

# 3,000,000 NATIVES SLAIN TO GET CONGO RUBBER

## Dr. Guinness Tells Audience Belgian King Is Guilty.

### CONGRESS IS ASKED TO ACT

Resolutions Adopted with a Whoop—

Robert C. Ogden and Lyman Abbott Join in Appeal.

Fully fifteen hundred men and women heard the horrors of the Congo described in Cooper Union last evening. The principal speaker was Dr. Grattan Guinness, Director of the Regents' Union of England, who is in this country endeavoring to get the United States to join with England and other countries with a view to stopping the atrocities committed upon the Congo natives.

As Dr. Guinness described how the savages were being mutilated to force them to gather rubber, and in their mutilated condition set a living example for their fellow-creatures, the audience became hushed with interest. The men and women present acted as though they had been stupefied by what they had heard. In the end they indorsed the resolution which Director Charles Sprague Smith read urging the passage of Senator Lodge's resolution of investigation now in the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Senate. The resolution was passed with a whoop of approval.

Besides the speeches of Dr. Guinness, the Rev. Everett Burr of Boston and the Rev. Dr. John Peters of St. Michael's Church, also spoke. Ballington Booth was also on the platform, but did not speak. Two letters were read favoring steps to stop the atrocities, one of them from Robert C. Ogden, the other from the Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott.

"You may wonder," said Dr. Guinness, "what you and America have to do with the affairs of Central Africa. It is a proper question, and it seems natural that you should ask it.

"You probably know of the visit that Stanley paid to the Central part of Africa. When he had returned, the King of Belgium, who was very much interested in the Congo, having in his younger days visited the place, sent for Stanley. 'Come to Brussels,' he said.

"After Stanley's visit the King of Belgium sent a Commissioner to this country. He saw your President—it was President Arthur, I think. This Commissioner told the President of the awful conditions which existed in the Congo, the people living in a savage state. This Commissioner said that the King of Belgium had already established a trade association in the Congo, and he asked whether the United States would recognize the flag of that association. The President wanted to know why he should do such a thing, and he was told for philanthropic reasons—that King Leopold wanted some power, some recognition, so that he could have an influence over the natives for good. 'All right,' said the President, 'we'll do it.'

"That's where your interest in this matter begins. That was in 1884.

"The next year almost every country fell in line. You set the example; we followed suit.

"If the King of Belgium had kept his promise to exert his power only for good all would have been well. I'm sorry to tell you that he didn't. Every promise has been broken.

"In 1890 rubber was discovered in the Congo. Next the question arose with him, 'How can I get the natives to collect the rubber and bring it to me? I know. I'll do it in the name of taxation.' That's where the atrocities begin.

"The natives now are compelled to bring the King of Belgium in rubber and

ivory about \$10,000,000 worth of goods a year. And if they don't?

"Ah, my friends, now comes a story which I cannot tell here. This is a mixed audience. To get the natives to collect the rubber, pay this tribute to the King of Belgium, the worst atrocities known to modern civilization are practiced upon them. The most common form is to cut the hands or feet from their bodies, so that they may be an example to those who are recreant about collecting the rubber. The white man teaches the black man how to shoot. Then he puts a rifle into his hands and says, 'Shoot down the men who will not work!' Well, you know how that acts on a savage. He uses his power, his rifle, often for the worst purposes.

"Women as well as men are compelled to do the bidding of these sentinels with guns in their hands. I will cite you only one instance, that of a woman who refused to do the bidding of one of these sentinels. He struck her in the abdomen with the butt of his rifle so that she was maimed for life. Then he cut off one of her feet. When recently an investigating committee went to the Congo the husband of this woman carried his maimed wife for miles until he had her at the feet of the Commissioners and then dropped her down before them.

"Three million of these savages have been killed in the last few years, and the number which has been mutilated is beyond computation. There are to-day 30,000 of these sentinels in the Congo armed with guns, and you may rest assured that they use them. A friend of mine saw a boat pass him on one of the rivers of the Congo with no less than fifty hands in the bottom of it, to be taken to the authorities to show that the ammunition which was being used was being spent for the purpose for which it was intended."

The letter of Robert C. Ogden was in part as follows:

The alleged barbarities in the Congo Free State have seemed to be so far beyond belief and so thoroughly out of harmony with the Christian civilization of the present age as to cast a doubt upon their accuracy, but recent testimony seems to have entirely confirmed the statements concerning the treatment of the African natives in that State under the authority of King Leopold of Belgium. It would therefore seem that the time has arrived when the civilized world should protest in the name of humanity against the prevailing policy, and that American diplomacy should find some means, in co-operation with other Governments, by which the suffering Africans may be relieved and this blot upon Christian civilization for the future be completely removed.

It would seem to be entirely plain that our Government has responsibility in this matter, and that public opinion, without distinction of creed or race, should make a protest so emphatic as to be heard and heeded.

Lyman Abbott wrote, in part:

"The conditions that have been described are so horrible that it is not strange that they have appeared to be incredible. They are now substantiated by the official report of a commission, whose report certainly cannot be disregarded as prejudiced against the Government which appointed it. The remedy is, first, an awakened public opinion through some official utterance by the civilized Governments of the world. It is sincerely to be hoped that our own Government will take part in this expression."