The Diamond Bracelet

By MRS. HENRY WOOD,

Author of East Lynne, Etc.

CHAPTER V—(Continued.)

"I trust not, but I am very unhappy. Who could have done it? How could it have gone? I left the room when you did, but I only lingered on the stairs watching—if I may tell the truth—whether you go out safely, and then I returned to it. Yet, when Lady Sarah came up from dinner it was gone."

"And did no one else go into the room?" he repeated. "I met a lady at the door who asked for you; I sent her upstairs."

"She went in for a minute. It was my sister, Gerard."

"Oh, indeed, was that your sister? Then she counts as we do for nobody in this. It is strange. The bracelet was in the room when I left it——"

"You are sure of it?" interrupted Alice drawing a long breath of suspense.

"I am. When I reached the door I turned round to take a last look at you, and the diamonds of that particular bracelet gleamed at me from its place on the table."

"Oh, Gerard! is this the truth?"

"It is the truth, on my sacred word of honor," he replied, looking at her agitated face and wondering at her words. "Why else should I say it? Good-by, Alice, I can't stay another moment, for here's somebody coming I don't care to meet."

He was off like a shot, but his words and manner, like her sister's, had conveyed their conviction of innocence to the mind of Alice. She stood still, looking after him in her dreamy wonderment, and was jostled by the passers-by. Which of the two was the real delinquent? One of them must have been.

CHAPTER VI.

A little man was striding about his library with impatient steps. He wore a faded dressing gown, handsome once, but remarkably shabby now, and he wrapped it closely around him though the heat of the weather was intense. But Colonel Hope, large as were his coffers, never spent upon himself a superfluous farthing, especially in the way of personal adornment; and Colonel Hope would not have felt too warm, cased in sheepskins, for he had spent the best part of his life in India, and was of a chilly nature.

The Colonel had that afternoon been made acquainted with an unpleasant transaction which had occurred in his house. The household termed it a mystery; he, a scandalous robbery; and he had written forthwith to the nearest chief police station, demanding that an officer might be dispatched back with the messenger to investigate it. So there he was, waiting for his return in impatient expectation, and occasionally halting before the window to look out on the busy London world.

The officer at length came and was introduced. The Colonel's wife, Lady Sarah, joined him then, and they proceeded to give him the outlines of the case. A valuable diamond bracelet, recently presented to Lady Sarah by her husband, had disappeared in a singular manner. Miss Seaton, the companion to Lady Sarah, had temporary charge of the jewel box, and had brought it down the previous evening, Thursday, this being Friday, to the back of the drawing room, and laid several pairs of bracelets out on the table ready for Lady Sarah, who was going to the opera, to choose which she would wear when she came up from dinner. Lady Sarah chose a pair, and put, herself, the rest back into the box, which Miss Seaton then locked and carried to its place upstairs. In the few minutes that the bracelets lay on the table the most valuable one, a diamond, disappeared from it.

"I did not want this to be officially investigated; at least, not so quickly," observed Lady Sarah to the officer. "The Colonel wrote for you quite against my wish."

"And so have let the thief get clear off, and put up with the loss!" cried the Colonel. "Very fine, my lady."

"You see," added her ladyship, explaining to the officer "Miss Seaton is a young lady of good family, not a common companion; a friend of mine, I may say. She is of feeble constitution, and this affair has so completely upset her that I fear she will be laid on a sick bed."

"It won't be my fault if she is," retorted the Colonel. "The loss of a diamond bracelet, worth two or three hundred guineas, is not to be hushed up. They are not to be bought every day, Lady Sarah!"

The officer was taken to the room whence the bracelet disappeared. It was a back drawing room, the folding doors between it and the front standing open, and the back window, a large one looking out upon some flat leads—as did all the row of houses. The officer seemed to take in the points of the double room at a glance; the door of communication, its two doors opening to the corridor outside, and its windows. He looked at the latches of the two entrance doors, and he leaned from the front windows, and he leaned from the one at the back. He next requested to see Miss Seaton, and Lady Sarah fetched her—a delicate girl with transparent skin and looking almost too weak to walk. She was in a visible tremor, and shook as she stood before the stranger.

He was a man of pleasant manners and speech, and he hastened to assure her: "There's nothing to be afraid of, young lady," said he, with a broad smile. "I'm not an ogre; though I do believe some timid folks look upon us as such. Just please to compose yourself and tell me as much as you can recollect of this."

"I put the bracelets out here," began Alice Seaton, laying hold of the table underneath the window, not more to indicate it than to steady herself, for she was almost incapable of standing. "The diamond bracelet, the one lost, I placed here," she added, touching the middle of the table at the back, "and the rest I laid out round, and and before it."

"It was worth more than any of the others, I believe," interrupted the official.

"Much more," growled the Colonel.

The officer nodded to himself, and Alice resumed:

"I left the bracelets and went and sat down at one of the front windows——"

"With the intervening doors open, I presume."

"Wide open, as they are now," said Alice, "and the other two doors shut. Lady Sarah came up from dinner almost directly, and then the bracelet was not there."

"Indeed! You are quite certain of that."

"I am quite certain," interpoled Lady Sarah, "I looked for that bracelet, and, not seeing it, I supposed Miss Seaton had not laid it out. I put on the pair I wished to wear and placed the others in the box and saw Miss Seaton lock it."

"Then you did not miss the bracelet at that time?" questioned the officer.

"I did not miss it in one sense, because I did not know it had been put out," returned her ladyship. "I saw it was not there."

"But did you not miss it?" he asked.

"I only reached the table as Lady Sarah was closing the lid of the box," she answered. "Lady Frances Chenevix had detained me in the front room."

"My sister," explained Lady Sarah. "She is on a visit to me, and had come with me up from dinner."

"You say you went and sat in the front room," resumed the officer to Alice, in a quicker tone than he had used previously. "Will you show where?"

Alice did not stir; she only turned her head towards the front room, and pointed to a chair a little drawn away from the window.

"In that chair," she said. "It stood as it stands now."

The officer looked baffled.

"You must have had the back room full in view from thence; both the door and the window."

"Quite so," replied Alice. "If you will sit down in it, you will perceive that I had an uninterrupted view, and faced the doors of both rooms."

"I perceive so from here. And you saw no one enter?"

"No one did enter. It was impossible they could do so without my observing it. Had either of the doors been only quietly unlatched, I must have seen."

"And yet the bracelet vanished!" interposed Colonel Hope. "They must have been confounded deep whoever did it; but thieves are said to possess slight of hand."

"They are clever enough for it, some of them," observed the officer.

"Rascally villains. I should like to know how they accomplished this."

"So should I," significantly returned the officer. "At present it appears to me incomprehensible."

There was a pause. The officer seemed to muse; and Alice, happening to look up, saw his eyes stealthily studying her face. It did not tend to reassure her.

Your servants are trustworthy; they have lived with you some time?" resumed the officer, not apparently attaching much importance to what the answer might be.

"Were they all escaped convicts, I don't see that it would throw light on this," retorted Colonel Hope. "If they came into the room to steal the bracelet, Miss Seaton must have seen them."

"From the time you put out the bracelets to that of the ladies coming up from dinner, how long was it?" inquired the officer of Alice.

"I scarcely know," panted she, for, what with his close looks and his close questions, she was growing less able to answer. "I did not take particular notice of the lapse of time; I was not well yesterday evening."

"Was it half an hour?"

"Yes—I dare say—nearly so."

"Miss Seaton," he continued, in a brisk tone, "will you have any objections to take an oath before a magistrate—in private, you know—that no person whatever, except yourself, entered either of these rooms during that period?"

CHAPTER VII.

Had she been requested to go before a magistrate and testify that she, herself, was the guilty person, it could scarcely have affected her more. Her cheeks grew white, her lips parted, and her eyes assumed a beseeching look of terror. Lady Hope hastily pushed a chair behind her, and drew her down upon it.

"Really, Alice, you are very foolish to allow yourself to be excited about nothing," she remonstrated; "you would have fallen on the floor in another minute. What harm is there in taking an oath—and in a private room? You are not a Chartist, or a Mormon—or whatever the people call themselves, who profess to object to oaths, on principle."

The officer's eyes were still keenly fixed on Alice Seaton's, and she cowered visibly beneath his gaze.

"Will you assure me, on your sacred word, that no person did enter the room?" he repeated, in a low, firm tone, which somehow carried her to the terrible belief that he believed that she was trifling with him.

She looked at him, gasped, and looked again; and then she raised her handkerchief in her hand and wiped her damp and ashy face.

"I think some one did come in," whispered the officer in her ear; "try and recollect." And Alice fell back in hysterics.

Lady Sarah led her from the room, herself speedily returning to it.

"You see how weak and nervous Miss Seaton is," was her remark to the officer, but glancing at her husband. "She has been an invalid for years, and is not strong like other people. I felt sure we should have a scene of some kind; that is why I wished the investigation not to be gone into hurriedly."

"Don't you think there are good grounds for an investigation, sir?" testily asked Colonel Hope of the officer.

"I must confess I do think so," was the reply.

"Of course, you hear, my lady. The difficulty is, how can we obtain the first clue to the mystery."

"I do not suppose there will be an insurmountable difficulty," observed the officer. "I believe I have obtained one."

"You are a clever fellow, then," cried the Colonel, "if you have obtained it here. What is it?"

"Will Lady Sarah allow me to mention it—whatever it may be—without taking offense?" continued the officer, looking at her ladyship.

She bowed her head, wondering much.

"What's the good of standing upon ceremony?" peevishly put in Colonel Hope. "Her ladyship will be as glad as we shall be to get back her bracelet; more glad, one would think. A clue to the thief! Who can it have been?"

The detective smiled. When men are as high in the police force as he, they have learned to give every word its due significance. "I did not say a clue to the thief, Colonel; I said a clue to the mystery."

"Where's the difference?"

"Pardon me, it is indisputably perceptible. That the bracelet is gone, is a papable fact; but by whose hands it went, is as yet a mystery."

"What do you suspect?"

"I suspect," returned the officer, lowering his voice, "that Miss Seaton knows how it went."

There was a silence of surprise; on Lady Sarah's part, of indignation.

"Is it possible that you suspect her?" uttered Colonel Hope.

"No," said the officer, "I do not suspect herself; she appears not to be a suspicious person in any way; but I believe she knows who the delinquent is, and that fear, or some other motive, keeps her silent. Is she on familiar terms with any of the servants?"

"But you cannot know what you are saying!" interrupted Lady Sarah. "Familiar with the servants! Miss Seaton is a gentlewoman, and has always moved in high society. Her family is little inferior to mine, and better—better than the Colonel's," concluded her ladyship, determined to speak out.

(To be continued.)

WOMAN WHO RIDES HORSEBACK.

St. Louis for some time past has been greatly exercised regarding a fair equestrienne who has appeared daily on the fashionable drives around Lafayette park riding her steed bareback and astride. Her identity was known to few and the majority marveled greatly at her skill in managing her spirited steed and at her temerity in setting at defiance the accepted customs of her sex. With her blonde hair dressed pompadour, and her blue eyes flashing with exhilaration, clad in a clinging wrapper, wearing neither hat nor gloves, she goes forth daily for an equestrian stunt that astonishes the avenue. The identity of the fair horsewoman has finally become known to the public at large. She is Miss Jessie Goodpasture and belongs to an excellent family. She knows a good horse when she sees one, but she never refuses a ride on any animal that is offered, no matter how sorry a plug he may be. She prefers a horse with much spirit and plenty of speed, and she does not object at all to one that tries to throw her. "I have never been thrown," she says, "and I don't fear being thrown. I guess I can stay on any horse that comes along. I never rode a bucking broncho, though. I have heard of Miss Bessie Mulhall of Oklahoma and the way she rides horses and ropes cattle. Well, I suppose she is a pretty good rider, but I can ride a little myself. When Buffalo Bill was here two years ago I rode in his parade. I also rode in his show with the general turnout of riders. But I like riding astride better than on a sidesaddle." Miss Jessie went from Springfield, Ill., to St. Louis eight years ago. She has never owned a horse, but depends upon acquaintances for her mounts. Whenever a boy rides past the alley in the rear of her home she craves the privilege of riding his horse. Then the neighbors witness a daring exhibition. "I don't know why I am so fond of riding," she said. "I guess I was just born that way. I'd rather ride than do anything else on earth. I just must ride."—Chicago Chronicle.

Christian science is said to be popular among art students in the Latin quarter of Paris.

CONGRESS.

Washington, Feb. 3.—Senate.—Another spirited debate, with the Philippine tariff bill as the text, was precipitated in the senate today, as the result of some statements made by Carmack, democrat, of Tennessee, in the course of an extended speech on the general Philippine question. It was the Tennessee senator's first speech in the senate, and he was given notably good attention on both sides of the chamber. He spoke without manuscript, with earnestness, force and eloquence. At the conclusion of his address, which had been listened to by many of his former colleagues in the house of representatives, Beveridge of Indiana, challenged some of his statements. The debate which ensued was very lively for a few minutes, taking on a political phase which proved particularly interesting to the auditors who crowded the floor as well as the galleries. Beveridge and Tillman of South Carolina, became involved in a heated colloquy in which the exchanges were as hot as both senators could make them. Prior to the taking up of the Philippine bill, the measure providing for an increase in the salaries of the United States judges was under discussion for an hour. In the course of the debate the case of Judge Arthur H. Noyes, of the district court of Alaska, was drawn upon to show why some judges should not be given the increase.

House.—The house devoted today to general debate upon the oleomargarine bill. The opponents of the measure attempted to filibuster against it at the opening of the session, but were beaten by more than a two-thirds vote. The speakers today were Henry of Connecticut, Haskins of Vermont and Graff of Illinois, in favor of the measure, and Wadsworth of New York, Foster of Illinois, Burleson of Texas, and Clayton of Alabama, in opposition to it. Those who antagonized the bill favored the adoption of the substitute, which is designed to prevent the fraudulent sale of oleomargarine under the guise of butter.

Washington, Feb. 4.—Senate.—After a brief discussion today the senate passed the bill providing for a 25 per cent increase in the salaries of United States judges. All amendments were voted down, including one to increase the salaries of cabinet officers from $8,000 to $12,000 a year. During the remainder of the day's session the urgent deficiency appropriation bill was under consideration, the Philippine tariff measure being laid aside temporarily. Hansbrough, of North Dakota, made a spirited defense of Judge Arthur H. Noyes, of the district court of Alaska, and Alexander McKenzie, upon whom an attack was made in the senate yesterday. This precipitated a long discussion of the Noyes case, legal and technical rather than personal. No action could be taken on this subject, but the discussion will be continued under the latitude allowed when apropriation bills are pending.

House.—Debate on the oleomargarine bill continued today in the house and the prospects are that a vote will not be reached earlier than Thursday. The opponents of the bill are making a strong fight so far as the presentation of argument is concerned. The speakers today were Tompkins, of New York; Robb, of Missouri; Knapp, of New York; Bates, of Pennsylvania; Davidson, of Wisconsin; Driscom, of New York, and Hepburn, of Iowa, in favor, and Cowherd, of Missouri; Lanham, of Texas; Grosvenor, of Ohio, and Kleberk, of Texas, against the bill.

Washington, Feb. 5.—Senate.—Throughout today's session the senate had under consideration the urgent deficiency apropriation bill, and just before adjournment passed it substantially in the shape in which it was reported to the senate by the committee. During the early part of the session the case of Judge Arthur H. Noyes of the district court of Alaska, and Alexander McKenzie and others was discussed. McCumber, of North Dakota, delivered an elaborate speech in defense of Judge Noyes and Mr. McKenzie. He paid a high personal tribute to both men, characterizing them as men of fine character, eminent ability and sterling integrity, incapable of doing the things with which they had been charged. Incidentally he criticised the circuit court of appeals of San Francisco for permitting itself to be influenced by prejudice and bias. He became involved in a colloquy with Tillman, who said he appeared in the novel attitude of a defender of the United States judiciary. The South Carolina senator had intimated that he would deliver a speech on the Noyes case, but at the conclusion of McCumber's speech he contented himself practically with putting into the congressional record the decision of the circuit court of appeals of San Francisco in the cases of contempt against Noyes and McKenzie. In a brief speech Stewart reviewed the case, speaking strongly against Noyes and his actions in Alaska.

House.—An agreement was reached in the house today whereby the oleomargarine bill will be brought to a vote after two more days of consideration, one to be devoted to general debate and one to debate under the five minute rule. The debate today continued in desultory fashion without special incident, the speakers being Kluttz of North Carolina, McLeary of Minnesota, Eddy of Minnesota and Crowley of Illinois for, and Allen of Kentucky, Scott of Kansas, Moon of Tennessee and Boutelle of Illinois against the bill. Tomorrow the bill will be laid aside to permit action on the legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bills.

Washington, Feb. 6.—Senate.—For four hours the senate had the Philippine tariff bill under discussion. The measure was completed, so far as the Philippine committee is concerned, all of the committee amendments being adopted. Several other amendments, however, will be offered, one or two being pending. Toward the close of the session the discussion became heated. In response to a resolution offered several days ago by Rawlins, of Utah, the secretary of war transmitted to the senate the sedition laws enacted by the Philippine commission. They were read in full and immediately drew the fire of the opponents of the government's Philippine policy. Hoar, of Massachusetts, expressed his astonishment that such law should be enforced by the government authorities. Foraker, of Ohio, had read from the revied statutes of the United States the laws of congress relating to the crime of treason and similar offenses against the government, and said that the acts passed by the Philippine commission were almost identical in their language with the laws enacted by congress in the days of the fathers of the republic, and that there was nothing unprecedented or unusual about them.

The Ohio senator was interrupted continually and had several warm colloquies with senators who were opposing him. In one of them he announced with great earnestness that the American army would never return from the Philippines until it returned victorious, and that gentlemen in and out of congress, rail about it as they might, ought thoroughly to understand that fact. In conclusion of the debate, Hoar poured oil on the troubled waters of the senate, saying that men might well differ on any of the great questions now before the country, but that all were thoroughly loyal to the country and were doing their duty as they saw it.

House.—The house spent the day on the legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill. Very rapid progress was made, 74 of the 130 pages of the bill being disposed of before adjournment. No debate of importance were developed during the consideration of the bill and no amendments of importance were adopted.

NOT A FORCE BILL.

But Republican Committee Will Look Into Charge in Full.

Washington, Feb. 6.—Representative Crumbaker of Indiana, author of the resolution presented to the republican caucus Monday night, and to be further considered at a caucus next Monday night, authorizes the following statement as to the general purposes of the movement to correct any impression that it is in the nature of a "Force bill."

"The resolution presented to the caucus is designed to secure a full and thorough investigation of the suffrage question, not only in the South, but in all the states that have imposed material restrictions upon manhood suffrage. There is a general belief that a number of states have disfranchised a large number of their citizens; that the colored population by the operation of state laws, is entirely eliminated as a political quantity and yet it counts in apportioning representation among the states.

"It is the general belief that the southern states have at least thirty-five representatives in the house and the electoral college resting upon a ficticious basis. If this be found true in fact, and representation be reduced accordingly as the constitution imperatively requires, it would go a long way towards settling the race question."

CUBA INVITED TO COME IN.

Joint Resolution Introduced by Representative Newlands.

Washington, Feb. 6.—Representative Newlonds of Nevada, of the ways and means committee, who was the author of the resolution annexing Hawaii, has introduced a joint resolution inviting the republic of Cuba to become a part of the United States, first as a territory, and then as a state, of the union, to be called the state of Cuba; also, authorizing a 25 per cent reduction of duties on the present crop of Cuban sugar, in consideration of Cuba's granting prefferential rates to the United States. The resolutions confine the 25 per cent reduction of duties to the period prior to January 1, 1903. The provision as to annexation is as follows:

"That in the meantime the republic of Cuba is invited to become a part of the United States of America, and her people to become citizens of the United States, with the assurance that Cuba will be entitled at first to a territorial form of government under the constitution and laws of the United States, with a delegate in congress to represent her people, and that ultimate statehood will be granted when, in the judgment of the congress, it is advisable to admit Cuba, including such other West India islands belonging to the United States as may be deemed advisable, as a single state in the union, to be called the state of Cuba."

TAKES DEWET'S LAST GUN.

Kitchener Elated Over the Boer Chase.

London, Feb. 6.—The British pursuit of General Dewet has been successful to the extent that his last gun has been captured and Commandant Wessels, one of his principal lieutenants, has been routed. Lord Kitchener sent the news in a dispatch from Pretoria, dated Tuesday, Feb. 4, as follows: "Byng's column, while proceeding toward Liebenburgviel, after a night march, attacked and routed a considerable force of the enemy under Commandant Wessels. We captured a fifteen pounder and a pompom taken from Firman's column, and also a Boer pompom that was the last gun Dewet had, and three wagons of ammunition, 130 horses and 100 mules. The Boer casualties were five men killed, six wounded and twenty-seven captured.

"Among the killed was Field Coronet Wessels. Among the prisoners is Captain Muler, of the Staats artillery. The enemy was scattered. Our casualties were slight.

"The national scouts, near Middleburg, (Cape Colony) captured thirteen prisioners.

"Plumer, near Amersfoort (Transvaal) captured seven prisoners and 500 head of cattle.

SULTAN WOULD KILL HIM.

Brother-in-Law of the Ruler Is Sentenced to Death.

Constantinople, Feb. 7.—Damad Mahmud Pasha, a brother-in-law of the sultan, has been sentenced to death. Hahmud has long been prominent in the young Turk movement and was recently expelled from Greece at the behest of the sultan. Mahmud went to Rome and the sultan requested his expulsion from Itlay. It was refused, but Mahmud went to Paris, where he remains in safety. All the sultan's blandishments failed to induce him to return to Constantinople, so the criminal court was instructed to issue a warrant for Mahmud's arrest and try the fugitive by default, with the result that he was condemned to death.

LETTER FROM SEC. SHAW.

Concerning Deposits of Government Funds at Interest.

Washington, Feb. 5.—Secretary Shaw's first communication on financial legislation is contained in a letter to Representative Sulzer of New York, concerning the latter's bill to deposit government funds at interest in national banks throughout the country. It says:

I find on my desk awaiting my arrival your letter of January 17, referring to house joint resolution 112, and asking information as to the amount of interest which the government would have realized had the proposed law been adopted as a part of the national banking law. If the surplus money in excess of fifty millions working capital had been deposited in clearing house cities in proportion to the relative capital of each bank therein, with no other securities than a prior lien upon the bank's assets, the government would have lost nothing, and if the government had realized 2 per cent upon the funds so deposited it would have received $32,000,000. Aided in this way the banks referred to would have been able to increase credit accommodations to the people in the sum of $200,000,000. This computation was made at the instance of my predecessor (one year ago) and was based upon quarterly rather than daily balances. I think some provision for the deposit of surplus funds belonging to the United States government with national banks upon security other than government bonds would be wise, though I doubt the limitations as to the amount of capital and surplus contained in the bill. I also question the wisdom of mandatory provisions of law. On the contrary, I think there should generally be a fair latitude of discretion. Authority to act in a given line is generally sufficient.

LESLIE M. SHAW.

NO INVERVENTION.

ENGLAND REPLIES TO THE DUTCH OVERTURES.

Only in South Africa Can Negotiations For Peace be Entered Into.

London, Feb. 5.—The British government replied to Dr. Kuyper, the Dutch premier, that if the Boers in the field desire to negotiate for peace, negotiations can be entered into; but, only in South Africa. The British government adheres to its intention not to accept the intervention of any foreign power.

The text of the reply of Lord Lansdowne, the British foreign secretary to the communication of the Netherlands, is as follows:

"THE FOREIGN OFFICE, Jan. 29—Sir: You were good enough to lay before me, January 25th, a communication from the Netherlands government in which it was proposed that, with the object of bringing the war to an end, his majesty's government might grant a safe conduct of the Boer delegates now in Holland, for the purpose of enabling them to confer with the Boer leaders in South Africa. It is suggested that after a conference, the delegates might return to Europe with power to conclude a treaty of peace with this country; and the Netherlands government intimate that, in this event, they might, at a later stage, be instrumental in placing the Boer plenipotentiaries in relation with plentipotentiaries who might be appointed by his majesty's government.

"The Netherlands government intimate that if this project commends itself to his majesty's government they will inquire of the delegates whether they are prepared to make the suggested visit to South Africa.

"It may therefore be inferred that the communication I received was made on the responsibility of the Netherlands alone, and without authority from the Boer delegates or leaders. His majesty's government has given it their best consideration and whilst fully appreciative of the motives of humanity which led the Netherlands government to make this proposal, they felt they must adhere to the position adopted and publicly announced by them some months ago at the commencement of hostilities, by the Boers, that it is not their intention to accept intervention of any power in South Africa.

"If the Boer delegates themselves desire a request for a safe conduct before his majesty's government there is no reason why they should not do so. But his majesty's government, obliviously, are not in a position to express an opinion on any such application until they have received it and are aware of the precise nature and grounds whereon the request is made.

"I may, therefore, point out that it is not at present clear to his majesty's government that the delegates retain any influence over the representatives of the Boers in South Africa, or have any voice in their councils. They are stated by the Netherlands government to have no such letters of credence or instruction of a later date than March, 1900. His majesty's government on the other hand, understood that all the powers of the government, including these of negotiation, were now completely vested in Mr. Styen, for the Boers of the Orange River colony, and Mr. Schalkburger, for those in the Transvaal. If this is so, it is evident that the quickest and most satisfactory means of settlement is by direct communication with the Boer forces in South Africa and the commander-in-chief of his majesty's forces, who has already been instucted to forward immediately any offers he may receive for consideration of his majesty's government.

"In these circumstances his majesty's government has decided that if the Boer leaders should desire to enter negotiations for the purpose of bringing the war to an end, these negotiations must take place, not in Europe, but in South Africa.

"It should, moreover, be borne in mind that if the Boer leaders are to occupy time in visiting South Africa, in consulting with Boer leaders in the field and in returning to Europe for the purpose of making known the results of their errand, a period of at least three months would elapse, during which hostilities would be prolonged and much human suffering, perhaps, needlesly occasioned.

"I have," etc.

(Signed) "Landsdowne."