must refer to. The military and other operations conducted by the Congo Administration on its eastern frontiers have necessitated the head-carriage over the great caravan routes of a gigantic mass of stores of all kinds. The picture shows the kind of thing on a small scale. Referring to one of these great routes the Commission tells us that the native people are "exhausted" through the demands made upon them for head-carriage in the transport of Government material, and are threatened with partial destruction.

Captain Baccari, the King of Italy's envoy, travelled through that region three years ago, and he says: "We have all the ghastly scenes of the slave trade, the collar, the lash, the press-gang." Another Italian officer tells us that the "carriers, weakened, ill, insufficiently fed, fell literally by hundreds." Yet King Leopold dares to proclaim: "Our refined society attaches to human life, and with reason, a value unknown to barbarous communities!"

46. Rev. J. H. Harris and a Chief of Baringa.

Ladies and gentlemen, amid all these tales of darkness there is just one ray of light. The finest testimony which can be given to our evangelical missionaries is contained in the following sentence from the Commissioners' report:

"The Missionary listens to the native, helps him according to his means, makes himself the echo of all the complaints of the region; hence the astounding influence which the missionaries possess in some parts of the country. . . The missionary becomes, in the eyes of the native of the region, the only representative of equity and justice!"

And if this is not sufficient, hear what Commandant Lemaire, who has spent more than ten years on the Congo, has to say; for this declaration was recently quoted in the Belgian Parliament:

" Amongst the missionaries there is only one class—the good. If I mention them you are compelled to believe me, because I am not a believer. I am even an infidel in the fullest sense of the term. One often hears of civilisation ; but the true civilisation is that to which the missionaries consecrate their lives out there."

Does not the photograph which shows a chief of Baringa on a visit to the Rev. J. H. Harris sufficiently indicate the relationships existing between them?

47. Natives, at a Missionary's house.

And the friendship is not confined to the chief. The villagers know that the missionary is their friend. Fortunately the articles of the Berlin Conference provide that " Christian missionaries are to be the object of special protection," and that " Liberty of conscience and religious toleration are expressly guaranteed to the natives as well as to the inhabitants and foreigners. The free and public exercise of every creed, the right to elect religious buildings and to organise missions belonging to every creed, shall be subject to no restriction or impediment whatsoever." This condition is grossly violated.

48. Baron Van Eetwelde.

How does the Congo Administration reward the missionary for his humane and civilising efforts, and how does it interpret these Articles? It tries to browbeat the missionary into silence. It declines to allow him to erect mission buildings except on unhealthy and malarial sites. It has prosecuted the Rev. Edgar Stannard for his bold denunciation of the barbarities of its officials, and has sentenced him to a fine of £40, or three months' imprisonment ; and the man who, next to King Leopold is responsible for these iniquities, is Baron Van Eetwelde, Secretary of State, whose portrait is upon the screen ; and who in his comfortable office in Brussels, devises schemes for hoodwinking the people of two continents.

49. Boma.

Are there any redeeming features? Well, the Commissioners say there are. " Cities which rival our most coquettish seaside resorts light up and animate the banks of the great river, and the starting point and terminus of the Lower Congo Railway :

Matadi—of which I showed you a photograph a short time ago—where ocean steamers anchor; Leopoldville, the great fluvial port, with its active workshops, make us think of our industrial European cities." At Boma, too, which is the centre of administrative power, and of which you have here a photograph, you have many fine public edifices. This is all very well; but, ladies and gentlemen, who paid for them? The Congo native. The inhabitants within forty miles radius of these "elegant stations" are subjected, "in order to maintain the up-keep of these charming centres of European vice, to taxation in staple food-stuffs, so crushing that—to quote the words of the Report—in another five years the population will have been wiped out." It tells us that the population is compelled to bring in every four, seven or twelve days, considerable supplies of native prepared bread, sometimes from enormous distances. In all this there is nothing to boast of. The "elegant stations," and fine public edifices, like the huge profits of the Rubber Companies, have been "wrung out of the suffering population of the Congo."

They boast, too, of their Railway and Steamboat system, and of their telegraphic facilities; but all these, good and desirable in themselves, have simply meant so many more opportunities for forcing labour out of the blacks. As to the charitable institutions, let anyone visit the native hospital in Boma, and he will find a wretched tumble-down hut in which the sufferer is infinitely worse off than in his own village.

Part III—Philanthropy exposed.

50. Map, shewing Revenue divisions.

Let me now briefly refer to the Revenues of the Free State, and I throw upon the screen a map, kindly furnished by Mr. Morel, which shows the Revenue divisions. Bear in mind that the Sovereign has interpreted—without the consent of the Powers—the word sovereignity to mean *possession*. He has by force of might conveyed to himself all the land with its vegetable and mineral products—one might say all its inhabitants. This gigantic property he has divided into various parts for revenue raising purposes. One part he has set aside to provide the sums necessary for the remuneration of the executive staff in Brussels and on the Congo, the construction of public works, and so on. This is the Domaine Prive, or Domaine National, as he now prefers to call it. Another part has been handed over on various terms to privileged people who have formed "Companies" which they have floated on the Belgian Stock Exchange. In these Companies the Sovereign is the principal shareholder. Another part he has declared inalienable from himself and his heirs for ever. Its revenues accrue to him alone. This part is termed the Domaine de la Couronne (Crown Land).

Now as the produce of the land can only be obtained by the people of the land; and as the people of the land are compelled *by force* to obtain it, the "Congo Free State" is neither a "State" not "Free," but a huge slave estate, owned and worked by the King of a civilised country in the 20th century of the Christian era.

51. Startling Reveuue figures.

There is not time for an exhaustive inquiry into the profits of this immoral commercial enterprise, but the table on the screen is full of suggestive interest. In six years the nett profits of the Abir Trust have amounted to £720,000 on a paid up capital of £9,280; and each share of a paid-up value of £4 6s. 6d. has received £335. King Leopold possesses 1,000 shares.

In the Kasai Trust there are 4,020 shares of £10 each, of which the King holds 2,010. The nett profits in four years have been £731,680 on a capital of £40,000. The profits for 1906 are calculated to be £400,000. The King's 2,010 shares are, at the present figure, worth £1,244,200. In the Mongalla Trust there are 3,400 shares of £20 each, of which the King holds 1,700. The full shares are now worth £280, so that the King's shares, originally calculated at £34,400, are now worth £476,000.

The slave trade is not quite a losing concern even to-day!

We now come to the Domaine de la Couronne, and we can only accept the estimates of the Belgian Professor Cattier, who by carefully tabulated statistics, has convinced himself that the nett profits from this private preserve have amounted, in the last 10 years, to a minimum of £300,000 per annum.

52. Brussels.

With this money King Leopold has improved the Laeken palace at a cost of £1,200,000. He has erected a Triumphal Arch at Brussels at a cost of £200,000. An enormous statue of himself is to be erected in the capital at a cost of £150,000. Professor Cattier has already proved purchases in real estate totalling £731,560. He has large properties on the Mediterranean; large sums invested in Chinese Railways, and in other foreign enterprises.

At immense cost, too, he has established a Press Bureau which subsidises certain newspapers in Belgium and in various foreign countries, and scatters laudatory pamphlets and similar publications up and down the world. The paid agents of the Bureau are everywhere—in America, Great Britain, and the Continent of Europe—and by their means King Leopold seeks to prevent the dissemination of all news hostile to his schemes and methods.

But even in Belgium, people are waking up to the true state of things; and it is hardly likely that the King will have carte blanche to do as he pleases, when once the horrible facts have been properly grasped.

53. King Leopold.

I want you to understand clearly that Belgium has no legal rights of any kind over the King's enterprise. The Belgian

people have no more control than you or I. The man who is responsible for these sickening outrages is the King of Belgium, Leopold II. I am going to contrast his promises and his assertions with the verdict of responsible and representative men. Listen to them both ; and first of all to the King Philanthropist :

" Our only programme, I am anxious to repeat," said King Leopold, " is the work of moral and material regeneration."

" There was certainly brought to light," said the Marquis of Lansdowne recently, " the existence of bondage under the most barbarous and inhuman conditions, and maintained for mercenary motives of the most selfish character."

" Each step forward made by our people," said King Leopold, " must mark an improvement in the condition of the native."

" Under the influence of terror," says Dr. Baccari, surgeon-general of the Royal Italian Navy, in his Report to his government, " entire villages hide in the bush at the approach of the white man—natives are bound with ropes and chains—all aspirations for liberty are punished with the whip and hunger cure."

Now listen to King Leopold the Pirate. To the protest of civilisation he replies :

" My rights on the Congo are indivisible—none possess any right of intervention." And his Prime Minister has recently voiced his master's up-to-date opinion in these words : " The native is entitled to nothing." That is philanthropy laid bare. We know now what the King's policy has been, and Professor Cattier, of Brussels is justified in saying, " The native population has been oppressed, ill-treated, decimated."

Part IV—Philanthropy that may be.

54 Natives making bricks.

Under happier conditions the native would prove the keen, enterprising, high-spirited man Stanley described him to be. King Leopold says he is essentially lazy and indifferent, but that is an old cry. It served Leopold's great prototype, Pharaoh, as an argument thousands of years ago: "Ye are idle, ye are idle; go therefore now and work." But the missionary says they are not lazy and indifferent. Under free labour they make bricks at the rate of 200 per day, for which they are paid; and liberty and wages make the black a willing worker.

But it is because the native is a *man*, with the rights of a man, that we appeal for, nay, that we demand intervention.

55. Natives making Palm Oil.

We demand that the Congo be *administered* and not pirated; that the produce of the soil be acquired by legitimate purchase and not by pillage; and that these native races, which at present are crushed and broken, and sick unto death of the very name of rubber, shall be encouraged, and not driven, to labour. We demand that the rights of humanity, even of black humanity, shall be recognised, and that serious efforts shall be made to brighten the lives, to train the intelligence, and to direct the activities of these unhappy people.

We demand that they shall be allowed to trade. You see them here busily employed making palm oil. Let them be encouraged. The labourer is worthy of his hire; let him not be deprived of it.

56. The Missionary's Message.

He is willing to learn. Gathered under the shade of a tree he listens to the white missionary and yields to the influence of love. It may be true that he learns the lessons of civilisation slowly, for the lesson is a strange one, and he has in his blood the instincts of the savage. But more than that, contrasted at present with the teaching of the missionary, he has the white man's

greed and cruelty. The missionary tells him that the Christian calls all men brethren ; that the Christian religion bids its followers do unto others as they would like others to do unto them ; that Christianity tames the passions and fills the heart with love. And the negro sees these so-called Christians. They are the high officials of the State. They treat him as a slave ; they rob him in his poverty ; they encourage and authorise the burning of his village, the outrage and mutilation of his wife and children. Do you wonder that they are slow to learn ; that the missionary's task is hard? I don't.

57. Sawing Timber.

Yet the missionary pursues his task. He finds the negro's heart. He cares for him, trains him, sets him to saw wood, to make bricks, to build dwellings and mission buildings and churches. The president of the Appeal Court of the Lower Congo, in an attempt to excuse the methods of the officials, says that the natives are "entirely refractory to all kinds of work, and only respect the law of force, know no other persuasion than terror." The missionary declares emphatically that it is untrue. Under white supervision, Mr. Harris tells us, they will cut up boards from a tree as hard as an English elm, by piecework ; and they will cut from 10 to 15 boards a day at the rate of 2d. per board. In seven years, as Mr. Morel has pointed out, these so-called "idle" natives have produced eleven millions sterling worth of rubber for King Leopold and his associates.

58. Schoolgirl's in prize dresses.

The Report of the Commission says that the condition of King Leopold's women prisoners is not "more painful than the existence of beasts of burden." Shame on the man whose greed makes such a statement possible! Shame on the man whose callous selfishness can doom men, women, and children in thousands and hundreds of thousands to outrage, mutilation, unheard-of misery and cruel death. These things must not be. We demand in the name of our common humanity, that a policy which makes it possible to compare women with the brute creation shall be put an end to. The missionary offers clothes as prizes to the girls, and the girls eagerly compete for them. Under favourable conditions the women of the next generation may be

a very different race from the present. It is for us to see that they shall be.

59. The Old Men's Appeal.

Some old men, whose photographs were taken by Mrs. Harris and are here shown, sent this message to the white men of Europe: "Take our pictures, and tell them we are the only old men left. All others have been killed, and soon we shall be killed too."

Ladies and gentlemen, is this to be? The statements which the missionaries made were disbelieved or barely credited once; but, as Sir Edward Grey has said, "they can be discounted no longer, because the Report confirms them."

Are the Churches of Christ to remain silent? Will the heart of civilisation remain unmoved? Surely not. The Archbishop of Canterbury has told us that the protest is raised "for wrongs which the whole world has felt to be intolerable." Then let the world put an end to it. The powers which gave Leopold certain rights can interpose. Men of all parties agree that intervention is possible.

60. The Last Resort. (War Vessel).

The Great Powers have been grossly deceived, and they ought to decline any longer to recognise King Leopold's flag as the emblem of a civilised administration. "An administration whose object is to accumulate rubber at an infinite cost to human life and suffering, as deliberately stated in the British House of Commons by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has no call upon our recognition in any case; still less so when such an object is totally at variance with solemn pledges made to us in the past." Let us refuse to admit his steamers to our ports; let us refuse to recognise his Consuls. Let us insist upon the appointment of our own Consuls, with consular jurisdiction in the Congo State. Let us demand that suitable sites shall be granted for the erection of mission stations. And if our legal and reasonable requests are refused, then let us send a man-of-war to the mouth of the Lower Congo, with orders to prohibit the entry or departure of steamers or craft of any kind until they are granted. King Leopold has broken every promise he made us under the Declaration and the Convention, and he must be brought to his senses.

A great cry for Justice and Mercy rises from the Congo forests. Can we be deaf to it? Surely not. Let us prove to those who sneer at us and dare us to interpose, that the blood of our fathers still courses through our veins. "Let us prove to them that the heart of the nation still beats soundly as of yore, by the performance of our plain and simple duty, by saving the races of Central Africa from the grip of the modern slavers."

Suggested form of Resolution for Public Meetings, etc., to be forwarded to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and to members of Parliament:

"That this Meeting expresses its deep sense of indignation at the barbarities inflicted upon the natives of the Congo, and denounces as contrary to the elementary rights of humanity, and as a violation of the Berlin Act, the principles introduced and enforced by the Congo State; and, recalling the declaration made by the present Foreign Secretary on the Congo Debate in the House of Commons, on 9th June, 1904, that none of the Great Powers 'should be content, in view of their own honour, to sit still and do nothing,' urges upon his Majesty's Government to utilise to the uttermost the resources of British diplomacy, with a view to the convocation of a renewed Conference of the Powers responsible for the creation of the Congo State; and, further urges upon His Majesty's Government to take such independent action as is open to it under the Anglo-Congolese Convention of 1884, to ensure that result, and to secure adequate protection for the persons and property of British subjects on the Congo."

(See Note at Foot of Second Page of Cover.)