

PREFACE.

THE English Army and the Boers have met in the shock of battle in South Africa. All attempts to avert the desperate conflict have failed and the eyes of the whole world are turned to watch the progress of the fierce struggle.

The first settlement of the Boers in South Africa—another name for Dutch inhabitants—dates from the sixteenth century. They have received accessions from the Huguenots of France, but retain the old Dutch character. After the final cession of the Cape of Good Hope to England in 1814 they disliked the new Government, especially its friendly policy to the natives and the emancipation of the slaves in 1833, the Boers having long been slaveholders. They moved northward and occupied the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

The Boers are the landholders and farmers of South Africa, famous for their courage and endurance, of strong and well-developed physique, good horsemen and splendid marksmen. They have proved themselves to be terrible fighters on many occasions. Previous to 1870 the Boers had much trouble with the surrounding native tribes, which resulted in many sanguinary battles. Wars were of frequent occurrence and little progress was made in the development of the country. The selfish policy of the Boers caused constant irritation with England. In 1877, owing to an exhausted public treasury and accumulated debts brought about by conflicts with the Zulus and other tribes, the Transvaal, or South African Republic, was on the eve of dissolution and the country about to relapse into barbarism. To avert this catastrophe the British Government assumed the care of it, subjugated the rebellious natives, and put the finances of the State in good condition.

Afterward England declared that the promises made by the Boers at this time were not carried out. One of the thrilling inci-