

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE PARIS PEACE CONGRESS AND THE TRANSVAAL WAR.

In one respect, at least, the International Peace Congress is superior to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference. The rule of the latter is to avoid questions of current interest, and to keep more to the vague, abstract, and theoretical side of things. The International Peace Congress, on the contrary, has a section whose business it is to study questions of the day; and the Permanent International Peace Committee, whose headquarters are at Berne, draws up an annual report on the events of each year, which is signed by the Committee's honorary secretary, Monsieur Élie Ducommun.

This year, for instance, three questions were submitted to the Congress: the Transvaal, China, and Finland.

It was to be expected that the Transvaal question would call forth the greatest show of feeling. Egged on by their English friends, Mr. Philip Stanhope and Dr. Clark, etc., almost all the friends of peace on the continent allowed themselves to be carried away over the question of the Transvaal. These English gentlemen are naturally the declared enemies of Chamberlain and the present Conservative Cabinet, and what they did was to involve their international friends on the Continent in a sort of anti-ministerial manifestation which in reality was out of place anywhere else than in England.

The resolution they proposed in the Congress was conceived in such violent language that, even with a reporting committee composed entirely of Boerophiles, and an assembly of delegates, myself excepted, probably all Boerophiles too, it was judged expedient to tone down the wording considerably.

What I did in the reporting committee was to go through the facts and discuss their bearing in detail. I showed how, in his dispatch of the 29th of November, 1889, Lord Derby told the Boers that if they desired to discuss the suzerainty question they must not dream of modifying the Convention of 1881. Indeed, Article 4 of the Convention of 1884 clearly proves the maintenance of England's suzerainty; while Article 14 assigns to her the responsibility for the liberty and security of all foreigners residing in the Transvaal.

I showed by the murder of Edgar what interpretation the Boers gave to the principles of justice; but the retort of all the members of the Congress was:

¹ The present little article by M. Yves Guyot, ex-deputy and ex-minister of France, and editor of the *Sidèle*, is published as a piece of interesting evidence of the difficulties under which even a Peace Congress may labor in its efforts to attain a just and unbiassed settlement of international difficulties. It may be noted, also, that M. Guyot was the only distinguished publicist on the side of England in the Transvaal war.—*Ed.*

"Kruger asked for arbitration, and Chamberlain refused it." From original documentary evidence I proved that for Kruger the arbitration proposal was only put forward in order to secure the annulment of the Conventions of 1881 and 1884, and consequently could not be accepted by the English government; finally, I read Kruger's proposal made on the ninth day of the Bloemfontein Conference (June, 1899).

"President Kruger said in conclusion :

"Give me Swaziland, the indemnity due for the Jameson raid, and arbitration in return for the franchise. Otherwise I should get nothing."

"These points cannot be separated.

"On the 9th of June, Dr. Reitz drew up proposals relative to the arbitration, but reserved to each country the right to withhold and exclude the points that seemed too important to be submitted to arbitration.

"What was the meaning of these reservations? And, moreover, in the constitution of the Committee, the third arbitrator, acting as umpire, was to be a stranger; he it was who would decide."

I hate war. So, when I realised the seriousness of the situation, I proposed what would have been a *modus vivendi*, liberal in its provisions and honorable to both sides: viz., "Autonomy for the mining districts." Mr. Chamberlain then informed me by a letter that this had already been proposed by the English government in 1896 and again at Bloemfontein in 1899. On each occasion the Boers refused to entertain the proposal.

The only conception of liberty possessed by Mr. Kruger and his partisans was that which permitted the Uitlanders to be oppressed and spoiled; and I foresaw that if the President of the Transvaal continued his shuffling policy, England would ultimately be forced to go to war. A bull-dog may for a time disdain the snarlings and snappings of a mongrel, but sooner or later he becomes exasperated, turns on the mongrel and breaks its back.

This I said in my protest yesterday before the Congress, and I added: "You speak of arbitration; what arbitration? on what point? Ought it, for instance, to have recognised the right arrogated by the Boers to continually violate the Conventions of 1881 and 1884?"

I did not expect my words would have sufficient power to displace the majority. I may hope, however, that they contributed to the milder modification of the original resolution. What is more significant is the rejection to-day of a vote relative to maintaining the independence of the Boer Republics. The chairman, Monsieur Richet, took care to insist upon the statement that there were no Anglo-phobes present at the Congress, which was perhaps saying rather too much. At any rate, the discussion was a great success, and I could speak without being interrupted.

PARIS, October, 1900.

YVES GUYOT.

THE CHILD.

Thou, little Child, art Beast and God,
 Past and Futurity;
 Thou tread'st the paths our Fathers trod,
 The paths our Sons shall see.