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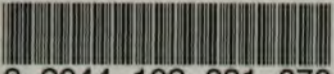
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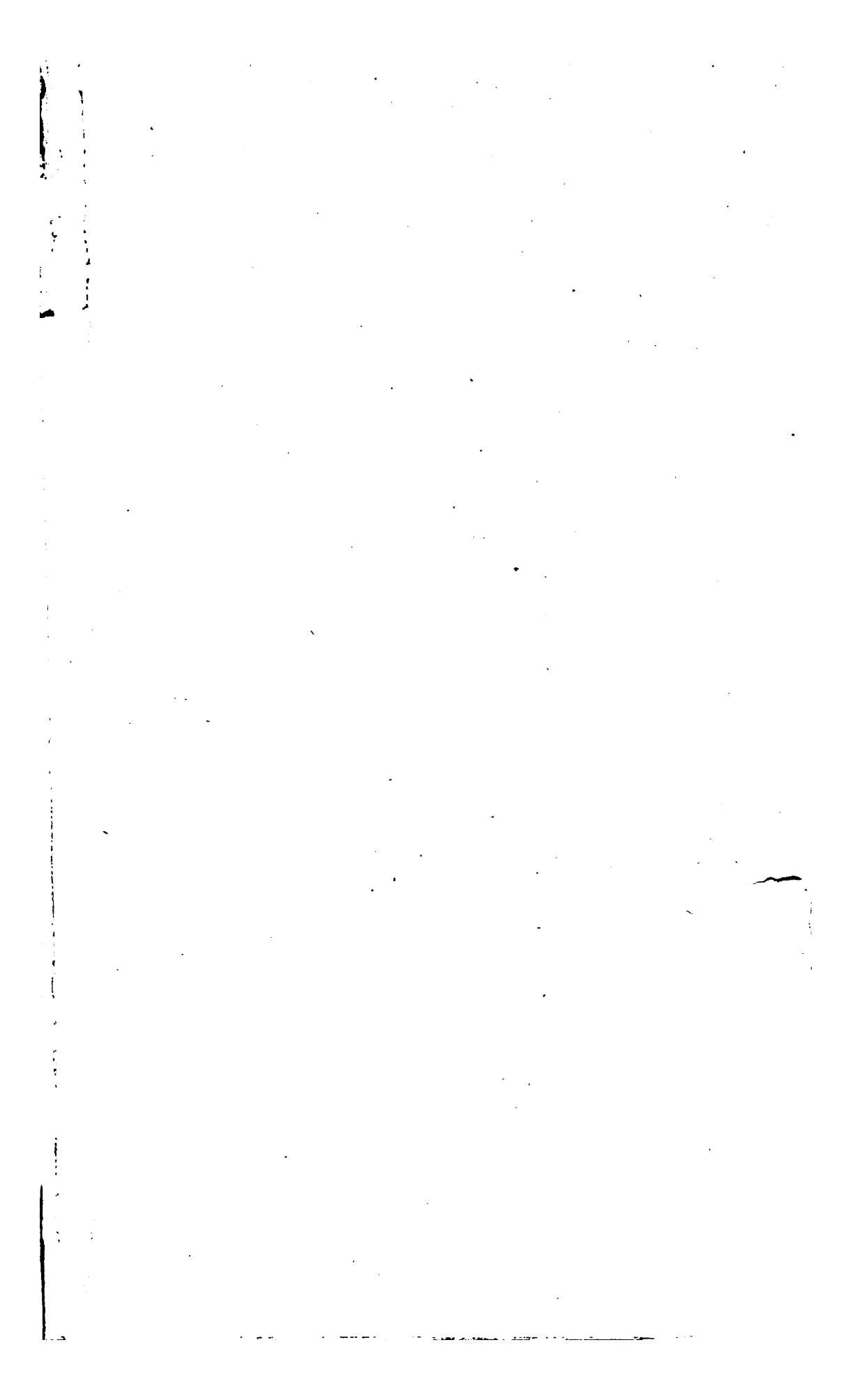
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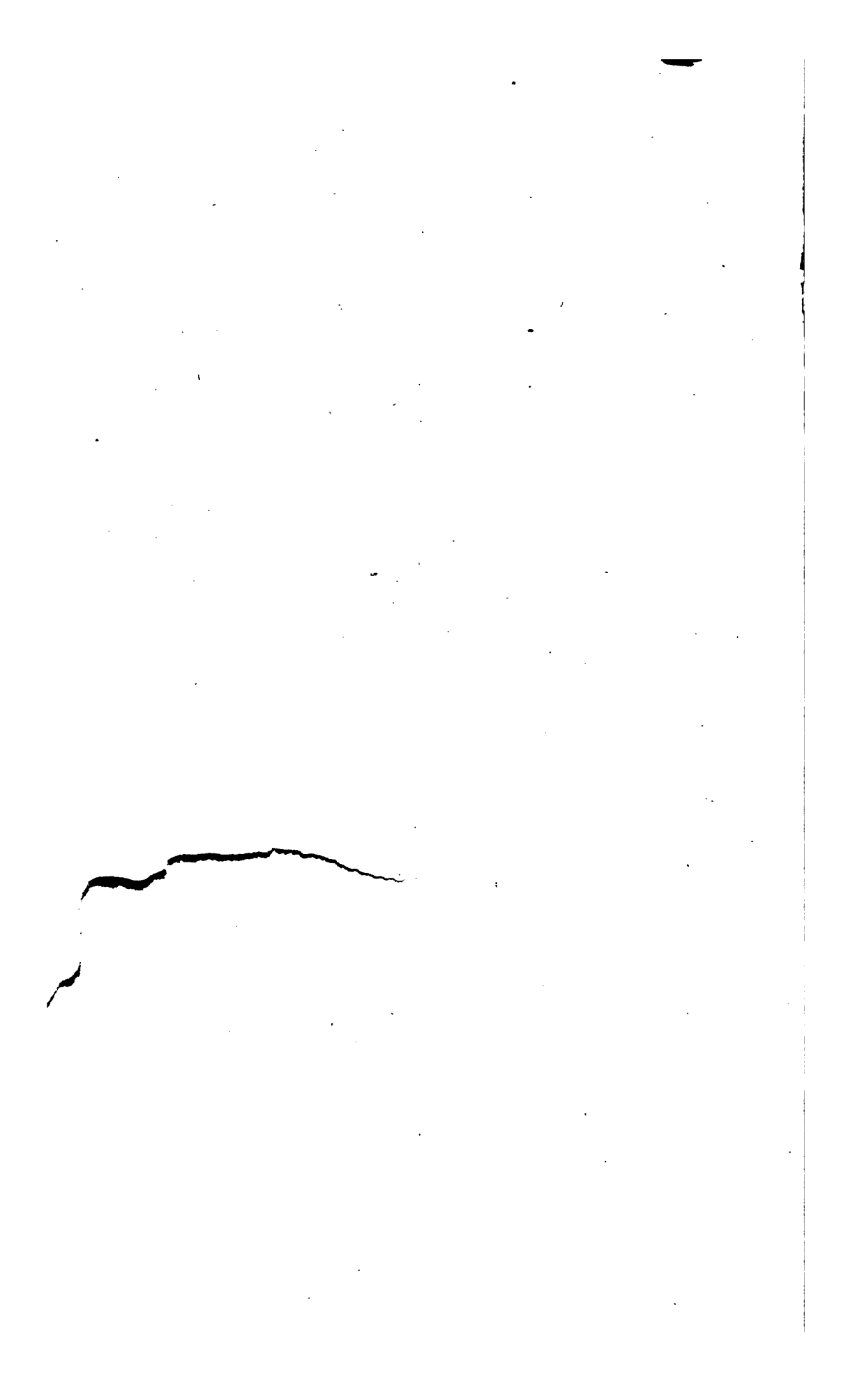


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THE <sup>031</sup>  
CONGO SLAVE <sup>44</sup>  
STATE. <sup>24</sup>

A Protest against the new African Slavery;  
And an Appeal  
To the Public of Great Britain, of the  
United States, and of the Continent of Europe.

By EDMUND D. MOREL.



"Every step that we take upon our way is a step that brings us nearer the goal, and every obstacle even although for the moment it may seem insurmountable, can only for a little while retard, and never can defeat, the final triumph."

*William Ewart Gladstone.*



LIVERPOOL :  
JOHN RICHARDSON & SONS, PRINTERS, 29, DALE STREET.  
1903.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

## "Affairs of West Africa."

Demy 8vo, with Illustrations and Maps. PRICE, 12/- NETT.

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN.

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"The sufferings of which the picture was given to the world in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, are as nothing to those which Mr. Morel represents to be the habitual accompaniments of the acquisition of rubber and ivory by the Belgian companies."—*Times*.

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ALSO

### "The British Case in French Congo."

W. HEINEMANN, 6/- 1903.

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CONTEMPORARY REVIEW, March, 1902.

### "Trading Monopolies in West Africa."

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JUN 27 1921

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## PREFACE.

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**I**N the days of the over-sea slave trade, Europeans went down the West Coast of Africa to capture the inhabitants and carry them away to labour on European and American plantations, and for other purposes. That wickedness was put an end to by a few men, who, after incredible difficulty, heart-breaking set-backs and soul-tearing toil, with pen and voice succeeded in rousing the conscience of the world. An evil perhaps as great—possibly greater—and accompanied by concomitant dangers which the over-sea slave trade was innocent of, faces us to-day. Although the present evil is not so universally practised as was the other, it wields nevertheless, a corrupting influence upon men's minds, its perpetration being accompanied by temporary material gains of an extensive kind—much more extensive than the profits derived from the over-sea slave trade—which gains, moreover, are unaccompanied by any hardship or unpleasantness to the principal beneficiaries concerned in promoting and enforcing the evil. The consequence has been that within the last few years the virus has spread, a pernicious example has been copied, the minds of many men are confused and, as in the days of the over-sea slave trade, familiarity with an existing evil has resulted in the blunting of conscience, in indifferentism and unthinking acquiescence.

One hundred years ago, a handful of men were fighting a system hoary with age and sanctified by custom, whereby the negro was considered the lawful prey of the white man, who, thanks to his superior engines of destruction, and to the inter-tribal warfare among the negroes, captured enormous numbers of the latter and enslaved them in a land of exile.

To-day, some of us are fighting a system whereby a certain number of individuals in a small country, having at their head a man utterly unscrupulous but extraordinarily able, consider the negro as their lawful prey, and, thanks to the perfection which modern engines of destruction have now attained and to the lack of unity among the negroes, are enslaving them in their own land.

The men of a century ago had for a long time, everything against them: Parliament, class prejudice, vested interests, and much more, beside of which the difficulties that face us to-day are insignificant.

We are confronted merely with the intrigues of a *clique*, the allies bound to it by the ties of material interest, and the paid agents it entertains. We are not struggling against a system to which long usage has given almost the force of law, but against a system adopted in violation of solemn international pledges, and which has been in existence for little more than a decade. We are not contending with a system which might have endured for a thousand years without the Nemesis of retribution, but with a system which carries within it the germs of destruction and chaos.

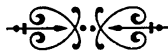
Yet, disproportionate as are our difficulties with those which faced the men of a hundred years ago, the obstacles we have to overcome are, nevertheless, considerable. If the honour of the nations of the world is concerned in this matter, so also are their mutual jealousies involved. The partition of Africa has given rise to much rivalry, to dangerous disputes almost culminating in armed warfare between the nations of Europe. Deeds have been done in Africa, of which each participating Power in the "scramble" feels ashamed, and this feeling of shame, coupled with distrust of its neighbour, causes each Power to hesitate before taking action, leads the timid statesman to shrink, to search for excuses, to palliate—almost to condone. Public opinion is still suffering, although in a lessening degree, perhaps, from one of those periodical waves of materialism and indifferentism which sweep over the intellectual world from time to time, when appeals to humanity are put down to sentimental clap-trap, or to the deluded imaginings of ill-regulated minds. But what movement for reform, what effort to undo a wrong, or to upset a tyranny has ever been

carried to a successful conclusion without impediments and opposition? Rather should we rejoice that so many powerful sympathies are already enlisted in the cause.

Those whom appeals to humanity leave untouched, we are able, happily, to approach on other grounds, to put before them arguments and data based upon the severest practicability, upon the clearest common-sense, upon considerations of science and reason which will bear—and have borne—the test of examination. We can produce sufficient presumptive evidence to show that the continuation and spread of this evil will bring with it, as inevitably as night follows day, ruin and disaster upon every legitimate European enterprise in Equatorial Africa ; will undo the work of years of patient effort ; will render valueless the sacrifice of many valuable lives laid down in the task of exploring and opening up those vast regions, and will fling back their inhabitants into the welter of barbarism, deeper and infinitely more degrading than any they have hitherto experienced.

The men of a hundred years ago, who fought the over-sea African slave trade, were giants. The obstacles they had to surmount were colossal. They surmounted them—they won. Compared with them, the men who to-day are fighting the New Slavery in Africa are pygmies. Their difficulties are substantial, but they will overcome them—and they will win.

HAWARDEN, 1903.



## INTRODUCTION.

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A FEW weeks ago I suggested to a friend who, although entirely unconnected with Congo affairs, shares nevertheless the feelings of indignation entertained by all impartial observers at the monstrous abuses of which the Congo Basin has become the scene, the publication of a pamphlet dealing with the subject, which I volunteered to write and compile, if he would defray the cost of printing and distribution. This he generously agreed to do. I can only hope that what is written in these pages may help the determined efforts now being made to rouse the public conscience of the world to the abuses which, under the cloak of a detestable hypocrisy, maintained by every political and personal intrigue that ingenuity can suggest, are befouling the honour of the white races in Equatorial Africa, and building up a heritage of trouble of which no man can foretell the consequences or the end.

. . . . .

This pamphlet—which is for gratis distribution only—is in effect an appeal to the people of the civilized world, whose representatives signed the Berlin Act of 1885, and the Brussels Act of 1890, to unite in putting pressure upon their respective Governments to take the territories known as the Congo State out of the hands of King Leopold II, now dictator over a million square miles in Africa, inhabited by twenty million negroes; and by such measures as may be decided upon at a new Conference, to ensure that the provisions of the Berlin and Brussels Acts shall be effectively carried out in those territories.

No attempt is herein made to recount the historical incidents relating to the foundation of the State, nor to recapitulate the authenticated stories of persistent cruelty and oppression which have characterised its career more or less since its birth, but especially since its policy of land appropriation, and appropriation of the produce of the soil was put into practice—that is to say, since 1891. That task has been fully and admirably performed by Mr. H. R. Fox-Bourne, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society in his volume published this year, “Civilisation in Congo-land.”\*

The object aimed at here has been twofold: (1) The presentation in a lucid and easily readable form of the cardinal features which underlie the new system of African slavery, conceived and applied in the territories of the Congo Basin by the Sovereign of the Congo State, thus centralising in a few pages the exposure of that system which the author has already attempted, in the volumes published by Mr. Heinemann in December of last and May of this year, entitled respectively “Affairs of West Africa,”† and the “British Case in French Congo.”‡

(2) The treatment, in distinct chapters, of the *Domaine Privé*, the *Domaine de la Couronne*, and each of the great Trusts into which the *Domaine Privé* is sub-divided, accompanied in every case by maps with the specific areas marked upon them, and by a narrative of the more recent events which are available, or have been chronicled, from those specific areas.

The author ventures to hope that, by this method of treatment, the reader may have no difficulty in getting at the bed-rock facts of the situation.

Every effort has been made to deal with the subject as temperately as the author’s feelings admit, but no apology is tendered to those whose sensitiveness will not allow that a spade should under

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\* P. S. King & Son, Orchard House, Westminster (Price, 10/6 net.)

† *Affairs of West Africa* (W. Heinemann, Bedford Street, London), price 12s. net.

‡ *The British Case in French Congo* (W. Heinemann, Bedford Street, London) price 6s. net.

any circumstances be described otherwise than as an agricultural implement. The use of kid gloves and undiluted rose water can be left to the diplomatists who for eleven years have sat still and not moved a little finger while the Congo Basin was in process of being formed into a charnel house, and who have only been roused from their apathy within the last few weeks by strong speaking and straight writing—notwithstanding the fact, that in the Foreign Offices of England, Germany and France, reports are pigeon-holed which confirm in every particular the charges made against the Congo State for years past, by all who have had an opportunity of studying the effects of its system on the spot.

The British Government, in the face of a unanimous House of Commons, has now promised to approach the signatory Powers, but there is some reason to fear that if constant pressure is not brought to bear upon the authorities, both inside the House and out of it, the “enquiry” will only be a half-hearted sort of affair. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that public opinion throughout the world should be brought to understand this question. This pamphlet is a humble attempt to that end.

It has been stated above that this is an appeal to the people of the civilized world, whose representatives signed the Berlin and Brussels Acts. To the American public, whose Government did not ratify the Berlin Act, but did ratify the Brussels Act, the writer ventures to appeal with special emphasis. America has a peculiar and very clear responsibility in the matter, inasmuch as the American Government was the first to recognise the *status* of the International Association (which subsequently became the Congo State) and thereby paved the way for similar action on the part of the European Governments. America was deceived, as Europe was deceived, by the professions of philanthropy and high moral purpose so lavishly scattered by the Sovereign of the Congo State. It is to be hoped that President Roosevelt and the American people may help to undo the grievous wrong which was thereby unknowingly inflicted upon the natives inhabiting the Congo Territories.

## CHAPTER I.

## The POLICY of the Congo State or the *Domaine Privé*.

THE POLICY—"VACANT LANDS"—THE "FRUITS" OF THE LAND—  
PRODUCTS OF COMMERCIAL VALUE—TRADE—THE PROVI-  
SIONS OF THE BERLIN ACT—THE DESTRUCTION OF TRADE—  
THE ROBBERY OF THE NATIVE—HOW THE POLICY WORKS  
OUT IN PRACTICE—"TAXATION IN KIND"—THE SUBSIDIARY  
TRUSTS OF THE *DOMAINE PRIVÉ*—ON THE ART OF MANIPU-  
LATING FIGURES.

---

"Vacant lands must be considered as belonging to the State."—*Decree*,  
July 1, 1885.

"In this same year, 1892, the State inaugurated a new economic policy.  
. . . This policy is characterised—(1) By the execution (*mise en pratique*)  
of the State's right of monopolising to its profit the products of the vacant  
lands of its territory. (2) By the appearance of concessionary and privileged  
companies, constituted for the purpose of exploiting the *Domaine Privé* with  
the moral and effective support of the State."—M. A. J. WAUTERS (Belgian),  
in *l'Etat Indépendant du Congo*, 1899.

"The State then initiated an economic policy diametrically opposed to  
that which had prevailed hitherto. This changed attitude was marked by  
the decree of September 21, 1891, not inserted in the *Bulletin Officiel*, and  
which ordered the District Commissioners of the Aruwimi-Welle and Ubanghi-  
Welle, and the leaders of the Upper Ubanghi Expedition, 'to take urgent  
and necessary measures to preserve at the disposal of the State the fruits  
of the domainal lands, especially ivory and rubber.' A few months after the  
signing of this document, three circulars appeared—(1) . . . forbidding  
the natives to hunt the elephant unless they brought the ivory to the  
State. (2) . . . forbidding the natives to collect rubber unless they brought  
it to the State. (3) . . . forbidding the natives to collect for their own  
profit, or to sell any rubber or ivory whatever, which were the fruits of  
the Domain of the State; adding that the merchants who bought these  
products from the natives, 'the collection of which the State only authorises  
on condition that they are brought to it,' would be guilty of receiving  
stolen goods, and would be denounced to the judicial authorities."—M. A. J.  
WAUTERS (Belgian), *ibid.*



"This *régime* is absolutely arbitrary. The decree does not specify the taxes which can be claimed from the Chiefs. It follows that nothing can prevent their being compelled to pay taxes utterly disproportionate to their resources, and of being exploited and ruined. Moreover, the basis of taxation is not uniform, and it varies from Chief to Chief. The system is calculated to legitimise every form of plunder and injustice."—F. CATTIER (Belgian), Professor at Brussels University; *Droit et Administration de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo*, 1898.

"You dare not, in the name of Christian morality, defend the exploitation of the *Domaine Privé*."—M. VANDEVELDE, Belgian Member of Parliament (in the Belgian House, July, 1901).

"That is Congo civilisation! On all sides war, massacres, crimes continue there. How can you possibly defend those things? . . . Your Colonial policy is analogous to the crimes mentioned in Article 123 of the Penal Code; it is a policy of devastation, pillage and assassination."—M. GEORGES LORAND, Belgian Deputy (in the Belgian House, July, 1901).

"The basis of the King's economic policy has been the formation of an army sufficiently strong to pay the rubber and ivory tax"—M. PIERRE MILLE (Frenchman), *Au Congo Belge*, 1899.

**T**HE *Domaine Privé* now covers the whole of the territories assigned to the Sovereign of the Congo State by the Powers in 1884, with the exception of a very small portion known as the Lower Congo.

Its area is shown in the accompanying map. The basis of the *Domaine Privé* was laid by Official Decree in July, 1885. It emerged from the region of theory to that of fact in 1891 and 1892. The *Domaine Privé* is a **Policy**. That Policy is a very simple one, which anyone can understand.

By a stroke of the pen, the entire area shown in the map, with the exception of native villages and clearings round those villages planted with foodstuffs by the inhabitants, has been declared "vacant land," and appropriated by the Congo State. By a few more strokes of the pen, the Congo State has appropriated to itself the "fruits" of this "vacant land," and has forbidden the natives to collect such "fruits" for the purpose of sale.

That is the **Policy** of the *Domaine Privé*.

. . . . .

The reader is asked to remember carefully that the above are facts which are not, and have never been in dispute. No mind, however subtle, no argument however ingenious, has ever applied itself, or been applied, to deny these facts which embody the constitution of the Congo State.

To frame such a **Policy** was one thing. To give effect to it was another.

. . . . .

Every student of Africa knows that, save in regions which have become deserted either by inter-tribal warfare extending over a long period of years, or through the effects of some terrible scourge, or through general lack of fertility, the term "vacant lands" is one which has little substance in fact. It may be accepted as an axiom, from which the departures are rare, that wherever there is a population there is no such thing as "vacant land" in Equatorial Africa. Moreover, careful investigation has revealed in regions where such investigation has been carried out in Western Africa, that native land tenure reposes upon well-defined customs, laws, and traditions; and is, in the great majority of cases, an institution deserving of thorough respect by European Governments. A great body of proof could be submitted in support of this assertion, were it not the purpose of the writer to keep this pamphlet within strict limits.

Now as to "fruits" of the land. What are "fruits" of the land? Fruits of the land are products of commercial value which are yielded by the land. By universal acceptance, the meaning attached to the words "products of commercial value," in referring to African products signifies products which, according to the distance from port of shipment, will leave a profit on the European market after deduction of the price of purchase, freight and sundry charges.

The next point we have to consider is the part which these African products of commercial value play in the relationship between the European and the native of Africa. That is easily answered. They play the main part. They are the primary cause and, nine cases out of ten, the sole explanation of the presence in Equatorial Africa of Europeans. They constitute the **Trade** of the country; and the motive power, since the slave-trade days, which has led Europeans to go to Western Equatorial Africa, and European Governments to open up the country, has been the necessity of creating new markets for their manufactures, and new sources for the supply of the products yielded by Equatorial Africa which European industrialism requires. Now the act of trading is the exchange—the barter—of one article against another. There is no exception that I know of to the rule. If the American wishes to purchase a certain article which the Englishman produces, he pays for it in cash. If the Englishman wishes to purchase a certain article which the American produces, he pays for it in cash. That is **Trade**. In Western Africa there is at present—save here and there where European silver coinage is being introduced—no cash currency, so if the Englishman wishes to purchase a certain article, such as rubber, or palm-oil, or mahogany,

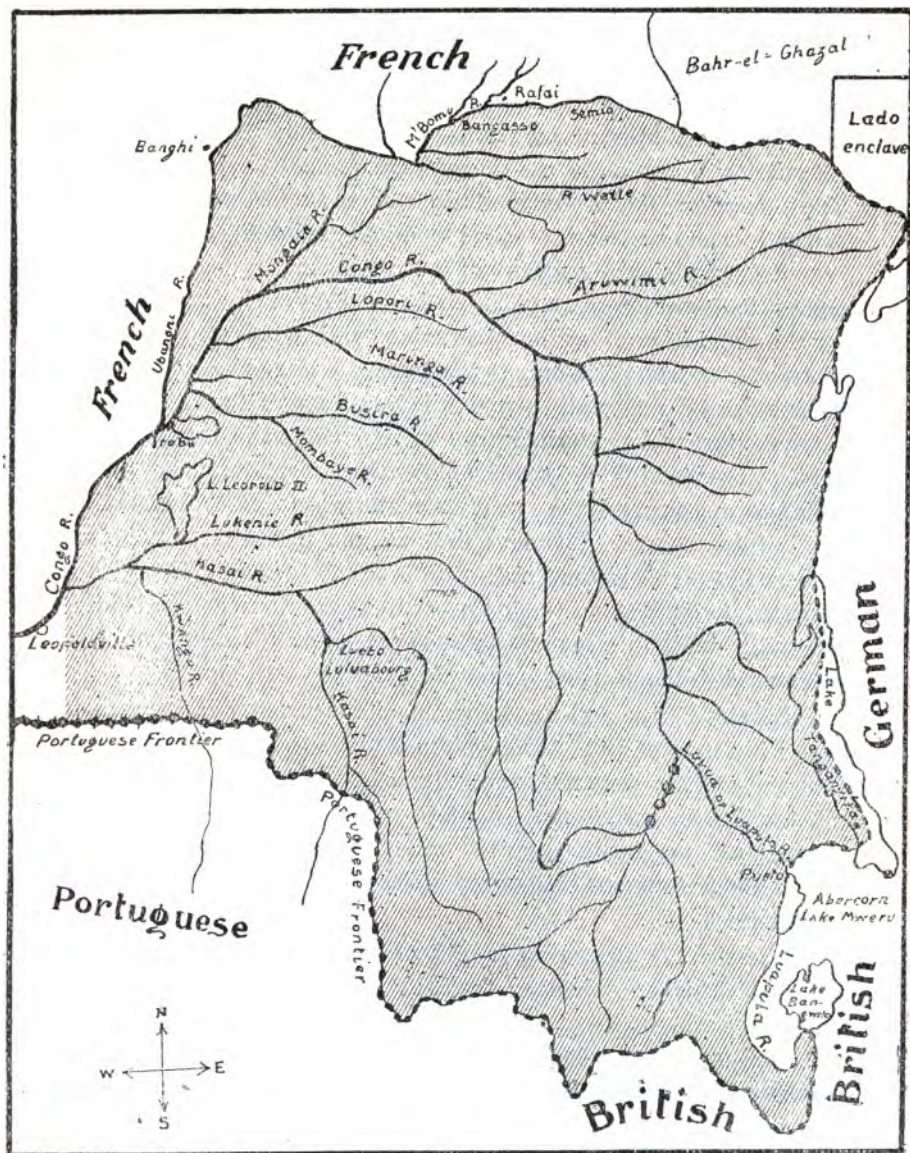
which the African produces, he pays for it not in cash, but in merchandise. That is **Trade**.

It has been universally recognised that the most efficacious method of opening up virgin countries is by encouraging trade, especially when, as is the case with Equatorial Africa, the inhabitants are natural traders, born as it were with the instinct of trade in their veins. Here again a great body of proof could be adduced to show that such is the universal belief, both as regards the part played by trade, and the natural aptitude of the African native for trading. But it is quite unnecessary to do so, for the simple reason that nineteen years ago, the Powers of Europe registered that belief in a solemn compact, binding upon them all, and more especially upon King Leopold II. of Belgium, who by virtue of that compact became entrusted with a vast portion of the African Continent, on the understanding that **Trade** was to remain free and unfettered within it, and that the rights of the natives in that portion of the Dark Continent were to be safeguarded. That compact was called the Berlin Act. The second stipulation was the corollary of the first. The one is the necessary appendage of the other. Under a system of unrestricted freedom of trade, the native benefits by competition and is in a position to derive all the advantages to which, as a human being, he is entitled from his trade; whereas under a system of monopoly, the native can only sell in one market, and the monopolists can, if they choose, make their own prices. Therefore, the Powers, animated as they were in 1884 and 1885 by a genuine desire to do the fair thing, and at the same time the wise and common-sense thing, laid down categorically that no monopoly or privilege of any kind was to be granted in matters of trade, and that the native was to be free to dispose of the products of his soil—otherwise stated to **Trade**; and that the Europeans should be free to purchase those products against merchandise—otherwise stated to **Trade**.

. . . . .

No sooner, however, had the Sovereign of the Congo State entered, on paper, into possession of the territories assigned to him by the Powers, than he issued a decree, as we have seen, claiming that all "vacant lands" belonged to the State; the term "vacant lands" meaning—as was explained in that decree and successive decrees—all land throughout the territories assigned to him, with the exception of the land built upon, or in actual cultivation by the natives. Now as neither the land upon which native villages are

## THE CONGO STATE ABOVE LEOPOLDVILLE.



The shaded portion indicates the area of  
THE DOMAINE PRIVÉ.

built, nor land upon which the natives cultivate food-stuffs for their consumption contain products of commercial value,\* this decree was not only calculated to hinder trade, actual or potential, but positively debarred the native from trading at all.

This decree was represented as a measure really framed in the interests of the natives themselves to prevent their being taken in by unscrupulous European merchants. In the years that followed, the international position of the Congo State strengthened considerably. The Sovereign of the Congo State had succeeded amongst other things in more or less entangling politically with the Congo State, two of the principal signatories of the Berlin Act, by playing one off against the other alternately, both being at this time in furious rivalry for the acquisition of territory bordering the Congo State. These are matters, of course, pertaining to the domain of historical fact. When he felt himself sufficiently strong, the Sovereign of the Congo State showed clearly the true significance he attached to the decree of July, 1885, by issuing in 1891 a decree, followed by a crop of circulars—all of which are mentioned in the extract from the work of M. Wauters at the head of this chapter—claiming that all the products of the land belonged to the *Domaine Privé*—that is to say to the State (which is himself), forbidding natives to collect these products, and forbidding European merchants to purchase such products under threat of being denounced to the Judicial—mark the Judicial—Authorities.

By this decree and by the circulars which followed it, coupled with the decree of July, 1885, which preceded it, trade was not only hindered, natives were not merely debarred in theory from trading at all, **but Trade, actual and potential, was swept out of existence throughout one million square miles of territory in Africa in which the Powers had expressly declared trade should be free and unrestricted.**

The right of the native to collect the products of commercial value which his land produces; the right of the native to sell those products to European merchants in exchange for goods; the right of the European to purchase those products, had disappeared because **one man sitting in Brussels, thousands of miles away, had decreed that it should be so.**

Since that time, and particularly at the present moment, the public is being deluged with treatises by Belgian jurists and Professors at Law, who maintain that the *Policy* of the Congo State has a

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\* The term "Commercial Value" in this connection has already been explained.

sound "juridical" foundation and that the Berlin Act has not been violated by the Congo State, because the Congo State **has rights of proprietorship over the Congo territories, and all they contain, those rights of proprietorship consisting in the statement of such rights made by one man sitting in Brussels thousands of miles away, in the years 1885, 1891 and 1892.**

. . . . .

To frame such a **Policy** was one thing. To give effect to it was another; but what was its motive?

. . . . .

It was given effect to in this wise, and its motive has never been one instant in doubt.

All land not built upon or cultivated, having been "juridically" declared "vacant," all the products of the land having been "juridically" declared State property; the theory that the native owned the products of commercial value yielded by the soil having been "juridically" disposed of, and such a thing as trade having therefore, "juridically" disappeared; all that remained to be done was to gather in as great a quantity as possible of those products of commercial value. As the native of Equatorial Africa is not a brute, but a man, the expectation that he would bring in the produce of the land, which he no doubt persists in continuing to believe to be his, for a trifling payment, or for no payment at all, was not to be entertained, and was not in point of fact entertained in Brussels. So a system of taxation was started and applied. The native would be called upon to pay taxes, and he would pay those taxes in kind: that is to say, in the products of commercial value, growing in that "vacant land" which used to be his, but which had now been "juridically" acquired by somebody else. That "vacant" land should contain inhabitants whom it was decided ought to pay taxes, might be a contradiction in terms—but what matter? The land had been "juridically" declared vacant. There at once was a basis of legality, upon which the most imposing legal formulas could be afterwards reared, and provided that no one in Europe raised initial objections—no one did, the Powers being busy squabbling as usual, too much occupied with their own affairs to pay attention to what was being prepared in the Congo—innumerable decrees and ordinances might subsequently be framed testifying to the ardent desire of the Sovereign of the Congo State to safeguard the rights of the natives, to protect them from outrage, to . . . in short care for their material and moral

welfare in the most approved manner; decrees and ordinances which could be thrown wholesale in the face of the world, quoted with unctuous rectitude and hypocritical asseverations, when the day arrived for the great unmasking, if ever that day should come. If the native would not pay the taxes, well, a remedy would doubtless be found, and not only a remedy but an effective name to characterise it. The remedy was found. It consists to-day in the existence of 20,000 cannibal troops, armed with repeating rifles, and secured by forced conscription, for raids upon villages; who, employed in districts far removed from their homes or place of capture, make useful tax collectors (when they do not rebel, cut the throats of their officers, and go raiding "on their own") and useful agents for punishing taxpayers, unwilling or unable to meet demands which have no finality, and no limitation. The name, or rather the phrase, was also found. It is this: "**Moral and material regeneration.**"\*

. . . . .

Owing to the opposition which his **Policy** met with in Belgium, from Belgians who had gone into the country as traders, the Sovereign of the Congo State was compelled to make an exception in their favour, and to continue to allow them to trade in specific districts. In order to satisfy the demands of financiers who had lent him money, and who wanted to share in the profits which were to be anticipated from the initiation of his **Policy**; to create for his **Policy** a favourable opinion in Belgium, based upon material interest; to conciliate a number of politicians, of bankers and others appertaining to the moneyed classes; the Sovereign of the Congo State judged it expedient to farm out large portions of his *Domaine*—that is to say, of the territories he had appropriated—to a number of favoured individuals. He rightly judged that the creation of several "Companies" whose shares would be actively dealt in on the Stock Exchange, and whose profits would be sure to run to colossal proportions—since they were relieved of the necessity of trading for the products of commercial value contained in their respective concessions, receiving, in effect those products from the Sovereign who had declared them, in the first place, to be his—would let loose a wave of profitable speculation which would tend to popularise his **Policy** in Africa among the general public in Belgium.

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\* "Our only programme, I am anxious to repeat, is the work of moral and material regeneration."—KING LEOPOLD.

This was done, and a short up-to-date history of each of the Trusts thus created is here given, so far as is possible, from information concerning their operations. I must not forget to add, that the Sovereign of the Congo State, besides—in some cases—stipulating that a regular payment should be made to the State on all products of commercial value shipped home by these Trusts ; further stipulated either that the State should hold 50% of the shares, or should be paid half the profits of the year's working. In one instance two-thirds of the profits go to the State, and one-third to the Trust. In this manner a further considerable source of revenue was to be secured in addition to the yield of the taxes themselves—otherwise stated the profit on sale in Europe of the objects of commercial value obtained by the State itself in such portions of the *Domaine Privé*, not allotted to subsidiary Trusts.

. . . . .

This **Policy** has given, in a material sense, all the results which could be desired, or had been foreseen. It has enabled the Congo State to raise and equip a huge army of mercenaries chosen from the fiercest cannibalistic tribes of the country. It has enabled the Congo State to build a flotilla of steamers on the Upper Congo and its affluents ; used in the conveyance from place to place of sections of this army, and for the transport down the river of the rubber and ivory obtained. It has enabled the Congo State to build numerous military stations, and depots in proximity to the main arteries. It has enabled the Congo State to spend huge sums upon the military occupation of a portion of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, weakly leased to it by the Rosebery Cabinet with the deluded idea of counteracting French schemes—to construct therein forts ; to accumulate therein a considerable quantity of artillery, and so on. Most of these achievements are pointed to by the Congo State as evidence of progress and developing the country, whereas they are in point of fact only part and parcel of the maintenance of a **Policy** determined upon in absolute violation of the Berlin Act : a policy which seeks to conceal the exploits of slave drivers and buccanneers, in the garb—as occasion arises—of philanthropy, of progress, of legality, and—the latest phase—of necessity. The last plea is, perhaps, the most impudent of all. The frame-work of a bogus philanthropy, a bogus progress, and a bogus legality having successively crumbled away, the Congo State is now driven to its final entrenchments, and seeks to defend its **Policy** upon the monstrous assumption that Equatorial Africa



can only be developed—save the mark!—upon the principles and the practises it has initiated; that is to say by robbing the native of his only source of wealth and by enslaving him in his own country.

By a judicious manipulation of figures, the Congo State as nearly as possible balances its estimated revenue and expenditure returns, thus conveying the impression that the results of its **Policy** are not very brilliant after all—that it just makes both ends meet, in short. In this way a good many people are taken in. In point of fact the figures are quite illusory. *The actual revenue returns of taxation from the Domaine Privé are never published, or at least have not been published since 1893. If they were published, they would show that the estimates are utterly fallacious, because the sums realised by the State through the sale on the Antwerp market of the rubber and ivory obtained from the taxes levied in the Domaine Privé show an excess, for each year in which it has been possible to obtain them, of millions of francs over the estimates, as the following table shows:*

### Result of Taxation in kind levied by the Congo State in the Domaine Privé

Year.	Published Returns.	Actual Returns.	Ivory and Rubber Sold on the Antwerp Market by the State's Brokers.
1893	Fcs. 237,057 = £ 9,482	Fcs. 347,396 = £13,896	Unobtainable.
1894	300,000 = 12,000	} Withheld from public knowledge.	Unobtainable.
1895	1,250,000 = 50,000		Fcs. 5,500,000 = £220,000
1896	1,200,000 = 48,000		6,000,000 = 240,000
1897	3,500,000 = 140,000		8,500,000 = 340,000
1898	6,700,000 = 268,000		9,000,000 = 360,000
1899	10,000,000 = 400,000		19,130,000 = 765,200
1900	10,500,000 = 420,000		14,991,300 = 599,652
*1901	17,424,630 = 696,985		Unobtainable.
*1902	15,452,060 = 618,082		Unobtainable.

These figures have been published before and never disputed. The figures in the right-hand column for 1893 to 1898 can be found in M. Wauters'† volume already referred to; those for 1899 were first publicly given during a debate in the Belgian House; those for 1900 were obtained by the writer from a source which forbids any possibility of inaccuracy.

It will be seen from the above that in the years 1895 to 1900 inclusive—six years—a total sum of £1,198,852 was obtained by the

\* The sales for 1901 and 1902 I have not yet been able to obtain. These secrets are jealously guarded—being, in a measure, the key of the situation.

† "Statistique des produits du *Domaine Privé* vendus à Anvers."

Congo State from the *Domaine Privé* in excess of the budgetary estimates, and not accounted for in any published official revenue returns, viz. :

SUMS UNACCOUNTED FOR	
1895 .. .. .	£170,000
1896 .. .. .	192,000
1897 .. .. .	200,000
1898 .. .. .	92,000
1899 .. .. .	365,200
1900 .. .. .	179,852

That there are other sources of *private revenue which never see the light* there can be no doubt, as will be gathered from the chapter entitled "*Domaine de la Couronne.*"

The predominant part which the sums derived from the *Domaine Privé* in the shape of taxation levied by the State play in the general financial condition of the State—even by taking the purposely under-rated estimates—may be gauged by dissecting the estimates for any particular year. Thus, in the year 1901, out of a total estimated revenue of Francs 30,751,054, the *Domaine Privé* Taxes are estimated at Francs 17,424,630, considerably more than half, to which must be added a further sum of Francs 2,075,000 under "*Produits du Portefeuille,*" supposed to represent the profits (although it is doubtful whether all are included), derivable by the State from its holdings in the Trusts it has created; giving a total of Francs 19,499,630, or not far short of three-quarters of the whole revenue.

It has, therefore, been made abundantly clear by the foregoing :

1.—That the financial existence of the Congo State is based upon the acquirement of vast quantities of rubber and ivory which it disposes of in the Antwerp market.

2.—That this rubber is acquired from the natives by extortion, compulsion, and the institution of Slavery on a colossal scale.

3.—That the Congo State acquires further large sums by this means, which are not accounted for in any public manner.

4.—That the published estimates are quite untrustworthy, and do not represent the real condition of the finances.

5.—That but for the proceeds of this so-called taxation, which is really nothing but pure robbery, the Congo State would become insolvent, and go into bankruptcy to-morrow.

## CHAPTER II.

## The Domaine de la Couronne.

"The receipts of the *Domaine* . . . are deposited in their entirety in the State Treasury, AS THE BUDGETS PUBLISHED IN THE BULLETIN OFFICIEL FOR THE YEARS 1892 TO 1903 SHOW. . . ."—*Bulletin Officiel de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo*, June, 1903.

**T**HIS portion of the *Domaine Privé* is wrapped in mystery. It appears to be more of a Royal Preserve, if possible, than any other portion of the *Domaine Privé*.

Its area is marked in the accompanying map.

The *Domaine de la Couronne* "constitutes a civil person" says the decree (*constitue une personne civile*)—and also, it can be inferred, *une personne royale!*

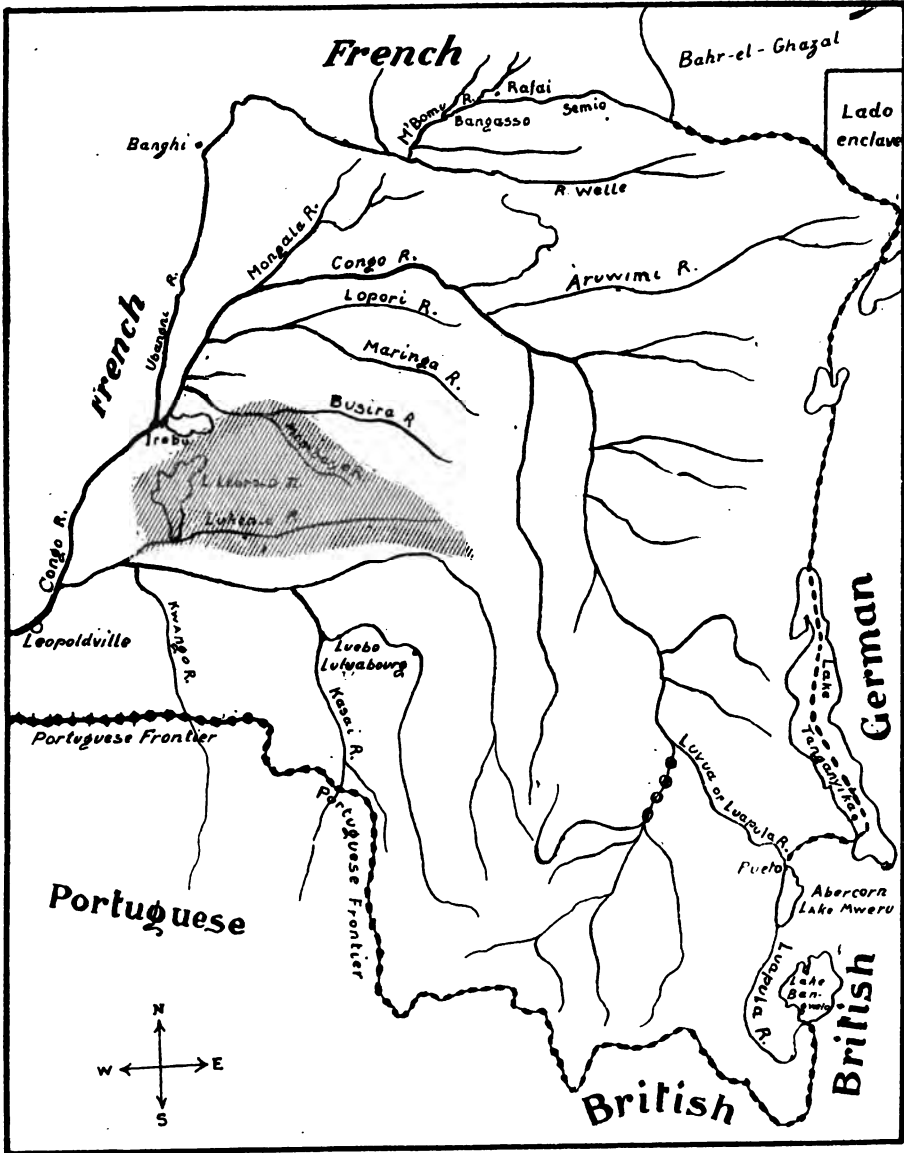
It is administered by a Committee of three persons nominated by Royal Decree. The disposal of the produce of the *Domaine de la Couronne* is entirely left to the Sovereign King.

Some people think that the yield of the *Domaine de la Couronne* is used in building up a secret fund utilised by the Sovereign as he may think fit. The yield of the *Domaine de la Couronne* **does not figure** in the budgetary returns published in the *Bulletin Officiel*.

The author has endeavoured to ascertain the extent of the annual yield from the *Domaine de la Couronne*, but hitherto without success. The greatest secrecy is observed regarding this portion of King Leopold's African dominions.

Some few months ago, a Belgian officer who had been employed in this particular territory, and who had come to loggerheads with the Congo State Authorities, wrote to the author offering his memoirs bearing particularly upon the rubber-collecting system in vogue therein, which he described in lurid terms.

THE CONGO STATE ABOVE LEOPOLDVILLE.



The shaded portion indicates the area of  
THE DOMAINE DE LA COURONNE.

## CHAPTER III.

**In the Domaine Privé.**

**DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING INFORMATION—A FRENCH TRAVELLER'S EXPERIENCES—THE PUNISHMENT OF THE VILLAGE OF M'BATCHI—"THE TERRIFYING EXAMPLE OF THE BELGIANS"—THE TRAFFIC IN WEAPONS OF PRECISION—DANGER CAUSED TO EUROPEAN INTERESTS THEREBY—THE SULTANATES OF THE UPPER UBANGHI—THE BATETLA, ABABUA, and AZANDE UPRISINGS—IN THE BANGALA DISTRICT—ATROCITIES AND DEPOPULATION.**

"Our only programme, I am anxious to repeat, is the work of moral and material regeneration."—KING LEOPOLD.

**T**HE consequences which the practical application of the **Policy** explained in the previous chapter were bound to bring about, so far as the victims of it—the natives—are concerned, were so natural and inevitable that the specific records of oppression and cruelty which have accumulated for the past eleven years, are chiefly valuable as illustrations of necessary effects.

Of such illustrations there is no lack although, but for the peculiar conditions existing in the Congo State, they would be more numerous even than they are. The peculiar conditions are these: that outside the missionaries of denominations other than Roman Catholic\* and chance travellers passing through various parts of the Congo territories from time to time, there is no independent public opinion available in the Congo itself.† All the Europeans in the Congo territories north of Leopoldville—with the exception of those we have stated—are the servants in one form or another of the Congo State and its subsidiary Trusts. While they are in the State's service

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\* The Roman Catholic Missions are all Belgian; and it will be readily understood that under the circumstances it is difficult, if not impossible, to expect that they will tell what they know, and what they have seen.

† On the borders of the South-eastern Districts of the State, valuable information can occasionally be obtained from Europeans living in proximity to those borders. The reader is referred to the chapters under the Katanga Trust.

their lips are sealed. If, as frequently happens, they fall out with the State and upon returning home allow their experiences to be made public, the State promptly does its best to discredit them, and generally succeeds. The individuals employed by the State and its Trusts usually belong to a type that offers facilities for the purpose desired. There is usually something that has been done, or said, or written by these individuals which provides a useful weapon the State never fails to make use of. Seldom is it that an individual who has left the State or its Trusts, after being employed by either one or both, and publishes revelations, escapes having something in his past raked up against him. It is because Mr. Canisius appears to me to form one of those exceptions, that his experiences have been incorporated in this pamphlet. The worst that has been advanced against Mr. Canisius, to my knowledge, has been that he is "an obscure American."

Independent missionaries, not belonging to the Roman Catholic faith, and chance travellers, constitute, therefore, in the main, the only sources of information available from which illustrations can be obtained of the practical working of the **Policy**.\* Mr. H. R. Fox-Bourne, whose work has already been alluded to, has collected all these illustrative accounts, and if we did not know that the appalling details recorded in the same were merely the fatal sequel of an existing root cause, they would in themselves be sufficient to convince the average man that a system of rule productive of such brutalities must have a vicious element at its very core. With pre-existing knowledge of the system, no man of common-sense and of independent judgment can doubt for a single moment that the explanation of these perpetual outrages is to be found in the **Policy** itself.

It is not my intention here to recapitulate the illustrative accounts of the working of the **Policy**, so effectively dealt with in Mr. Fox-Bourne's volume, at any rate, as regards the sections of the Congo territories where the State alone compels the natives to produce rubber and ivory in the form of taxation. I may be compelled to refer to events with which the public is already familiar in discussing the operations of the Trusts in order to make my account intelligible; but so far as the area of the Congo territories are concerned, where extortion, in the shape of government taxes goes on, I propose to quote from one or two sources with which the public as a whole is not familiar, and which are somewhat enlightening in respect to the specific points covered.

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\* The reports of the British Consul at Boma are never published in their entirety.

Extracts from the experiences published by the Colonial Institute of Marseilles, of M. Leon C. Berthier, who for two years—May, 1899, to June, 1901—travelled on the Congo River and its affluents the Ubanghi and Welle\*. M. Berthier's experiences are recorded in the form of a diary.

### **The Punishment of the Village of M'Batchi for not producing sufficient quantities of Rubber.**

"Belgian Post of Imesse, well constructed. The Chief of the Post of Imesse (Belgian Congo) is absent; he has gone to punish the village of M'Batchi, up river, guilty of being a little late in paying the rubber tax, imposed by Boula Matari (Stanley's old name, by which the Congo State is known).

"Nine o'clock in the evening. A canoe full of Congo State soldiers returns from the pillage of M'Batchi. And yet this Free State was created in order to civilise the black races!

"Post of Ibenga, in the river of that name, affluent of the Congo. Before arriving, we passed the canoe of the *Chef de Poste* of Imesse, who gave us details of the punishment of M'Batchi, thirty killed, fifty wounded!!!

"At three o'clock, M'Batchi, the scene of the bloody punishment of the *Chef de Poste* of Imesse. Poor village! The debris of miserable huts, and of canoes covered with a bark which resembles birch; in the huts, above the smoking embers, one or two human skulls. The natives have taken refuge in the bush, and the blandishments of Shaw, who speaks to them in Bangala, cannot induce them to approach. One goes away, humiliated and saddened, from these scenes of desolation, filled with indescribable feelings. How can these negroes be really blamed if one fine day they surprise one of their white oppressors and exterminate him? Probably it will not be one of those guilty for the destruction of the village, but an innocent person who will pay for the guilty."

### **The Terrifying Example of the Belgians.**

"The Lobay river, Post of Morigoumba.† The whites are installed here, but the rubber does not come in. The terrifying example of the Belgians is the cause that the natives from Brazzaville to Banghi,

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\* Notes de reconnaissance et d'exploration économique au Congo Français. *Annales de l'Institut Colonial de Marseilles.*

† French Bank.

retreat before the white man, and that notwithstanding their intense desire for European goods, they will not come in to acquire them against rubber, fearing that the Moloch of European rapacity will oppress them as in the territory of Boula Matari. Ten days ago, the natives of the neighbourhood of Morigoumba seized a canoe full of soldiers, deserters from the Free State, and ate them. An eye for an eye . . .

“In front of the Belgian village of Ibengue. It is curious to notice that the Belgian bank is far less inhabited than the French bank ; the natives leave the Belgian bank in masses to take refuge with us.”

### **Introducing Weapons of Precision into the Country.**

In view of the claim of the Congo State to have abided most rigorously by the clauses of the Berlin Act in respect to the introduction of quick-firing guns into the Congo territory—notwithstanding that its cannibal army of 20,000 men is armed with the Albini rifle—M. Berthier's notes on this point will be read with considerable interest.

“The M'Bomu river (at Bangasso) is very wide here and forms the southern basis of the square ; it is the route through which the ivory passes, under our noses and beneath the eyes of our Post, to be sold on the other bank (Belgian) where it is paid for in Albini rifles, despite all the Acts of Berlin and Brussels forbidding even the sale of cap-guns. On all the convoys of rifles and ammunition which are sent there, the representative of the Congo State, declare by *procès verbal* in good and due form, the disappearance of a few cases of rifles and cartridges, which are not lost for every one, by virtue of the adage that nothing is lost and nothing is created in nature. They are stolen. By a new magic, the secrets of which I know, these quick-firing guns thus ‘virtually lost’ become transformed into ivory, at the rate of a rifle and a small quantity of cartridges for about 50 kilos. of ivory.”

M. Berthier calls the attention of the French Colonial Minister to these facts.

In the third extract from M. Berthier's diary quoted above, the traveller writes from Bangasso, the capital of one of the three great Sultanates of the Upper Ubanghi. These three Sultanates are known as Bangasso, Rafai and Semio. The tribes which inhabit them are closely allied ethnologically. The first is mainly composed of Sakaras, the second of Azandes and Krischs ; the third of Azandes. They



are respectively strong and homogeneous, and it is amongst them that combination against the white man might not uneasily become a reality. The territories of the Semio Sultanate are split up, on paper, between the Congo State, France, and the Bahr-el-Ghazal, which is partly occupied by Anglo-Egyptian forces and partly by Congo State forces, and over which Egypt and Great Britain have the Sovereign claim. To arm the chiefs of these Sultanates with quick-firing guns—such as M. Berthier tells us plainly is done with the connivance of the Congo State Authorities, so far as Bangasso is concerned, for the purpose of obtaining revenue in the shape of ivory—is, therefore, a most reprehensible and dangerous proceeding for which Anglo-Egyptian and French interests will suffer ultimately.

In this connection it is interesting to reproduce a paragraph from an Antwerp newspaper, *La Tribune Congolaise*, which is friendly to the State, and from the columns of which a great deal of valuable information can from time to time be obtained. This paragraph, as will be seen, refers more particularly to the Semio Sultanate, a large portion of which is in Congo State territory.

“THE SULTAN SEMIO.—The Sultan Semio, whose territories are situate on the confines of the Wellè and Upper Ubanghi, cannot exercise his direct authority over a country so vast as that which he rules, so his territories are divided into districts, administered by great chiefs. These chiefs have, in their respective villages, a sufficient number of soldiers to keep the conquered tribes in obedience. Thus Bondono and Semio have a troop of 350 men *armed with guns*; Djeme has 60; Gatanga 100; Yapato 64; Kipa 50; Biamboro 60, etc. . . . There is, indeed, in every village an aboriginal chief,\* but he has an Azande soldier to watch him and to give him orders, and he it is who is the real chief. . . . The soldiers of Semio alone possess guns. . . . This organisation, coupled with a rule of very great severity by the chiefs, keeps everyone obedient, and makes of Semio a powerful and redoubtable chief. In such a country. . . . this form of rule gives excellent results.”—*Tribune Congolaise*, May 21st, 1903.

It would seem clear from M. Berthier's notes, and from the above passage that these powerful Sultanates are in process of being armed with the connivance, if not by the direct action of the Congo State. Possibly the knowledge of this fact has something to do with the tardily expressed desire of His Majesty's Government to get the

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\* The Azandes are immigrant conquerors in the region where they hold sway.—E. D. M.

Belgians out of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, seeing that Semio's authority extends over no inconsiderable proportion of that Anglo-Egyptian province.

Many other indications point to the territory of the Upper Ubanghi Sultanates not being the only portion of the Congo State where repeating rifles and ammunition are finding their way into the hands of the natives. We find in the annals of *La Tribune Congolaise*—which, as already explained is friendly to the Congo State, and publishes more Congolese information than any other newspaper in Belgium—for 1902, a good many interesting side-lights on this question.

Thus the records of January, 1902, contain the following somewhat contradictory information:

“State Inspector Malfeyt crushes the Batetlas at Bulidi in Southern Katanga.”

“The Batetlas have, it seems, not entirely submitted, and are taking refuge in the Lomami district.”

This serves to remind us that although some seven years have passed since the Batetla mutiny took place, in the course of which the mutineers have several times defeated the Congo State troops and captured quantities of rifles and ammunition, the State has shown itself powerless to crush it. Further references to the Batetlas will be found in the chapter devoted to the Katanga Trust. It is, I believe, a fact that the Batetla mutineers hold a large portion of the South-Eastern region, in which they have organised a system of rule modelled upon the lines of the Congo States.

The records of *La Tribune Congolaise* for January, 1902, also contain the following :

“Revolt of the Ababuas ended. Commandant Lahaye captured from the rebels 107 Albinis and much ammunition.”

The records for February tell us that :

“M. Mardulier, Commissaire for Bangala captured three of the most important Budja chiefs. He captured 50 Albinis, 450 cap guns, 4 revolvers and much ammunition.”

In connection with the Ababua revolt, *La Tribune Congolaise* published in May an interview with Commandant Chaltin—a high State Official—upon his return from the Congo. This gentleman is reported to have expressed himself thus : “The reason of the Ababua revolt is the same as that which provokes nearly all these risings, viz. : the laziness of the negro and his opposition to civilisation.” A truly illuminating remark. In October, *La Tribune Congolaise* announced

that Commandant Lahaye, the conqueror of the Ababuas had been killed by the "Chief of Kodia," who afterwards committed suicide.

### **A Revolt and Its Sequel.**

A last quotation from *La Tribune Congolaise* may not be amiss, as it illustrates rather pertinently the remark attributed by that paper to Commandant Chaltin respecting the Ababua revolt.

In March of last year, *La Tribune Congolaise* announced that the Azandes had risen, and a column had been sent against them. In August, this announcement was followed by the statement that Commandant Wacquez had defeated the great Azande chief Fune, and that the revolt was at an end. In November, this again was followed by the account of a correspondent of that paper in the Upper Congo, quite as illuminating as the remark attributed to Commandant Chaltin, to this effect :

"Commandant Wacquez has worked a great deal in the Makua zone. All this rich southern region has submitted; *it is making rubber. It brings in enormous quantities and will bring in more.* The great chief Fune, defeated by Wacquez is now devoted, *and himself furnishes about 30 lbs. of rubber monthly, and will furnish without difficulty 2000 kilos.*"

The chief's "laziness" had been most effectively cured!

### **In the Bangala District.**

The following extracts are from letters written to the author by a prominent missionary of the British Baptist Missionary Society, and dated respectively, May 5th, 8th and 17th, 1902. The original letters are in the author's possession.

#### EXTRACT FROM LETTER DATED MAY 5TH.

"You may have heard that the State soldiers on returning from expeditions against natives have to give a hand for every cartridge used, hence the baskets of hands you read about in some reports. They do not care where the hands come from, hence you see in this picture that one boy has lost two hands and the other one, and the woman has lost one hand. There is no excuse for cutting off the hands of boys and women, and when such hands are presented before a *Commissaire* or Commandant, he should have shown his disgust by punishing the soldiers who brought them. It may be said in excuse that there is little or no difference between a woman's and a man's hand; well, let that pass, but surely there is such a difference

between a child's hand and a man's that the most cursory look would have detected it. This photo was taken three or four years after the hands were cut off, consequently the lads have grown and one cannot fully appreciate the cruelty of the deed."\*

EXTRACT FROM LETTER DATED MAY 8th.

" Now in answer to your questions. The Bangalas do not collect rubber for the State or anyone else. There is practically no rubber in the country occupied by the Bangalas proper. They pay taxes in goats, fowls, palm oil, eggs and cassava bread. They must take up certain quantities every month, and in many cases every fortnight. The tax is now becoming increasingly heavy, because when it was first assessed there was nearly double the population that there is now, and although the population has so decreased, yet the amount levied is the same. When charged with taxing the people the State replies that they *buy* the produce of the natives. It is true that they give the natives something, but it is far below the market value. For example, a locality takes one goat worth 600 brass rods, 100 fowls worth 300, 10 pots of oil worth 100, cassava bread worth about 900 rods, fish worth 150 rods, in all 2,050, and they will think themselves lucky if they get 500 rods in return, and the State soldier who takes it up will keep back 100 of those. You can roughly reckon brass rods at 5 francs per hundred. I am personally acquainted with natives who have given 600 for a goat and only received 100 in return. They are forced to take the produce or men are tied up, and have to be redeemed at so many thousands of rods.

The towns in the Bangala district have to supply the State with men. An order is sent from Boma to the *Commissaires* of districts saying that men must be sent down, and then the *Commissaires* have to supply as many as they can from their districts. Some become soldiers, others workmen. They are rated at a certain wage. You might ask—are they ever paid? I know some are paid and I know others are not. The special hardship is here, there is no system in their demands. Towns are dropped on according to the demands of

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\* In the debates in the Belgian House, in July, 1901, M. GEORGES LORAND, leader of the Radical Section of the Chamber, said: "As a result of what I have stated here, the particular officer, whom I challenged to deny the facts, has written, giving me information in which he admits that there 'were trophies (severed human hands) brought in.'" The REVEREND FATHER CAMBIER, in a communication to the Belgian Press in 1901 admitted that the Congo soldiers cut off ears and hands. (See *The Truth about Civilisation in Congoland.*)

Boma or the whim of the *Commissaire*, to supply so many men, and they must find them somehow. And these oft-recurring demands are eating the very life out of a decreasing people. Punishment is meted out if any objections are raised.

Cases of oppression, etc., that have come under my own immediate notice, I have dealt with at the time by forcing native soldiers to return looted goods, and in more serious matters I have written direct to the *Commissaire*, and in some cases he has taken steps to right matters and in others he has not moved. Native soldiers have been sent often with no white man. I have heard of their doings, but could not swear to the facts, because they have not come under my personal observation. That is the difficulty, to prove all you believe to be true. The Bangalas are very largely used as soldiers, and probably for this reason their country proper has not so many grievances as some, for they have said on more than one occasion : how can we go and fight for you, if you worry our fathers and mothers while we are gone ?

*Re* cutting off of hands. I do not know from whom the order emanates. But this I know—there are victims who have survived the cruelty in every district, in some more than others. I know white men who have seen the baskets of hands being carried to the Central State Station, and others have told me of the hands being put in a line or lines. State soldiers themselves give as their reason for this barbarous deed, that they have to account for the use of their cartridges in this way. The cutting off of hands for this reason is a common report on the Upper River and is generally believed by all who live there.

I wish you every success in your endeavour to throw light upon this 'open sore' of Central Africa and trust that the agitation may result in lasting good to poor Africa."

EXTRACT FROM LETTER DATED MAY 17th.

"In reply to your questions. 1—*Re* population. No proper statistics have ever been taken, and I could only give guesses. Since 1890, in a district with which I am well acquainted, one town half a mile long has disappeared, and another town a quarter of a mile long has also gone ; another small town has gone, and up a creek where there were 1,500 people there are scarcely 400 now. The towns left are not so populous as they were, in fact, the River folk are dying out from various causes and the State has in several places induced or forced the backwoods folk to start towns on the River. Between

1890 and 1895 there was no perceptible diminution of the people, since 1895 there has been a reduction by one half of the population. Forced labour was begun in this district in 1895, and the food tax was assessed in 1896. Undoubtedly "sleeping sickness" accounts for a good number of folk, and all the more, because the strong and virile have been taken away and those that have been left, have had the heart wrung out of them by a tax that is pressing more and more heavily on a decreasing people. The State has every two or three miles a sentry, with a subordinate or two, and two or three servants from the locality. It is a part of his duty to see that the tax is taken up regularly and if he does not do so he is severely rebuked by the *Commissaire*. Now a keen-witted soldier will see to it that he is not reprimanded, and an unprincipled soldier will do anything to the people to get the tax out of them, rather than run the risk of a reprimand and so making himself a marked man in the *Commissaire's* book. I leave you to imagine all the oppression and misery that arise out of this system. I have known demands for men sent down, but only once was the demand accompanied by a white officer, and that was when the *Commissaire* came himself. There has been active opposition and there is generally passive opposition to recruiting. Both the men and women object and grumble very much about the recruiting, but they have to submit. Occasionally a man volunteers for work. I have seen mothers, wives and relatives cry and protest against their children, husbands or relatives being sent as recruits, because so few return.

The present policy I condemn most heartily and the government will be a curse, rather than a blessing, to the natives while it continues to pursue the course it does. It has reduced the natives to miserable slaves, and thinks more of its own profits than of the natives' good.

The native government was infinitely better than the present, for then there was far more security for native life and property. I lived there before the State, or at least when the State was in its infancy and had not made its baneful power felt, and I have lived there all these years after, so I trust I know what I am writing about."

Such are the results of the **Policy** of the Congo State; such the consequences of "tax-collecting" in that portion of the *Domaine Privé* not farmed out to the subsidiary Trusts, where the State Officials and the State's Officers are solely and wholly responsible for the carrying out of the **Policy** which goes by the name in Brussels of **Moral and Material Regeneration**.

## CHAPTER IV.

## The Subsidiary Trusts.

## No. 1. The Katanga Trust.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE KATANGA COMPANY—THE DECREE OF 1885 AS IT AFFECTED THE COMPANY—THE RESULT OF THE CIRCULARS OF 1891 AND 1892—THE RESUSCITATION OF THE COMPANY IN 1899—THE MARKET VALUE OF THE COMPANY'S SHARES AFTER ITS RESUSCITATION—THE CONDITION OF THE KATANGA REGION IN 1899 AND 1900—LAWLESSNESS OF THE CONGO SOLDIERY—HERR RABINEK'S ARRANGEMENTS WITH CONGO STATE OFFICIALS AND THE KATANGA COMPANY—THE ABSORPTION OF THE COMPANY BY THE CONGO STATE—THE CREATION, COMPOSITION, AND NATURE OF THE KATANGA TRUST.

ON the 15th April, 1901, the parent of the Thys group of Belgian Companies, *La Compagnie pour le Commerce et l'Industrie*, founded the Katanga Company, *Compagnie du Katanga*, with a capital of 3,000,000 francs, represented by 6,000 "privileged" shares of 500 francs each. Eighteen thousand ordinary shares were also issued "without designation of value."\* The mineral value of the Katanga district was supposed to be considerable, and preferential rights over all the mines in it were granted to the Company for twenty years, with further privileges, on condition that, besides other stipulations, within three years two steamers should be launched on the affluents of the Upper Congo or the adjacent lakes, and at least three stations established within the district. The Congo State received, under this agreement, 600 of the privileged shares and 1,800 of the ordinary shares. The Katanga Company received from the Congo State, in full proprietorship, a third of the territories belonging to the "Domaine†

\* "Bilans Congolais." Alphonse Poskin, Brussels, 1900. (page 41.)

† The "Domaine," or *Domaine Privé* as it is usually called, was created in July 1, 1885—"all vacant land must be considered as belonging to the State." See Introduction and Chapter I.

of the State situated in the territories referred to in the present convention, and the concession for 99 years of the mining rights in the conceded territories."\*

The Katanga Company lost no time in despatching expeditions to explore and open up its concession. It may be noted in passing that under the above Convention, the Katanga Company received a third of the territories "belonging to the Domaine of the State," situated in the Katanga district. The "Domaine of the State," according to the Decree of July 1, 1885 (*see note*), consisted of "all vacant lands"—that is to say, all lands upon which natives were not actually squatting. It logically follows, therefore, that the Katanga Company had been granted a large area of "vacant land"—that is to say, uninhabited wilderness. Of course, the lands lying within its concession were not in the least "vacant"—as the Company was very soon to find out. The Concession had not even been explored. Yet this huge, *unexplored* area, teeming with population, came within the operation of the Decree of 1885. The Katanga district had been, inferentially, declared "vacant" by Royal Decree signed in Brussels in 1885, without anything being known of the country. It is well to draw attention to this point, as it is the illegal basis—illegal from the point of view of international law and ethics—upon which the Congo State has built up these many years an imposing array of legal formulas, to give mere robbery an appearance of legality. It is upon the monstrous assumption embodied in the Decree of 1885, and those which followed it, that the Congo State rests its claim to compel the natives of the Katanga region to pay taxes, because, forsooth, by a stroke of the pen, seventeen years ago, its Sovereign declared the Katanga region to be "vacant land," and consequently the property of the State!

The Katanga Company lost no time in profiting by its Convention with the State. By the end of the year 1891, the first expedition had so far succeeded that the Congo State flag was run up at Bunkeia, and Msiri, the principal ruler of that part of the country, had been shot. The Company's second expedition was wiped out by Arab half-castes, in May of the ensuing year (1892). Meanwhile, the Sovereign of the Congo State, having by the Decree of 1885 annexed all "vacant lands," had launched through his Commissioners at Bangala, Basankusu, and Yakoma, those famous Decrees appropriating to the State

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\* *Bulletin Officiel*, September, 1891, and *Annexe* to same. The Convention was signed March 12, 1891.



all the rubber, ivory, and other "fruits" of the "Domaine" (December, 1891; February, 1892; May, 1892), which led Colonel Thys, as head of the *Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l'Industrie*, to denounce the King before Europe of having violated the spirit and letter of the Berlin Act, by appropriating the hereditary lands of the natives and by forbidding merchants to purchase the fruits of those lands, the exchange of which against European goods constituted the word "trade" used in the Berlin Act.

If, at that time, England had contained a Governing Statesman sufficiently alive to the importance of the subject, and sufficiently far-seeing to realise its potentialities, Europe would not be confronted to-day with the Nemesis of her own back-slidings. However that may be, if those Belgians who affect pained surprise at the strictures of Englishmen upon the State's policy as it appears to-day stripped of its hypocrisies and cant, will take the trouble to turn up the files of the *Mouvement Géographique*—the then organ of the Thys group of Companies—for 1892, they will be in a position to appreciate how dull and tameless our criticisms compare with the flood-gates of abuse poured out in the columns of that interesting publication. Men's memories are so short—even in Belgium. King Leopold declined to give way on the question of "principle," but he found it convenient to square his adversary by well-timed concessions.

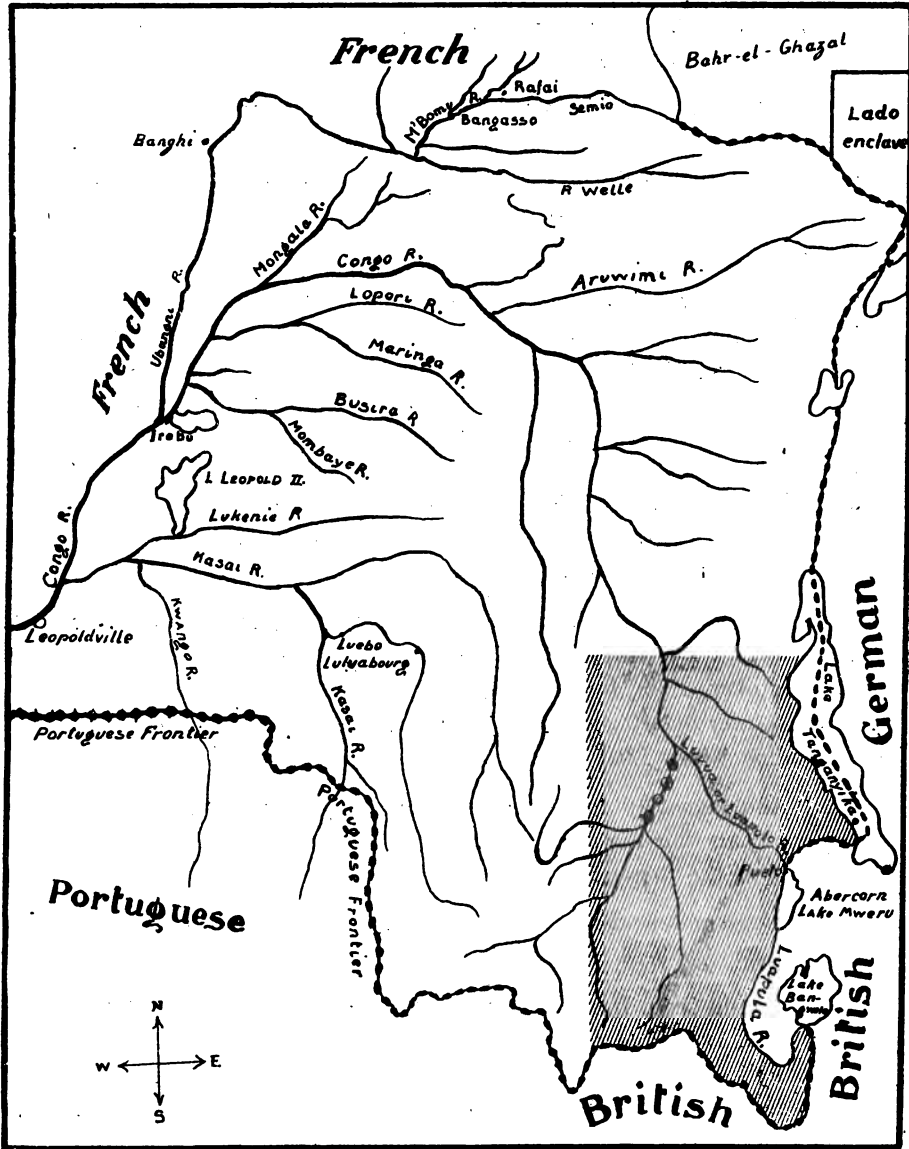
The Katanga Company, however, became virtually extinct, for by the Decree of October 30, 1892, the Katanga region was closed to merchants,\* and so remained until July, 1899, when the Company was galvanised once more into life. On December 18 of that year (1899), M. Georges Brugmann, presiding over the annual meeting of the *Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l'Industrie*, made the following statement :

"The 'Katanga' Company has at last emerged from its period of inactivity which circumstances, foreign to its wishes, had imposed upon it. In execution of its Convention with the Congo State of March 12, 1891, the Company has sent two steamers and four lighters to the Tanganyika region, to be launched on lakes Tanganyika and Mweru. . . . Let me add that the extraordinary general meeting

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\* This was expressly admitted by the Congo State Authorities in the communication they sent to the *Morning Post* in February of this year (1903), in connection with the Rabinek case, of which more anon. The statement of the Congo State Authorities reads: "The exploitation of india-rubber was forbidden in the territory of the Katanga by virtue of the decree of October 30, 1892."

THE CONGO STATE ABOVE LEOPOLDVILLE.



The shaded portion indicates the area of  
THE KATANGA TRUST.

of the shareholders of the Katanga Company, held on July 12 last, approved the resolution adopted by the Company's directorate, in consequence of a correspondence exchanged with the Congo State, following upon which, a mixed commission to delimit the conceded territories has been sent to Africa."

In its issue of December 18, 1889, the *Mouvement Géographique* published a map showing the area of the "Concessions of the Katanga Company." The area of that concession is marked upon the map which accompanies this article.

The resuscitation of the Katanga Company "in consequence" of the "correspondence" with the Congo State referred to by M. Brugmann, appears to have had a marked effect upon the Company's shares, for in July, 1899, we find the 500 Francs "privileged" shares (of which be it remembered the State held 600) quoted on the Antwerp Stock Exchange at 1,250 Francs, and the ordinary shares (of which be it remembered the State held 1,000), of undesignated value, quoted at 895 Francs, giving a total capitalisation at those evaluations for the 600 privileged and 18,000 ordinaries, of 23,610,000 Francs, or close upon one million sterling.

In due course, the Katanga Company set to work. Its director in Africa, M. Lévêque—a Frenchman, I believe—was furnished on 12th October, 1899, by the Company's Administration in Brussels with a power of attorney of the most extensive kind, of which the concluding words read as follows :

"And generally to do, in connection with the powers above conferred, all that the mandatory may think advisable although not foreseen in the present" [document].

The reason for referring to this point with some detail, will appear later on.

It would seem from a sworn declaration of M. Lévêque, dated August 12, 1901, and referring to events in 1900 and 1901, that the Company's operations were anything but brilliant; but that it had succeeded in carrying out certain stipulations of its contract with the Congo State which the latter thought "impossible of accomplishment"; and further, that the Congo State's relations with the Katanga Company became strained almost immediately after the agreement was signed. We may judge of the former fact by certain passages in M. Lévêque's testimony. For instance, he speaks of "the total absence

of rubber on the Tanganyika " and of the " difficulties of collecting rubber on Lake Mweru in sufficient quantities to pay expenses." Two other facts also appear very clearly from M. Lévêque's testimony, and from other evidence which is not in dispute. The first of these facts was that the Congo State Authorities, in the interval which had elapsed between the failure of the Katanga Company's original expeditions into the Katanga territory, of which I have already spoken (1891 and 1892), and the new arrangement arrived at with the Katanga Company in 1899, had been tax-collecting and fighting in the Katanga region, the " vacant lands " and the " fruits " of which, it will be remembered, had been appropriated by the State by virtue of the Decrees of 1885 and the Circulars of 1891 and 1892. Several " stations " or State posts had been established in the country, for the purpose of " collecting " the rubber tribute from the natives. (I shall have something to say about this further on). The result of these " operations " is indicated in the sworn declaration of M. Lévêque already mentioned. " The environs of the Mpueto station," he says, " which formerly produced much rubber, no longer produce any, on account of the lack of care on the part of the Congo State in getting this article, want of care which was principally due to the hostility of the natives against the Congo State's officials." Again referring to a certain part of the region in question, which was occupied by revolted soldiers of the State, he remarks, " that this portion of the territory could not be entered by anyone officially connected with the Congo State " (*était inabordable à tout ce qui était officiel dans le Congo*).

Of the utter lawlessness of the Congo State soldiers and their brutality, not only towards the natives but also to white men, there is ample proof ; as also that the Congo State officers have no control over their soldiers. M. Lévêque refers himself to the treatment by Congo soldiery of several white men at Fort Chinama at the end of 1900. In the declaration already mentioned, he says : " The *Askaris* of the Congo State several times threatened to shoot M. Van der Bosch. He was abominably treated by them, dragged as far as Lukafu (Lukaffo), given putrid meat to eat, etc."

The second fact, which has an important bearing upon our story, is that prior to the resuscitation of the Katanga Company, an Austrian merchant—the late Herr Rabinek—established in British territory, contiguous to the Congo State frontier, and having open credits with Scotch and German firms, had been trading in the

Katanga region with the consent of the Congo State officials, who had granted him permits for the purpose, and to whom he had paid, for those permits, the sum of 2,450 francs.\*

As we have seen, the newly started operations of the Katanga Company had not been encouraging ; and when the late Herr Rabinek—bearing, no doubt, of the advent of the Katanga Company's representative in the country, and wishing, presumably, both to increase his own business transactions and to get upon good terms with the Company—approached the Company's representative and proposed a business transaction, he was welcomed with open arms. It may be advisable to state here that long before the resuscitation of the Katanga Company, and of the arrival of its manager, M. Lévêque, upon the scene, the late Herr Rabinek imported goods into and exported rubber from the Katanga country, filling up the Customs House forms, familiar to many Europeans in the region.

What was the nature of the transaction between Herr Rabinek and the Katanga Company? M. Lévêque, relying upon his power of attorney, which gave him practically unlimited authority to conclude arrangements in his Company's interests, granted the Austrian trader a licence to collect ivory and rubber in the portion of the Katanga Company's territories which no Belgians dared enter ; but in which a non-Belgian merchant, travelling without soldiers or military force whatever, could nevertheless succeed by legitimate commercial means to drive his trade. For this licence, Herr Rabinek was to pay £10 per annum, and a further sum of one franc for every kilo. of rubber and ivory brought by him from the natives to be exported *via* British territory. All Herr Rabinek's purchases were to pass through M. Lévêque's hands in order that due record should be kept of the same. The Katanga Company stood to gain largely by the transaction. Herr Rabinek estimated his purchasing capacity at 100 tons of rubber

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\* In the course of a futile attempt to clear itself of responsibility for the illegal arrest of the late Herr Rabinek, the Congo State, replying to an article of the writer's in the *Morning Post*, endeavoured to show that the unfortunate Austrian had been "repeatedly warned" that his trading was illegal (an assertion which constitutes in itself a flagrant violation of the Berlin Act), and with strange fatuity, cited specific officials, who, on specific dates, did, so it alleged, warn Herr Rabinek. The officials whose names it gave, were the very ones who granted Herr Rabinek his trading licences ; and the dates it gave were the very dates upon which the licences were granted by those officials—a fair sample of the Congo State's methods of argument ! When mendacity has become a cult, it is apt to over-reach itself, and to be hoist with its own petard.—E.D.M.

per annum, which, in the words of the Company's director, "would have brought the Company a profit of 100,000 francs per annum without risk or disbursements." The agreement was signed on September 23, 1900. M. Lévêque was delighted with the bargain he had struck, and so doubtless would his Company have been, but for an entirely unexpected development.

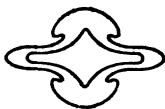
While these events were occurring in Africa, the Katanga Company was being dissolved. From a more or less private concern, it had become a State Institution on the lines of the other "Domaine" Companies—so-called. What the precise reasons of this new move may have been is known to a few individuals in Belgium. Outsiders, who have not the privilege of sharing the official secrets of the Congo State and its acolytes, will, nevertheless, have little difficulty, in view of M. Lévêque's testimony and other indications, in forming their own conclusions, which point unmistakably, as the extract from the *Gazette Coloniale* referred to later on in Chapter VIII, to the fixed purpose of the Congo State, pursued with unflinching determination, to absorb every undertaking of quasi-independence still existing in that portion of the Congo Basin which the Powers handed over to its tender mercies in 1885. Chapter VIII is concerned with its absorption of the Kasai Companies. The history of the absorption of the Katanga Company has now to be told.

On June 15, 1900, a Convention was signed by the Katanga Company on the one part, and the Congo State on the other, and published in the *Bulletin Officiel*. According to this Convention, the Katanga Company disappeared, and the *Comité Spécial du Katanga* took its place. The object of the *Comité Spécial du Katanga* was "to ensure and direct a joint exploitation of all the territories belonging to the Domaine of the State and to the Katanga Company." In other words, the Katanga Company, like the Kasai Companies, became a Government concern, as was clearly demonstrated by the composition of its directorate. The Convention provided that the President of the *Comité Spécial du Katanga* was to be M. Droogmans. M. Droogmans is the Secretary of the Finance Department of the State. Other members were three officials of the State, and two directors of the Katanga Company. The officials of the State appointed to the Board were: M. Arnold, Director of the Service of Agriculture of the Domaine and of Central Book-keeping; F. de Keyser, Director of the Finance Department, and R. Lombard, Director of the Department of Interior. The profits of the *Comité Spécial du Katanga*

were to be divided as to two-thirds for the Congo State, and one-third to the Katanga Company. The Convention, as already stated, became law, and holds good.

Thus was created the Katanga Trust. Thus became closed to legitimate commerce in practice, as in theory it had been since 1892, another vast region of that internationally free commercial land which the Berlin Act provided was to be thrown open to the unrestricted commercial intercourse of all nations.

The effect of the Congo State's **Policy** in the Katanga region upon legitimate trade existing within it; upon the development of the British Protectorate adjoining; upon the persons and property of merchants established within that British Protectorate; upon the persons and property of British native subjects living in that British Protectorate; and upon the persons and property of the natives of the Katanga region itself, under the process known as **moral and material regeneration**—these things will be discussed in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER V.

## No. 1. The Katanga Trust

(Continued).

HOW THE TRUST'S OPERATIONS AFFECT BRITISH TRADE—THE RABINEK TRAGEDY—SEIZURE OF BRITISH NATIVE SUBJECTS, BRITISH CARRIERS, AND BRITISH GOODS BY THE OFFICIALS OF THE TRUST—THE CASE OF M. DE MATTOS—TREATMENT OF NATIVES IN THE KATANGA TERRITORY—VARIOUS TESTIMONY—TWO AFFIDAVITS.

"The field of action in trade open to individuals on the Congo has never been, and is not restricted. . . ."—*Bulletin Officiel de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo*, June, 1903.

**S**OUTH and East of the Katanga region lie the British possessions of Northern Rhodesia, and British Central Africa. British Central Africa has the shortest, cheapest and safest connection from the Ocean to all parts of the Congo State from the East. The Congo State Authorities take advantage of the roads—built at great expense through the British Central Africa Protectorate and Rhodesia, to forward their material into the Katanga region; but European traders in British territory are not allowed to establish themselves in Congo State territory; native traders, under British protection, are not permitted to trade with the natives of the Congo State; and the latter are not allowed to sell rubber or other produce to such traders. They are not, indeed, allowed to sell it at all, because—as was shown in the previous chapter—the basis of Congo State rule in Africa is the assumption that the produce of the land does not belong to the native, but to the Congo State Government, and the native has, therefore—according to Congo State "law"—no right to dispose of that produce of which he was, by the Decree of October, 1892, dispossessed.

How efficaciously the agents of the Congo State carry out this policy in the Katanga region will presently be shown. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note the practically official testimony of Mr. Robert Codrington, in his recent "Travel and Trade Routes in



Northern Rhodesia and adjacent parts of East Central Africa.' "There is no trade, properly so-called," says Mr. Codrington, "on the Congo coast of Tanganyika, but all rubber and ivory is regarded as the property of the State, and has to be surrendered by the natives in fixed quantities annually. The natives, are, however, continually in rebellion, and the country is unsafe, except in the immediate vicinity of the military garrisons, and within the sphere of influence of the missionaries."

The rigidity of the rules excluding merchants established in British territory from trading in the Katanga region, appears to have been temporarily relaxed in the case of the late Herr Rabinek, who, as already explained, was an Austrian subject with his headquarters in British territory. Herr Rabinek had obtained (presumably without central authority, judging from subsequent events) permits from the Congo State officials, Cerckel and Hennebert, in September, 1899, and in February, 1900—permits for which he had paid—to "trade in the Congo;" "to shoot elephants for five years," and "to carry thirty-nine guns." He subsequently, as was explained in the previous chapter, obtained a further licence to trade from the Katanga Company. All available data tend to show that Herr Rabinek was an honourable man, and was greatly trusted, both by the European firms, who sent him goods on credit, and by the natives to whom he sold those goods against rubber and ivory. He was in commercial relationship with the African Lakes Corporation, of Glasgow; and with Messrs. Ludwig, Deuss & Co.; E. H. C. Michalhes & Co., of Hamburg and Blantyre, Prins & Stuerken, of Hamburg and Dar-es-Salaam; and T. de Mattos, of Karonga. It is not my intention here to enter fully into the various incidents of the Rabinek tragedy. The full history of this, one of the most painful and scandalous episodes in the history of the Congo State, has yet to be told; and will, I hope, be told, for the few remaining links in the chain are almost complete. But it is necessary to touch upon it here.

Acting—as may be inferred—upon instructions from headquarters, the local authorities of the Congo State in the Katanga region made up their minds to get rid of the Austrian, somehow or other. The new "Trust" which had come into existence could not allow a competitor in the field; especially a competitor who approached the natives on a fair basis of trade, and not from the standpoint of being the owner of the produce which the natives were expected to gather for the Trust's benefit. The Director of the *Comité Spécial du Katanga* refused to recognise the validity of the arrange-

ment arrived at between Herr Rabinek and the Katanga Company, and after a series of incidents in the highest degree discreditable to the Congo State Authorities, Herr Rabinek was served with a warrant for arrest on board a British steamer, the "Scotia," at that time lying in the British waters of Lake Mweru. Conscious of the strength of his case, Herr Rabinek landed at Pueto, the Congo State station at the mouth of the Luapula, only to be sent in charge of native soldiers of the State to Albertville; there judged and condemned by a court-martial to a year's imprisonment, without even being told\* the reason of his condemnation. The one and only charge preferred against him was of having violated the rubber laws of the State. In the words used by His Majesty's Commissioner for British Central Africa, who, in view of the disclosures made by the present writer, has recently investigated, on the spot, the circumstances attending the arrest of Herr Rabinek: "With reference generally to the occurrences connected with the arrest: Rabinek was trading in Congo Free State territory, partly because it was understood that the State was open to the trade of all nations (under the Berlin Act), and especially, I understand, because he presumed that the permission to trade given him by M. Lévêque, formerly chief authority in the Katanga region, was a valid concession."†

It is important to note that the sentence of one year's imprisonment passed upon Herr Rabinek by the Albertville court-martial on June 14th, 1901, for trading in the Congo State, was not merely in flat contradiction with the Act of Berlin, which stipulated freedom of trade for all nations in the Congo Basin. It even violated the text of the Decree upon which the arrest, and the confiscation of Herr Rabinek's goods—which also took place—was based. That Decree‡ provides as a *maximum* penalty, a fine of 1,000 francs and one month's imprisonment. Herr Rabinek was condemned to a fine of 1,000 francs, and *one year's imprisonment*. A judicial officer of the State, who attended the court-martial, protested against the sentence, but was over-riden. The motive of this doubly illegal sentence is patent:

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\* The originals of Herr Rabinek's letters written at the time are in my possession.—E.D.M.

† "Africa, No. 4, 1903. Report from His Majesty's Commissioner for British Central Africa respecting the Anglo-Congolese frontier in the neighbourhood of Lake Mweru, and the circumstances attending the arrest of the late M. Rabinek." It may be noted that this Report confirms, in every particular, the statements previously made and published by me on the subject.—E.D.M.

‡ *Decret du 30 Octobre, 1892 (Bulletin Officiel p. 307.)*

it was to force Rabinck to appeal, and as his appeal could only be heard in Boma, thousands of miles away, it compelled the unfortunate trader to take that tremendous journey, under the tender care of his tormentors. That would get him out of the way—and on the journey, anything might happen. Something did happen—something which M. Lévêque, the Director of the Katanga Company, when he heard the sentence, prophesied would happen. Herr Rabinck died. He was last seen by Europeans unconnected with the Congo State, travelling in charge of an escort of Congo soldiery, whose treatment of their prisoners, white or black, is notorious.

He appears to have reached Stanleyville, in what condition may be imagined, on July 18th, and remained there until August 14th, when he was embarked on board the Congo State steamer, "Hainaut," for Boma. His last letters to his relatives—who are now claiming £10,000 damages from the Katanga Company for breach of contract—were full of the gloomiest predictions as to his fate. If they never heard from him again, he wrote, they could conclude that he had been made away with. The Congo State's version of his death is that it was attributable to fever, complicated by morphia-mania; but two friends\* of Herr Rabinck have since publicly testified that the suggestion of morphia-mania is untrue, and two others, I understand are prepared to do so. According to the official statement of the Congo State, Rabinck became ill on August 28. On the 29th, the steamer—which does not appear to have had a doctor on board—called at Irebu, when a doctor came off, and pronounced Rabinck suffering from fever, but not dangerously. On September 1st, in the evening, his temperature increased, and a Congo State "Commandant" on board the steamer administered a "hypodermic injection of quinine."† Half-an-hour afterwards Herr Rabinck expired.

Thus was such trade as existed in the Katanga region prior to the formation of the Katanga Trust, effectually disposed of.

But the Katanga Trust is not content with wiping out legitimate trade within its dominions. It must needs violently interfere with British trade in the neighbouring British Protectorates. In September, 1901, M. T. de Mattos, a well-known merchant, established

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\* Messrs. C. Fuhler (January, 1903) and J. Lawrence Green (February, 1903). I sent these declarations to the *Morning Post* which published them.—E.D.M.

† As per official documents communicated to the Austro-Hungarian Government by the Authorities of the Congo State.

eighteen years in British territory, and a representative of Sharrar's Zambesi Traffic Co. Ltd., and Zambesi Trading Co., whose respectability has been attested by Messrs. Ludwig, Deuss & Co., merchants in Hamburg and East Africa, agents for the German East Africa Line at Chinde, and of the Aberdeen Line at Quilimane, went down the Luapula from Chienje to Fort Rosebery in the African Lakes Corporation's steamer, "Scotia." The steamer took in firewood at the English village of Kampalla Luapula. Two natives employed by M. de Mattos were at Kampalla, whither they had been sent by M. de Mattos' agent on Lake Tanganyika to buy rubber in British territory. They reported the need of cloths to pay carriers to bring the rubber they had bought to Chienje. Two canoes were hired by M. de Mattos from the Chief of the village of Kampalla, to convey the rubber by water to Chienje. The task was undertaken by the son of the Chief, and three other natives. M. de Mattos then proceeded to Chienje in the "Scotia." Four days after his arrival at that place, his two rubber buyers turned up, reporting that all the rubber had been loaded into one large canoe, and, as they did not know how to paddle, they had travelled overland. The canoe, however, did not arrive. Some three days later, the Katanga Company's steamer arrived, and upon enquiry being made, M. de Mattos ascertained that his canoe had been seized on the Luapula, when on its way to Chienje, and confiscated, together with its contents, by the Katanga Company's agent. The captain of the Katanga Company's steamer, challenged by M. de Mattos, admitted the fact; adding that upon seeing the Belgian steamer bearing down upon them, two of the natives in the canoe had sprung into the water, but that one remained, and the canoe with the remaining native on board had been towed to Pueto, the Congo State's station on Lake Mweru. M. de Mattos lost no time in going to Pueto, and confronting the "Commandant" in charge. The latter replied that he was on board the Belgian steamer when she captured the canoe, and that the native who had remained on board was in gaol. He refused to answer any questions, declined to give the weight of the rubber seized, and behaved in an insolent manner generally.

M. de Mattos thereupon left Pueto and laid his complaint before Dr. Blair Watson, British Magistrate for the Mweru district. The latter communicated with the "Commandant" at Pueto. This individual replied that the rubber had been collected from the Congo State side of the Luapula, from territory belonging to the *Comité Spécial du Katanga*—otherwise stated, the Katanga Trust—that the

seizure was perfectly legal, and that the natives would be dealt with by "la Justice." This reply showed once again that the Congo Authorities, contrary to the Act of Berlin, do not allow the natives of the Congo State territories to sell rubber to European traders—or to anyone. But the statement in itself was also totally untrue, because, as already stated, the rubber was gathered by British natives in British territory, and was being conveyed to a British port, in a British canoe, manned by British natives. There were several witnesses, white and black, to testify to this. and sworn declarations by the native buyers of M. de Mattos were made before Mr. J. L. Green, the British Native Commissioner. Owing to the energetic representation of Dr. Blair Watson, the Katanga Trust was subsequently compelled to change its tune. Major Weyns, the Trust's chief representative, discredited his "Commandant," and on April 29th, 1902—six months after the seizure occurred—M. de Mattos received the following letter from Mr. Chesnaye, Acting-Administrator at Fort Jameson.

ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE, FORT JAMESON,  
NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA,

*April 29th, 1902.*

SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that I have received a letter from Dr. Blair Watson, Civil Commissioner, Mweru district, to the effect that Major Weyns, Representative of the *Comité Spécial du Katanga*, of the Congo Free State, had discredited the action taken by Mr. Charquois in seizing a canoe containing rubber belonging to you.

At Dr. Watson's request, the rubber in question is being sent to Chienje to be delivered to yourself or your agents. Dr. Watson informs me that he has communicated with you on this subject.

Representations are now being made to the Congo Free State authorities with a view of effecting the immediate release of the canoe and the native of Kampalla's, which were illegally seized by order of Mr. Charquois.

Should you claim any compensation for illegal detention and seizure on the part of the Katanga Company, I will be glad to receive your claims and the reasons on which these demands are based.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

C. J. CHESNAYE,

*Acting-Administrator.*

M. TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS, ESQ.,  
Karonga.

M. de Mattos sent in the following claim :—

Value of rubber seized, 2,800 lbs. at 2/- per lb. . . . .	£280	0	0
M. de Mattos had paid his agents £70 (2,800 sixpences) in trade goods. Rubber is bought at 6d. per lb., and the claim made was based on the net European value the rubber would have fetched, if sold in London in February, 1902, after deducting expenses.			
Six months' interest . . . . .		16	16
Delay and travelling expenses to Pueto . . . . .		50	0
Illegal detention . . . . .		100	0
		<hr/>	
Total . . . . .	£446	16	0

All he has ever received, however, at the time his latest communications have reached me, is the value of three bags of rubber, all that the canoe contained according to the agents of the Katanga Trust! Possibly, however, M. de Mattos may still get adequate compensation; for a passenger on board the Belgian steamer when the seizure took place has signed an affidavit (copy of which is in my possession), before M. C. MacKennon, Magistrate at Murongo, North-Eastern Rhodesia, and dated January, 1903. In this affidavit, it is stated that the quantity seized was very much larger than the "three bags" allowed by the Katanga Trust. The circumstances of the seizure, and the treatment of the unfortunate British native, are minutely described in the affidavit. The native was tied up to the steamer rail, and was left there for two nights and one day. The native, as already explained, was finally handed over to "la Justice," at Pueto. Whether he ever escaped from the clutches of Congo "justice" does not transpire.

I have gone into this matter somewhat fully, not because I am particularly interested in M. de Mattos personally—although I am indebted to him for many of the particulars which enabled me to bring the case of the late Herr Rabinck to the knowledge of the world—but because the treatment to which he has been subjected is a pertinent illustration of the outrageous methods employed by the Congo State's officials and agents.

It is clear that the extraordinary attitude of our Government in tamely submitting that the Congo State territories, which were declared open to the trade of all nations, should be closed to the enterprise of merchants in the British sphere adjoining that State, when the opening up of those territories to our merchants' enterprise would greatly benefit both the British Central Africa Protectorate and Northern Rhodesia, does but increase the audacity of the Congo

State officials, and their defiance of all law and international usage. That the British Government in maintaining this attitude is not only behaving in an extremely short-sighted manner as regards the material interests of the British Protectorates, but is incurring a moral liability of increasing extent in respect to the persistent and inevitable ill-treatment of the natives, by its tacit recognition of the Congo State's assumption of proprietorship over all the produce of the soil in the territories assigned to it by the Powers, the outrages by Congo native soldiery which are the necessary accompaniment of that system, and so on, cannot be doubted.

In connection with the treatment of the natives in the Katanga region, I have received, of late, numerous reports. An agent of the African International Flotilla and Transport Company, Limited, writes, under date of November, 1902, from Lake Nyassa :—" I am unaware from where you have obtained the information contained in your articles on the Rabinek case, but they are absolutely true and positive facts, and not exaggerated in the slightest degree. Indeed, there are very many atrocities and cruelties in the Congo (Free ?) State which have not yet come to light, but which I sincerely hope and trust will be shown up now, although there are many which will never be shown up. If people at home only knew the disgraceful way in which the natives are treated, and the Congo Free State run, the Belgians would be dispossessed of their territory immediately. When Rabinek was arrested for no legal reason whatever, the remark was made that, if there was no case against him 'one could and would be made and proved.' Needless to remark, his fate was known immediately he was sent to Boma. While I was stationed at Chienje, Lake Mweru, down to April, 1902, I had ample opportunities of meeting the *Comité Spécial du Katanga's* people. I also spoke to Dr. Crawford, of the Garanganze Mission, stationed for about two years at Luanza, on the west side of the Lake in Congo State territory. I spoke to him of the abominable way in which native 'askari' (soldiers!) of the Congo State were armed and let loose over the country to the curse of all other native men and women—facts which he himself, of course, knew to be true; and told him that, as a missionary, he ought really to report and expose, but he was afraid his mission would be turned out of the country. . . . I have written to X—, asking him to drop you a line, as he (being an Englishman) has also been turned out of the *Comité's* country, after a residence there of over eight years. He, as you know, came to the country for sport, being very wealthy. He is now at—."

Here are extracts from a letter, dated Lake Tanganyika, February, 1903, from a missionary, the Reverend Richard B. Smith, who travelled and laboured in the Katanga region in 1900 and 1901 :

"During my stay at Mvoa, I found that the conduct of the native soldiery belonging to the Belgians, towards the native population in the district was a disgrace to civilisation; the people lived in a state of terror, caused by the ill-treatment of the soldiers, who robbed them and otherwise molested and disturbed their peace." The writer subsequently described the treatment by Congo soldiery of one of his own servants, whom he had sent to some villages one day's journey from Mvoa to buy food, furnishing him with cloth and beads for the purpose. "This man was caught by two soldiers and dreadfully beaten; his buttocks and legs were beaten with hippo-hide whips until the blood came, cartridges were forced into his nostrils until they burst, also into his ears and mouth."

Writing from Abercorn in February, 1903, a correspondent says:—"The latest news we have of the Belgians in Congo State territory is to the effect that they are building a new fort at Uwiri (North-end of Lake Tanganyika), only women being employed in its construction. These women are said to be slaves, by a European who has visited the fort. They have been probably forced into service, or hired somewhere in the interior. They work all day, and at night are at the disposal of the soldiers, of whom there are about 400 in the neighbourhood. These particulars are known to the German authorities at Ujiji (East shore of Lake Tanganyika)."

The same correspondent, writing from Karonga (Lake Nyassa), at the end of last year, describes how the wretched natives on the Congo-side steal across Lake Mweru at night in frail canoes, in order to sell rubber to native traders in British territory in fear of their lives, and knowing what their fate will be if they are discovered returning to the Congo State shore with European goods, possession of which by a Congo native is regarded as a punishable offence. My correspondent also describes the disguises and precautions which native traders in British territory have to adopt, if—imbued with that commercial instinct for which the African native is conspicuous—they brave the perils of entering that internationally free commercial land which the Act of Berlin intended the territories of the Congo State to be, but which, instead, has become a vast preserve for the benefit of a *clique* in Belgium, where none may enter, and where—to use the words of my correspondent as he took them down before two



European witnesses from the lips of one of these British native traders—"it is always dark ; all conversation and trade is only safe at night."

There are two affidavits, originals of which I have forwarded to His Majesty's Government, all made before European witnesses, signed in March, 1903, sealed with the stamp of the British Central Africa Protectorate by a British official, Mr. C. T. Caudy, Collector at Karonga.

The first relates to the experiences of native British subjects, formerly employed as soldiers by the State, and shows the utter incapacity of the Congo State officers to control their soldiers, and the abominations which are constantly being committed by the latter.

The second is the testimony of natives, formerly living in Congo State territory, as to the treatment they have received. It shows the absolute lawlessness of the Congo soldiery, and the methods of raiding practised by their officers.

"We, John and Johan, natives of Karonga, Lake Nyassa, British Central Africa, do hereby declare that about four years ago we were engaged by Mr. Mohun to serve him as soldiers for the period of three years during his construction of a telegraph line in the Congo Free State.

"On our arrival in the Congo Free State we learnt from the inhabitants and the Government soldiers that there is always war between the white men, the soldiers, and the natives.

"The reason of a war and the constant troubles are as follows :— Long ago, the Belgian officials hanged the soldiers for their bad behaviour. They hanged so many that this created a vengeance to such an extent that all soldiers formed a ring under the head man, at that time the sergeant called Yankoffu ; with the object to kill all officers at the different stations on and near the Lake Tanganyika. This they did, and took all the guns and ammunition. They then formed a stockade and made Yankoffu their chief. Later on they were attacked by a strong force of the Belgians ; also we, under Mr. ———, attacked them ; we killed many people but could not get Yankoffu. Most of his people crossed the Lake to German territory, taking with them the captured guns and ammunition. After this, other Belgian officers occupied the plundered stations, but from that time the officers became afraid of the soldiers. When we were there, one officer of Marabo station, about ten days from Lake Tanganyika, thrashed a soldier with a hippo-hide whip. Some time later, the same officer received from the same soldier a letter, and when reading the

same the latter shot him dead. We two, and many other soldiers, were given orders to catch the murderer ; we went after him for many days but could not find him. *The white men are so afraid of the soldiers that they let them do whatever they like ; they rape, murder and steal everything of the inhabitants, and if the Chief or villagers object they are often shot dead on the spot. The officers all know this, but they never take any notice of it as they are afraid to punish their soldiers.* Another officer, called by the natives Kaputimasinga, died long ago at his station, Rivarenga, on the Lake shore of Tanganyika. *At this station he punished the natives by cutting off their hands, ears, etc., etc., or hanged them according to the crime.*

“ JOHN.” [X—his mark.]

“ JOHAN.” [X—his mark.]

The above statement was made before me and the following witnesses on the thirteenth day of March, 1903, and interpreted by the two natives, Timothy Bwana and Alexander Ned.

C. T. CAUDY, *Collector*, Karonga.

[Witnesses' signatures.]

Upon request of Mr. Teixeira de Mattos, this statement has been interpreted before me at Karonga, British Central Africa, this thirteenth day of March, 1903. The two interpreters having first carefully translated whatever the two men said, I distinctly and audibly read over the contents of this statement to the interpreters, who declared it to be the correct translation of what the two men said.

C. T. CAUDY, *Collector*, Karonga.

Interpreters—TIMOTHY BWANA.

ALEXANDER NED.

“ My name is Chewema, and I belong to the Mahusi tribe in the Congo Free State. I remember my mother, the people in our village, but have forgotten its name. I remember well that one day the Arabs made war, and I, together with other people, were taken prisoners and were sent off to Chiwala's village at the Luapula river.

“ When my breasts were about the size of my large toe, the Belgian soldiers with four white men called Kula-Kula, Chipekaman-senga, Kasiera and Kachesa (these are the native names for them only). They came from Lukafu and made war with our Chief Chiwala ; many people were killed, but the Chief and his wife escaped to the English side of the Luapula. I, together with other women and many tusks of ivory, were captured. Part of us were sent to M'towa and Sambu, and I and many others to Lukafu. The white man Kula-Kula was shot by Chepembera, who lives at present in English territory. *When*

*we were transported to Lukafu we were fastened together by a rope round our necks and at night-time our hands and feet were tied together to prevent us from escaping.* At Lukafu the elder women were forced at first by the soldiers to sleep in their huts, until Commandant Kasiera prohibited this. I and three other girls of my age were taken over by the Commandant to carry his water and to cultivate his gardens. After one month at Lukafu, I and the three other girls were sent to M'pwetu;\* we were tied together the whole way, but on our arrival at M'pwetu the white men took off the ropes. I was taken by the white man called Lutina as his wife's servant. None of the women at M'pwetu were allowed to leave the station; many, however, managed to escape to the English side, also some soldiers were allowed to take their women with them when leaving the station, but others had to remain whether they had children by them or not.

"At M'pwetu I witnessed the killing of two natives who had stolen rubber from the Government stores. *By the order of the white man called Lutina, the two natives were beaten by his soldiers with a hippo-hide whip; after this, they were made to stand up; the soldiers then threw bricks on them till they died.*

"One native was from Chewerchewera's village, very near M'pwetu, and was buried by his relations; the other, who had no relations so near, was thrown into the Lake Mweru.

"I have been two rainy seasons at M'pwetu, till I had the opportunity to go with another woman to the English side; also I have been there two rainy seasons; from there I went to Lake Nyassa, where I arrived last month. "CHEWEMA." [X—her mark.]

The above statements were made before me and the following witnesses, on the nineteenth day of March, 1903, and interpreted by the two natives, Timothy Bwana and Alexander Ned.

C. T. CAUDY, *Collector, Karonga, B.C.A.*

[Witnesses' signatures.]

Upon request of Mr. Teixeira de Mattos, this statement has been interpreted before me at Karonga, British Central Africa, this nineteenth day of March, 1903. The two interpreters having first carefully translated whatever the woman said, I distinctly and audibly read over the contents of this statement to the interpreters, who declared it to be the correct translation of what the woman said.

C. T. CAUDY, *Collector, Karonga.*

Interpreters—TIMOTHY BWANA.

ALEXANDER NED.

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\* Pweto.

## CHAPTER VI.

## No. 2. The Mongalla Trust

(Société Anversoise du Commerce au Congo).

THE FOUNDATION OF THE TRUST—ITS DIRECTORS AND SHAREHOLDERS—ITS PROFITS FROM 1897 TO 1902—ITS ATROCIOUS HISTORY—EVENTS IN 1902 AND 1903—M. EDGAR CANISIUS, AN EX-OFFICIAL OF THE TRUST, TELLS THE STORY OF HIS THREE YEARS' EXPERIENCE.

"Let us repeat what so many others have said; what has become a platitude. The success of the African work is the result of an autocratic government, that is to say, the government of a single man, guided by one sole idea; *homo unius libri*, said the Romans, speaking of a remarkable man. It is the work of a sole directing will, untempered by the control of hesitating and timorous politicians, acting on its sole responsibility; intelligent, reflecting, conscious of the perils and advantages, discounting with admirable prescience the great results of a speedy future."—M. A. POSKINS, in the *Bilans Congolais* (Brussels Société Belge de Librairie, 1901).

"Our only programme, I am anxious to repeat, is the work of moral and material regeneration."—KING LEOPOLD.

THE Société Anversoise du Commerce au Congo is the name given to the Congo State's Trust in the Mongalla district. The *Anversoise*, as it is usually termed, was founded at Antwerp in August, 1892, as a Belgian Company. It was dissolved in January, 1898,\* and was reconstituted under Congo State Law. The *Anversoise* received some 12,000 square miles in the Mongalla region; in virtue of the Decree of 1885, already alluded to in describing the Katanga Trust. The locality of the *Anversoise's* operations is indicated on the accompanying map. The capital of the *Anversoise* is 1,700,000 Francs, or £68,000, divided into 3,400 "privileged" shares of 500 Francs, or £20 each; 25,000 shares of £20 each were subsequently created, but apparently very seldom quoted, the speculation to which these shares afterwards gave rise being confined to the "privileged" class.

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\* M. J. WAUTERS. *L'Etat Indépendant du Congo. Also Annexe au Bulletin Officiel de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo de février, 1898, No. 2.*

The head-quarters of the Trust are at Mobeka, and the administrative seat is 104 Rempart des Béguines, Antwerp. Its President is M. A. de Browne de Tiège, a banker who has upon several occasions lent sums of money to the Sovereign of the Congo State, and who is, or was until recently, considered as one of the principal advisers of the King in Congo affairs. The administrators of the Trust are Baron Goffinet, Ed. Bunge, and C. de Browne de Tiège, and the "Commissaire" is Count Emile Le Grelle. Baron Goffinet and Count Le Grelle are attached to the Court. Ed. Bunge is the Congo State's Broker in Antwerp, and C. de Browne de Tiège is presumably a relative of the President of the Trust. The principal shareholders are :

The Congo State	..	..	..	..	1700 shares.
M. A. de Browne de Tiège	..	..	..	..	1100 "
Bunge & Co.	..	..	..	..	100 "
E. P. Grisar	..	..	..	..	130 "
Deyman-Druart	..	..	..	..	100 "

The net profits of the *Anversoise* for the four years 1897-1900 have been :

1897	..	..	..	..	..	Fcs. 120,697
1898	..	..	..	..	..	„ 3,968,832
1899	..	..	..	..	..	„ 3,083,976
1900	..	..	..	..	..	„ 84,333
*1902	..	..	..	..	..	„ 1,080,247

or a total profit in five years of Fcs. 8,353,085—£334,123, about five times its total declared capital. In June, 1899, its "privileged" shares of Fcs. 500 were quoted at Fcs. 13,500 on the Antwerp Stock Exchange, showing a total value at that time of Fcs. 45,900,000 or £1,836,000.

During these five years, the Mongalla Trust's operations have been described as one long "carnival of massacre"; and the scandals arising therefrom led to stormy debates in the Belgian House of Representatives. Some minor agents of the Trust were punished by imprisonment in Boma. The important men were allowed to go scot-free, notably Major Lothaire.

Mr. Edgar Canisius, an American citizen, served a three years' engagement with the Trust, ending April, 1901. He describes in detail further on, the system prevailing in the Trust's territory; a system bound, as I have repeatedly emphasised, to lead

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\* I have not the figures for 1901.

to such results, a part and parcel of the methods of "moral and material regeneration" pursued by the Sovereign of the Congo State.

As Mr. Edgar Canisius will explain, the Trust, notwithstanding the terrible cruelties inflicted upon the unfortunate natives of the Mongalla region, had still not been able in 1901, after several years bloody repression, to "break" the tribes—especially the Budjas—sufficiently to make them produce rubber in the quantities desired. The Trust had, indeed, suffered considerably from the obstinate bravery of the Budjas.\* Lest it be supposed, however, that the events of 1898-1901 have in any way altered the methods of the Trust, I give below a summary of such news as has been permitted to transpire from the Mongalla district in 1902 and 1903. The particulars for 1902 are all extracted from the Antwerp newspaper, *La Tribune Congolaise*, a paper devoted to the Congo State, and dealing as its name implies, wholly with the affairs of that State.

#### FEBRUARY.

Fighting in the Mongalla district. M. Mardulier, *Commissaire* for Bangala, captured three of the most important Budja chiefs. In the course of the fighting, he captured 450 flint-locks, 50 Albinis, 4 revolvers, and much ammunition.

#### APRIL.

The three Budja chiefs captured in February were sent to Nouvelle Anvers. One got away, another was hanged, and the third exiled.

#### MAY.

The imprisoned men Lacroix, Mattheys, and Moray pass their time in stitching blue trousers for the troops. The rumour that Mattheys will be set at liberty continues.

The Mongalla district is quiet. The paramount Budja chief Eseko, condemned to transportation, is at Banana; two more chiefs are shut up in the prison of Nouvelle Anvers.

[It may be here explained that Lacroix, Mattheys and Moray were three of the subordinate agents condemned to imprisonment for participation in the atrocities of 1900 and 1901. These men publicly confessed their deeds, and in any other country would have been shot out of hand. As, however, they were only the servants of the system, it was no doubt considered inexpedient to shoot them.]

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\* The Trust's outlook appears, however, to have improved of late.

## JUNE.

As we announced last month, the pardon of Mattheys is hoped for. Perhaps the pardon of Lacroix and Moray will follow. . . . Since Moray's evasion—and recapture—the prisoners are submitted to a very severe *régime*. Formerly it was very easy to see them. Now difficulties are raised, and they can only be seen for a few minutes on Sunday mornings. The Director of the prison is allowed 3 francs 75 cents per day for feeding each prisoner. Their dinner includes a plate of soup, a plate of meat and fresh vegetables. In the evening they have another plate of soup, and a plate of meat. On Sunday they are entitled to a glass of wine.

## OCTOBER.

A partial uprising has taken place in the Bangala district.

## MAY, 1903.

The Belgian papers announce that "complaints have been received from natives in the Mongalla district, that a white agent has murdered many people and burned several villages." An enquiry proved that the complaints were true, and the culprit has been sent to Boma for trial—another sub-agent, presumably.

. . . . .

At the annual meeting of the Trust held in June of this year, the President declared that the "Company's work now proceeds on normal lines, and it is very prosperous." He added that the discussion in the House of Commons did not trouble him in the least . . .

## JUNE.

In its issue of June 25th, *La Tribune Congolaise* published the following from its Boma Correspondent: "An agent of the Company is awaited at Boma to answer for 'exactions and *faits d'armes*' in the Mongalla district."

. . . . .

We will now let Mr. Canisius speak for himself.

\*Having completed my three years' contract with the Congo administration, I returned to Europe early in 1899 on leave (without pay), and the same year entered the employ of the *Société Anversoise du Commerce au Congo*, at that time the most important of the *Concessionary Companies*. The territory conceded to the company by the State, which, in return, received one-half of its shares, includes

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\* Reproduced from the *West African Mail*.

the whole of the basin of the Mongalla river, a stream of imposing size and navigable for a distance of several hundred miles by steamers of 20 to 30 tons burden.

The headquarters of the Company are at Mobeka, a station built at the mouth of the Mongalla, in a very swampy country, as, indeed, is characteristic of the whole of this stream, and of most of the other rivers in the Congo basin.

At this place I received verbal orders from Major Lothaire, the manager, to proceed to N'Dobo, a station in the eastern part of the concession and situated upon the north bank of the main river.

In this part of its course the mighty Congo assumes most magnificent proportions and is said to be fully twenty miles wide. I am inclined to believe it, for I have at this point crossed in a large canoe, with thirty paddlers, and going at a fair speed, occupied six hours in its traversal. Its placid surface is dotted with thousands of verdure-covered islands, most of which are inundated at high water, and are often many miles in length but seldom of great breadth, and are the haunts of the fishing tribes who fly to them in time of danger.

At N'Dobo I was forced to remain for some time on account of the revolt of the fierce Budja tribe, in whose territory it was intended that I should establish a post. These people inhabit the interior to the north of N'Dobo, and I was destined later on to make their closer and far from agreeable acquaintance.

While awaiting developments at N'Dobo, I had an excellent opportunity of witnessing the system employed by the Company's agents in that part of the concession which, in size, almost equals Belgium.

Between the Budja country and the river, which is the *habitat* of a race of semi-nomadic fishermen, called Bapoto, there is a tribe called by the natives Gombés, who are less warlike than the Budja and therefore, submitted more quickly to the rubber *régime*. These people possessed in the rear of the station of N'Dobo, a number of rather insignificant villages, and were subject to the rule of the Company's agent at that place.

Once in a fortnight, these Gombés were obliged to bring rubber to the post. Each of the villages was under the surveillance of a "capita" or headman, sent by the post manager, whose duty it was to see that the natives gathered the rubber in time, and in proper quantity.

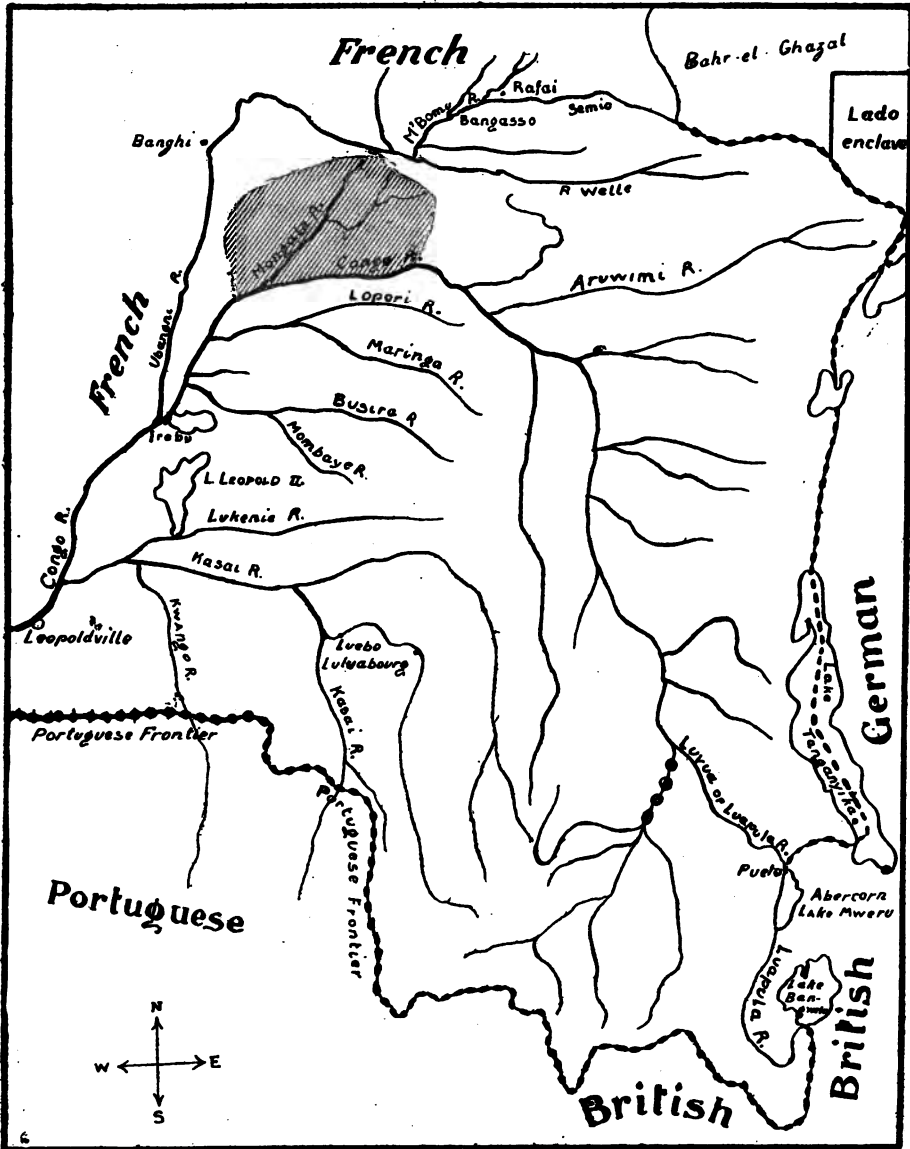


At the time appointed, the post manager notified the "capitas" to bring in the rubber gathered by the villagers under their control, and in due course they arrived at the station, each man carrying a small basket made of rattan, furnished by the white agent, in order that no native could make a mistake as to the quantity he must furnish.

When all the villagers had arrived at the station, they took up their positions in rows, and the post manager then settled down to business, assisted by the Company's "soldiers," a number of whom were stationed at every post. Each villager was in turn ranged up before him, every man with his basket before him. Each native wore, attached to a cord around his neck, a small disc made of the zinc lining of packing cases. These discs each had a number stamped upon it, and in a book which the manager had before him were inscribed the names of the natives against the number upon their "tags." One by one, the half-frightened bushmen were called up and made to present their baskets to the white man, a proceeding frequently assisted by a cuff from one of the soldiers. If the quantity of rubber was satisfactory, the native—who had worked many days to produce it—was paid what the agent thought the proper amount in "mitakos," pieces of brass wire, six to eight inches long. These "mitakos"—a currency forced upon the natives by the Congo Government and the Belgian traders—were no longer valued by the natives in any part of the country, for they had already accumulated vast quantities, and, as the Belgians in most places would not accept them in exchange for other goods, they were practically of no value. However, the natives accepted the brass rods without demur, and with the utmost indifference, as though they knew they would be obliged to furnish the rubber whether they were paid or not.

If, on the other hand, a native had only a small quantity of rubber in his basket, he was taken aside by one of the soldiers, and, after all had been called up, was severely castigated with the fearful whip made of hippopotamus hide, and called the *chicotte*, and with which the natives, in all parts of the Congo, are so familiar. During my term of service under the State, I had seen men, women and children flogged with this instrument of torture, even to death, and the flogging of twenty or thirty natives at N'Dobo did not affect me as it would have a new-comer. Shrieks for mercy such as resounded through the post on this occasion, are heard from Lake Tanganyika to Banana, from the Uelle to Lake Moero, and are most familiar sounds in the Congo.

THE CONGO STATE ABOVE LEOPOLDVILLE.



The shaded portion indicates the area of  
THE MONGALLA TRUST.

When all the villagers had deposited their quotas of rubber, the manager had a thousand pounds, or more, which I estimated cost him at the rate of about one penny per pound. As this rubber was worth over three shillings per pound in the Antwerp market, it is safe to assume that the Company made a very considerable profit on it, even after paying heavy transport charges and a high export tax.

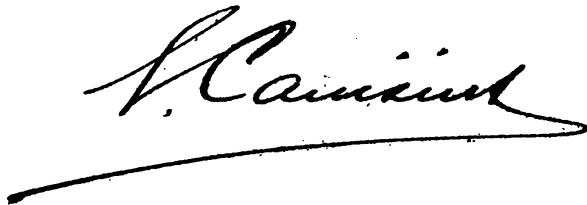
In this part of the concession the natives employ a different system of coagulating the *latex* than in the eastern portion. When they have collected the desired quantity of sap they smear it on their skins, working it the while with their hands. In this manner the liquid rapidly evaporates and the gum gradually thickens into a small ball, which is increased in size until it reaches the proportions of a large walnut. These balls are then strung together by simply sticking one against the other until they form a long string, and in this form they are taken to the Company's post. Should a chief fail, or refuse to furnish rubber, he is promptly brought in by the "capita" stationed at his village—aided, if necessary, by the Company's soldiers—and receives a severe flogging, and, perhaps, a month in the chains. In all of the Company's posts, as well as in those of the State, there are constantly large numbers of native chiefs in the chain-gangs for failing to furnish either rubber or some other *corvée* demanded by the white man.

After a sojourn of eight months in the Budja country, at the end of which time the Company's agents were driven out of it with great loss in men and prestige, I was transferred to a post on the Mongalla river, called Akula. This station is situated on the south bank of the river, and is surrounded on three sides by swamp and the usual jungle. The houses are built upon what is practically an island, raised from the swamp by the unremitting and unrecompensed labour of hundreds of native women, who are forced by the Company's agents to perform this work, in spite of their pitiful appeals to be allowed time to attend to their own work, as many were starving through being forced to neglect it.

In this region, again, I found a different system of "gathering" the rubber in vogue. Instead of "tagging" every adult male in his district, the post manager sent into each group of villages a "capita-chief" whose duty it was to see that those villages produced in proper quantity. The capita-chief in turn collected about him a band of men who were inscribed in the books of the station as labourers, but whose only work, as far as I could see, was to bully and pillage

the villagers. These capita-chiefs, at the time of my arrival in the Mongalla, were armed with Albini rifles, belonging to the Congo Government, and their bands were provided with percussion muskets of the usual "gas-pipe" order. The post manager furnished powder, caps, cartridges, and bullets to these men whenever they asked for them, which appeared to me to be rather frequently. Thus every little group of villages had billeted upon it a gang of cut-throats who ranged through the country killing, ravishing and pillaging to their heart's content. So terrible became their exactions that the natives finally abandoned their plantations, from the cultivation of which they received no benefit, and many took to the bush, where they lived upon roots and insects. Many of them starved to death. I have myself seen, when on remote jungle-paths, their putrefying corpses lying where they had fallen exhausted by hunger. For several years the Company, aided and encouraged by the "State," had instituted one continuous carnival of massacre and oppression. One of its oldest agents, to whom I suggested that fully ten thousand natives had been done to death in one way or another in the Mongalla country, laughingly told me that double that number would be nearer the mark!

In this part of the concession the natives coagulate the *latex* by pouring it into an earthen pot which contains boiling water, and which enables them to skim off any impurities. The mixture is then gradually evaporated over a fire and the rubber forms into a kind of "pancake" upon the bottom of the pot. It is taken in this condition to the post, and there cut into long strips, which in the market are known as "Mongalla lanieres." As these strips are carefully hung on battens in a shed to dry for three months, and all adulterated pieces thoroughly sorted out, the quality is very good and brings a correspondingly high price.



H. Rainier

FURTHER DETAILS ELICITED FROM M. CANISIUS IN REPLY TO  
SPECIFIC QUESTIONS PUT BY THE EDITOR.\*

QUESTION I.

*What is the modus operandi adopted when the foundation of a new post or rubber station has been decided upon ?*

When it has been decided to form a new post, a location is generally selected in the neighbourhood of a number of villages, having a sufficient population to properly perform the innumerable *corvées* sure to be demanded of them, such as supplying food (the price of which is fixed by the post manager) ; providing paddlers or carriers for the transport ; furnishing poles and thatch for the post buildings, and labourers to perform the work of constructing the post ; making baskets in which to ship the rubber, and supplying the rattan needed for the purpose, and other services too numerous to mention. Latterly, the Mongalla Company, in conformity to a regulation issued by the Government at Boma, attempted to make extensive plantations of rubber-vines and this task was also imposed upon the natives of the near-by villages. In most cases the villages thus taxed are not compelled to collect rubber, although this depends much upon the post manager's sense of justice, which in the case of a Belgian seems but slightly developed. When an agent is sent out to form a new post he is generally accompanied by his *Chef de Zone* (for in everything of this nature the *Concessionnaire* Companies imitate the State—in fact, they form a State within a State), and a band of armed "labourers" or soldiers who serve the double purpose of assisting the work and overawing the villagers. As soon as the post-manager, who is to reside at the new "factory," is thoroughly settled down, the native villages in the region to be worked by him are visited, and each chief made to distinctly understand the quantity of rubber he must bring in each month. "Capitas" are then left with the chiefs to enforce this order. Thereafter, they have no peace. They cannot call their property their own, nor are their lives for a moment safe. When they begin to tire of this and fall short in their supply of rubber, the bloodhounds of the Company are set upon them, and they are forced, by the slaughter which immediately begins, to once more resume their weary task.

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\* The questions were originally put at much greater length. The substance is here given. The replies are according to M Canisius' manuscript, in the Editor's possession.

## QUESTION II.

*Is there emigration from the Mongalla territory to French territory ?*

. . . . .

There is no emigration that I ever heard of from the Mongalla basin into French Congo, although along the Congo generally, where the French bank adjoins the Belgian, the natives have crossed over in thousands. Great numbers of the Bateke and Baianzi have gone over to French territory, and I understand the same thing has occurred to a large extent in the Ubangi. The natives in the Mongalla Concession do not know of the existence of the French. They know *Bula Matari* (the native name for the Congo State) only.

## QUESTION III.

*Does the Concessionnaire Company raise its own soldiers ?*

. . . . .

The soldiers of the Company, as already explained, are in the first place engaged as labourers, and the best of them are then armed and drilled, and wear the uniform provided by the Company, which differs entirely from the State uniform. When I was in the Mongalla, there were many State soldiers detached for service with the Company, but at the time of the Moray affair these were withdrawn, as were also the State's Albinis, which were replaced by others belonging to the Company.

## QUESTION IV.

*Is the "tag" system in general use, to your knowledge ?*

. . . . .

The only place where I saw the "tag" system in use was at N'Dobo, where the Company was attempting to force it upon the Budjas, with disastrous results.

## QUESTION V.

*Do you consider the estimate given you by the Congo State official as to the number of people killed by the Company exaggerated ? Why do not the natives leave the district ?*

. . . . .

I am inclined to think the population of the Mongalla, as well as the Equateur district, has been considerably thinned by the rubber régime. The estimate made by the Company's oldest agent,

who was, indeed, one of the first white men in the Mongalla region (under the State and before the Company was established), may be an exaggeration, to which the Belgians are certainly much given, but I am quite convinced that thousands have been killed. As explained in my answer to Question 2, the natives cannot emigrate, and even did they attempt to leave they would be promptly stopped by the State, as they would have a considerable stretch of land inhabited by hostile tribes to traverse. The people on the river banks opposite the French territory could quietly pass across, and not be discovered; this the Mongalla tribes cannot do.

#### QUESTION VI.

*Can you give further particulars with regard to the "mitakos" system and say what kind and quantity of merchandise the Company imports?*

. . . . .

In some posts of the State and the Companies, *magasins d'échange* have been established, but the amount of "mitakos" to be accepted rests entirely with the agent in charge. In the part of the Mongalla where I was, the "mitakos" were not taken in exchange for merchandise. In most places the natives do not want the "mitakos," but are obliged to take them or nothing. The "mitakos" are certainly a non-recognised currency, for no independent trader on the coast will accept them, nor will the Congo State take them in payment of taxes or anything else from a white man. The quantity of merchandise imported by the Company is not great in proportion to the amount of rubber exported and consists largely of brass wire for making "mitakos," which vary in length at nearly every station. The soldiers are paid in cloth in some parts of the Congo; in others they receive coin, which they immediately exchange for cloth.

#### QUESTION VII.

*When the women are forced to labour, what becomes of the children?*

. . . . .

Young children are carried by their mothers when working, or left in the villages. Older girls work with their mothers, while boys are compelled to collect rubber, or perform other services mentioned in answer to Question 3.

## QUESTION VIII.

*People at home have difficulty in understanding how natives can die of starvation in the bush, however oppressed. The idea seems to be that the forests contain edibles in plenty which the native can obtain without trouble. What are the usual sources of native food-supply ?*

. . . . .

The natives obtain food from three sources, but not often all three at the same time. First, many of the numerous creeks and rivers contain fish, which is an important item of consumption. Second, the natives are generally hunters and obtain, though seldom, big game. Third, with the exception of some of the nomadic fishing tribes, they cultivate plantations, but only in a desultory manner, for they never feel sufficiently safe in their possession to expend much labour on them. The jungle affords but little that can help them, and it is only since they have been driven into it by the Belgians that they have, to any extent, relied upon this source. When they are subject to constant raids by the State and Company, those living in places dependent upon plantations for sustenance, abandon these, and, naturally, cannot find enough in the bush to feed upon. This was the case among the Mogwandis, some of whom I mentioned as having been seen by me lying in the jungle, dead of starvation.

## QUESTION IX.

*The Congo State always takes credit for punishing agents guilty of atrocities. What is your opinion on this point ?*

. . . . .

As far as I am aware, the only agents ever punished for the outrages upon the natives have been mere subordinates—corporals, clerks, or Company agents. No high official or Belgian army officer has ever seen the inside of the prison of Boma. The unfortunate, ignorant persons who have been punished were merely trying to carry out the wishes of their superiors, who are not ever rebuked. All the Congolese agents of both State and Company perfectly understood that the condemnation of the men who were punished was a mere farce to blind the eyes of the civilized world, and none of them were expected to serve their time. Indeed, had they done so, it would have meant, in cases where the punishments were penal servitude for a number of years, certain death. The opinion generally expressed was, that the State would wait until the stir which the story of the atrocities made in Europe had blown over, and then let the



men escape or have them pardoned by the Sovereign. These men were the temporary scapegoats which it was necessary for the State to find. The authorities do not want to hear accusations against agents, but when such are made public, something must be done to make Europe think that justice *does* exist for the native after all. This justice is done most unwillingly and as seldom as possible.

While at Boma, on my way to the Mongalla, I attended at the Court there, and saw a *Commissaire de District*, in uniform resplendent with many bands of gold lace, being tried on a charge of murder, in having kicked his "boy" to death. The court was composed of three young Belgian lawyers: the judge, registrar and *greffier*. No other persons were present, save a Bangala interpreter and half a dozen Bangala witnesses. The judge was busy asking questions of all of them and seemed to be in himself a legal jack-of-all-trades. These legal luminaries, I knew, were good and true friends of this gold-laced official, and they had, no doubt, drunk many a glass of absinthe and *lambric* together. Needless to say the *Commissaire* was acquitted—at least no one ever saw him in the Boma prison.

It is hard to get news out of the Congo, and when it does come out it is, as a rule, unreliable; moreover, few Belgians would dare to boldly denounce the State, for, as you know, Belgium is not free soil, and fear of the power of the rubber *clique* is enough to deter any of the returned employees from speaking, and, of course, the army officers are more helpless still, for the slightest breath against the administration would have consequences too serious to contemplate. The Belgian officers are dependent upon the pittance they earn as such, and cannot afford to quarrel with the hand that gives them their bread.



## CHAPTER VII.

## No. 3. The Lopori-Maringa Trust.

(Abir.)

THE ABIR, "QUEEN" OF THE CONGO TRUSTS—ITS ADMINISTRATORS, SHAREHOLDERS, AND COLOSSAL PROFITS—HOW ARE THE PROFITS OBTAINED?—A FRENCH COLONIAL GOVERNOR'S OPINION OF ITS METHODS—BELGIAN REVELATIONS—DR. GRATTAN GUINNESS'S INFORMATION—MORE "MORAL AND MATERIAL REGENERATION."

No matter what has been said, this prosperity has not been attained by any detriment to the lot of the Natives.—*Bulletin Officiel de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo*, June, 1903.

THE *Abir* Trust has been called the "Queen" of the Congo Companies. Originally the Anglo-Belgian India-Rubber Company, founded in August, 1892, and in which Colonel North was at one time largely interested, it was, like the *Anversoise*, reconstructed under Congo law in 1898 with a capital of 1,000,000 francs, divided into 2,000 shares without designation of value, "giving right of  $\frac{1}{2000}$  of the Avoir Social." This Trust has the monopoly of exploitation of the Lopori and Maringa districts; head-quarters, Bassankusu. The sphere of its operations is shown in the map. President, A. Van den Nest; administrators, A. Mols and Count H. Van der Burgh; *Commissaires*, Jules Stappers and F. Reiss; director, Charles de Wael.

Original Shareholders: \*

Alex. de Browne de Tiège, <i>as mandatory</i> of the Congo State	1000
Alex. de Browne de Tiège .. .. .	60
Horach van der Burgh .. .. .	58
As mandatory of A. Van den Nest .. .. .	125
Charles de Wael .. .. .	6
As mandatory of M. M. Alexis Mols, Alfred Oster- ricte, Maurice Ortmans, Thys & Vanderlin Ernest Vanderlinden, Henri Vanderlinden ..	75

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\* Abir Statuts; Imprimerie Ratinckx Frères, Antwerp.

Jules Stappers	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Frederic Reiss	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Alphonse Lambrechts	..	..	..	..	..	..	40
C. de Browne de Tiège	..	..	..	..	..	..	50
Bunge & Co.	..	..	..	..	..	..	50
W. Mallinckrodt	..	..	..	..	..	..	45
Bouvoisin-Deprez	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Lowet	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Ruys & Co.	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Francois Grell and Prosper Creitz	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Société Anversoise du Commerce au Congo	..	..	..	..	..	..	150
J. van Stappers	..	..	..	..	..	..	10
L. & W. Vandavelde	..	..	..	..	..	..	5

## PROFITS :

1897	..	..	..	..	..	..	Fcs. 1,247,455
1898	..	..	..	..	..	..	„ 2,482,697
1899	..	..	..	..	..	..	„ 2,692,063
1900	..	..	..	..	..	..	„ *4,718,575
1901	..	..	..	..	..	..	„ 2,455,182
1902	..	..	..	..	..	..	„ 1,472,000

In six years the profits of this concern have, therefore, amounted to the colossal sum of Fcs. 15,067,972, or £602,718. In June, 1899, each share was worth Fcs. 17,900, and the total value of the 2000 shares originally worth £40,000, was Fcs. 35,800,000, or £1,432,000 ! But the shares in 1900 went to over Fcs. 25,000, and the total value of the 2000 shares originally worth £40,000, was over £2,000,000 !

It will thus be seen that the share of the profits, substantial as they have been, accruing to the Congo State from the operations of this Trust, does not exhaust the State's benefits under the arrangement. In 1900 the State's 1,000 shares in the *Abir* were worth *one million pounds sterling*. What fortunes may not have been amassed through Stock Exchange speculation by the possessor of 1000 shares in this undertaking !

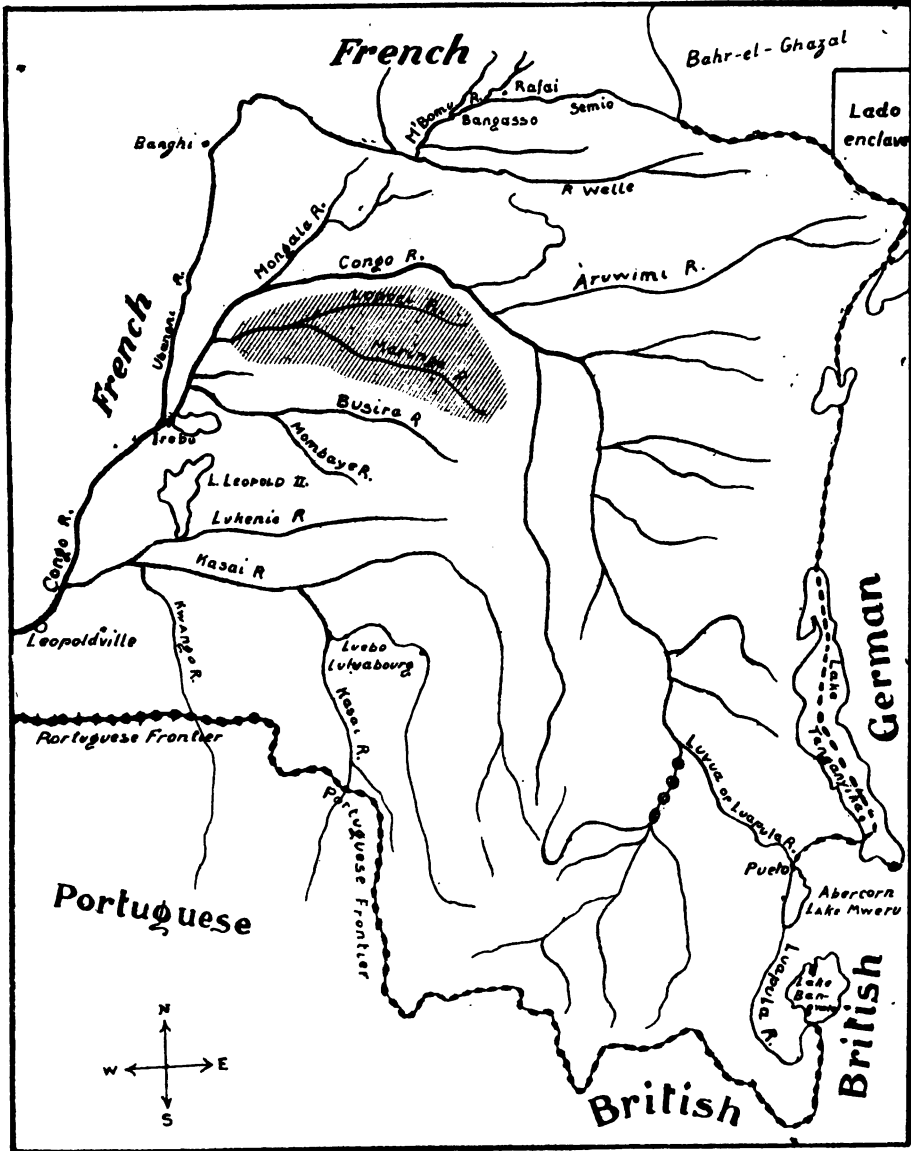
Needless to remark the usual incidents have accompanied the acquisition of these profits.

M. de Lamothe, an ex-Governor of French Congo, in the course of his evidence, given a couple of years ago before the Commission of Colonial Concessions, held in Paris, remarked in the course of his deposition, that : The *Abir*, for instance, possess a considerable

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\* The figures for 1900 are given by Mr. Fox-Bourne in his book.

THE CONGO STATE ABOVE LEOPOLDVILLE.



The shaded portion indicates the area of  
THE LOPORI-MARINGA TRUST.

territory, and has even police rights (*sic*) over the natives. From that point of view the rights which its charter confers upon it are exaggerated. *Its agents have applied this so well that they have succeeded in inducing 30,000 natives to leave their territory, and take refuge on the French bank of the Congo.*

In October, 1901\* the *Actualité financière* of Brussels, published an article of which the following are extracts :

“The Abir is a Company in which many big-wigs were, or are interested . . . The enormous quantities of rubber sold on its account, and on account of the *Anversoise* caused astonishment, but people thought that the territories conceded were very rich, and that the Companies having received—from all-powerful sources—certain privileges and advantages, all was well.” The paper—a Belgian paper, may it be repeated?—then went on to refer to the scandals attending the *Anversoise* operations, speaking of the crimes committed on behalf of the shareholders “as exceeding in horror and cruelty anything that can be imagined.”

*L'Actualité financière* then proceeded to disclose the fact that “three months ago,” reports “giving absolutely precise details” had been furnished to the Council of Administration of the Abir, as to the atrocities taking place upon its concession. *L'Actualité financière* reproduced some of them.

1.—A sub-agent of the *Abir* ordered a native who had not made enough rubber to receive fifty blows of the *chicotte*. After the punishment the agent pulled out his revolver and shot the man, breaking his shin-bone.

2.—The head of a factory, dismissed for brutality towards the natives, had tied up for a whole day several rubber collectors, in a state of nudity, to stakes, in the full glare of the sun.

3.—In September, 1899, all the Upper Bolombo region was put to fire and sword, by the Dikila factory, to force the natives, with whom the Company had not yet come in contact, to make rubber.

4.—On 24th August, 1900, passing by Boyela (in the *Abir* concession), I met in the said village two young girls, one of whom was *enceinte*, with their right hands cut off. They told me that they belonged to the village of Bossombo, and that the soldiers of the white-man of Boyela had cut off their hands, because their master did not make enough rubber.

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\* Referred to shortly in the *Times* and other papers.

Stirred by the publicity given to these reports, the Company, or the State—there is not much difference—ordered an enquiry, and the Belgian papers announced last year, with complacency, that Judge Rossi had looked into the charges which he had found “much exaggerated”—naturally! The worthy Judge did more. The Belgian papers of October, 1902, reported him to have said that the “English Missionaries were inciting the natives to complain!”

In the early part of this year, *La Tribune Congolaise* published a letter from a correspondent to the effect that the *Abir*, post of Bogandanga, was producing large quantities of rubber—doing splendidly in short. This was quite easy to understand, for about the same time, Dr. Grattan Guinness, whose mission—the Congo Bololo Mission—has a station at Bogandanga, received a letter written by one of his representatives, reading as follows:

“The Trading Company have now a different system in order to get rubber. Ten soldiers, with rifles, are apportioned to Sungamboyo; ten also to Banlongo, two to Boseke, Ilinga, Lumala, Boyela, and Bavaka respectively. This means, as you understand, that the country is in the hands of these merciless fellows, who abuse, oppress, rob, and kill at their pleasure. M. L. who is here . . . told me that he was only producing five and a half tons per month, and that although M . . . had promised him another agent, he writes now that he cannot do so unless seven and a half tons are forthcoming per month. This is impossible, as every available man is working rubber, and that with a gun behind him. The laws that appeared to come into force just before you left here are now considered *nil*, and we have the terrors of the gun; the wretched prison life and work; the *chicotte*; the chain; the transport down river; and other offshoots of oppression too numerous to mention. The place is greatly changed. They have made a new line of towns, but the houses are scattered and poor. The people are tyrannized over by the sentries, and therefore, spend most of their time in the bush.”

This letter was incorporated in a long article published by Dr. Grattan Guinness, last April, in the *Regions Beyond*, which was reproduced in full in the *West African Mail*, of April 17th.

“**The moral and material regeneration** of the natives” in the territories conceded to the *Abir* Trust, half of whose shares are held by the Congo State, is proceeding right merrily: so merrily, indeed, that the prospects were declared by its President at the annual meeting the other day to be “brilliant.” And the slave-drivers sit at home and pocket the dividends.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## No. 4. The Kasai Trust.

THE HISTORY OF THE KASAI TRUST—THE "FREE TRADE" OF THE KASAI—THE FORMATION OF THE TRUST—THE CONSTITUTION OF THE TRUST—BELGIAN VIEW OF THE TRUST—THE KASAI ATROCITIES—WHERE THE PROFITS COME IN.

"Men . . . are slow to understand that it may be a sentiment that induced King Leopold II. to father the International Association. He is a dreamer, like his *confères* in the work, because the sentiment is applied to neglected millions of the Dark Continent. They cannot appreciate rightly, BECAUSE THERE ARE NO DIVIDENDS ATTACHING TO IT, this restless, ardent, vivifying, and expansive sentiment which seeks to extend civilising influences among the dark races."—SIR H. M. STANLEY, at the London Chamber of Commerce, September 19th, 1884.

"The Kasai Trust is controlled by the Congo State, and benefits by State rates of transport, ocean and fluvial. THE NUMBER OF DIVIDEND-PAYING SHARES IS 4,020, OF WHICH THE STATE HOLDS 2,010."

"The cargo brought by the last steamer, the 'Philippeville,' brings the amount received up to the present by the Kasai Company, to 330,000 kilos. The rubber collected is of two kinds. One fetches 9 Fcs. 10 c. per kilo., the other 7 Fcs. 75 c. per kilo. The sales have produced TWO MILLION-AND-A-HALF FRANCS (£90,000), without counting 50,000 Fcs. worth of ivory. At the last sale, the Company's rubber imports fetched nearly HALF A MILLION FRANCS (£20,000). The total rubber collected during the year ending December 31st, is estimated at FIVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE TONS. From the above an opinion can be formed of the importance of this Company's operations."—*La Chronique*, of Brussels (May, 1903).

"Our only programme, I am anxious to repeat, is the work of moral and material regeneration"—KING LEOPOLD II., Sovereign of the Congo State.

At a meeting held at the Royal United Service Institution, Whitehall, on May 5th, presided over by the Rev. Dr. Clifford, M.A., LL.D., and supported, amongst others, by the Right Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke, Bart., M.P.; Sir W. Brampton Gurdon, M.P., K.C.M.G.; Thomas Bayley, M.P.; Alfred Emmott, M.P., and Herbert Samuel, M.P.; the Rev. W. M. Morrison, of the American Presbyterian Mission, recounted his personal experience of the barbarous and ghastly methods of the Congo State Authorities, their cannibal regulars and irregulars in the Kasai district.

UP to January of last year, the Kasai district was—nominally, at any rate—open to free trade.

When, in 1891 and 1892, through the medium of decrees, and circulars to the District Commissioners, the Sovereign of the Congo State claimed as State property the products of the soil throughout the territories above Leopoldville—that is to say, in 99-100ths of the State—entrusted to his management by the Powers, in order that commerce should be promoted and the lives and property of the natives safeguarded, the Kasai region was exempt from the application of the new rules. It was left open—on paper—to free trade; or, in other words, the Sovereign of the Congo State graciously consented to permit the exercise of legitimate commerce in *one portion* of the vast area in which he was pledged to encourage, in every possible way, the development and increase of trade.

This condescension was in due course taken advantage of by a number of Belgian and Dutch Trading Companies, which established factories in the country. But they soon found that their business was seriously impeded by the Administration, which, wherever its power could make itself felt, compelled the natives to bring in the usual taxes, which it levies upon all natives throughout the Congo State territories, in accordance with the policy it has always pursued. The natives were required to bring in rubber to the State posts as tribute, before bartering that article against European goods imported by the merchants. The officials of the Administration pretended, in effect, to have a prior claim upon the rubber-producing capacities of the native; and as the State's rule is absolute, and as its will is enforced by methods known as "regenerating" both of the "moral and material" order, the natives of the Kasai district found that it was not compatible with their comfort to disobey the "Government's" instructions. The Trading Companies complained. Their complaints appeared in the Belgian papers. Their transactions became restricted to such small quantities of rubber as they could obtain, rubber and ivory being the only products exportable from the country. For these small quantities they competed keenly. The upshot of it was that they were unable to make both ends meet.

That was the opportunity of the Sovereign of the Congo State, who, as we are told by M. Wauters, is the personal director of the Congo State. A Trust, called the Kasai Company was formed. Four thousand and twenty dividend-paying shares were formed,



of which 2,010 were retained by the Congo State, and the balance divided between the Companies trading in the Kasai.

The Shares were distributed as follows :—

Congo State .. .. .	2010
Société Anonyme Belge du Haut Congo .. ..	340
Neuwe Handels Vennootschap .. ..	340
Société des Produits Végétaux du Haut Kasai ..	255
Cié. Anversoise des Produits du Lubéfu .. ..	217
Plantations Lacourt .. .. .	204
La Belgika .. .. .	199
Comptoir Velde .. .. .	77
La Kassaienne .. .. .	75
La Djuma .. .. .	74
L'Est du Kwango .. .. .	62
La Loanje .. .. .	58
Central Africaine .. .. .	55
Cié. des Magasins Généraux .. .. .	31
Trafic Congolais .. .. .	23

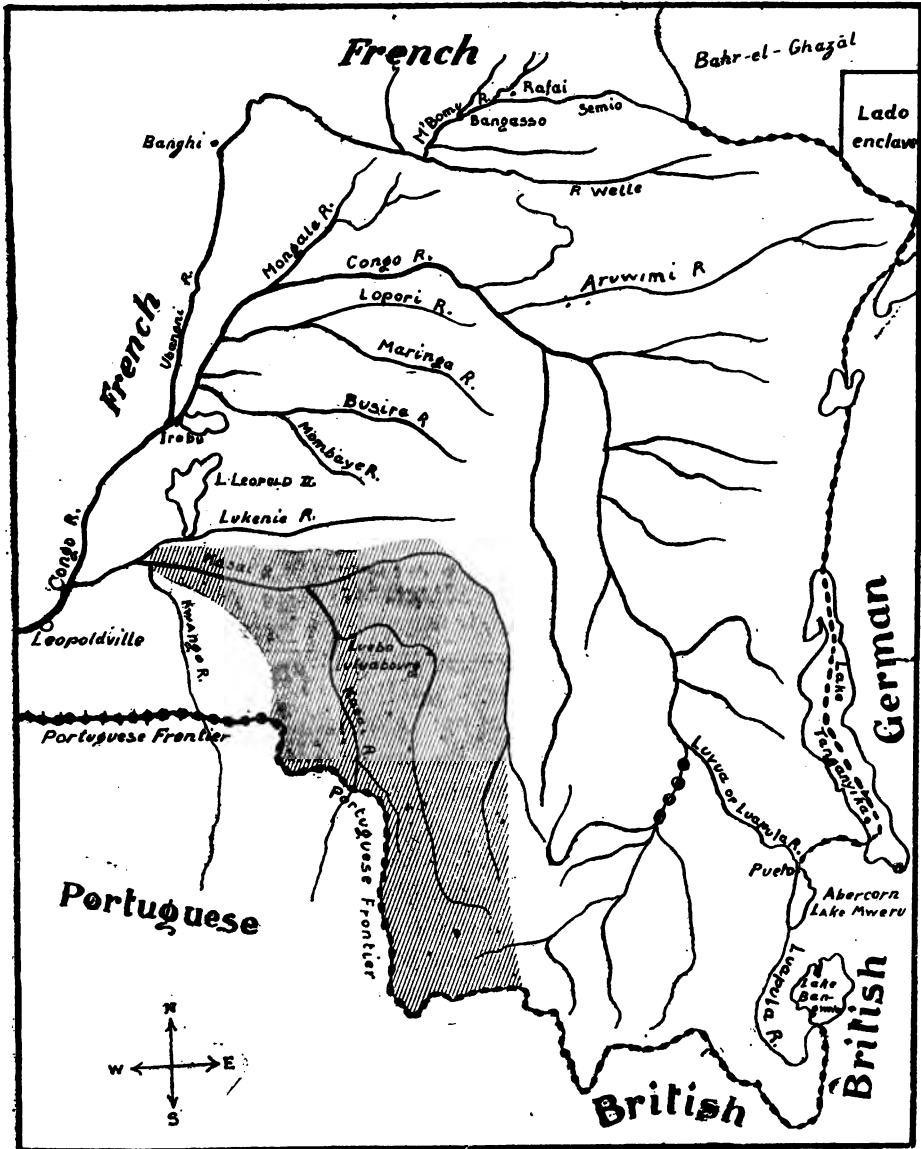
The Belgian Press—let this fact be noted by those whom it may concern—was not pleased. Even *La Gazette Coloniale*, the leading Congolese paper in Antwerp, was anything but enthusiastic. I extract from an issue of that paper in January, 1902, some comments which are of particular value at the present time. *La Gazette Coloniale* has, by the way, recently changed its name—and, possibly, its opinions. These, at any rate, were its opinions in January, 1902 :—“What appears to characterise the policy of the Congo State to-day, is not a struggle\* against the Trading Companies such as took place in 1892, but their absorption by the Congo State Government.”

*La Gazette Coloniale* thereupon referred to the *Abir* and *Anversoise* “Companies,” half of the profits of which, it said, were shared by the State ; and to the *Société Générale Africaine*, as to which, it said, a similar state of affairs existed. *La Gazette Coloniale* continued :—“Last year, against its will, the Société du Haut Congo (one of the Thys group) was compelled to abandon to the State the posts which it had established at great expense in the Bussira region, and from which it anticipated large profits. In the Kasai the State has virtually absorbed the fourteen Companies which previously existed, leaving them only a purely nominal autonomy.”

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\* This refers, of course, to the celebrated *lutte homérique* between King Leopold II. and Colonel Thys (in 1892), who objected to the claim set up by the Sovereign of the Congo State to the entire products of the soil.

THE CONGO STATE ABOVE LEOPOLDVILLE.



The shaded portion indicates the area of  
THE KASAI TRUST.

Referring to the newly-formed Kasai Company as a "huge trust," *La Gazette Coloniale* then went on:—"There will soon be in the Congo nothing but vast organisations, placed under the direction and control of the Government. Private initiative will disappear. . . . to employ an expression which appears accurate under the circumstances, the Congo State will soon be nothing more than a vast farm, exploited, either directly or for joint account, by a few officials. The interests of Belgian trade have nothing to gain by such a state of affairs. . . . The *Domaine Privé* will probably increase its rubber production. But save for a few rare shareholders holding 'parts,' the Congo State will become, in the eyes of the majority of the Belgians, a Colony more and more foreign to them."

Having thus described the way in which the Kasai Trust was formed, and incorporated into the *Domaine Privé*, which now covers the whole of the Upper Congo (see map), we may turn to the revealed atrocities which have taken place as a consequence of the system of "moral and material regeneration," so dear to the heart of the Sovereign of the Congo State, who, it will be remembered, scorned the very idea of "dividends" in any shape or form.

In April, 1902, shortly after a "rising" in the Kasai district had been reported in the Belgian newspapers, the London correspondence of the *Manchester Guardian* contained the following passage: "The trouble originated with the brutal treatment inflicted upon the natives by a certain lieutenant of the *Force Publique*, who, to punish them for not bringing in food at the precise hours required, raided a village at the head of his cannibal troops and killed and imprisoned a number of its inhabitants. A trader who went up the Kasai river shortly afterwards as far as Benna Makemia, observed some thirty women in chains and practically starving, guarded by State troops. He says of their appearance that the thighs of the stoutest were hardly larger than a champagne bottle in circumference. This trader, who was a Belgian, was subsequently driven away by the natives of the district with showers of arrows. At the time the mail left the Congo, the whole Kasai district was described as up."

Writing to me at the end of 1901, a correspondent in Brussels, well acquainted with the Congo State affairs, said: "In course of conversation with an intimate Belgian friend of mine the other day, who has just returned from the Kasai, he declared that smoked human flesh was still sold and bartered for in some of the native villages in that region, and with the cognisance of the State authorities."

The Zappo Zapps, as we know from the Rev. W. M. Morrison, are a cannibal tribe, armed and employed by the Congo State to raid for tribute—otherwise stated, for rubber. It was doubtless to Zappo Zapp villages that my correspondent referred. The same correspondent, upon news of the formation of the Trust, wrote :—“ You may now expect to hear before long of the usual horrible atrocities in the Kasai district, similar to those prevailing in other parts of the *Domaine Privé*.”

In Mr. Fox-Bourne's book, “ Civilisation in Congoland ” (P. S. King & Son, 1903), much valuable information is collected, in respect to the Kasai district. In 1893, a portion of the cannibal soldiery of the Congo State, euphemistically termed *Force Publique*, was recruited in that district. At the end of 1893, 600 Batetlas (cannibals) in the service of the Congo State, and known as “ Gongo Lutetés Bodyguard,” were brought into the Kasai district, at Luluabourg. Two years later, they rebelled, sacked Luluabourg, and killed the Belgian officers in command. The cannibal Batetlas were replaced by the cannibal Zappo Zapps. In October, 1899, the same courageous American missionary, who to-day is helping so materially to proclaim the truth about the system of **moral and material regeneration** introduced into Central Africa by the Sovereign of the Congo State, wrote to that Sovereign as follows :—“ These Zappo Zapps, armed as they are, and sent out by the State to collect tribute for the Government and other purposes, are a terror to the whole region. They are the great slave-dealers of this section—a traffic which the State is supposed to be making efforts to suppress.”

In that same year, the Rev. W. M. Morrison and his colleague, Mr. Sheppard, made known for the first time to the world the fearful details which the former has recently brought to the knowledge of the world, and which were published in full in the issue of the *West African Mail* for May 8th. He appealed direct to the Sovereign of the Congo State, and to President McKinley. I have reason to believe that the late President addressed a remonstrance to the Sovereign of the Congo State on the subject. The Congo State promised to enquire.

The result of the investigation, the Rev. W. M. Morrison announced in May, 1903. None of the officials implicated have been punished, and matters are proceeding the same as ever. Murder, raiding, slavery, forced labour, the chicotte, the chains, in fact all the natural and inevitable attributes of the regenerating system, are in full swing *to-day*.

If honourable Belgians, disgusted, as many are, with the abominations which are sullyng the name of their country, and which have made the Congo State an object of loathing throughout the world, are nevertheless inclined to doubt the absolute truth of the Rev. W. M. Morrison's statements, they have only to turn to the admissions of a Belgian Roman Catholic Priest, Father Cambier, given in that ludicrously dishonest publication issued the other day, and entitled "The Truth about Belgian Civilisation in Congoland" (p. 192).

The pecuniary results, of course, are all that could be desired. The rubber from the Kasai district is noted for its quality, and at the present high prices prevailing on the home markets, fetches in some cases 7s. 6d. per kilo. What the State made out of this particular district, prior to the formation of the Kasai Trust, can only be conjectured. The colossal profits which the State, as co-partner in the Trust is making now, can be estimated from Extract IV. at the head of this article. During the year closing December, 1902—that is to say, in the first year of its operations—the Trust has "collected" (charming word, that!) 565 tons of rubber. In order not to overstep the mark in any way, let us reckon that these 565 tons gave an average yield of 6s. per kilo. There are 1,015 kilos. to the ton. Therefore, if we multiply 1,015 by 565, we shall arrive at the number of kilos., viz. : 573,475. And if we multiply 573,475 by 6, we shall arrive at the number of shillings, viz. : 3,440,850, or £172,042 10s.

I wonder how many lives have been taken in the process? Not even the Rev. W. M. Morrison can tell us that.



## CHAPTER IX.

## Other Trusts.

THE BAHR-EL-GHAZAL TRUST (SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE AFRICAINE)—  
 THE KWANGO TRUST (COMPTOIR COMMERCIAL CONGOLAIS)—  
 THE LOMAMI TRUST (COMPAGNIE DU LOMAMI)—THE THYS  
 TRUST—RAILWAY AND LAND TRUSTS.

## The Bahr-el-Ghazal Trust.

**Société Générale Africaine.**

**T**HIS "Company" was founded in December, 1897, with a capital of Fcs. 3,000,000. It is also a "State Institution," and seems to be another name for the State itself, because the yield of taxation levied by the State, instead of being declared in the homeward manifests of the Congo steamers as "D.P.,"\* are now made out to the Société Générale Africaine. This Company was formed for the purpose of exploiting the territories leased to the Sovereign of the Congo State by Lord Rosebery, in the abortive Convention of 1894. In the *Annexe au Bulletin Officiel de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo*, for October, 1898, No. 10, we read that the *Société Générale Africaine* "can create and issue bank-notes guaranteed by the State by preliminary agreement with the Congo Free State," and "can advance sums of money to the State, with or without guarantee." Article 17 provides that "The President of the Council of Administration is named, and dismissed, by the Sovereign King." Article 28 provides that "No modification of the Statutes is admitted unless it be approved by a decree of the Sovereign King." The capital was subsequently increased to Fcs. 12,000,000. King Leopold fondly imagined by means of this "Company" to exploit the riches of the Bahr-el-Ghazal. So sure was he of success that the representative of the "Company," M. de Baaker, who arrived at Matadi towards the close of 1898, *en route* for the Bahr-el-Ghazal, carried in his

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\* That is, *Domaine Privé*.

pocket a chart of the Bahr-el-Ghazal upon which the "concession" given to his "Company" was carefully marked. That "concession" covered the whole of the territory originally leased to the Congo State by the British Government, under section II of the Agreement of 1894. Like most agents of the State, he was not very discreet, and showed it to a friend of the author's at Matadi. For full particulars of this affair, the reader is referred to the *Nineteenth Century and After*, for August, 1901. What this "Company" may be doing now is doubtful, but from statements which have recently appeared in the Belgian Press, the Congo State would appear to have taken over the "posts" it has founded on the Bahr-el-Ghazal frontiers.

## The Kwango Trust.

### Comptoir Commercial Congolais.

Founded in Antwerp, in 1892, under Belgian law; reconstructed under Congo law in July, 1895.\* Capital 500,000 francs, divided into 2,000 shares, originally held between thirteen people, of whom Messrs. Alexis Mols, William F. Schmolle, Louis Hoeckle, A. Van den Nest, Edmund, Charles, and Andre de Wael account between them for 1,340 out of the 2,000.† Headquarters: Fayala, on the Wamba (Kwango).

I am informed on excellent authority that half the profits go to the Congo State.

According to the *Bulletin Officiel* (*Annexe* May-June, 1900), its profits in 1899 amounted to Fcs. 262,089, or 52%. Personally, I have not been able to collect any further figures regarding this Company's operations. In the Statutes‡ we read the following:—

"Est aussi intervenu l'Etat Indépendant du Congo qui a approuvé les présents statuts et la cession des concessions à la Société."

The above passage is in itself sufficient to show that, like the other Trusts, it is a "State Institution," to use the words of M. Wauters.

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\* WAUTERS.

† *Comptoir Commercial Congolais. Statute Anvers; Imprimerie Ratinckx Frères.*

‡ *Ibid.*





## The Lomami Trust.

### **Compagnie du Lomami.\***

Founded July 5, 1898. Capital 3,000,000 francs. After sundry provisions for payment of percentage on shares, the Congo State gets 25%. (Article 34). The Thys group are largely interested in this concern.

## The Thys (Colonel) Trust.

The interests of the Thys Trust are so scattered and now so largely bound up with the Congo State that it would be tedious and unprofitable to dissect them. They are present in the Lomami, Katanga, and Kasai Trusts, and exploit a portion of the Busira district, near the limits of the *Domaine de la Couronne*. The Thys group of Companies originally protested against the Decree and Circulars of 1891 and 1892, and waged violent warfare against the Sovereign of the Congo State until silenced by the grant of special privileges and concessions.

## Railway and Land Trusts.

### **Compagnie du Chemin de fer du Congo Supérieur aux Grands Lacs Africains.**

Founded January 4, 1902. Capital 25,000,000 francs; 100,000 "actions de capital" of Fcs. 250 each; 100,000 "actions de jouissance" held by the Congo State. Concessions in the Aruwimi district.

### **Société d'Etude des Chemins de fer du Stanley Pool au Katanga et de l'Itimbri à l'Uélé, etc., etc.**

Founded in 1903. Capital Fcs. 1,000,000: 1000 shares of Fcs. 1000. Grant of 10,000 *hectares* on the left bank of the Congo, above Stanleyville, as compensation for survey expenses. For every Fcs. 25,000,000 of capital subsequently subscribed, a concession of five millions *hectares* is guaranteed. Concession to be exploited by the State on joint account.

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\* *Compagnie du Lomami*: Brussels. P. WEISSENBRUCH, Imprimerie du Roi.

## CHAPTER X.

## Oppression in the Lower Congo.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE REV. MR. HALL IN THE IREBU DISTRICT OF THE UPPER CONGO, AND IN THE LOWER CONGO—NATIVES RETROGRESSING—WHOLESALE EMIGRATION INTO FRENCH TERRITORY—"THE STATE DO NOT LOOK UPON US AS MEN, BUT AS MONKEYS"—PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE REV. A. WILLIAMS IN THE MAYUMBE DISTRICT OF THE LOWER CONGO—REIGN OF TERROR CAUSED BY EXACTIONS OF SOLDIERY—IMPOVERISHMENT AND DEPOPULATION.

"Our only programme, I am anxious to repeat, is the work of moral and material regeneration."—KING LEOPOLD.

IT has been stated already that the **Policy** accountable for the oppression and cruelty which distinguishes the Belgian conception of Equatorial African "development," as enforced in the Congo territories, does not apply to the insignificant portion of those territories known as the Lower Congo. The application of that **Policy** to the Lower Congo would have been of little service to its authors, for little or no ivory and rubber comes from there. It was not worth the while of the initiator of that **Policy** to trouble about the Lower Congo.

Nevertheless the whole theory and practice of Belgian rule in Africa is so saturated with a vicious disregard of ordinary decency in the treatment of the natives, and the class of men sent out to the Congo seem, as a rule, to be so lost to all sense of justice and equity, that it is not altogether surprising to find evidences of oppression in the Lower Congo.

A notable outcome of this took place about three years ago, when the garrison of Shinkakassa Fort, near Boma—stirred up, as it was reported at the time, by the persistent interference of the Belgian officers with the men's wives—rebelled, seized the fort, and rained shells for two days upon the capital, which would undoubtedly have been destroyed, had the native soldiers known how to manipulate the time-fuses.

The author received a visit, a few months ago, from the Rev. Mr. Hall, a West Indian Missionary, of good family, trained at the Calabar College, Kingston, Jamaica, and attached to the American Baptist Missionary Society of Boston. Mr. Hall has lived for very many years in the Congo: at M'Palabala, Irebo, Ikoko, and Mukimoika. He came, bearing a letter of introduction from the well-known Dr. E. Wilmot Blyden, Director of Mohammedan Education in the Colony of Sierra Leone. The author subsequently received the highest testimonials as to Mr. Hall's uprightness and veracity from the Rev. J. H. Weeks, in charge of the Monsembe station of the Baptist Missionary Society, on the Congo. The particulars here given of Mr. Hall's experiences, both in the Upper and Lower Congo, are from notes taken by the author in the course of the interview.

### **Mr. Hall's Experiences in the Irebu District (Upper Congo).**

“ I have been a number of years in the Upper Congo, and in the Lower Congo. Oppression characterised Congo State rule in the Upper Congo; but there was no cutting off of hands in my particular district—Irebu. The people were heavily taxed. The particular Commissaire of the district was inclined to leniency, and would sometimes take manioc, out of which bread is made, instead of rubber, which was scarce in the immediate neighbourhood. Irebu is not far from the French frontier, and the natives escaped into French territory whenever they could. When I first went to Irebu the population in the actual neighbourhood was estimated at 5,000. That was in 1889. When I left in 1897, after eight years' residence, the population only amounted to about three or four hundred; the rest had emigrated. Since I left the Upper Congo, I have heard from time to time from my colleagues that the rubber oppression is much the same. The soldiers, who are used by the State to get in the rubber, have pretty much their own way. They seldom have officers to guide them when out collecting the rubber tax.”

Q.—What do you consider broadly the condition of the natives in the Upper Congo?

A.—“ I believe that since the country has been given over to the State, the natives are worse off than they were before. They used to be able to go about and trade. That is forbidden. They used to be able to sell their ivory—now they cannot do so. I have

known natives at Irebu to throw their ivory into the river. They told me the State will not pay them a proper price. To the East of my district there were large towns on the banks of the river—now they are all wiped out, and the natives, because of the oppression to which they are subjected, have crossed into French territory. Irebu is a military station. When the State went there, they chased the natives out of the town, and the native plantations and gardens have all disappeared. The people are Bobangis and very peaceable. They express themselves very freely to us sometimes. They say they do not wish to remain in State territory, because they are not slaves to the State. The State, they say, entered their country and took their lands without payment, and now wish to make slaves of them by sending them into the bush to collect rubber. The natives were quite willing to supply the State with fish, as tribute, instead of rubber. They are fishermen in the first place, and in the second place they had to journey long distances to get the rubber, which meant that their homes had to be left to get it. They themselves had to live in the bush without shelter, and all their family arrangements were upset. Rather than endure this perpetual persecution, they have simply left the country, as I tell you. A native once said to me, "The State do not look upon us as men, but as monkeys, and that is why they treat us so."

### **Mr. Hall's Experiences in the Lower Congo.**

"I have been eight years in the Lower Congo down to December, 1902. There is no progress whatever among the natives of the Lower Congo. In fact, except in the immediate vicinity of the Mission station they are going back. There is no rubber tax there; but towns and little hamlets have to supply labourers for the State for three months at a time. These men are paid the miserable wage of 10 francs per month (8s. 4d.); they are employed in breaking stones, transport work, and so on. After three months' work they have, of course, nothing left out of their earnings, and they go home again with nothing with which to support their families or better their position. The result is they simply live on from year to year in the same condition, getting more impoverished every year. In many parts of the Lower Congo there is much depopulation. In what is now Congo State territory, near the Portuguese frontier, there used to be very large towns and villages. They are now quite abandoned, the natives preferring the rule of the Portuguese, which is none of the

best, to the rule of the Belgians, which is far worse. Before I left the Congo, I had many complaints brought before me by the natives. Amongst other things they said they had to provide the State with all their live stock, for which they got nothing of value in return, and they were not allowed to shoot game to feed themselves. They actually had to buy their own food. The State, they said, had taken their country without remuneration, and now the State has made laws to prevent them killing their game—the only way in which they can get meat. The State, they said, can get supplies from Europe—“but we have no meat but that which God has given us in our forests.” They said the State told them not to kill elephants. They have no objection to that, but now they are told they must not kill antelopes or buffaloes.

In conclusion, I can assert that, after my long experience, State rule has in no way benefited the native. On the contrary, they are being utilised for the pecuniary benefits of the State, while the State does nothing to better their condition.”

### **The Experience of the Rev. A. R. Williams in the Lower Congo.**

The Rev. A. R. Williams, of the Christian Missionary Alliance, of New York, who has just returned from the Congo, called upon the author last month, after first seeing Mr. H. R. Fox-Bourne, who suggested his seeing the author on his way to America. The substance of Mr. Williams' remarks, as taken down at the time, are now given :

“I have just returned from four years' residence in the Mayumbe district of the Lower Congo. I was located about 100 miles due north of Boma, the capital of the State, and about 40 miles from the French and Portuguese frontiers respectively. The inhabitants of Mayumbe are Fjorts, very peaceable folk, and naturally friendly towards the white man. The State post of Tshala is 3½ hours' march to the west of my station of Kinkonse. It is garrisoned by about 80 soldiers from the Upper Congo. The existing taxation in this district takes the form of labour. The soldiers are sent out and force the villages to give labourers, who are paid with trumpery bits of cloth or handkerchiefs, of little or no value. The men are employed in carrying loads of rice from the neighbourhood of Tshala to rail-head (Mayumba railway). They also work in the State stations, planting, clearing, etc. I must emphasise the fact that the pay to the natives is utterly

inadequate, both for labour and victuals, with which they are compelled to furnish the State posts. Where we give four fathoms of superior cloth, the State gives small strips of common and useless stuff—and this as remuneration for carrying the most heavy loads. So heavy are these loads, that the men come back utterly played out, and not infrequently die from the effects of over-fatigue. These unfortunate carriers sometimes throw their loads down and bolt, feeling that they simply cannot struggle on. When this occurs, the chief of the village which supplied the absconding men is heavily fined in live stock. If proper wages were paid, and the loads more fairly adjusted, there would be no difficulty in getting carriers. Moreover, cases have come to my personal knowledge, where the men have not been paid at all. Some excuse or another has been given.

The soldiers are a perfect terror to the whole place; and the bad characters of the neighbourhood are enlisted to help them. They rape the women, and clear the villages of live stock, and generally behave in a most oppressive and unjust way. I have taken soldiers red-handed in acts of oppression, and complained to their officers, but as a rule, they are never punished, although promises are made. A day or two after such an event has occurred, the soldier has passed by me grinning. Some officers are more inclined to act justly than others. One such man who was in charge of the State post for a part of the time used to do all he could to suppress outrages. We recognised and were grateful for his good intentions. He was undoubtedly sincere, but he could do but little. He went home sick, and the next man we had was a perfect brute.

The result of this wholesale levying of a tax on food-stuffs is that towns become almost destitute of animals—this means of course, the impoverishment of the people. Natives are continually complaining to us. When news arrives that the soldiers are going to visit a particular district, all the women take refuge in the bush, and live there shelterless, homeless, and half starved, with their children, until the soldiers have gone, to escape being raped or seized. I have seen with my own eyes, streams of women and children, with such household utensils as they could carry, flying to the bush, or to villages close to our stations, where they were sure of not being molested. I was at our own out-school last December, when about 100 women and children came in, flying from the soldiers. Personally, I have not observed depopulation, because my station is too far from the frontier; but the head of our Mission, who has visited the districts lying near the Portuguese frontier, where there were many towns a few years

ago, tells me all the people have left. From and about Stanley Pool where the Upper Congo begins, I hear that where stations were built by another Society, some years ago in the midst of a flourishing and numerous population, there are now so few natives that it is hardly worth while maintaining those particular stations."

### **Petition from Merchants.**

On August 10th, 1901, the merchants established in the Lower Congo (of whom there remain a few) petitioned the King to reduce taxation. After pointing out the heavy import and export duty on goods and produce (20/- per ton on palm oil for instance) and showing how small the existing export trade already was, owing to the taxes and emigration of native labour, due to "the means employed in raising native levies." The petitioners went on to say: "we do not disguise from ourselves that business in the Lower Congo is practically nil . . . Each of us," continues the petition, "consistently hopes for an increase in trade, but these hopes appear to us more and more unreliable, and the Government of the Congo State, instead of coming to aid us, imposes increased and too onerous taxes."



## CHAPTER XI

## The Commercial Statistics of the Congo State for 1902.

### THE "BULLETIN OFFICIEL" EXAMINED—THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TRADE OF THE CONGO STATE.

"The system of the State, at the same time that it hastens the economic development of the country, has given rise to A CONSIDERABLE COMMERCIAL MOVEMENT."—*Bulletin de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo*, Juin, 1903.

WE have always contended that the Congo State's own Decrees, and the Congo State's own published documents, are at once the most informing and the most revealing material which we have to go upon in studying both its policy and its methods. The root of the problem—the axis upon which all else revolves—is *there*, in the official publications issued from the head-quarters in Brussels of that gigantic Trust which calls itself an Institution for the "moral and material regeneration" of the races of Equatorial Africa.

There lies before us at the present moment a copy of the *Bulletin Officiel de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo*, No. 4 (April, 1903), giving the statistics of its "trade" for 1902. It begins thus :

#### "REPORT TO THE SOVEREIGN KING.

"SIRE,—I have the honour to place before the eyes of Your Majesty the Commercial Statistics of the Congo State for the year 1902," and it ends thus :

"I am, with the greatest respect, Sire, of Your Majesty, the very humble, very obedient and very faithful servant and subject,

"In the name of the Secretary of State :

"The General Secretary of the Finance Department,

"H. DROOGMANS."

M. Droogmans might have added, "and the President of the *Comité Spécial du Katanga*, the Trust which Your Majesty has graciously condescended to form for the purpose of elevating the natives of the Katanga region of Your Majesty's Dominion." But, as another



issue of the *Bulletin Officiel* contains the deficiency, perhaps M. Droogmans did not think it necessary to append his full titles to this particular document.

The "Commercial Statistics." Let us bear this phrase carefully in mind. The *Bulletin Officiel*, No. 4 (April, 1903), purposes to give us the "Commercial Statistics" of the State for 1902. We will then examine these "Commercial Statistics."

The total export "trade"\* is given at Fcs. 50,069,514.97 or £2,002,780, and the total import "trade" is given at Fcs. 18,080,909.25, or £723,236.

**The Export "Trade," Total, Fcs. 50,069,514.97,  
or £2,002,780.**

We are at once struck with the extraordinary disproportion between the two figures. What a peculiar country must this be, whose inhabitants give £2,002,780 worth of produce to receive in return only £723,236 of goods! But we will let that pass for the moment, and proceed to the analysis of this "trade," taking first of all the export returns. A tabular statement on page 67 renders the task comparatively easy, and we speedily ascertain that out of the total value of exports, amounting to Fcs. 50,069,514.97, or £2,002,780, rubber is represented by Fcs. 41,733,525.60, or £1,669,341; and ivory is represented by Fcs. 4,986,140.00, or £199,446. Of the total export returns, then, amounting as we have seen to £2,002,780, rubber and ivory represent between them £1,868,787.

Turning to pages 69 and 71, we find that the rubber and the ivory came from the Upper Congo, with the exception of Fcs. 106,594.80 worth of rubber, and Fcs. 67,500 worth of ivory, which came from the Lower Congo. These two amounts added together give Fcs. 174,094.80, or £6,963. Examining other items of export, we further ascertain that of the total coffee exported (Fcs. 109,636.55) the Upper Congo produced Fcs. 81,741.80; the Lower Congo, Fcs. 27,894.85; the whole of the gum copal (Fcs. 475,496) came from the Upper Congo; of the total cocoa exported (Fcs. 22,222.10), Fcs. 10,347.40 came from the Upper Congo; the Upper Congo produced all the rice exported, Fcs. 9,429; and all the tobacco exported, Fcs. 509.40.

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\* The total export "trade," that is of the Congo State itself, the *commerce spécial*—not to be confounded with the *commerce général*—which includes goods passing over the Congo railway to and from the French and German possessions.

The export "trade" therefore, may be analysed thus :

Total Fcs. .. 50,069,514.97, or £2,002,780.

	Upper Congo.	Lower Congo.	Total.
Rubber.....	£1,665,077	£4,264	£1,669,341
Ivory .....	196,745	2,701	199,446
Ground Nuts ... ..	3,355	—	3,355
Coffee .....	3,269	1,116	4,385
Gum Copal .....	19,020	—	19,020
Palm Oil .....	—	38,034	38,034
Palm Kernels.....	—	67,758	67,758
Cocoa .....	414	474	888
Beans .....	—	63	63
Maize .....	1	2	3
Hides .....	—	48	48
Rice .....	377	—	377
Tobacco .....	20	—	20
Timber .....	—	42	42
	£1,888,278	£114,502	£2,002,780

The total export returns, then, *minus* the export of rubber and ivory, only amounted in 1902 to £133,993, and of the total returns, the Lower Congo only accounts for £114,502. The result can be shown more clearly by parallel columns :

TOTAL EXPORT "TRADE" £2,002,780.

Upper Congo.	Lower Congo.
Total.....£1,888,278.	Total.....£114,502
(Rubber and Ivory £1,883,787)	
(Other Produce.....£19,490)	

It is instructive to compare these figures with those given by Stanley in his lecture before the London Chamber of Commerce on September 19, 1884, when he was playing the part of political bagman for King Leopold. According to those figures, the Lower Congo—the Upper Congo was not then "opened up"—exported in 1883 produce to the value of £1,856,400. Stanley added : "The area of the Congo country that supplies these exports cannot exceed 15,000 square miles, as the navigable length of the Lower Congo is only 110 miles." It should be mentioned, however, that Stanley included in that estimate a longer extent of *coast line* in his "Congo country" than the Lower Congo (Congo State) now contains. But it can be asserted without fear of contradiction that the trade of the Lower Congo river was infinitely larger prior to the formation of the Congo State than it is to-day. In fact, it has now dwindled to almost

nothing, owing to the heavy taxes imposed by the Congo State authorities,\* and to the steady depopulation of the country, which is rapidly becoming a desert, both on the banks of the river itself, and in the territory immediately north of it which is subject to Congo State rule.

But the significance of the above figures lies in the fact that of the million and odd square miles handed over to the Congo State by the Powers, the insignificant strip of territory known as the Lower Congo is *the only part of it where trade exists*. The whole of the vast Upper Congo is one huge Trust divided into a number of lesser Trusts, and it is from the Upper Congo, as these figures show, that the exports come from; 99-100ths of which are composed of rubber and ivory. The phrase "Commercial Statistics" is a piece of deliberate mendacity. There is no trade in the Upper Congo. The rubber and ivory exported therefrom has been officially declared to be the property of the State before it is collected, and it is wrung from the unfortunate natives by methods now well known to the whole world.

Another point of interest before leaving the export statistics. The financial *estimates* of the State for 1902 amounted to Fcs. 28,709,000, of which Fcs. 15,452,000 (£618,080) was represented by revenue from the *Domaine Privé*, viz.: taxes paid in kind by the natives, or, in other words, ivory and rubber forced out of the natives; so that £618,080 out of the total of £1,888,278 representing the Upper Congo exports, is accounted for in this way—the product of taxation which the State has the effrontery to include in its export "trade" statistics! Of course, the *actual* returns of this taxation were much larger than the *estimates*. The former are never published, and can only be ascertained by ascertaining the realisations of the rubber and ivory sold by the State's brokers in Antwerp on account of the State. Upon this point I dwelt fully in Chapter I.

Having reviewed the so-called export "trade," we will now examine the so-called import "trade."

**The Import "Trade," Total, Fcs. 18,080,909.25,  
or £723,236.**

The disproportion between the export and import figures was commented upon at the beginning of this notice. The analysis of the exports has clothed that disproportion with the greater significance. We have found upon examination that out of a total export "trade" of £2,002,780, produce from the Upper Congo—where

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\* Against which the few merchants left have publicly protested. See Chapter XI.

no "trade!" exists—accounted for £1,888,278 (£1,868,787, represented by rubber and ivory); that £618,080 of the latter total was composed of the proceeds of taxation; and that trade properly so-called in the Congo territories did not really amount to more than £114,502 for the year. It may be hoped that the fiction of an export "trade" from the Congo State has been disposed of. The fiction of an import "trade," of any consequence, has now to be exploded.

Well, in the first place, we are not long in discovering that a considerable proportion of the articles imported into the Congo State territories have nothing in the remotest degree to do with the trade in *the sense of being goods imported for barter with natives against produce*. Many of them in any honest Colonial report would be classified among Government stores, public works, etc.

We will enumerate them :

Matches .. .. .	Fcs. 18,398.57
Live Stock and Fodder .. .. .	99,167.50
*Military Equipment, Arms, Ammunition, etc. ..	999,297.86
Steamers, Boilers, Anchors, and Chains .. .. .	754,242.12
Coffee .. .. .	21,122.57
Camping Materials .. .. .	113,989.35
Varnish, Paints .. .. .	76,379.41
†Stores, Preserved Meats, Potatoes, etc. .. .. .	3,948,667.05
Drugs .. .. .	49,854.57
‡Clothing and Linen .. .. .	903,233.99
Saddles, Saddlery .. .. .	40,579.80
Scientific Instruments .. .. .	88,959.44
Locomotives, Wagons, Machinery, Telephone and Telegraph Material .. .. .	745,087.21
Materials for construction .. .. .	390,948.62
Furniture .. .. .	195,862.79
Desk Furniture, Account Books, Note Paper, etc. ..	210,922.71
Beer .. .. .	329,347.40
Wine .. .. .	773,179.46
Rails .. .. .	69,466.63
Cigars and Cigarettes .. .. .	82,270.32
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	Fcs. 9,910,977.37

\* The total given is Fcs. 1,105,966.52, but as this contains an item of Fcs. 213,337.32 for gunpowder, and as a portion of this gunpowder may be used in the real trade of the Lower Congo (imported chiefly by the Dutch Trading Company), we have deducted half the above value from the total.

† The total under this item is Fcs. 4,048,995.10, but as it includes salt of a value of Fcs. 101,328.11, and as this salt may be used in the real trade of the Lower Congo, we have deducted the value of the salt from the total.

‡ It must be borne in mind that there are some 20,000 soldiers to clothe.

It will be seen, therefore, that goods of the value of Fcs. 9,910,977.37, or £396,439, are included in the import "trade," totalling £723,236; which are completely foreign to "trade." You do not purchase produce from the natives with locomotives, or rails, or account books, or telephones, or cigars, or wines, or boilers, or scientific instruments. Hence, if an examination of the export returns had not already shown us that 99-100ths of the export "trade" is no "trade" at all, a study of the import returns would have confronted us with a fact even more astonishing than a country paying £723,236 in goods for £2,002,780 worth of produce—viz.: a country paying only £326,439 in goods for £2,002,780 worth of produce!

But apart from the items mentioned above, which may be definitely crossed out of the category of trade goods, there are a number of other items, the greater part of which are probably quite as foreign to trade as the ones already named. For instance:

Worked Wood and Wooden Objects .. .. .	Fcs. 248,883.77
Candles .. .. .	34,608.56
Rope, Nets, and Fishing Utensils .. .. .	23,035.70
Seeds (Vegetable) .. .. .	39,681.75
Oils and Greases, Resin, etc. .. .. .	129,352.31
(Probably for lubricating engines, axles, etc.)	
Chemical Products .. .. .	38,473.00
Pharmacopœia .. .. .	193,648.79
Soap .. .. .	89,798.89
Glass and Glassware .. .. .	381,659.59
	<hr/>
	Fcs. 1,179,142.36

Thus a further sum of Fcs. 1,179,142.36, or £47,165, out of the "total trade" imports, may not unreasonably be regarded as not in the least connected with "trade" properly so-called. The list might be largely added to, but the items are not sufficiently detailed to do so with any degree of accuracy.

Such are the "Commercial Statistics" of the Congo State—such its trade in 1902!

What are the conclusions to be derived from this study? Trade in the Congo State is to all intents and purposes *nil*, or so insignificant that it is not worth considering. The vast Trust and the lesser Trusts attached to it—otherwise the *Domaine Privé* Companies in whose profits the Congo State shares and whose policy it controls—have

succeeded in grinding out of the natives of the Upper Congo, in 1902, £1,868,787 worth of rubber and ivory for which the native has received nothing, or practically nothing. The import "trade" is mainly composed of articles necessary to the up-keep of the Trust (and the subsidiary Trusts) organisations, and the feeding and clothing and arming of its servants, white and black. The Trust buys where it likes, and, of course, it buys in Belgium whenever it can.

There is no trade in the Congo State. There is no expansion. There is no opening for commerce. A vast field, and one of the richest in Equatorial Africa, is closed to trade. In all that makes for the development and advancement of a country, the Congo State is reaction personified. The door of Equatorial Africa, instead of being flung open, has been slammed in the face of the world. After nineteen years' existence the export trade of the Congo State is under £150,000 per annum. But the produce of slave-labour totals nearly £2,000,000 per annum. The imports (which, if the exports were genuine trade exports, would total well over a million, *exclusive* of railway and marine material, Government stores and all the paraphernalia of administration) total £700,000, of which *at the very least* 60%, and *probably nearer* 80% than 60%, is composed of railway and marine material, Government stores, military equipment for the 20,000 cannibal troops, and so on. As for British and British Colonial\* imports, they do not amount to more than £104,358, which is considerably less than twenty years ago.

Those are the dry-as-dust facts. But it is chiefly by a careful study and analysis of these facts—which bear the official stamp of the Congo State Authorities—that we can hope to make the truth about the Congo State known to those who do not seem yet to grasp that, given a policy based upon the denial of the native of Equatorial Africa to any right whatsoever in his land or the produce thereof, and dependent for its continuation upon the acquisition by force of those products, slavery is necessarily re-established, and outrage and oppression rendered inevitable and endemic.

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\* The whole trade of Great Britain and her Colonies with the Congo State is £115,956; viz.: Imports, £104,358, Exports, £11,598.

## CHAPTER XII.

## The Debate in the House of Commons, May 20, 1903.

THE PRIME MINISTER PLEDGES THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION—IMPORTANT DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT.

TEXT of the resolution accepted by His Majesty's Government :

“ That the Government of the Congo Free State having, at its inception, guaranteed to the Powers that its native subjects should be governed with humanity, and that no trading monopoly or privilege should be permitted within its dominions ; this House requests His Majesty's Government to confer with the other Powers, signatories of the Berlin General Act, by virtue of which the Congo Free State exists, in order that measures may be adopted to abate the evils prevalent in that State.”

In the House of Commons on May 20, at 9 p.m., MR. H. L. SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland), called attention to the administration of the Congo Free State, and moved the resolution published in *The West African Mail* of May 15th. He said the Congo Free State had been created by the common consent of the Great Powers, and had been allotted, not to a country, but to an individual: the King of the Belgians. This was done subject to certain conditions to be found in the Act drawn up by the Berlin Conference—first, that the moral and material well-being of the natives should be furthered ; and, secondly, that entire freedom and liberty should be secured to the commerce of all nations. What had been the result ? Practically the whole of the State was regarded as the private possession of the King of the Belgians, with the exception of a small portion south of Stanley Pool. Vast areas had been allotted to financial companies which had their headquarters in Belgium, or elsewhere

on the Continent, in which the Congo Free State held half shares. In these huge reservations no outside trader was allowed to carry on his business. The Parliamentary paper published the previous night showed that an unfortunate Austrian, trading in the eastern portion of the Congo Free State, was arrested and sentenced to one year's imprisonment for "trading in a district in which public trading is forbidden." The exports of the Congo Free State to Belgium were worth £1,860,000, and to England £11,400; while in the French West African Colonies, which had about the same population, and were under a protectionist *régime*, the trade with Great Britain was proportionately four times greater. A far graver issue, however, was the treatment of the native population.

### **"Constant Atrocities and Unending Tyranny."**

Forced labour of many kinds was at present authorised by law, and forced military service. Cannibal troops were set loose to raid their neighbours, there were constant atrocities and unending tyranny. Carriers needed for transport were kidnapped, and the large revenue of the country was raised to a great degree by heavy taxes on the natives. The hon. member accordingly read at length detailed accounts from missionaries and others, of fiendish acts of cruelty perpetrated on the natives. As a consequence thousands fled from the villages, the men fleeing to the forests and the women and children seeking refuge in the mission stations. In one stockade an eye-witness found eighty human hands being slowly dried over a fire. There were many missionaries who had not the courage to speak out as to the facts of which they were aware, and they would not allow their names to be published. Some years ago a number of British subjects from Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast were recruited in the Congo Free State; but owing to their terrible sufferings the Government had to stop the recruiting, and it was now prohibited. There were very many witnesses who had testified to these atrocities. If the administration of the Congo State was civilization, then, he asked, what was barbarism? Financially the activity of this Government had been a brilliant success. The companies which had been founded to exploit the rubber industry had prospered amazingly, and the State had a share of the enormous profits which they had made. He had done his best not to exaggerate the case. He was glad to think that public opinion was waking up to the evils of which they complained. The course which should be adopted was



a matter for those in authority. The Act of Berlin provided that an international commission should be appointed to regulate the navigation of the Congo and to investigate any charges made of breaches of the Act. That commission had not been appointed. His Majesty's Government might propose to the other Powers concerned that that international commission should be established and that through its agency steps should be taken to abate these evils. It would shortly become necessary for the Powers to decide whether the duties on goods imported into the Congo State should be allowed to continue, and His Majesty's Government would then have an opportunity of taking action in concert with the other Powers. He trusted the Government would realise that in this matter apathy and delay were intolerable, and that by taking the initiative they would add to the annals of the good deeds of this country. He begged to move the resolution. (Cheers).

SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean), in seconding the motion, said it must not be supposed that this vast district of the Congo was unknown to British trade and British missions before the King of the Belgians went there. In a dispatch of 1876 the Government laid down the position with regard to our trading rights in the Congo State. They directed Sir William Hewett to make fresh treaties with the chiefs on the south bank of the Congo for absolute free trade, and similar treaties were made by other naval officers on the north bank. In 1876 Sir T. F. Buxton and the right hon. member for the Honiton Division took part in starting at Brussels the International African Association. In 1880-81 De Brazza for the French, and Mr. H. M. Stanley for the King of the Belgians, made treaties on both banks of the river; and in the struggle that developed, assurances were given of the utmost freedom for all who wished to extend their trade there, in almost the terms of the Berlin Act.

### **“Violations of Plighted Word and Solemn Treaty Engagements.”**

The personal assurances of King Leopold were as could be conceived. In 1882 the King informed us that his “sole object was to open Africa to the trade of all nations and to allow the penetration of civilisation.” His association had no commercial character, but was “an association of wealthy philanthropists, who, in the disinterested aims of civilisation and for love of progress, sought

to open the basin of the Congo." The Commercial Department of the Foreign Office was directed to give assurances to Hatton and Cookson, of Liverpool, who had great interests there, and to Holt, of Liverpool, and the Chambers of Commerce of Liverpool and Manchester, that continued complete freedom of trade would be in any case maintained. The Government were a party to these assurances; and it was their bounden duty to see that these assurances were continued and maintained. (Hear, hear.) King Leopold was in the position of despotic ruler in the country, and could not approach the Government through his Belgian Ministers; and in 1884 Sir M. Mackinnon was his intermediary, and he, on behalf of the King, promised "absolute freedom of trade" and "absence of privilege." In 1884-85 came the Berlin Conference. Sir J. Pauncefote and Sir E. Malet were our plenipotentiaries, and Baron de Courcel was the principal French plenipotentiary; and the two latter were still living and could confirm the statement that the assurances were repeated. The basis of the Conference was "freedom of commerce within the basin of the Congo" and "to bring the natives within the pale of civilisation." Note was taken of the declarations of the King by the Berlin Act and protocols, and two sets of words were used. One declared against "monopoly or favour of any kind in matters of trade," and the other form was "no monopoly or privilege of any kind in commercial matters." Baron de Courcel, on behalf of a committee of the conference, explained that this included trade in all products of the soil, and there was a distinct expression of the right of foreigners to "immovable possessions" in the Congo basin. The acts of which they complained had been going on for a long time, and it had been notorious to the world that there had been violations of plighted word and solemn treaty engagements. (Hear, hear.) It was not enough to say the subject had had attention. There must be reports on the subject; but the House had not had them. Undoubtedly there had been a certain timidity on the part of the Government in regard to action. The decrees of the State had been alluded to, and these decrees in effect made the whole land and all the products of the soil in this vast region the personal property of King Leopold. More than that, the whole field had been covered by nine concessions to large companies, and our trade had been killed by these operations. There was nothing but monopoly; no open trade was left. These concessions covered everything worth having in the Congo valley. One of the concessions extended to the Bahrel-Ghazal in the Anglo-Egyptian sphere; though, happily, this was

not now being worked. This showed that there was no limit to the pretensions of the Congo State. As regarded seven out of the nine concessions, the 50% arrangement prevailed; there was one of which the conditions were unknown, and in the case of the Katanga concession the State took two-thirds of the whole of the shares. That was a gigantic concession, covering the whole of the district nearest to our own possessions, and coming right up to our territory. As a specimen of the way in which this Katanga concession was likely to work in connection with the development of our possessions, let the House take the Rabinek case. There was, it seemed to him, the most absolute monopoly in this case of the products of the soil, the most absolute and direct violation of the principles laid down by Baron de Courcel. He could not imagine that the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs would deny that there had been a complete violation of the Berlin Act; and, if he admitted that, he thought they had established a case where we must insist on our treaty rights being fulfilled. (Hear, hear.) As to the question of the natives, the whole anti-slavery world had been swindled by the administration of the Congo State. (Cheers.)

### **"Complete Enslavement of the Whole Population."**

It was obvious that there was a complete enslavement of the whole population, and that it could lead to nothing but a system of horrors. The Congo State had palliated, but had never attempted to deny the charges. Although the Congo State had been spending money like water within the last few weeks in publishing denials of all sorts of things, and in sending lying books to members of that House, no attempt had been made to answer charges. Not one of the horrible decrees had been withdrawn. All the new concessions had been added, and the collection of rubber out of which the sentry system grew had been extended to the whole territory, so that the new *régime* was thus an extension of the old. As the suppressors of slavery and the slave-trade, we had always led Europe, and had a higher degree of responsibility under the engagement of the Powers of Berlin to watch over the execution of the Berlin Act for the protection of the natives. The Congo State, as he thought, had acted treacherously in the matter of the leases granted in 1894, and they were left in possession of the Lado enclave in the Anglo-Egyptian sphere. Possibly, what had made us hold our hands, and rather shamefully neglect to do what otherwise any British Government

must desire to do, might be timidity as to what might happen to the Congo State. Dealing as an unofficial member with that delicate question in a way that an official member could not do, he would say, speaking for himself, that if the choice lay between the Congo Valley going to France and the present state of affairs continuing, it would be better in our own interests that it should go to France. We had declined this territory. All we desired was security for the natives, regard for their rights, and security for British trade against monopoly and restriction. (Cheers.)

### **"Overwhelming Evidence."**

SIR J. GORST said he hoped the Government might be able to accept this motion and that, strengthened by resolution of the House of Commons, they would take some practical step for the deliverance of the Congo territory from the evils which had been described. He did not think anybody now could doubt the substantial accuracy of the description given by the hon. member who moved the resolution of the condition of the natives in the Congo State. The evidence was perfectly overwhelming. The state of things which had been revealed would grow worse unless some steps were taken. There was no doubt that His Majesty's Government had a right to interfere, because the treaties made between the Congo State and ourselves had been violated. Was it expedient to interfere? He should say it was. We had a right to interfere in the interests of our trade; and it was our right and duty to interfere because of our Imperial position and because of the policy we had always asserted in the face of the world in regard to slavery and the treatment of native races. There were probably other Powers who were nearly equally responsible with ourselves; and a conference with the Powers, or an appeal to those Powers who were parties to the Berlin Act would be a perfectly legitimate and inoffensive step to take in the first instance. Although the United States were not parties to the Berlin Act, he believed the President of the United States had already taken steps to protest against the condition of affairs in Congoland. Surely we, who were responsible for the Berlin Act, had a perfect right to take such steps as would bring this terrible state of things to an end.

MR. EMMOTT (Oldham) supported the motion. He said there was ample testimony of the truth of the stories which had come to them from the Congo State; and ghastly stories they were.

**“A Direct, a Necessary, an Inevitable Result  
of the System.”**

The Stokes affair was a very good example of the kind of justice and fair play that one got in the Congo State ; and the Rabinek affair was significant, for the only crime with which Rabinek was charged was that of attempting to trade in the territory which was monopolised by the Katanga company. He believed these cases to be a direct, a necessary, an inevitable result of a wrong system. (Hear, hear.) The condition of affairs, he believed, was due to a system which could only be worked successfully from the financial standpoint by inhumanity (hear, hear), and that system brutalised both natives and white agents. The problem before Europe with regard to tropical Africa was great and difficult, but he did not think it was insoluble, because the methods that were best for the negro were those that were best for our own people at home. The best method of civilising the natives of tropical Africa was by trade, by the gradual permeation of honest, upright trade methods. Judged by this standard, or by any decent standard, what were they to say of the Congo State ? Look at its system—expropriation of the natives from the land without compensation, monopoly of the products of the soil, the natives forbidden to collect the products of the soil except for sale to the State, and immediately after that a forced collection of the products of the soil, for which the natives were paid most unsatisfactorily by the State, and, in order to enforce this collection of the products, a cannibal army had to be recruited. In addition to all this, they had a system of forced levies both for the army and for the large number of labourers which was employed on the plantations of the State. That system was not trade at all (hear, hear), and the whole of this system of so-called trade, the whole industrial system of this country, rested upon force. He quoted sworn documents to show the treatment of the native women, and to bear out his contention that the system of the white man was maintained by forced labour. Such a system must inevitably break down, and when it did there would be danger to us and other European nations. The monopoly system was clearly illegal, and it was certainly against the spirit of the Berlin Act. When the collapse came the vast region inhabited by the fierce Bantu tribes, armed and imbued with an undying hatred of the white man, would be anything but a comfortable enterprise for us in the Bahr-el-Ghazal. Europe ought to set about doing two things. First of all the system must be changed,

root and branch: The finance and other things rested on this system of monopoly and of forced collection of rubber, and when these were stopped the State must collapse. Next, if we did not intervene now, we would be compelled to intervene soon.

### **Viscount Cranborne replies for the Government.**

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) said that he was in a peculiar position, because no general attack had been delivered against His Majesty's Government. For the most part the debate had consisted of an attack on the Government of the Congo Free State. He was not there to represent that Government, and he could take no responsibility for the acts of that Government. But he asked himself what was the attitude which the representative of His Majesty's Government ought to take in dealing with a discussion of this kind. He did not desire for one moment to defend or to extenuate anything which might be proved to be amiss in the Congolese Government. He wished to approach the question from the impartial and *quasi-judicial* point of view. First of all, what right had this Government to deal with the state of things in the Congo Free State? We had undoubtedly a legitimate *locus standi*, not so much by virtue of the special treaties which had been referred to as of the general Act of Berlin, which was more precise and which went further. We had the *locus standi* which every signatory to that Berlin Act possessed. There was no question that the Congo Free State had entered into certain obligations towards us; but we had entered into no obligations whatever as to the Government of the Congo Free State. There was, however, the duty which belonged to every signatory to the Act of Berlin. Upon what subjects and in what directions did these obligations of the Congo Free State extend? He would treat the subject from the points of view of trade and of government. As to trade, there was a clause in the Act of Berlin which bound every signatory, wherever they possessed sovereign powers within the area affected by the treaty, not to grant a monopoly or favour of any kind in matters of trade. The language was very general, but in treaties it would be found that the language always was very general. His Majesty's Government were disposed to think that the system which had been established, and which was prevalent in the Congo Free State, was not altogether in accordance with the obligations into which the Congo Free State had entered. (Laughter.) But that contention was not universally admitted. On the other side it was contended that as long as every one was free to buy and sell in the Congo Free

State, the obligations of the Berlin Act were fulfilled. But the question was whether every one was free to buy and sell. (Cheers and laughter.) He thought that a monopoly might be said to be created when in a specified area competition was excluded and a person or a society, or even a State itself, was constituted the sole medium through which any one might buy and sell. (Laughter.) He thought that that was not an unfair definition of a monopoly (cheers and laughter); and, taking it as the criterion, he confessed that it was difficult to escape from the conclusion that the present administration of the Congo Free State had not come up to that standard. The concessions of the Free State were very large; they had been established with special assistance from the State; and they were under special State control. Their privileged position had been brought about largely by the power which the State possessed of disposing of unoccupied land; and he thought it would be fair to say that the administration of these large areas was as much conducted with a view to the profit of those in whose interests the concessions were held as of the natives. He had said that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government they could not admit that the administration of the Congo State did not come within the prohibition of monopolies contained in the Berlin Act. (Hear, hear.) But we were only one of a number of Powers who were signatories of that Act, and it would not be reasonable to expect His Majesty's Government to act alone in respect of it. The Government could not assent to the motion as it stood; but he thought that, considering the difference of opinion which existed among the signatories as to the precise effect of the Monopoly Clause of the Berlin Act, it would be a proper and reasonable course to institute an exchange of views with those Powers upon that particular point. (Hear, hear.) He was able to assure the House that that course would be adopted by His Majesty's Government. (Hear, hear.) He would turn now to the more important question of the condition of the natives. As several speakers had reminded the House, an assurance was given to Europe that the well-being of the native races would be the main object of the Government, not only of the Congo Free State, but of all the other areas which were within the purview of the Berlin Act. There was no doubt that the administration of the Congo Government had been marked by a very high degree of a certain kind of administrative development. (Hear, hear, and some laughter from the Opposition benches.) There were steamers upon the river, hospitals had been established, and all the machinery of elaborate judicial and police

systems had been set up. Hon. gentlemen had alleged that all this was a whited sepulchre, that the apparent administrative completeness of this system did not really correspond to good government. They said that the officials of the Congo Free State showed no due sense of their responsibility for the native races, and that their government had been accompanied by atrocities of a very heinous order. Were these things true? He did not think that the Congo authorities denied the existence of these atrocities. What they did say was that they had taken the ordinary steps of a civilised Government to punish the perpetrators and had adopted measures to prevent the recurrence of these acts. It was, he thought, this very doubt as to what was the real truth in regard to the Government of the Congo Free State which made public opinion throughout Europe so anxious, and which he thought the Congolese authorities themselves ought to feel as calling for some action upon their part to clear away. It must be remembered that the Congo Free State had an enormous area, and that any one only living for a few months on the coast was not in a position to afford evidence of a very reliable kind of what passed in the far interior. (Hear, hear.) The question was, was there general misgovernment in the Congo Free State? The Congo Free State authorities urged as a reply to the accusations on this head that their system was a great improvement upon the barbarous government of the native tribes who preceded them. He really thought from some of the speeches to which they had listened the House would hardly believe that that was the case, but he thought that was not a very satisfactory way of stating their case. There were of course, the questions of compulsory labour and the charges which had been brought against the armed forces of the Congo Free State. Where a system of compulsory labour was introduced it did not follow that it was iniquitous, and an armed force—that was to say, a police force—was necessary to the Government of any community. Had this compulsory labour and had this armed force led to atrocities? He had some difficulty in giving a confident opinion about that, but he would refer to a passage in a book called "The Truth about Civilisation in the Congo," which gave an account of an interview with the father superior of a mission in the Free State. This gentleman was asked, "What do you think of the charges made against the officials of the State?" In reply, he quoted some observations which he said he had seen and which were to this effect: "Do not tell me that these customs are no longer practised. They are still carried on. Hands, ears, and even heads are cut off. Of



course, soldiers with three, four, or five years' service respect our instructions, but can you forbid a young soldier, animated with a desire to show his prowess, to bring back some trophies?" ("Oh, oh.")

MR. EMMOTT.—Does the noble lord defend that? (Opposition cheers.)

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said that such a passage as that made one doubt whether the authorities of the Congo Free State realised their responsibilities as the white governors of these barbarous regions. (Hear, hear.) It was an instructive quotation, because it was made by a man evidently speaking in perfectly good faith, and speaking, of course, from the Congolese point of view. All would admit that no such state of things would be permitted for a moment in any protectorate of this country, and therefore it was that a feeling of general suspicion had been aroused throughout Europe, and especially in this country—and it had been very emphatically expressed in the debate—as to whether the Congo Free State authorities had really come up to that sense of their responsibilities which might be expected from the white governors of a district in Central Africa. (Hear, hear.) How did the Congolese authorities meet these criticisms? They said in the first place, and he thought due weight must be given to that reply, that the standard of civilisation which we favoured was not the growth of a single day and required time and continuous effort to bring about. There was also some truth in their plea that where atrocities were proved they visited the perpetrators with condign punishment. They pleaded also that they had established a Commission whose function it was to investigate any misgovernment which might be brought to their notice, and to provide remedies. He was bound to say that the Congo Free State authorities had been very willing to give us all the information in their power in respect of the operations of this Commission, whose members consisted largely of independent persons, and which had held many meetings and made reports. He thought the Congolese authorities would be wise to do their best to satisfy public opinion (Opposition laughter), and that where definite facts were alleged in support of suspicions, it would be well, in their own interests as well as in those of the subject populations, that they should do their best to remove those suspicions and reassure the public opinion, which was sensitive on the subject. He did not regret the debate which had taken place, he thought it probable that what had been said might have considerable influence—

MR. W. REDMOND.—Not what you have said, anyhow.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said the Congolese authorities and the Belgian people had always expressed the greatest regard for the opinion of this country, and especially for the House of Commons, and he was fully persuaded that what had been said that evening would have a great effect upon them. He did not, however, think it possible for the government to assent to the motion in the form in which it was presented to them. They were asked, not merely to indict the Congo Free State, but actually to condemn them. (Opposition cheers.) Let them rather be content with bringing under the notice of the authorities the strong feeling which had been excited by the charges of misgovernment which had been brought against them. The House would realise that he was not desirous in any way to sympathise with any misgovernment which might be proved against the Congolese authorities. He recognised that they were bound by their signature to the Berlin Act to afford to the signatories of that Act every satisfaction. The Government were prepared, as he had said, to consult with their co-signatories as to the evidence of misgovernment which had been laid before them; and he was not doubtful that the strong expressions of opinion which the debate had called forth, voicing as it did public opinion not only in England but throughout Europe, might have its due effect, and tend to remedy the evils of which they had, he was afraid, so much cause to complain.

### **Lord E. Fitzmaurice warns the Government of the strong feeling in the House.**

LORD E. FITZMAURICE (Wilts, Cricklade) said that as the noble lord proceeded he began to think that possibly it was gradually becoming necessary that some attack should be made on the Government in this matter. His hon. friend who brought forward the motion made an unanswerable case, and the motion itself embodied a very moderate request. The House was not asked to pass a sweeping set of resolutions dealing with a series of counts. He (the speaker) submitted that there had been made out an unanswerable *prima facie* case sufficient to justify the Government in bringing the facts before the signatories of the Berlin Act. (Cheers). The case against the Congo Free State was that neither in the spirit nor in the letter had it been able to carry out the duties which it undertook to perform under the Berlin Act. The Government of King Leopold was unable to control their representatives in those distant lands;

and so atrocities had been committed which curdled the blood and made civilisation ashamed of its name. (Hear, hear.) They had a perfect right to go to the other Powers concerned and call their attention to the existing state of affairs in the Congo, which was a disgrace to civilisation. (Hear, hear.)

**The Prime Minister admits the existence of an  
"Overwhelming Case," and pledges the  
Government to take action.**

MR. BALFOUR said he was not inclined to dissent from the position which the noble lord had adopted in respect to the course which His Majesty's Government ought to pursue on this question. The noble lord stated with perfect accuracy the effect of the last part of the resolution, and His Majesty's Government recognised, as his noble friend recognised, and as every speaker had recognised, the responsibility of this country as one of the co-signatories of the Treaty of Berlin. They recognise their duty, acting with their colleagues, and, of course, with the Government of the Congo Free State, to deal with the question which had been discussed. That was the practical proposal which had been made, and with that practical proposal they were in agreement. That was the only important matter before them; but there was a question of procedure, he had almost said of Parliamentary decorum, to which he wished to call attention. He did not think it was wise or judicious for them without inquiry to place upon the permanent records of the House a resolution not merely asking the Government to take this or that step, but to pass condemnation upon another Government. (Hear, hear.) Hon. gentlemen had spoken in very strong terms about the action or inaction of the Congo Government in dealing in matters as to which it was rightly held there was an overwhelming case. There was a very great difference in an individual gentleman coming to that conclusion and expressing himself strongly upon it, and the deliberate procedure of the House of Commons. The House, should not, without anything in the nature of judicial inquiry and merely upon statements made in debate, commit itself to the condemnation of a friendly Government. It would be impossible for the Government to vote against the resolution, because it indicated a policy the Government desired to follow. It would be more consistent with the dignity of the House to accept the assurance of his noble friend, which he repeated,

that they meant to take action in this matter. He hoped the hon. member would withdraw the motion or put it in an amended form, free from the objectionable condemnation of a friendly Government. (Hear, hear.)

MR. H. SAMUEL accepted the assurance of the right hon. gentleman, and amended the motion by leaving out the words "and both these guarantees having been constantly violated."

This was accepted, and the motion was agreed to.

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### **Members of Parliament who have identified themselves with the Cause of Congo Reform.**

THE RIGHT HON. SIR CHARLES W. DILKE, BART., P.C., M.P. for the Forest of Dean. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1880-82; Author of *Greater Britain*: has for many years persistently and continually worked to secure reform in the Congo. Brought the matter before the House of Commons in 1897; has spoken and written much on the subject; principal speaker at the Mansion House Demonstration in May, 1901. Moved the first resolution at the United Service Institution, Whitehall, on May 5th, 1903; seconded Mr. Herbert Samuel's resolution in the House of Commons, May 20th, 1903; published his views of the debate in the *West African Mail*, May 29th, 1903.

ALFRED EMMOTT, M.P. for Oldham; President of the Oldham Chamber of Commerce; Member of Royal Commission on Supply of Food and Raw Material in the time of War; Chairman of the Executive Committee for Congo Reform of the London branch of the International Union; Member of Council of Empire League. First took up the Congo Question publicly in 1903. Has since spoken, and written on the subject, notably in the *West African Mail* of May 1st, 1903. Contributed a powerful speech on Mr. Herbert Samuel's resolution in the House of Commons' Debate on May 20th, 1903.

LORD EDMOND FITZMAURICE, M.C., M.P. for the Crickdale Division of Wiltshire. Plenipotentiary at Danube Conference in London, 1882-83; Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1882-85. Took part in the Congo Debate in the House of Commons on May 20th, 1903, warning the Government that it was faced by a unanimous House, irrespective of Party,

RIGHT HON. SIR JOHN ELDON GORST, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., M.P. for Cambridge University. Ex-Vice-President of Committee of Council on Education; Solicitor-General, 1885-86; Under-Secretary for India, 1886-91; Financial Secretary to Treasury, 1891-92. Took part in the Congo Debate in the House of Commons on May 20th, 1903, describing the evidence against the Congo State as "perfectly overwhelming."

HERBERT SAMUEL, M.A., M.P. for the Cleveland Division of Yorkshire. Member of the Aborigines Protection Society, and of the African Society. Visited Uganda in 1902. Has been a student for some years of African problems. Initiated the Debate in the House of Commons on May 20th, 1903, in a speech of great cogency and earnestness. Contributed a weighty article on the subject to the *West African Mail*, in May, 1903.

THOMAS BAYLEY, ESQ., M.P. for Derbyshire (Chesterfield Division) since 1892. Took up the Congo question many years ago; has often spoken and written on the subject. Contributed an eloquent letter to the *West African Mail*, of April 24th, 1903. Spoke at the United Service Institution, Whitehall, on May 5th, 1903.

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SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE TO CHAPTER III.

In the debates which are taking place (as we go to press) in the Belgian House of Representatives, the Belgian Deputy, M. VANDERVELDE, has brought the appalling abuses perpetrated in the Rubi-Welle region of the *Domaine Privé* proper upon the natives by Congo State officers before the Belgian House. He has shown conclusively that those abuses were the direct and necessary outcome of the written instructions received by sub-agents from their superiors with the knowledge of the Congo authorities. M. VANDERVELDE'S disclosures are of a terrible character. The only paper in England to reproduce them in full has been the *West African Mail*. They will be found in the issue of that paper for July 10th, 1903.

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