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CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. I.
LOANS NEGOTIATED

South Africa and the East.

LAST DAYS OF KRUGERIA.

(Douglas Story, London 'Daily Mail.')
Pretoria, May 12.

They have said, Oh God, that this must be the last meeting of the Volksraad of the Republic. To the we pray to prevent that.

The words came in the chaplain's opening prayer, so that all who were there knew they were present at a historic sitting. A gravity that was really a gloom settled on the faces of the Raadsleden, and of the women in the crowd the greater number wept. All knew the inexorableness of the fate that pursued them, though none admitted it.

And they looked a synod of kirk elders rather than a parliament, this company of sun-burned men in ill-cut broadcloth. They filled their chairs uneasily, for, for seven months, they had known no softer seat than a saddle. Their deep bronzed faces contrasted strangely with the office pallor of the Hollander clerks, and the healthy mahogany of the chairman, Lucas Meyer, made ghastly the fishy whiteness of the President's cheeks.

For a deliberative assembly they were young, with only two greybeards conspicuous in the First Volksraad. Douce, sober-minded farmers they seemed, more suited to the taking of a collection than the deliberation of a nation's destinies. All men in their prime, full of the passion of life, there was but one influence could curb their animalism—their own material gain. Peace had its price in this Transvaal national assembly, the reckoning day was coming, and the members were already uneasily counting its cost.

In the chairs at General Lucas Meyer, a great man, deep-chested and deep-voiced, pre-eminently a man of presence. High on his left hung the portraits of those he had aspired to be reckoned among—Paul Kruger, Piet Joubert and Nicolaas Smit. A war he had valiantly fought against had intervened to keep him from their company and to dim in some degree the lustre of his reputation. He had not done badly in battle, but he had not proved himself the leader the people had thought him, and so he was somewhat of a smaller man than at the date of his last election to the chair. He had been tried in the fire, and the burghers were not satisfied with the assay.

At his right hand sat the changeless one, Paul Kruger. Sitting crinkled up in his chair, the old, leaden-faced man looked badly beside his burly colleague. And yet had he lost nothing of the respect which he claimed at the commencement of the struggle. Day in, day out, ceaselessly, tirelessly, the President had worked. Many of the big battles had been designed by him, all of the State's great business had been conducted by him. He had been indefatigable, laboring through the darkness and all through the Sunday. Every principle of his daily life had been violated. At seventy-five he had broken laws which had been immutable with him since childhood. He had set out on long journeys on the Sabbath, had forgotten the peasant's precision in dining hours, and had driven poor Tanta Sana nearly crazy by the irregularity of his ways.

But there is much of the hero in Paul Kruger. He has had a great battle to fight, and with the material to his hand, has fought it well. He stood out that opening day pre-eminently the greatest man in the state, as he did when last he sat in the Raadzaal. He alone stood firm in the faith while others faltered. He was a man who, in other states, would go down in history as Paul the Great; nor would he there disgrace many of his compeers. Granted some grace of body, some dignity of presence, and Paul Kruger would be avowedly a great man. Sitting there huddled together in his chair, with the thumbless hand fretting over the

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needless, tedious ceremony, he merely the farmer of Geduld made president.

But through it all the restless eyes are roaming, resting for a moment with silent wonder on the brilliant uniforms of the foreign consuls and the glittering breasts of the military attaches, but resting longest on the vacant places. Only two of the executive chairs to his right are occupied. Mr. Reitz, the State Secretary, is there, looking busy but buoyant, regretting sorely the time lost in this senseless ceremonial; and Vice-President Schalkburger, pessimistic, burdened, tired—the man who has overlain his opportunity, the Transvaal Hamlet.

Piet Joubert's seat is held sacred to him by a great wreath of palm leaves clasped by a bunch of Transvaal ribbon. It is his guerdon for a clean-remembered life of service to the state; General Joubert may have been no great tactician, but he was an honest man—the proudest epitaph a man may earn in South Africa.

Three other executive seats are empty, those of A. D. Wolmarans, gone to Europe, Jan Kock, killed at Elandslaagte, and Piet Cronje. Jan Kock's place is marked, as Joubert's is, by the insignia of an honorable death. Over the vexed chair of Cronje is draped a vierkleur, and on that is placed an oak wreath—memorials of the man who so blindly planned the Republic's Sedan at Paardeberg.

Down in the body of the Raadzaal two wreaths show the seats of Mr. Barnard, died at Dooport, and of Mr. Tosen, succumbed to hardships suffered at the front. Of the members, one at least was dependent upon a crutch, who had walked straight and well six months before. Round every hat was a band of crape, and the hand of war lay very heavy on the Assembly that bright, sunlight afternoon of May 7, 1900.

Three members remained out of seven upon the executive benches, and the President referred to the vacant places not inelegantly in his speech: To my mind it would not be out of place to express here how sincerely we appreciate the services of these our dead brothers. History will know how to value the work of our late Commandant-General. He not only commanded the respect of the enemy, but his humane and glorious deeds have added significance to the state among the nations.

A suitable resolution was afterwards adopted by the House.

Blunt company of farmers though they be, the Transvaal Raadsleden are jealous of their parliamentary ceremonials. Their President may only enter the Raadzaal on their express invitation, and must remain throughout a guest with all a guest's limitations of privilege. At this, the opening of the Raad, he is escorted to his seat by a chosen commission of members, wears his broad, green sash of office, and so much of a pair of white gloves as he can conveniently manipulate.

He is an old man, Paul Kruger, now; of a curious leaden complexion, who speaks, without stop or breath, in a hard, crackling voice that positively breaks when he is irritated. His voice was a good base once, but it has grown sadly rusted on the veldt in battle and in the chase, and is now a greatly deteriorated instrument. His language is the true voortrekker's taal, forcible, sometimes picturesque, but terribly illiterate. Punctuated by hard, dry barks, it is difficult to follow; and much of the clerky Hollanders' dread of him is due to the mystery of his tongue.

He entered the Raadzaal this afternoon with the bluff 'Goede middag heeren,' and settled in his seat to hear the reading of his formal speech. Later, he spoke, and his speaking was a passionate recital of his efforts after

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peace and of his country's treatment at the hands of the British. The subject of all of it has been known to us this long time; but there was no conviction in the old man's voice as he thundered: 'I tell you, God has said, "Thus far shall you come, but no farther." We live in the Lord and we shall triumph.'

And yet this was no Roundhead Parliament, and that no Oliver Cromwell. It was the most corrupt body of politicians on the face of the globe, throwing its fate utterly upon a God of just dealing! But Oom Paul was as honest in his belief as ever was Old Noll. In that belief the better part of this fighting has been undertaken.

And so if it was until the next day, when the government introduced to a secret session its proposal to dispose of certain undermining rights, the property of the state and of private persons, 'in the worst market and at the worst time.' No longer was the seagreen incorruptible secure in his faith. He must have money, and he would have money. He wrestled with the Raad, bullied it cajoled it. It was useless. The Raad would have none of the proposition, and the old man flung himself homeward in the deepest dudgeon.

Again, on the Wednesday, the attempt was made in a new form; but the Opposition swore to end their part in the war, to withdraw their sons and relatives from the fighting line if this things were done. The president was worsted.

And so the session of 1900 was ended. It had ended badly. Moderate men, sobered by the long-drawn tussle with death, left again for their commandos, wondering sadly that such things could be while the very veldt was rusted with the blood of patriots.

Was this, then, to be their last recollection of the Volksraad;

HUMORS OF THE CLERGY.

IRISH AUDIENCE THAT LAUGHED DURING SERVICE AT A SOLEMN SCOLDING.

"An Irishman of the full blood cannot resist an opportunity for repartee, no matter how solemn the occasion or what his surroundings," said an English clergyman, a visitor in Washington, the other day, when the conversation turned on the funny experiences of clergymen, and the humor that creeps into matters connected with the church.

"The only time I ever heard a congregation laugh unrestrainedly during the regular services in a cathedral was back in the eighties, when I was a resident of dear, dirty Dublin. On one Sunday morning the Archbishop of Cork preached. He was a splendid man, an Irishman to the backbone, and possessed of as fine a brogue as ever distinguished a son of Erin. His congregation was made up of the very essence of fashion in Dublin, which in those days was one of the greatest social centers in the world. Notoriously, people were living beyond their means, for the income from the landed estates of Ireland had taken a big tumble. But that made no difference, and good dressing went as a matter of course, and was one of the smallest of the extravagances. The Archbishop preached on the subject of extravagance, and spoke particularly of overdressing as a prerequisite to attendance at church. His arrangement of the sin of debt and the wickedness of setting the heart on fashion and dress. He attacked the over-dressed woman, and wound up this particular reference this way:

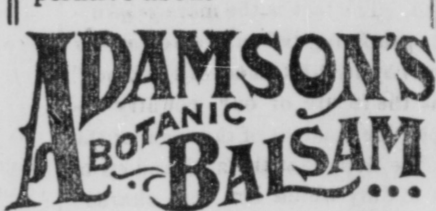
"Now, supposin' every one of ye—every one, man and woman, should stand up in this church, take off the clothes you have not paid for, just to kin' out with only the things on your back ye have paid for—a pretty lot of 'em, lot of scare-crows ye'd be."

There was a pause until the real significance of the suggestion had percolated through the members of his congregation, then some one snickered. Everyone was picturing to himself the real scene that would ensue should the archbishop's idea be carried into effect, while wife looked at husband, and members of each family nudged one another. The ludicrous side was irresistible, and the laugh was general.—Washington Star.

The human-hair industry is a very active one in France, the departments most frequently visited by the hair merchants being those of Correze, Creuse, Allier, Cher Dardogne and Haute Vienne. The average price given for a full long head of hair is from eight shillings to thirty-five shillings for the best quality and color. The girls of the districts mentioned above, which are exceedingly poor, stipulate that their hair shall not be cut short in front, and conceal the short appearance at the back by a draped colored handkerchief. The best shades of light and blonde hair are obtained from Germany and Switzerland, and for these high prices are given.

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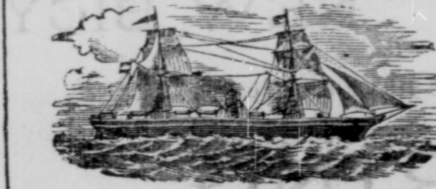
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