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R. WILSON SMITH,
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PEACE!

The Boer leaders on the 31st May all signed an agreement to cease fighting and accepted the conditions of surrender dictated by Lord Milner as British Commissioner in South Africa, and Lord Kitchener, as commander of the British forces. The news was made known under circumstances of unprecedented solemnity, as the announcement of peace was made on Sunday night, when congregations were assembled in honour of the Prince of Peace, their devotions to whom were interrupted by the glad tidings from South Africa. The story of the war is now too familiar to need recital. But it is not generally realized how much the Empire is indebted to the late Cecil Rhodes for the salvation of South Africa as an Imperial possession. In a speech in the Cape Assembly in 1883 he said: "I believe in a United States of South Africa, but as a portion of the British Empire." In March, 1898, in a speech at Cape Town, he told of his being offered the leadership of the "Afrikander Bond," on condition that the State to be formed by joining Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal and Orange Free State should be "*independent of the rest of the world.*" Cecil Rhodes to this offer replied: "You take me for a rogue or a fool," and from that hour Kruger and his party pursued with intense energy their conspiracy to seize the two colonies of Great Britain and form an independent State wholly apart from the Empire. It is sad that this "Empire builder" passed away before seeing his prophecy fulfilled and his labours for Imperial unity crowned with success. Sad, too, that Victoria the Beloved did not live to have the halo of peace brightening the closing days of her beneficent reign. The acquisition of the two South African Republics is in line with four great ancient empires triumphing over powers less civilized than themselves, and each by and through superiority in the arts and policy of civilization. The Boers have not been so much vanquished by sheer force of arms as by the marvellous concentration of the energies, the chivalry, the unity in sentiment, of an Empire which, in all the arts of peace and all the forces of civilization represents the loftiest achievements of human genius. There is a work of development in progress raising mankind from lower to higher planes. The Boers, by persistently resisting this movement, were condemned to inevitable defeat. Now they are British subjects they will be brought within the range of new and higher influences, their ideas in regard to civil, political and religious liberty; their appreciation of equal justice to all ranks; their value of education; of the need of improved methods of land culture; in a word, their whole conception of life and the duties of life will be expanded, purified, elevated. The Boer of the future will probably celebrate the peace settlement of May 31, 1902, as emancipation day. Peace for the Empire is an inexpressible blessing, to none more so than to our Dutch fellow-subjects in South Africa. It is eminently right that the whole Empire should rejoice now "the war drum beats no longer" in South Africa, and right, too, that amid our jubilations the brave dead should be remembered with gratitude and all honour paid to those who fought and wrought for the defence of the Empire.

May prosperity soon spread over the region desolated by war, and from the Zambesi to the Cape may all the people heartily say:

GOD SAVE THE KING.