

Venezuela's Ingratitude to the Nation
That Made Her and Helped Her Free
From the Yoke of Spanish Sovereignty
—Turkey Turning John Bull's Hair
Grey—China and Persia in This Con-
nection.

During the last 20 years Venezuela has cost us £40,000, and now is going to cost us £38,000 more, never having let slip a chance of worrying the long-suffering John Bull. We have claims against her for about £50,000, to say nothing of the Britons who have earned grey hairs in trying to get it out of her.

Over a dozen British subjects have been either murdered or imprisoned, or fined without proper trial, and £20,000 worth of British property has been seized. All this, too, in spite of the fact that we made Venezuela—a battalion of British soldiers originally leading and helping the people to free themselves from the power of Spain in the same way that the United States freed Cuba.

Whenever Britain has been particularly busy elsewhere, Venezuela has seized the chance to trouble her; and five years ago she claimed a part of British Guiana, and nearly let us in for a war with the United States. The resulting commission and investigation lasted six months, and cost £10,000, the affair being finally settled by arbitration. This troublesome nation has nine times seized British ships, and has fired on a dozen more. As there is practically always war going on in the interior, and any quantity of highway robbery, things are made very unpleasant for foreigners, but Britons have suffered most. Germany has been worried a good deal, too, but not so much as we have. The trouble is that even if we teach the present Government a sharp lesson, there will be a brand new Government within a year or two that will also treat us with contempt when we ask for the money Venezuela owes us, just as the present one has done, and we shall have to spend another £30,000. There are 15 British warships dealing with the matter.

On the whole, Turkey does more to turn the hair of John Bull grey than any other nation, and is a constant worry and expense to us. She has cost us over £3,000,000, and seven times within the last 40 years we have had to enforce our claims on her. We have to help manage her customs for her, and to collect the interest due, at continual trouble and expense. Troublesome as she is, we are bound to look after her, because she is supposed to hold the passage between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, the Russian fleet in the Black Sea not being allowed to come through. If they did, however, in case of war with us, Turkey could not stop them, and we should have to do it for her. She owes us, besides, something like £2,000,000, which is another anxiety, and is so hopelessly in debt at home that hardly any of the officials get their wages, but have to get them out of the population—which they do with interest. The navy cannot steam and the army cannot get its pay. Turkey is a considerable worry to France as well, and often even to America, but least of all to Germany. Moreover, when any nation is trying to force Turkey to pay a debt she owes, we have to be there too, at more expense, to keep an eye on the other nation.

A still more expensive "worry" to us, however, is China, which country, apart from anything we get out of her, has cost us £15,000,000, and averages a bill of £1,000,000 a year for John Bull to pay. She cannot be induced to behave with any decency unless a number of troops are handy, and a costly squadron of warships to keep her in order. Even now disturbances are starting again, worrying British statesmen and putting British lives in danger, although it is hardly any time since we spent £1,500,000 in teaching her a lesson, with all the other powers to help. When China shut Britain and other legations up in Peking and tried to massacre them it cost us that amount to get them out and smote out justice. The China squadron cost £500,000 a year to keep going, and a British has the entire work of organizing and keeping in order the Chinese customs, which are almost the only hold an outside nation can get to collect its business debts.

Another nation that means continual expense and anxiety to Britain is Persia, whose slippery ways and constant flirtations with our enemies keep John Bull forever on the edge of apprehension, and decreases this petty cash account. Russia has got the north part and the northern railways practically under her thumb, but Britain has a stronger pull in the south, where Russia wants to get hold of a port that will let her into the Persian Gulf. This is very awkward, necessitating the continual despatching of cruisers and gunboats, at a big expense, and the ever-present possibility of a "row."

Nobody knows on which side Persia is going to smile next, and the chief and most anxious point is that Persia, in the hands of Russia, would place India in a much more ticklish position than it is now—in fact, if there were any question of that we should have to fight. Another worry in that direction is that enterprising firms are constantly smuggling cargoes of rifles into the hands of the troublesome Indian tribes.

Finally, Afghanistan is the most trying of all our worries, and has cost us £18,000,000 in the last 25 years, holding the most turbulent race under the stars, and being the only buffer between India and Russia on the north. At any moment, being very little under the power of her ruler, Afghanistan might cost us £10,000,000 in blood and treasure, and needs more careful nursing than any nation on earth.—Answers.

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In Holland.
Many of the country dames and damsels in Holland look as if they had been brought up on soap and water. Their faces glisten so preternaturally, their pots and pans, the red tiles of their floors, their tables and benches all bear witness so unmistakably to their cleansing ardor. I suppose a fly in the butter they were churning or a mired foot on the boards they have but just scrubbed would be as nearly likely to give them a fit as anything could be.

A Giant Emperor.
Maximilian, the giant Roman emperor, could twist coils into corkscrews, powder hard rocks between his fingers and do other seemingly impossible things. When angry, he often broke the jaw of a horse or the skull of an ox with his fist. His wife's bracelet served him for a ring, and every day he ate sixty pounds of meat and drank an amphora of wine.

Retrospection.
A Scotchman had two sons, one of whom was a doctor and the other a clergyman, of whom he was very proud. "If I had kent," said he, "that one of my sons was to be a medical man and the other a minister, I would never have had auld Jenny McCosh for their mother."

Doctors Make No Mistakes.
Patient—But, doctor, only last week you said I would surely die, and today you see I am as well as I ever was.
Doctor—Sir, I never make a mistake in a diagnosis. Your ultimate demise is only a matter of time.

A Strong Hint.
Hardup—Say, old man, I believe I owe you an apology.
Freeman—Well, I've heard it called a V, a fiver, a snuff plunk and five bones, but never an apology before!

Pretty nearly every ninety pound woman has an ambition to be managing editor of a 240 pound man.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

DO YOU KNOW

That it's no use Eating Unless you Digest Your Food—That if Your Stomach Won't Digest it Dodd's Dyspepsia Tablets Will.
Do you know that the stomach is the seat of health as well as the root of disease? Do you know that if the stomach is out of order the whole body is affected, is unable to do its regular work, is unable to resist any disease that may be floating around, and is all the time working towards disease on its own account?
This is only natural. The man who can't get food for his stomach grows weak and ill. If the stomach is not in shape to pass the food along to the various parts of the body the food might just as well never be eaten. That's why Dyspepsia is worn out and dispirited. They are just like people who have been starved for a time.

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"I certify to having suffered two years with Dyspepsia caused by inflammation of the stomach. I took three medicines without relief. I became discouraged until one day seeing an account of cures performed by Dodd's Dyspepsia Tablets I bought two boxes. By the time I finished taking them I was completely cured and I have stayed cured ever since."

THE VICTORIA CROSS.

History of the Decoration Since Its Inauguration Forty-Six Years Ago—Arts and Letters.

The Victoria Cross was born Jan. 29, 1859. Forty-six years ago, when there was much less talk about democracy than there is to-day, when aristocracy was frankly regarded as aristocracy, and the people were less severe than we are to add letters of distinction to their names, it entered into the head of a far-seeing leader of men to recommend the institution of a distinction to convey honor upon and to recognize that quality of man and which is more to be admired than any other. Moreover, it was a quality which is in no sense reserved to the possession of the high and mighty. Quite the contrary, in fact. The ordinary soldier has probably a greater opportunity of manifesting "conspicuous bravery in the sight of the enemy" than have his officers. And amid all the criticism which has been leveled at the English military system, no fact stands out more plainly than the number of ordinary privates who have been decorated. Here there is no question of nepotism, or petticoat influence, or toadyism. The most coveted honor in English heraldry is given with a catholicity of recognition which cannot but be appreciated by those who pause to think.

It is said that it was the genius of the late Queen to hit upon bronze as the material for the adornment which should bear her name for all time. We have heard of the Iron Cross and the Iron Eagle, but the bronze cross has a wider significance. At once we associate it with the cheapest coin of the realm. It is the act which wins the Cross and not the metal of which it is made which represents the value. Birth may bring a Garter; diplomatic success may bring an Order; but the one decoration which can be earned by merely personal valor is the Victoria Cross. It is well that we should recognize the price at which it is purchased. That simple bronze which adorns many a breast means that the wearer offered his life in one consummate act to his King and country. The little motto—"For valor"—includes a fullness of meaning which no phrase of the College of Heralds designing ever could include. Whitaker places the honor behind many a page of decorations which have a greater dazzle and glitter more in the heraldic eye. But the great public know the V. C. They know that it connotes all that England is and can be.

When we look back upon the history of such decorations we find that it took the world a considerable time to open its eyes to the value of personal bravery on the field. No doubt had Julius Caesar established some such honor, we should be led to realize that the Roman Republic cared more for the common soldier than history leads us to believe. In those days the soldier of the legion was a unit, and no more. If he was called upon to show personal valor of a high order he was recognized, to use a common phrase of to-day, as "all in the day's work." We remember that when the Victoria Cross was instituted certain cavaliers—there are always such cavaliers—argued that it was lowering to the dignity of the soldier to be specially rewarded for doing a soldier's duty. The cavalier urged that Napoleon needed no mere adornment to lure his soldiers over the Alps in the thick of the Winter's snow. We have a reply to all this ready to our hand. The soldier of the British Empire does not need the decoration to lure him to valor. It is the Empire itself which yearns for a method of recognition of more than common valor. Imagine Xerxes, or Hannibal, or Barbarossa, or Napoleon offering their soldiers a tribute.

But in the Victoria Cross we have an honor for which even the King is practically ineligible, since he can never be permitted to risk his person in the presence of an enemy. We may look through the list most carefully and we shall find very few exalted persons. This is not to insinuate that exalted persons are lacking in bravery, but that the work of generalship and administration necessarily handicaps them. Yet there is one Field Marshal—need we say it is Lord Roberts?—there is one Admiral of the Fleet, Sir N. Salmon. Coming a step nearer to the rank and file we find a handful of Generals and a similar number of Rear Admirals. The list is headed by a Chaplain; it contains seamen and privates in considerable numbers, and it closes with the names of four who, but for an untimely end, would now be wearing the coveted distinction.

It is well for us in times of peace to cast our minds over such a list. The public memory is painfully short. A year ago, and we spoke of heroes and had great regard for the virtues which are manifest on the battlefield. Alas, to-day we are busy once more with political and domestic enterprises, and the writer of the latest novel is more to us than the defenders of the Empire. In Grecian days, year by year, the roll of honor was read out to the people. It was not such a roll of honor as this which we commemorate on Jan. 29, for in those days of intellect and speculation the mere ordinary man was but his country's asset and slave, think we as highly of Greek civilization as we may. We might do worse than read out the Victoria Cross roll annually in the market places of our great towns. It seems hardly fair to confer so great an honor, adding to it the somewhat paltry pension of an annual £10, and then to banish the names of those who are thus adorned to the oblivion where all men, even the greatest, must go nowadays. Even Whitaker, that kindly monitor of the public mind, only retains surviving recipients in his list. How proud would we all be of a permanent list, in St. Paul's, for example, a public reminder to all time of those who served us and offered their lives in our service!—London Globe.

Men have scarce learned to treat their friends with the love Christ showed His foes.—Ram's Horn.



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