



CARRYING A DESPATCH IN WAR TIME.

duty at Kroonstadt, the seat of the Orange Free State Government, a very pretty place on the Balsch River. At Kroonstadt were many irreconcilables. The teachers tried to bring the various factions together by means of hockey and field sports, with no small success. The British Government made strenuous efforts to secure the repatriation, or settlement on their farms, of the Boers. It kept large trek wagons constantly on the road, carrying the farmers and their goods to their homes. When this was done, the oxen, fourteen to a wagon, were loaned to the farmers. But these efforts were rendered futile from the long drought lasting from January, 1902, till June, 1904. The drought killed cattle and sheep by the thousand and wasted three seeding times.

As to compensation, says Miss Graham:

"Such a scheme as was projected by the British Government marked a new epoch in the history of warfare. In the terms of surrender £3,000,000 were promised to assist those persons who surrendered under Lord Roberts' proclamation, or to compensate British subjects, foreign subjects, and natives. The granting of this sum was purely an act of grace on the part of the authorities for the partial relief of sufferers."

"Incredible as it may seem, there was not such a thing as a beggar throughout the length and breadth of the new African colonies during the year and a half following the war. Yet there were thousands of landless people who, in the ordinary course of events, would have been utterly stranded after the war. These were the very poor, very dirty and very ignorant folk, who had passed the most comfortable days of their lives in the refugee camps. Under the Dutch régime they had been known as 'by-woners'—squatters—and seemed but little higher than the Kafirs in the scale of civilization.

"What was to be done with the 'by-woners?' As a temporary measure some of the refugee camps were kept open for almost a year after the close of the war.

"Another class who inhabited these belated camps consisted of considerable numbers of women and children left in these camps because their husbands and fathers were still away in the prison camps refusing stubbornly to take the oath of allegiance, and known as 'Irreconcilables.' Many of them remained under the care of the Government for more than a year following the war, and others for still longer periods. It is interesting and hopeful to note that each party of irreconcilables, on returning to South Africa, experienced the liveliest surprise at the friendly way in which Briton and Boer had settled down side by side; and in the majority of cases expressed strongly the wish that they had taken the oath of allegiance sooner."

Better than feeding the by-woners at public expense and so pauperizing them for ever, was the British plan of starting a relief works. One of these expended £70,000 in making a huge