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EDITORIAL

## THE GUERILLA.

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**S**imultaneously with news from the Philippine Islands that peace is established, news comes from South Africa that all Boer opposition has been crushed; and barely have these items been read, when despatches are flashed on the bulletin boards from the Far West announcing the capture and killing of American soldiers, and from the seat of war in Africa that whole brigades of Britishers have been surprised and taken. To how many does this see-saw convey real information? Most readers, busy in pursuit of their, to themselves, decidedly pressing concerns, never stop to think further, or dismiss the matter with the slovenly thought that when opposition to regular armies has come down to the guerilla, virtual opposition is ended.

This is a huge error. Napoleon III. and his parliamentary paladins were lured to their destruction by it. What is occurring now in the Philippines and in the Transvaal occurred at our very doors thirty-five years ago.

The guerilla is a confession of military impotence; but it is also a manifestation of deep-rooted popular hostility. Not infrequently, nations too weak in some of the essentials to keep regular armies in the field, have, through this popular sentiment, reached their goal as effectively as if they had kept up armies. The guerilla is the weapon of such. The veterans of Napoleon III. swept through Mexico from the Gulf to the Rio Grande: no force could resist them: but as fast as they moved on, the guerilla arose in their rear and on their flanks: it arose from the bosom of the nation: it was a throb from the nation's heart: the throb would be at times held in suspense, but as soon as possible it was felt again. Harassed for the period of three years, the disciplined forces of France finally evacuated, unable to resist a national opposition that required the actual occupation of every inch of territory. It is so now in the Philippines, it seems to be so in the Transvaal also.

The guerilla warfare may, accordingly, present the most serious aspect of war. It forces the alternative of either the extermination of the "conquered" nation, or the

bleeding to death of the “conqueror.” Either war must be carried on like bees, that ruthlessly slaughter every living being in the captured hive; or the “conqueror” is forced to bleed to death by keeping up an army of occupation of gigantic proportions.

The despised guerilla may in the opening days of the Twentieth Century teach quite a bitter lesson to the cockish graduates of Military Academies.

**Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.**

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