

### THE SOUTH AFRICAN DISPATCHES.

LONDON FINANCIAL PAPER DISCUSSES THE WAR AND ITS GOAL.

"Dauntless he rose, and to the fight returned."

To the reverses we are meeting with in South Africa we are becoming accustomed, but not reconciled. However, the student of history can extract comfort from the situation by recalling the dark days of the Indian Mutiny, the blunders of the Crimean War, and the many instances recorded of the sacrifice of British soldiers by the storming of impregnable positions. All the world wondered at the display of mad valour and useless bravery immortalized by Lord Tennyson, and, perhaps when the narrative of the present campaign against the Boers is fully told, we shall hear similar stories of foolish heroism and cruel waste of life in South Africa. But we must not permit brief and depressing dispatches to the War Office, especially when perused in gloomy December weather, to unduly excite and alarm us. No doubt of the ultimate outcome of the war is entertained by our brethren across the sea, and there should not be the faintest shadow of misgiving as to the result harboured here or elsewhere. Unfortunately, we have enemies within and without the Empire who do not hesitate to express satisfaction at every slight or serious disaster befalling our soldiers.

The might, majesty and glory of Great Britain and her Colonies is at stake in this struggle, and no thought of failure should find expression among loyal Canadian subjects of the Queen. There is nothing in the recent repulse of Lord Methuen to occasion anxiety. He has not given his opponents much rest since he started to the relief of Kimberley. He keeps moving them on, though, owing to the instinctive capacity of the Boers for rapidly appraising the tactical value of a position and manning it to advantage, we gain less from successive victories than we would over any other foe in similar circumstances. The Boers ride off whenever they have had enough of the bullet and the bayonet, and when a handful of horse is sent in pursuit they demonstrate the superiority of mounted infantry over regular cavalry in the country we are now campaigning in.

The mob of Berlin and Brussels may exult at the temporary success of the Boer plan of campaign, and other enemies of the Empire may accept the speech of Senator Mason at Washington as proof that America is with them in their opposition to this "iniquitous war against a handful of farmers." But eventually the British will reach Pretoria, and in what spirit terms of peace will be discussed, may be gathered from the following article from the London "Financial News":—

"While Paul Methuen and his men are preparing the way for a settlement with Paul Kruger, the politicians

at home are busily engaged in discussing the terms of that settlement. To all appearance, only a pitiful and dwindling minority in the country has the hardihood to favour a species of Bloemfontein-cum-Majuba compromise; so that it may seem a work of supererogation to combat such pernicious doctrine. But there is a fear that when the war is ended the sympathy of our people will be worked upon ostensibly in favour of the deluded burghers who have fought so well. Now, the courage of the Boers is not an element of any political import. We do not reward men who fight well in a bad cause, though we take care that they shall not personally suffer for devotion to false ideals. For the time being our affair is with the Boers in the field. When we are done with them we begin to deal with another question altogether. Having fought to restore conditions of equality and good government for all white men in South Africa, we are not going, with open eyes, to reconstruct a system which lends itself readily to the manufacture of inequalities and the fostering of corruption. And, in Mr. Balfour's words, "Never again shall we allow to grow up within our midst communities of our own creation in a position to use the liberties that we have granted them to turn their country into a place of arms to be used against us." After all, there must be some consideration for British necessities as well as for Boer susceptibilities. It is essential that there should be no permanent focus of hostility to British rule in South Africa. The only semblance of an argument advanced by the advocates of "magnanimity" on the 1881 model is that unless we restore the Republics we shall keep alive ambitions and enmities among the Dutch population. Had the Gladstone-Derby policy effaced such ambitions and enmities we might listen to the argument. As the outcome of that policy was the creation of a factory for new ambitions, and the fanning of smouldering animosities, we see no reason to assume that a second experiment in the same direction should be attempted.

No one who studied the proceedings at the Bloemfontein Conference can be under the delusion that the programme then put forward by Sir Alfred Milner represented anything more than a suggested palliative for the evils existing in the Transvaal. The modest amount of Uitlander representation then proposed would have served only to give publicity in the Volksraad to the corrupt proceedings of the Pretoria oligarchy, in the hope that gradually the opinion of the mass of the electorate would be enlightened and leavened. If at the close of the war we were to leave the Transvaal administration in the old hands, curbed only by the speeches of half a dozen Rand members in the Raad, we should become accomplices, both before and after the fact, in corruption and misgovernment. In 1881 and 1884 we took no guarantees for good government or good faith towards this country; but we can judge of what value guarantees would have been by the manner in which the spirit of the Conventions has been violated. Now it is our turn to give guarantees of good government to those who flocked