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RED RUBBER

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THE STORY OF THE RUBBER SLAVE
TRADE FLOURISHING ON THE
CONGO IN THE YEAR OF GRACE 1906

BY

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FRENCH CONGO," "KING LEOPOLD'S RULE IN AFRICA," "THE
TREATMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE CONGO STATE,"
"THE CONGO SLAVE-STATE," "THE DEVELOPMENT OF TROPICAL
AFRICA BY THE WHITE RACES," "LE CONGO LÉOPOLDIEN"
(WITH PIERRE MILLE), ETC., ETC.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

SIR HARRY H. JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

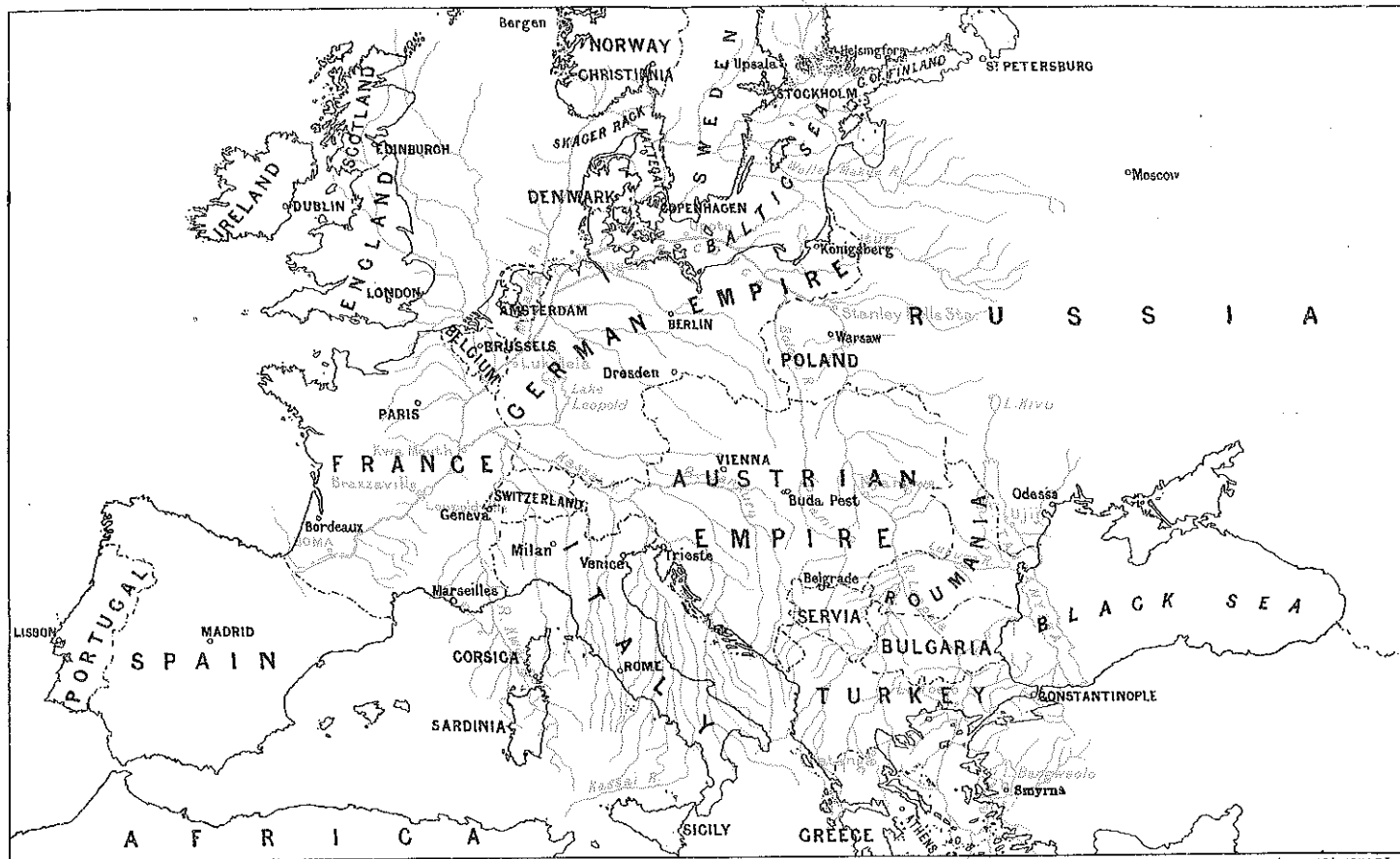
AND TWO MAPS

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN
ADELPHI TERRACE . MCMVI

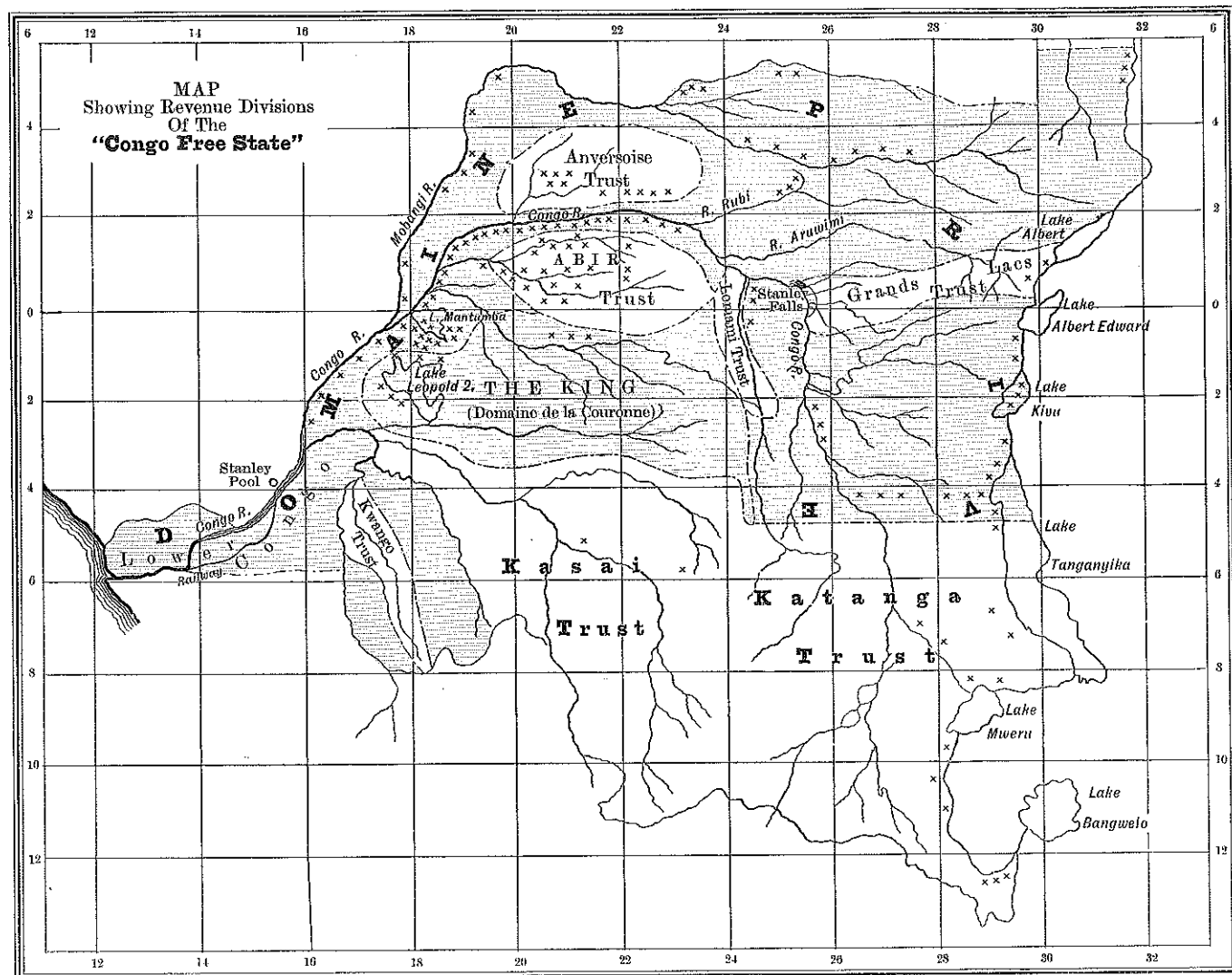
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MAP OF EUROPE SHOWING, IN RED, THE PROPORTIONATE AREA COVERED BY THE CONGO RIVER AND ITS AFFLUENTS.



EXPLANATORY.

- ORANGE - *Domaine Privé.* So-called "public revenue" area.
- RED - *Domaine de la Couronne.* Revenues retained by the King and not accounted for in any way whatsoever.
- YELLOW - *Trusts Area.* Revenues shared by the King and partners whom he controls. This is the so-called "Concessionnaire" area.
- x x x x - Localities whence specific reports of atrocities have been received.

THE DEEDS

"Auferre, trucidare, rapere falsis nominibus imperium, atque ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant" (TACRUS, *Agri-cola*, cxxx).

("What they, by a misuse of terms, style Government, is a system of pillage, murder, and robbery, and their so-called peace is a desert of their own creation.")

I reproduce below the comments upon "Affairs of West Africa," published in 1902, in which book four chapters were devoted to the affairs of the Congo, because they are typical of the difficulties which those of us who took up this matter were confronted, difficulties which are referred to in the opening chapter of the present volume.—AUTHOR.

"The state of affairs to which he calls attention in the latter portion of the book is, indeed, so terrible, and the accusations which he does not hesitate to bring personally against King Leopold II. are so grave that, notwithstanding the unfortunately too general apprehension entertained in well-informed West African circles that there exists very solid ground for criticism, we hesitate, without independent investigation, to give further currency to his assertions. . . . *If Mr. Morel is accurately informed* there is hardly a condition of its (the Congo State's) charter that it has not broken, nor a law of common humanity which it has not flouted. The sufferings of which the picture was given to the world in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' are as nothing to those which Mr. Morel represents to be the habitual accompaniment of the acquisition of rubber and ivory by the Belgian companies."—*The Times*, December 19, 1902.

Sir Harry Johnston in the *Daily Chronicle*, December 20, 1902 : "Mr. Morel's indictment is one of the most terrible things ever written, *if true*."

WITHIN the last few months only have the closest students of the Congo question been in a position to appreciate to

the full the staggering volume of records to the continuity and uniformity of outrage, AND THE ALL-PERVADING CAUSE OF OUTRAGE, on the Congo. Many of the *data* here summarised are unknown save to the comparatively few persons who are subscribers to the Congo Reform Association, in whose monthly journal they have been recorded. Others now appear for the first time. In the main the records here given are but the briefest and baldest summaries. If the whole of them were to be set down, a book double the size of the present one would hardly suffice to contain them. My object—or one of them—is to show how unbroken is the tale of horror, how dreadful the similarity. We see precisely the same scenes described by men thousands of miles apart, and with many years' interval between them.

RECORDS FROM 1890 TO 1893.

Letter from Colonel Williams, an officer in King Leopold's employ, read out to a London meeting by Mr. R. Cobden Phillips, representing the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, on November 4, 1890. (Extract.) (Area : presumably upper river banks.)

"Your Majesty's Government has been, and is now, guilty of waging unjust and cruel wars against natives, with the hope of securing slaves and women to minister to the behests of your Majesty's Government. In such slave-hunting raids one village is armed against the other, and the force thus secured is incorporated with the regular troops."

March, 1891.—Letters from correspondents in the Congo read out to Manchester Geographical Society by Mr. E. Sowerbutts, the Secretary. Letters speak of atrocities by Congolese troops, women and children seized as prisoners, &c., in this "diabolical and unholy so-called civilising work." (Area : probably Cataract region.)

In 1891 the secret decree appropriating the produce of the soil, and calling upon officials to devote all their energies to collecting revenue, is issued, together with the regulations and circulars which followed it (see last chapter). The *immediate* effects of the regulations and circulars are chronicled in letters from Belgian and French traders in

the Upper Congo. Letters dated 1891 and 1892. *Published for the first time in 1904.*¹ (Area : river banks and central region.)

"YAMBAYA, *February 6, 1891.*—The country is ruined. Passengers in the steamer *Roi des Belges* have been able to see for themselves that from Bontya, half a day's journey below our factory at Upoto, to Boumba inclusive, there is not an inhabited village left—that is to say four days' steaming through a country formerly so rich ; to-day entirely ruined."

"GONGA DONA, *October 20th.*—Thanks to the proceedings of the State we cannot travel three hours in a canoe without coming across a hostile village. This is the way they go on. They go to a village and say to the Chief, 'If by noon three tusks of ivory are not here for us to buy, you are no longer our friend.' At noon the Chief arrives and says, 'I have only two,' or as the case may be. 'If that is the case,' replies the representative of the State, 'we will see.' The whole party then springs on shore and endeavours to make prisoners. That having been accomplished, the Chief is told, 'Come with so many tusks, and your men and women will be returned to you.'"

"BASANKUSU, *September 17, 1892.*—The villages are compelled to pay heavy taxes in rubber ; they are compelled to furnish so many kilos to the State every week. To give you an idea, the State has received 1,060 kilos in one month and a half. The State had made war upon the villages from Lulonga to Basankusu. All the villages in the Maringa suffered the same fate."

"LIKINI, *October 15th.*—After the wars with the Mambatis and the Boucoundu, when the State people took many prisoners, which the Mambatis redeemed with ivory, they have begun the same proceedings again. To buy ivory in this way does not need many goods, and has the merit of simplicity. Four days ago they started making war once more ; thirteen killed, six prisoners."

"*October 18th.*—The frequent wars upon the natives undertaken without any cause by the State soldiers sent out to get rubber and ivory are depopulating the country. The soldiers find that the quickest and cheapest method is to raid villages, seize prisoners, and have them redeemed afterwards against ivory. At Boucoundje they took thirty prisoners, whom they released upon payment of ten tusks. Each agent of the State receives 1,000f. commission per ton of ivory secured, and 175f. per ton of rubber."

"YAMBAYA, *March 23, 1893.*—The majority of natives in every village are fleeing to the forests on account of the perpetual troubles with the State."

¹ "King Leopold's Rule in Africa" (4½ pages).

Red Rubber

Such was the immediate result of the official instructions to raid ivory and rubber on commission; the early beginnings of the system which was to prevail for fifteen years, and which still prevails.

RECORDS FROM 1894 TO 1898.

Glave, E. J. : an independent English traveller, formerly with Stanley, who speaks very highly of him. Crossed the Congo from the Great Lakes to the ocean in 1894-5. His voluminous diary published by the *Century Magazine* in 1896.¹ (Area : the whole country traversed.)

"The white officer at Kamambarc has commissioned several chiefs to make raids on the country of the Warua and bring him slaves. They are supposed to be taken out of slavery and freed, but I fail to see how this can be argued out. They are taken from their villages and shipped south to be soldiers, workers, &c., on the stations, and what were peaceful families have been broken up and the different members spread about the place. This is no reasonable way of settling the land. It is merely persecution. . . . The brutal action of the soldiers so terrified the people that many fled into hiding, and have not since returned. . . . Not content with this, the soldiers steal everything on the plantations and in the houses. If the rightful owners object they are beaten, the women taken by force. . . . In stations in charge of white men, Government officers, one sees strings of poor, emaciated old women, some of them mere skeletons, working from ten to six tramping about in gangs with a rope round their necks and connected by a rope one and a half yards apart. They are 'prisoners of war.' . . . Expeditions have been sent in every direction forcing natives to make rubber and to bring it to the Stations. Up the Ikelemba away to Lake Mantumba, the State is perpetrating its fiendish policy in order to obtain profit. . . . War has been waged all through the district of the Equator, and thousands of people have been killed and homes destroyed. . . . Many women and children were taken, and twenty-one heads were brought to Stanley Falls, and have been used by Captain Rom as a decoration round a flower-bed in front of his house. . . . Most white officers out in the Congo are averse to the india-rubber policy of the State, but the laws command it.² . . . If the Arabs had been the masters it would be styled iniquitous trafficking in human flesh and blood, but

¹ *Vide* also "Civilisation in Congoland," by H. R. Fox Bourne.

² *Vide* circulars and regulations in last chapter.

The Deeds

being under the administration of the Congo Free State, it is merely a part of their *philanthropic* system of *liberating* the natives."

Sjöblom, a Swedish missionary of the American Baptist Missionary Union. In conjunction with an Englishman in the same Mission, Banks, Sjöblom had complained with great vehemence locally, and caused furious resentment to the Governor-General, Baron Wahis, who threatened him with five years' imprisonment. Through the intermediary of Mr. Fox Bourne he appealed to the world at a public meeting in London (May 12, 1897). His experiences cover 1895-7. (Area : central region.) The following are extracts from his statements :

"The natives in inland towns are, as a matter of custom, asked whether they are willing to gather india-rubber. The question put to them is not 'Will you live at peace together? Will you acknowledge the Congo Government?' It is, 'Will you work india-rubber?' Well, many of the people are killed, and they try suddenly to disband, and refuse to bring the india-rubber. Then war is declared." Describes the usual procedure adopted. Within his knowledge 45 towns have been burnt down. Describes the sentry-system, the soldiers stationed in the villages, living on the people, and driving the adult males into the forest to gather india-rubber. Narrates how he visited a village at sunset. The people had never seen a white man and had returned from their hunt for rubber. As he was speaking to them, a soldier rushed in among the crowd, and seized an old man guilty of having been fishing in the river instead of gathering rubber; shoots him before Sjöblom's eyes. Right hand cut off. People flee out of the town. "All except the old chiefs are forced to go away and work rubber." The sentries are "from the wildest tribes." "When they get to this work they are many times worse. They are really small kings in the towns and often kill the people for the sake of the rubber. If the rubber does not reach the full amount required the sentries attack the natives. They kill some and bring the hands to the Commissioner. Others are brought to the Commissioner as prisoners. Hundreds are constantly taken down in large steamers." . . . "From this village I went on to another where I met a soldier who pointed to a basket, and said to me, 'Look, I have only two hands.' He meant there were not enough to make up for the rubber he had not brought.' He had several prisoners tied to trees. When I

¹ *Vide* Africa No. 1, 1904. Every cartridge expended required a right hand as tally.

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never have taken such a hold upon the people if they had not had their spirit crushed out of them by an ever-increasing burden of taxation." Taxation in food stuffs becoming heavier and heavier. Imposition of fines "sapping the life of the people." "Heartrending to compare this district now with what it was in 1890."

In letters to friends in England, dated June and July, 1903:—

"I say, without any fear of contradiction, that the condition of the people is, to put it mildly, one hundred per cent. worse than in 1893." . . . "The entire population of the district is now 9,400, and quite half has recently been driven from the bush to the river to repopulate its banks. Stanley, in 1885, reckoned this same district at 80,000 people. In 1890 Mr. Stapleton and myself, in search of a site, landed at a very large number of towns, and concluded that the figures of 1885 were too high, and put the population down at 50,000. The population has dropped in 13 years from 50,000 to under 5,000. . . . This is not the only district which has gone down in population. Starting from Stanley Pool, Bwembe, has about 100 for every 1,000 it once had; Bolobo has not a third of its former population. . . ." (Here follows an enumeration of towns with their old, and former population.)

Morrison, William, of the American Presbyterian Mission. Reports outrages in the Kasai district, beginning in 1898. They are given in the next record.

Murphy, of the American Baptist Union. Describes in *Times* of 1895 the raids and atrocities carried on by Congo troops in his district from 1893-5. "The hands—the hands of men, women, and children—were placed in rows before the *Commissaire*, who counted them to see that the natives had not wasted cartridges." Area: *Domaine de la Couronne* (Lake Mantumba).

Casement, Roger, British Consul in the Congo. It is difficult to dissect, from the point of view of time, the long and detailed disclosures of Consul Casement, which disclosures cover the past as well as dealing with the present. But here and there are passages which can be selected as showing how the present day situation is the outcome of long years of oppression. Consul Casement's Report was published in 1904. (Area: *Domaine de la Couronne*.)

The Deeds

"The population of the Lake-side towns would seem to have diminished within the last ten years by 60 to 70 per cent. It was in 1893 that an effort to levy an india-rubber imposition in this district was begun, and for some four or five years this imposition could only be collected at the cost of continual fighting."

Area: river banks.

"The station at Bikoro has been established as a Government plantation for about ten years. It stands on the actual site of the former native town of Bikoro, an important settlement in 1893, now reduced to a handful of ill-kept, untidy huts, inhabited by only a remnant of its former expropriated population."

"We touched at several points on the French shore, and on the 25th July reached Lukolela, where I spent two days. This district had, when I visited it in 1887, numbered fully 5,000 people; to-day the population is given, after careful enumeration, at less than 600.

"Bolobo used to be one of the most important native settlements along the south bank of the Upper Congo, and the population in the early days of civilised rule numbered fully 40,000 people, chiefly of the Bobangi tribe. To-day the population is believed to be not more than 7,000 or 8,000 souls. The Bolobo men were famous in former days for their voyages to Stanley Pool and their keen trading ability. All of their large canoes have to-day disappeared, and while some of them still hunt hippopotami—which are still numerous in the adjacent waters—I did not observe anything like industry among them. Indeed, it would be hard to say how the people now live . . ."

"Perhaps the most striking change observed during my journey into the interior was the great reduction observable everywhere in native life. Communities I had formerly known as large and flourishing centres of population are to-day entirely gone, or now exist in such diminished numbers as to be no longer recognisable. The southern shores of Stanley Pool had formerly a population of fully 5,000 Batekas. These people some twelve years ago decided to abandon their homes, and in one night the great majority of them crossed over into French territory. Where formerly had stretched these populous native African villages, I saw to-day only a few scattered European houses. In Leopoldville there are not, I should estimate, one hundred of the original natives or their descendants now residing."

Area: *Domaine de la Couronne*. In the notes to his report Consul Casement gives details of native evidence showing how the "Lake-side" people were extirpated:—

"I decided to visit the nearest settlement of these fugitives. I

asked first why they had left their homes and had come to live in a strange, far-off country where they owned nothing and were little better than servitors. All, when the question was put, women as well as men, shouted out, 'On account of the rubber tax levied by the Government Posts.' . . . I asked them how this tax was imposed. . . . 'From our country each village had to take twenty loads of rubber. These loads were big; they were as big as this (producing an empty basket which came nearly up to the handle of my walking stick). . . . We had to take these loads in four times a month.' 'How much pay did you get?'—(Entire audience) 'We got no pay. We got nothing.' . . . 'It used to take ten days to get the twenty baskets of rubber. We were always in the forest, and then when we were late we were killed. We had to go further and further into the forest to find the rubber vines, to go without food, and our women had to give up cultivating the fields and gardens. Then we starved. Wild beasts—the leopards—killed some of us when we were working away in the forest, and others got lost or died from exposure and starvation, and we begged the white man to leave us alone, saying we could get no more rubber, but the white men and their soldiers said, "Go! You are only beasts yourselves; you are nyama (meat)." We tried, always going further into the forest, and when we failed and our rubber was short the soldiers came up our towns and shot us. Many were shot; some had their ears cut off; others were tied up with ropes round their neck and bodies and taken away. We fled because we could not endure the things done to us. Our chiefs were hanged, and we were killed and starved and worked beyond endurance to get rubber. . . . The white men told their soldiers, "You kill only women; you cannot kill men." So when the soldiers killed us' (here he stopped and hesitated, and then, pointing to the private parts of my bulldog—it was lying asleep at my feet) he said, 'then they cut off those things and took them to the white men, who said, "It is true you have killed men."' 'You mean to tell me that any white man ordered your bodies to be mutilated like that, and those parts of you carried to him?'—(All shouting) 'Yes, many white men.' 'You say this is true? Were many of you so treated after being shot?'—(All shouting) 'Nkoto! Nkoto!' (Very many; very many)."

Mr. Scrivener in his diary confirms this last statement. He heard it from the lips of the sentries themselves, and in the Mongalla massacres of 1899 the agents of the Anversoise confessed to ordering sexual mutilations.

Dealing in a long enclosure with the appalling depopulation of this region, Consul Casement gives as the primary reason thereof:—

"War" in which children and women were killed as well as men. Women and children were killed not in all cases by stray bullets, but were taken as prisoners and killed. Sad to say, these horrible cases were not always the acts of some black soldier. Proof was laid against one officer who shot one woman and one man while they were before him as prisoners with their hands tied, and no attempt was made to deny the truth of the statement. To those killed in the so-called "war" must be added large numbers who died while kept as prisoners of war. The irregular food supply has been another cause, says the Consul. The native is "without ambition because without hope." He does not attend to his plantations owing to the sense of insecurity. "When sickness comes he does not care." A third cause is the "lower percentage of births." Weakened bodies brings this about, also "women refuse to bear children and take means to save themselves from motherhood." They "give as the reason that, if war should come, a woman big with child or with a baby to carry cannot well run away and hide from the soldiers." With regard to the mutilations practised by the soldiers and referred to by Mr. Clark and others, the Consul says, "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 white man; it was not the outcome of the 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."

Whitehead, John, of the British Baptist Missionary Society. Extracts from letter to Governor-General, dated Lukolela, July 28, 1903. Published in Africa No. 1, 1904 (White Book). (Area: river banks.)

"The population of the villages of Lukolela in January, 1891, must have been not less than 6,000 people, but when I counted the whole population in Lukolela at the end of December, 1896, I found it to be only 719, and I estimated from the decrease, as far as we could count up the known number of deaths during the year, that, at the same rate of decrease, in ten years the people would be reduced to about 400; but judge of my heartache when on counting them all again on Friday and Saturday last to find only a population of 352, and the death rate rapidly increasing."

RECORDS FROM 1899 TO 1903.

With the year 1898, the great Trusts of the central region came into being, and to the horrors of the *Domaine de la Couronne* and all that had been up to that time *Domaine Privé* were added the horrors of the Trust area, as the agents of these concerns (which are the King under varying labels—*Vide* Section IV.) struck new ground, or, as was the case with the A.B.I.R., carried further devastation into districts already “tapped.”

Lacroix and other agents of the Anversoise Trust; confessions of. (Area: central region, Mongalla.)

Fighting in the Mongalla district had been continuous since 1898. On April 10, 1900, the *Nieuwe Gazet*, of Antwerp, published the confessions of Lacroix. Instructed by his superiors to attack a certain village for shortage in rubber, he had killed in the course of his raid many women and children. “I am going to appear before the Judge for having killed 150 men, cut off 60 hands; for having crucified women and children, for having mutilated many men and hung their sexual remains on the village fence.” Other confessions followed, published in *Le Petit Bleu* and other papers. The Congo Courts inflicted long terms of imprisonment. The men never served them, and have long since been released. The defence was identical. They had acted under instructions—to force rubber by any and every means. The “superiors” were not troubled. Later on, as we shall see, the trial of the man Cauldron, also an agent of the *Anversoise*, showed, four years later, a precisely similar state of affairs existing in the district.

Weeks, John (see above).

Letter of protest to District Commissioner of Bangala, dated Monsembe, November 30, 1903. Published in the *West African Mail* in 1904. Describes punishment of towns of Bokongo, Bongondo, etc., for shortage in food stuffs by a force of 150 soldiers under an officer; gives names of eleven women, ten men, and a girl slaughtered unresisting: “It is very evident from the different places in which these people were shot down that there was no armed resistance”: “have you neither mothers nor sisters that you can treat women in this brutal way.” Mr. Weeks proceeds to give particulars of increasing wretchedness of people owing to scandalous taxation; people compelled to sell their rela-

tives into slavery to meet it; gives names of people sold into slavery to provide food stuffs for State stations. Lieutenant in charge was allowed to return to Europe, although a subsequent inquiry confirmed the truth of Weeks' charges. So admitted by the Commission of Inquiry.

In a letter to the author, dated December 24, 1903, published in the *West African Mail*, 1904. Gives abundant and detailed statistics of taxation in food stuffs: shows that the 820 natives of all ages and both sexes in the four sections of Malela, Bongondo, Mungundu, and Bokongo must supply each year to the State food stuffs aggregating £1,605 16s. 8d. in value.

“I need scarcely point out that young children, very old people, and invalids cannot earn a wage, or even farm or fish; consequently the burden falls heavier on those who can, and the vision before them is one of unceasing toil in order to comply with the demands of the State. Is it any wonder the natives die under the burden? The wonder to me is that so many are alive after these seven years of oppression and taxation. Death has less horror than this constant grind, this perpetually trying to fill a bottomless sack, this everlasting paying of heavy taxes, meeting exorbitant fines, being shot down untried, or forced to work in the chain on a State station. Death is kinder than this sort of living. . . . My colleague has just returned from spending a week among the Ndobo towns, and his comment on what he there beheld was ‘Death and decay in all around I see.’”

Tilkens, Lieutenant, officer of the *Force Publique*. His letters read in the Belgian House in July, 1903; cover 1897–1900. At the time he wrote them Tilkens was carrying out his duties as fixed by his superior officers. (*Vide* Sections I. and IV. Area: north-eastern region. *Domaine Privé*.)

Letter to Major Lenssens of the Belgian Army on July 20, 1898.

“The Chef de Poste of Buta announces the arrival of the steamer *Van der Kerkhove*, which is to be floated upon the Nile. He will require the colossal number of 1,500 carriers. Unhappy blacks! I do not like to think of it. I ask myself, where I can find them. If the roads were good it might be different; but they are barely cleared, crossed repeatedly by marshes, where many will find a certain death. Hunger and the fatigues of an eight days' march will account for many more. What blood this

financiers with revenues, and his soldiers and their crowd of retainers with food-stuffs.

Lower, Mr. and Mrs., of the Congo Balolo Mission at Ikau. A.B.I.R. concession. Described to the Commission of Inquiry in 1904 innumerable outrages perpetrated upon the natives in 1902 and 1903. Evidence suppressed. Published by the C. R. A. last year. Summary:—

Natives flogged and shot for shortage in rubber. Names, dates, etc., given in great detail. They are all specific cases, of which this is a type: "Went to report murder of his mother by sentries . . . cruelly treated by sentries in consequence. . . . Beaten by sentries during a two weeks' stay in prison; sent back to village; died two days later." Men, women, and children given in the lists of the murdered—punishment for delay in rubber production.

Harris, J. H.; Mrs. Harris; Padfield, Charles; Stannard, Edgar, all testified before Commission of Inquiry of atrocities and general oppression and ill-treatment antecedent to 1904. Evidence suppressed, published in summarised form by C. R. A., 1905.

RECORDS IN 1904 AND 1905.

1904 was chiefly remarkable for the voluminous and appalling accounts sent home by the missionaries on the A.B.I.R. concession, Messrs. John Harris, Herbert Frost, Edgar Stannard, and Charles Padfield—all of the Congo Balolo Mission. Voluminous, detailed, and terrible narratives from the first three named of these gentlemen were published in the C. R. A. organ for August, 1904, and for many months to come information was regularly supplied by them to the author, and supplied by the author to the world's Press. The public is sufficiently familiar with these reports—which have, moreover, been confirmed by the Report of the Commission of Inquiry—to absolve me from quoting from them. It suffices to say that they are concerned exclusively with the atrocities committed by the A.B.I.R. "Company" in forcing rubber from the natives of the country. At the close of 1905 the Commission of Inquiry began its ascent of the upper river, and Messrs. Billington,

Clark, Grenfell, Scrivener, Gilchrist, Mr. and Mrs. Harris, Stannard, Ruskin, Gamman, Mr. and Mrs. Lower, Mr. Padfield, and Weeks testified before it. Their evidence was suppressed; but summaries, in some cases lengthy summaries, were published in 1905 by the Congo Reform Association.¹ On August 4, 1905, Sir Charles Dilke again brought the Congo question forward on the Foreign Office vote. Earl Percy, replying for the then Government, stated that Consul Mackie was not allowed to see the depositions of the witnesses, but that he "had sent home extracts from some of the evidence given at the later sittings." This report of Consul Mackie's was suppressed by the British Government, and every attempt to have it produced has hitherto failed; an incident which is curious to say the least.

Further evidence was supplied in the course of 1904 from other regions. Writing to the author on May 17, Mr. Weeks gave details of the treatment of three prominent chiefs of his district in connection with incidents arising out of the food taxes. Two or three chiefs were placed "in the chains," and died in them from ill-treatment after a few weeks' incarceration. The third was a fortnight "in the chains," and was fined £10 because his village had failed to trap a bush pig, part of the fortnightly tax levied by the adjoining Government station. On May 27th Mr. Scrivener, in a letter to the author, described another journey into the *Domaine de la Couronne*, peopled by some wretched survivors of the rubber hunting orgies in the Lake district. He gave abundant details (as usual) of men and women shot, women tied up and thrown into the river, etc. "Then ensued a series of massacres which would be incredible were it not for so much of a like character that has been proved only too true. The district is now a waste."

Mr. Whiteside, of the Congo Balolo Mission, sent a long letter to the *Belfast News* (21st October), describing the condition of the Lolanga towns.

¹ "Evidence before the Congo Commission of Inquiry." Price 2d. Four editions were published.

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Much Italian evidence was produced in 1905; chiefly from the Eastern District, and led to stormy scenes in the Italian Chamber.

A long letter to the author from a missionary correspondent in the Katanga district also came to hand. Unhappily the writer was terrified—not unnaturally from the details given—lest his name should appear; which deprives his evidence of some of its weight in the public estimation. The letter was published in the C. R. A. organ for September, 1904. It describes the usual proceedings. Girls raped and carried off by King Leopold's officials; chiefs degraded and shot; forced labour; oppression and cruelty rampant.

A further memorial to Congress from the American Missionary Societies, dated January 16, 1905, contains more evidence from American missionaries.

Mr. Charles H. Harvey reports:—

"The dreadful form of rubber collecting has, among other evils, introduced a form of slavery of the worst possible kind. No man's time, liberty, property, person, wife, or child is his own. His position is worse than that of the sheep or goats of the white man. . . . Even the dreadful horrors of the 'middle passage' are completely put in the shade by deliberate, demon-like acts of atrocity."

Mr. H. W. Kirby reports:—

"I have just returned to Lukunga after visiting our 15 mission stations. The population is decreasing, and during the last twenty years has decreased very rapidly." The first cause of the decrease he attributes to "Fighting with the State." He says: "The further away from publicity the greater the atrocities. I have heard much. I could tell much, but you know enough. A white officer forcing a native to drink from the water closet; shooting down hand-cuffed men; the employment of fierce cannibal soldiers that terrorise the people; shooting down twenty men to pay for a lost dog."

The judgment of the Boma Appeal Court in the Caudron case was published by the Congo Reform Association in May, 1904. It showed the state of affairs prevailing in the territories of the Anversoise Trust to be similar in all respects to that which obtained when Lacroix and his co-adjutors were performing their civilising deeds; and it

The Deeds

showed the complicity of the Supreme Executive in these deeds. (*Vide* Section IV.)

Letters from the Kasai to the author disclosed further risings of the natives against the rubber demands made upon them. These risings have since assumed larger proportions.

Mr. T. Ackermann, a Swiss, described in a report sent to Herr Ludwig Deuss (a highly respected merchant of Hamburg, who has laboured manfully in Germany for the cause of Congo reform), atrocities committed in 1902 and 1903 at Flambi, Fakisuli, etc. (Lomami district). Each case stated in great detail, and some of them peculiarly horrible:

"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. How often have I watched heads and hands being carried into the factory."

Herr Duess sent a copy of the report to the German Government, and I transmitted a copy to the British and American Governments. Published, minus the names of individuals, in the *West African Mail*, March 3, 1905.

1905 was notable also for the publication of confidential circulars and regulations issued by the agents of the A.B.I.R. Society "Company" to their agents; proving the complicity of the Home Administration in the taking of hostages and other concomitant of the rubber slave-trade.¹

EVIDENCE TO HAND SINCE THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY VISITED THE COUNTRY.

No sooner was the back of the Commission of Inquiry turned than the *régime* they had described as wholly "illegal" and atrocious was again in full swing, and continues to-day all over the Congo, as it must do, of course, just as long as England and Europe allow it. King Leopold's claim to the land, its products, and its people

¹ "Red Rubber," by E. D. Morel. Price 1s.

assistance in the problems connected with the administration of Tropical African dependencies may be expected from them.

Now, on the Congo, since the Decrees of 1891, an altogether different conception prevails. There, as I have said, everything is abnormal. Sitting in his royal palace five thousand miles removed from his black subjects whom he has never seen, King Leopold has with a single stroke of the pen robbed the native of his entire wealth, actual and prospective, and calmly appropriated it himself. So colossal a theft has never been imagined by mortal man. The rubber which grows in the forest does not belong to the native. It belongs to King Leopold! And so with "dead" and "live" ivory, and so with the valuable resins, and so with everything! And observe how this works out, and must work out, in practice. I may write down, "The contents of the Bank of England belong to E. D. Morel." That would be foolishness, would it not? Equally foolish would it be for King Leopold to write down, "The wealth of Central Africa belongs to me"—if he stopped there. But the regenerator of the negro race is anything but foolish, and he did *not* stop there. Having appropriated on paper, he proceeded to acquire in deed. So he claimed the labour of the people to bring him their wealth which he has pirated. There is no need to purchase what belongs to you, by virtue of your royal will. So the abnormal replaces the normal. Armed force replaces trade. The revolution is accomplished, and the enslavement of the people, so long as that armed force can be maintained, is complete. It is marvellously simple.

* * * * *

The one weak part of the British Note to the Powers in 1903 is the paragraph in which the suggestion is put forward that the question of "commercial freedom"—otherwise trade—as laid down in the Act of the West African Conference, should be separated from the question of the treatment of the natives, and referred to the Hague Court. But nothing is more patent than that the two questions are inextricably interwoven. They cannot be separated. They

make one. If the right to trade in the produce of his country is taken from the native by a *prima facie* claim to possession of that produce, ill-treatment necessarily follows as night follows day, for such a claim is merely grotesque unless it be enforced, and it can only be enforced by compelling the native to collect that produce through the constant use of armed coercion, involving the inevitable perpetration of incessant outrage, wholesale and detail. To submit the effects of a given cause to one international tribunal and the cause itself to another is surely amazing illogicalness?

I maintain that it is the duty of the British Government, above all Governments, to uphold the principle of trade in the African tropics, in the legitimate interests of the people who have entrusted it with power. This is no question of Protection *versus* Free Trade, of irritation with other Powers because they put on differential tariffs against our goods, and we should prefer they did not. It is a question of trade itself, the pivotal element which unites all societies, the link which binds together in a practical sense the various branches of the human family. I can only attribute the peculiar horror which seems to strike some worthy persons at the mere mention of the word "trade" or "commerce" in connection with the Congo problem to ignorance of the essence of that problem, and to forgetfulness that the very existence of this country is dependent upon trade. Trade spells freedom for the inhabitant of the African tropics. Its suppression spells his enslavement by those who deny him the right to own the produce of his country, deprive him of his right to buy and to sell, strangle for ever his economic development, force him at the end of the lash and at the muzzle of the rifle to harvest what was once his wealth before they stole it from him, and lay it at the feet of the despoiler. Surely those who label themselves humanitarians, affect to look upon the African as a cross between a babe and a saint (he is neither), and boast of a superior moral sense, should consider this aspect of the matter, if their nerves are unwrought at what they deem the utilitarianism of the other? The plain fact of the matter is that to insist upon the principle of trade relationship between the Euro-

pean and the Negro in his own home as the basic principle in that relationship is synonymous with declaring that the Negro must be treated (not as a half-babe, half-saint, to be petted and venerated with an outward culture altogether foreign to his ideas, leaping over twelve centuries in a few years) as a Man with the rights of a Man—not as a brute-beast.

To great commercial nations like England, Germany, and the United States the closing of the greater part of Central Africa to trade is a blow dealt straight at the legitimate interests of the British, German, and American peoples by a monarch whose "sovereignty" over the Congo was recognised by them principally on the ground—*vide* Section I.—that his intentions were to facilitate in every conceivable manner the development and extension of trade. Stanley, speaking at Manchester in 1884 in favour of King Leopold's enterprise, went into flights of rhapsody over the potentialities of the Congo as a market for British manufactured cotton goods. Mr. Frelinghuysen, American Secretary of State, in a letter to Mr. Tisdell, said, "Soon these millions of people inhabiting the interior of Africa will, under the inspiring influence of civilisation, become purchasers of every kind of provision, manufactured goods, agricultural implements, &c, and I see no reason why the people of the United States should not come in for a large share of the valuable trade which must soon be developed in this region." Mr. Kasson, the American delegate at the Conference, congratulated himself that "we secure (by the action taken at Berlin) the abolition of all monopolies private or co-operative."¹

"Monopolies" have become one gigantic monopoly, going far beyond a monopoly of trade, which signifies the right of a certain party to be the exclusive purchaser of produce in a given region; involving claim to personal possession of the very elements of trade, thus doing away with the need of purchase altogether. An owner, let it be repeated, is not called upon to *purchase* what belongs to him!

¹ *North American Review*, February, 1886.

"The importance of the rich prospective trade of the Congo valley has led to the general conviction that it should be open to all nations on equal terms," said President Arthur in his message of December, 1884.

It is not only closed to all nations, it is extirpated! "The fundamental idea of this programme is to facilitate the access of all commercial nations in the interior of Africa," declared Bismarck at the opening of the Congress. "Freedom of trade—remarked Lord Vivian at the Brussels Conference in 1890—was established in the interests not only of civilisation but of the native races of Africa."

Thus it will be seen that the representatives of the great commercial nations saw nothing to be ashamed of in consecrating aloud the principle of trade in the Congo basin. Why should Englishmen be afraid of upholding that principle to-day? Lest they be accused of "ulterior motives"? Where are the "ulterior motives"? They are not "ulterior," they are actual, legitimate, common-sense. They should be boldly proclaimed, insisted upon. The British merchant has the right of erecting factories and trading with the natives all over the Congo, even in the *Domaine de la Couronne*, for all its inalienability! That every square yard of the territory should be claimed by King Leopold and his financiers, and everything of economic value thereon, matters not one jot. The claim is preposterously impudent. British trade, with or without the medium of the British merchant, has the right to penetrate into every corner of the "Congo Free State." That King Leopold's principal secretary in Brussels should inform the British Government, in effect, that trade is impossible on the Congo because "there are no longer any unappropriated lands there" is mere insolence. That the same official should declare in reference to the British Note that it "confuses the utilisation of his property"—that is King Leopold's property, *e.g.*, 800,000 square miles in Central Africa—"by the owner"—that is King Leopold—"with trade"—that is the right of the natives to buy and to sell—and that "the native who collects on behalf of the owner"—King Leopold—"does not become the owner of what is so collected, and naturally

cannot dispose of it to a third party" ¹ is, with the exception of King Leopold's Manifesto of 1906, the most cynical avowal of wholesale spoliation ever penned. What! The Power to which King Leopold came on bended knees twenty-two years ago begging for support, calmly informed to-day by the same Potentate that the British merchant, and that British trade are shut out from Central Africa, because it has pleased him by a stroke of the pen to substitute himself for the native as the owner of the commercial wealth of Central Africa, and that consequently the native has nothing to exchange for British goods! In very truth the proposition is laughable in its audacity. To use an historic phrase "Enough of this foolery." Aye, and more than enough, for it exercises itself not only at the expense of the legitimate interests of great nations, but at the price of African blood shed in torrents, and African misery unportrayable in words.

And, finally, there is another reason why Britain should decline any longer to recognise the pretensions of King Leopold. To every Power holding possessions in the neighbourhood of his "fine stations," and in proximity to the operations of his ivory and rubber-raiding officials, the seizure and collection by armed force of his revenues, is a positive danger and disturbance. The presence of a lawless, marauding soldiery ever increasing in numbers, and only held in nominal discipline by the conferring of full freedom to loot and rape is a menace. The erection of frontier-forts armed with heavy guns, a threat. The importation of enormous quantities of ball cartridges and ammunition to make rubber, *à la Congolaise*, which includes the provisioning of fighting clans with material of war to force rubber in the royal interest from their weaker neighbours, when the "regulars" are employed elsewhere, is a peril which it would be folly to ignore. Two great rebellions of native soldiery, which brought the "Congo Free State" almost toppling to the ground, have occurred in the last ten years. Even the fort at Shinkakassa just outside Boma, the capital, was seized a few years ago by the garrison exasperated with

¹ Memorandum, September 17, 1903.

the treatment of their women by King Leopold's officials, who, terrified out of their lives, ran hither and thither like scared rabbits, for all their gold-lace and impeccable ducks: Boma itself being saved from destruction only by the ignorance of the mutineers in the working of the time-fuse; and from pillage, by the action of a brave British coloured subject of Lagos, who organised his compatriots from the British West African colonies (settled in various capacities at Boma) into patrols, which marched through the town, and who was destined later on to be hounded to a suicide's grave by the malignity of the men he had rescued.¹ Bands of these revolted soldiery have on several occasions invaded and committed havoc in the contiguous British possessions, and to this day hold parts of the Congo territory into which no official dare set foot. Any moment may bring forth another and graver revolt, and any day may see the rise of an intelligent native corporal with a brain above his fellows, some bastard Arab blood in his veins perhaps, who will make a bold bid for empire against the officials of the absentee landlord. And over all the land broods the shadow of a great crime, filling the breasts of the miserable people with an undying hatred of the accursed white man and all his ways. Given the slightest chance at combination, given a leader, given a favourable set of circumstances, and the smouldering embers will burst into a flame, and the conflagration might well spread until every official of the King with his throat cut had been flung into the river. It would be a just retribution, but what sort of task would confront the criminal apathy of Europe! Sir Harry Johnston is not given to sensationalism, or rash predictions, but this is what he wrote in 1902—four years ago, before the charges against King Leopold's enterprise were thoroughly established—"if all the stories are true of the wickedness perpetrated in the Congo Free State since 1885, there will some day be such a rising against the white man,

¹ Mr. H. A. Shanu, who held a store in Boma much patronised by the officials. Denounced in 1904 for the heinous crime of communicating with me, he was boycotted by official instructions, his business ruined, and himself reduced to despair. Shanu was a man of the highest integrity and honourable standing.

and such punishment inflicted on European interests in the heart of Africa as will surpass any revolt that has ever yet been made by the black and the yellow man against his white brother and overlord." To watch with philosophic eye this cauldron of native discontent and misery fed with the ingredients of a civilised barbarism, go seething on, is madness. Arguments drawn from the necessity of keeping up the "prestige" of the white man in the African tropics do not appeal to me very much, for the surest foundation for the maintenance of such is justice, "even-handed, tiger justice," as poor Mary Kingsley used to say, but I often wonder that the White Powers can continue their supine contemplation, while deeds are done in the Congo Basin which brand with indelible infamy the white race in the eyes of the black, deeds which in Lord Fitzmaurice's words "make civilisation ashamed of its name," deeds which cry to Heaven for vengeance, and for which, some day, in the fulness of time, a fearful penalty will be enacted.

* * * * *

The Act of the West African Conference provides a weapon which can be wielded against the "civilised barbarism" introduced by King Leopold, with or without the convocation of a renewed Conference of all the Signatory Powers of that Act, a weapon which requires but five of the Signatory Powers to make up their minds to use. (Act 1) That weapon is the "Navigation Commission" which has never been invoked, although the essential clauses of the Act have been violated with impunity for fifteen years. The question of navigation on the Congo waterways is intimately bound up with the question of the trading rights of European merchants and of the natives, for it is obvious that freedom of navigation is a misnomer if trade is non-existent; consequently the general question of maladministration, misrule and spoliation is also involved. Indeed the idea entertained by the Plenipotentiaries of the Powers at Berlin in providing for a Navigation Commission, was clearly concerned with the protection of trade. Thus M. de Kusserow, one of the German delegates at the

Conference, declared (Prot. 3: sitting November 27, 1884), that in the view of his Government freedom of trade should not be left unsupervised (*sans contrôle*), and he added "The International Navigation Commission appears to it (the German Government) a competent instrument to be provisionally entrusted with this supervision." Moreover the Act itself as signed by all the Powers is explicit. Article 25 reads, "This provision of the present Act of Navigation shall remain in force in time of war. Consequently all nations, whether neutral or belligerent, shall be always free, for the *purposes of trade*, to navigate the Congo, its branches, affluents and mouths as well as the territorial waters fronting the embouchure of the river."

The powers enjoyed by this Commission as provided in the Act, would be as considerable as those enjoyed by the Danube River Commission. They would be virtually sovereign powers, in regard to everything affecting navigation, and who controls navigation in the Congo basin controls the arteries and veins of the "Congo Free State." It is "independent of the territorial authorities" (Art. 20). The Powers composing it "can have recourse" to their own ships of war. It can raise loans (Art. 23).

In short, the appointment of this Commission would be the stepping stone for that wider and closer international control of the Congo which, failing the possible but unlikely solution of Belgian annexation *on lines acceptable to public opinion*,¹ honour and safety alike demand shall no longer be delayed.

With these considerations I bring this chapter and with it this volume to a close. I have indicated the specific courses of action which are open to Great Britain under her own Treaty rights,—rights which no Power would dream of contesting, and I have given expression to a widely spread conviction that the adoption by Great Britain of one or more of the steps denoted would compel international interference. To these I may here add that Great Britain

¹ Let it be clearly understood that what I mean to convey is not the doubt that the Belgian people would *desire* to do the right thing, but the doubt of their being in a position to do it. *Vide* last chapter.

Red Rubber

would appear to be entitled (with or without the appointment of a Navigation Commission) to place a gun-boat on the Upper Congo, and that she ought to do it on behalf of her own subjects: and, I hasten to add, other Powers would seem to have precisely the same option in that respect. I have given reasons—and no one can deny that they are grave, legitimate, and weighty reasons—why Great Britain should drop the policy of vain expostulation pursued for ten years, and take energetic measures to abide by, and if necessary to enforce, her Treaty rights in her own justifiable interests; and I have proved, I venture to think to the satisfaction of all reasonable persons, that in so acting Great Britain would be serving the general interests of humanity. With respect to the position of Great Britain as one of the signatory Powers of the Act of the West African Conference I have shown how preponderating is that position in regard to the corresponding position of most of the Signatory Powers; how great is the prestige of Great Britain abroad at the present moment: how immensely important are the issues at stake: how duty and honour summon the British Government to a vigorous initiative. Finally, I have drawn attention to the very definite instrument which the Act of the Conference provides for the invocation of practical international control over the vast fluvial system of the Congo.

What remains to be said can be embodied in a couple of paragraphs.

Nothing impracticable, nothing unrealisable is being demanded on behalf of the Congo natives. No grandmotherly legislation, no sentimental claims are being urged in their interest. Only justice. They have been robbed of their property. We demand that their property shall be restored to them. They have been robbed of their liberty. We demand that their liberty shall be restored to them. They are bound in chains. We demand that those chains shall be rent asunder. For fifteen years they have been degraded, enslaved, exterminated. We demand that this shall stop, not fifteen years, or five years, or one year hence: but now.

The "Congo Free State" has long ceased to exist. It

What Great Britain Can Do

has given place to a political monster and international outlaw. Of that political monster and international outlaw, but one thing can be said or written, *Delenda est Carthago*.

The reek of its abominations mounts to Heaven in fumes of shame. It pollutes the earth. Its speedy disappearance is imperative for Africa, and for the world.

E. D. MOREL.